Жития Святых

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

set forth in Russian according to the guidance of the Chet'i-Minei of

OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS

St. Dimitri

Metropolitan of Rostov

Январь

JANUARY

Book I

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THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY

January 1

1 января

New Calendar January 1 · Old Calendar January 14 (civil dates)

Sermon on the Circumcision of Christ

Слово на Обрезание Христово

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when eight days had passed since His birth, was pleased to receive circumcision. On the one hand, He received it in order to fulfill the Law: "I came not to destroy the Law," He said, "but to fulfill it" (Mt. 5:17). For He submitted to the Law so as to free from it those who were held in servitude beneath it, as the Apostle says: "God sent His Son, made under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law" (Gal. 4:5). On the other hand, He accepted circumcision to show that He had truly taken on human flesh, and to stop the mouths of the heretics who say that Christ did not assume true human flesh but was born only in appearance.[1] Thus He was circumcised, so that His humanity might be made plain. For if He had not clothed Himself in our flesh, how could a phantom, and not flesh, have been circumcised? Saint Ephraim the Syrian says: "If Christ was not flesh, whom did Joseph circumcise? But since He was truly flesh, He was also circumcised as a man, and the infant was really stained with His own blood, as the Son of man; He suffered and wept from pain, as befits one who has human nature." Moreover, He underwent fleshly circumcision also in order to establish for us spiritual circumcision;[2] for, having brought to an end the old Law, which concerned the flesh,[3] He made a beginning of the new, spiritual law. And as the man of the Old Testa-

1. The heretics called Docetists taught that God could not take upon Himself weak human flesh, and that it only seemed to men that Christ suffered and died.
2. That is, baptism, which, as is said below, removes the sinful passions from a man.
3. The Old Testament contained chiefly regulations concerning the outward good conduct of man.

ment, a fleshly man, circumcised his sensual flesh, so the new, spiritual man must circumcise the passions of the soul: wrath, anger, envy, pride, unclean desires, and the other sins and sinful lusts. He was circumcised on the eighth day because by His blood He prefigured the life to come, which the teachers of the Church commonly call the eighth day or age. Thus Saint Stephen,[4] the author of the canon for the Circumcision of the Lord, says: "He prefigures the unceasing life of the eighth age, in which the Lord was circumcised in the flesh."[5] And Saint Gregory of Nyssa says thus: "Circumcision according to the Law had to be performed on the eighth day, and the number eight prefigured the eighth age to come."[6] It is also fitting to know that circumcision in the Old Testament was instituted as a figure of Baptism and of the cleansing of the ancestral sin, although that sin was not completely cleansed by circumcision, which could not happen until Christ, of His own will, shed His most pure blood for us in suffering. Circumcision was only a prefiguring of true cleansing, not the true cleansing itself, which our Lord accomplished when He took sin out of the midst and nailed it to the Cross;[7] and in place of the Old Testament circumcision He established the new gracious Baptism of water and the Spirit. In those times circumcision was, as it were, a punishment for the ancestral sin, and a sign that the infant being circumcised had been conceived in iniquity, as David says: "and in sin his mother bore him" (Ps. 50:7), which is why the wound remained upon the body of the boy. But our Lord was sinless; for although in all things He became like us, He had no sin in Himself. Just as the bronze serpent set up by Moses in the wilderness was like a serpent in appearance but had no serpent's venom in it (Num. 21:9), so Christ was a true man, yet free from human sin, and was born, in a supernatural manner, of a pure and wedlock-free Moth-

4. Stephen the Sabaite

5. Service to the Circumcision of the Lord, canon, Ode 4.

6. The number seven in Holy Scripture signifies fullness. Therefore, to designate the whole long duration of this world's life, the holy Fathers used the expression seven ages or days, while the eighth age or day naturally had to signify the life to come.

7. Col. 2:14. "The sin that stood in the midst" — that is, sin stood as an obstacle, a partition, separating man from God. But afterwards sin was nailed to the Cross, that is, it was deprived of all power and could no longer hinder man from entering into communion with God.

er. He, being sinless and Himself the Lawgiver, had no need to endure that painful legal circumcision; but since He came to take upon Himself the sins of the whole world, and God, as the Apostle says, "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21), He, being without sin, underwent circumcision as if He were a sinner. And in the circumcision the Lord showed us a greater humility than in His birth. For in His birth He took on the form of man, as the Apostle says: "being made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man" (Phil. 2:7); but in the circumcision He took on the form of a sinner, suffering as a sinner the pain appointed for sin. For what He was not guilty of, for that He suffered as the innocent, as if repeating with David: "What I did not take away, I must restore" (Ps. 68:5); that is, for a sin of which I am not partaker, I accept the pain of circumcision. By the circumcision which He accepted, He foreshadowed His sufferings for us, and the drinking of that cup which He was to drink to the end, when, hanging on the Cross, He said: "It is finished!" (Jn. 19:30). Now He sheds drops of blood from the foreskin, and afterward the blood will flow in streams from all His body. He begins to suffer in infancy and is trained to endure suffering, so that, becoming a perfect man, He may be able to bear more cruel sufferings, for the labors of courage must be learned from youth. Human life, full of toil, is like a day, for which the morning is birth and the evening is death. Thus from the morning, from the swaddling clothes, Christ, the Man worshipped as God, goes forth to His work, to His labors: He has been at labor from His very youth, and at His work until evening (Ps. 103:23), that evening when the sun will be darkened and there will be darkness over all the earth, until the ninth hour. And He will say to the Jews: "My Father worketh until now, and I work" (Jn. 5:17). What, then, does the Lord accomplish for us? Our salvation: "He who works salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. 73:12). And in order to accomplish this work fully, He takes it up from the morning, from youth, beginning to endure bodily suffering and at the same time grieving in His heart for us, as for His own children, until He Himself, Christ, is formed in us.[8]

8. Gal. 4:19. "Be formed" — the image of Christ is clearly imprinted in us, so that we shall be fully worthy of the name of Christians.

From the morning He begins to sow with His own blood, so that by evening He may gather the precious fruit of our redemption. To the Infant worshipped as God was given at His circumcision the name Jesus, which had been brought from heaven by the Archangel Gabriel when he announced to the Most Pure Virgin Mary her conception of Him, before He was conceived in the womb, that is, before the Most Holy Virgin accepted the words of the messenger and said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Lk. 1:38). For at these words of hers the Word of God immediately became flesh, dwelling in her pure and most holy womb. Thus the most holy name Jesus, given by the Angel before the conception, was bestowed upon Christ the Lord at His circumcision, and this served as the announcement of our salvation; for the name Jesus means Salvation, as the same Angel explained when he appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21). And the holy Apostle Peter bears witness to the name of Jesus in these words: "There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). This saving name Jesus was prepared, written, and kept until now for our deliverance before all ages, in the Counsel of the Holy Trinity, and now, like a priceless pearl, it was brought from the heavenly treasury for the redemption of the human race and was revealed to all by Joseph. In this name the truth and wisdom of God are revealed (Ps. 50:8). This name, like the sun, illumined the world with its brightness, according to the word of the prophet: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise" (Mal. 4:2). Like fragrant myrrh it filled the universe with its aroma: "Thy name is as ointment poured forth," says the Scripture, "because of the savour of thy good ointments" (Song 1:2). His name is not myrrh remaining in a vessel, but myrrh poured out. For as long as the myrrh is kept in a vessel, its fragrance remains within; but when it is poured out, it immediately fills the air with its perfume. The power of the name of Jesus was unknown while it was hidden in the Eternal Counsel, as if in a vessel. But as soon as that name was poured out from heaven onto earth, then, like fragrant myrrh poured out at the shedding of the infant's blood at the circumcision, it immedi-

ately filled the universe with the fragrance of grace, and all nations now confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is to the glory of God the Father[9]. The power of the name of Jesus has now been revealed, for that wondrous name Jesus astonished the Angels, gladdened men, and terrified the demons, for "the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas. 2:19). By that very name hell is shaken, the abyss is troubled, the prince of darkness vanishes, idols fall, the gloom of idolatry is dispelled, and in its place the light of piety shines forth and enlightens every man that comes into the world (Jn. 1:9). Of this name it is said that it is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth (Phil. 2:10). This name Jesus is a mighty weapon against enemies, as Saint John Climacus says: "Always strike the warriors with the name of Jesus, for you will not find a stronger weapon either in heaven or on earth." How sweet this most precious name Jesus is to the heart that loves Christ Jesus! How pleasant it is to him who possesses it! For Jesus is all love, all sweetness. How dear this most holy name Jesus is to the servant and prisoner of Jesus, taken captive by His love! Jesus is in the mind, Jesus is on the lips, Jesus is where the heart believes unto righteousness, Jesus is where the mouth confesses unto salvation (Rom. 10:10). Whether you walk, or sit at home, or do your work, Jesus is always before your eyes. For, said the Apostle, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 2:2). For Jesus, to the one who cleaves to Him, is enlightenment of the mind, beauty of the soul, health to the body, gladness to the heart, a helper in sorrows, joy in afflictions, a remedy in sickness, comfort in all misfortunes, and the hope of salvation; and to the one who loves Him, He Himself is the reward and recompense.

Once, according to St. Jerome, the ineffable name of God was inscribed on a little golden plate which the high priest wore on his brow[10]; but now the divine name Jesus is inscribed with His true blood,

9. Phil. 2:11. That is, the Lord Jesus glorified God the Father by His own accepted labor, which He took upon Himself.

10. The golden plate fastened to the headband of the high priest bore the inscription of the name of God (Jehovah).

shed at His circumcision. It is inscribed not on material gold, however, but on the spiritual, that is, on the hearts and lips of the servants of Jesus, just as it was inscribed in him of whom Christ said: "For he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name" (Acts 9:15). The sweetest Jesus wishes His name to be carried in a vessel as the sweetest drink, for He is truly sweet to all who taste Him with love; to them the psalmist speaks these words: "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 33:9). Having tasted Him, the prophet cries out: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength" (Ps. 17:2). Having tasted Him, the holy Apostle Peter also says: "Behold, we have left all and have followed thee. To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (Mt. 19:27; Jn. 6:68). By this sweetness the grievous sufferings of the holy martyrs were so sweetened that they did not fear even the most dreadful death. "Who shall separate us," they cried out, "from the love of God: tribulation, or danger, or sword? Neither death nor life... for love is strong as death" (Rom. 8:35, 38; Song 8:6). In what vessel, then, does this ineffable sweetness, the name of Jesus, love to be carried? Surely in a golden one, which has been tested in the furnace of afflictions and misfortunes, and which is adorned, as with precious stones, with the wounds received for Jesus, and says: "For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). Such a vessel this sweetness requires; in such a vessel the name of Jesus desires to be carried. It is not in vain that Jesus, receiving the name at His circumcision, sheds blood; by this He tells us, as it were, that the vessel which is to bear His name within itself must be stained with blood. For when the Lord took to Himself the chosen vessel for the glorifying of His name, the Apostle Paul, He immediately added: "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). Look upon My vessel, bloodied and wounded: thus the name of Jesus is inscribed in the redness of blood, in the sicknesses and sufferings of those who, striving against sin, have resisted unto blood (Heb. 12:4).

Therefore, let us kiss thee with love, O sweetest name of Jesus! We worship with zeal Thy most holy name, O most sweet and all-bountiful Jesus! We praise Thy most exalted name, O Jesus Savior; we fall down before Thy blood shed at the circumcision, O gentle Infant and perfect

Lord! We beseech Thine abundant goodness in this, for the sake of that Thy most holy name and for the sake of Thy most precious blood poured out for us, and further for the sake of Thy Most Pure Mother, who bore Thee incorruptibly: pour out upon us Thy rich mercy! Sweeten, O Jesus, our hearts with Thyself! Defend and guard us, O Jesus, everywhere with Thy name! Mark and seal us, Thy servants, O Jesus, with that name, that we may be received into Thy future Kingdom, and there with the Angels glorify and sing forever Thy most honorable and magnificent name, O Jesus. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Seated on the fiery throne on high with the Unbeginning Father and Thy Divine Spirit, Thou didst deign to be born on earth of a Virgin, Thy Mother who knew not wedlock, O Jesus; wherefore Thou wast circumcised as an eight-day-old man. Glory to Thy all-good counsel, glory to Thy providence, glory to Thy condescension, O Thou alone Lover of mankind.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

The Lord endures circumcision for all, and being good, He circumcises the transgressions of men and grants salvation to the world this day. And the Creator's hierarch, the radiant divine mystagogue of Christ, Basil, rejoices on high.

* * *

Life of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea

Житие святого отца нашего Василия Великого, архиепископа Кесарийского

The great servant of God and God-wise teacher of the Church, Basil, was born of noble and pious parents in the Cappadocian city of Caesarea[11], around the year 330, in the reign of the Emperor Constantine the Great. Constantine the Great reigned from 324 to 337. His father was also named Basil[12], and his mother Emmelia. The first seeds of piety were sown in his soul by his pious grandmother

Macrina, who in her youth had been privileged to hear the teachings of St. Gregory the Wonderworker, and by his pious mother Emmelia. His father taught him not only the Christian faith but also instructed him in the secular sciences with which he himself was well acquainted, for he was a teacher of rhetoric, that is, the art of oratory, and of philosophy. When Basil was about fourteen years old, his father died, and the orphaned Basil spent two or three years with his grandmother Macrina, not far from Neocaesarea, near the river Iris[13], in a country house owned by his grandmother, which was later turned into a monastery. From there Basil often went to Caesarea to visit his mother, who lived in that city with his other children, since she was a native of it.

After the death of Macrina, at the age of seventeen, Basil again settled in Caesarea in order to study various sciences in its schools. Through his unusual keenness of mind, Basil soon equaled his teachers in learning, and, seeking new knowledge, he set off for Constantinople, where at that time the young sophist Libanius[14] was famous for his eloquence. But Basil stayed there only a short time and went on to Athens, the city that was the mother of all Hellenic wisdom[15]. In Athens he began to attend the lessons of a famous pagan teacher

11. Cappadocia was a province of the Roman Empire, situated in the east of Asia Minor, and in the time of Basil the Great was known for the learning of its inhabitants. At the end of the eleventh century Cappadocia fell under the power of the Turks and still belongs to them. Caesarea was the chief city of Cappadocia; the Church of Caesarea had long been renowned for the learning of its archpastors. St. Gregory the Theologian, who there laid the foundation of his education, calls Caesarea the capital of enlightenment.

12. Basil's father, likewise named Basil, known for his charity, was married to a noble and wealthy maiden, Emmelia. Five daughters and five sons were born of this marriage. The eldest daughter, Macrina, remained faithful to this well-matched union, dedicating herself to chastity (her memory is celebrated July 19). Of the five brothers, one died in early childhood; three were bishops and were numbered among the saints; the fifth perished while hunting. Of those who remained alive, the eldest son was Basil, followed by Gregory, afterwards Bishop of Nyssa (his memory is celebrated January 10), and Peter, at first a simple ascetic, later Bishop of Sebaste (his memory is celebrated January 9). — Basil's father, probably shortly before his death, received the rank of priest, as may be concluded from the fact that Gregory the Theologian calls the mother of Basil the Great the wife of a priest.

13. Neocaesarea — today Niksar — the famous and beautiful capital of Pontus Polemoniacus in the north of Asia Minor; especially known for the church council held there (in 315). The Iris is a river in Pontus, rising in the Anti-Taurus.

14. Sophists were scholars who devoted themselves chiefly to the study and teaching of rhetoric. — Libanius, even later, when Basil was already a bishop, maintained written correspondence with him.

named Eubulus, while also attending the schools of two other renowned Athenian teachers, Iberius and Proaeresius[16]. Basil was by this time already twenty-six years old. He showed extraordinary diligence in his studies, and at the same time he won general approval by the purity of his life. He knew only two roads in Athens: one that led to the church and another that led to the school. In Athens Basil became friends with another famous hierarch, Gregory the Theologian, who was also studying in the Athenian schools at that time[17]. Basil and Gregory, being alike in their good morals, gentleness, and chastity, loved one another so deeply that it was as though they had one soul, and they preserved this mutual love forever afterward. Basil was so absorbed in learning that often, sitting over his books, he even forgot the need to take food. He studied grammar, rhetoric, astronomy, philosophy, physics, medicine, and the natural sciences. But all these secular, earthly sciences could not satisfy his mind, which sought a higher, heavenly illumination. Having spent about five years in Athens, Basil came to feel that worldly learning could not give him a firm foundation for Christian perfection. He therefore resolved to go to those lands where the Christian ascetics lived, and where he might become thoroughly acquainted with the truly Christian wisdom.

Thus, while Gregory the Theologian remained in Athens, having himself already become a teacher of rhetoric, Basil went to Egypt, where the monastic life was flourishing[18]. There, with a certain archimandrite named Porphyry, he found a large collection of theological

15. Athens, the chief city of Greece, had long attracted the flower of Greek intellect and talent. Here once lived the famous philosophers Socrates and Plato, as well as the poets Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and others. — By "Hellenic wisdom" is meant pagan learning, pagan education.

16. Proaeresius, the most famous teacher of philosophy of his time, was a Christian, as is seen from the fact that he closed his school when the Emperor Julian forbade Christians to teach philosophy. Nothing is known about what religion Iberius professed.

17. Gregory (of Nazianzus) was afterwards for some time Patriarch of Constantinople and is known for his lofty writings, for which he received the title "the Theologian." He had known Basil already in Caesarea, but became close friends with him only in Athens. His memory is celebrated January 25.

18. Egypt had long been the place where Christian ascetic life was especially developed. Likewise there was a great multitude of Christian scholars there, of whom the most famous were Origen and Clement of Alexandria.

writings, and he spent a full year studying them, while also practicing ascetic fasting. In Egypt Basil observed the lives of the famous ascetics of his own time: Pachomius, who lived in the Thebaid; Macarius the Elder and Macarius of Alexandria; Paphnutius; Paul; and others. From Egypt Basil went to Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, in order to see the holy places and to become acquainted with the lives of the ascetics there. But on his way to Palestine he stopped at Athens, where he held conversation with his former teacher Eubulus, and also disputed about the true faith with other Greek philosophers.

Wishing to convert his teacher to the true faith, and thereby to repay him for the good he had himself received from him, Basil sought him throughout the city. For a long time he could not find him, but at last, outside the city walls, he met him at a time when Eubulus was conversing with other philosophers about some important matter. Listening to the dispute and not yet revealing his name, Basil joined in the discussion, at once resolving a difficult question, and then in turn put a new question to his teacher. When the listeners were perplexed as to who could answer and contradict the famous Eubulus in this way, the latter said:

"This is either some god, or else Basil."[19]

Recognizing Basil, Eubulus dismissed his friends and disciples and led Basil to his own home, and for three full days they spent their time in conversation, scarcely taking any food. Among other things, Eubulus asked Basil what, in his opinion, constitutes the essential worth of philosophy.

"The essence of philosophy," Basil replied, "consists in this: that it gives a person the remembrance of death."[20]

In saying this, he pointed Evul to the instability of the world and of all its pleasures, which at first seem truly sweet, but afterward become exceedingly bitter for the one who has become too strongly attached to them.

19. That is, according to Eubulus's opinion, Basil had a mind exceeding the ordinary measure of human understanding, and in this respect approached the gods.
20. That is, only he deserves the honorable name "philosopher" who looks upon death as a passage into a new life and therefore leaves this world without fear.

"Alongside these pleasures," Basil went on, "there are consolations of another kind, of heavenly origin. It is impossible to enjoy both at the same time: 'No one can serve two masters' (Mt. 6:24). Nevertheless, we, as far as it is possible for people who are bound to worldly things, break the bread of true knowledge, and we bring under the roof of good works the one who, even through his own fault, has lost the garment of virtue, pitying him as we would pity a naked man on the street."

After this, Basil began to speak to Eubulus about the power of repentance, describing images he had once seen of virtue and vice, which by turns draw a man to themselves, and an image of repentance, around which various virtues stand as its daughters[21].

"But we have no need, Eubulus," Basil added, "to resort to such artificial means of persuasion. We possess the truth itself, which anyone can grasp who sincerely seeks it. Namely, we believe that all will one day rise again: some to eternal life, and others to eternal torment and shame. The prophets clearly tell us this: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and David, and the divine Apostle Paul, and also the Lord Himself, who calls us to repentance, who sought out the lost sheep, and who, with love, embraces and kisses the prodigal son returning in repentance, adorns him with the bright robe and a ring, and makes a feast for him (Lk. 15). He gives equal reward to those who came at the eleventh hour, as well as to those who endured the burden of the day and the heat[22]. He gives to us who repent and are born of water and the Spirit that which is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him.'[23]"

When Basil had related to Eubulus, in brief, the history of God's economy of our salvation, beginning with the fall of Adam and ending with the teaching about Christ the Redeemer, Eubulus exclaimed:

"O Basil, revealed by heaven! Through you I believe in the One God, the Father Almighty, Creator of all things, and I look for the resurrec-

21. Such images were often used in antiquity by moral teachers in order to make a greater impression on their hearers.
22. That is, the heat, the scorching sun, which is very oppressive in the East (Mt. 20:12).
23. That is, what we cannot by any means even imagine now (1 Cor. 2:9).

tion of the dead and the life of the age to come. Amen. And here is proof for you of my faith in God: I will spend the rest of my life with you, and now I desire to be born of water and the Spirit."

Then Basil said:

"Blessed is our God from henceforth and forever, who has illumined your mind, Eubulus, with the light of truth, and has brought you out of extreme error into the knowledge of His love. If you wish, as you have said, to live with me, then I will explain to you how we should care for our salvation, freeing ourselves from the snares of this life. Let us sell all our property and give the money to the poor, and then let us go to the holy city to see its wonders there[24]; there we shall be strengthened still more in the faith."

Having thus distributed all their property to those in need, and having bought for themselves the white garments that those receiving baptism were required to have[25], they went to Jerusalem, and along the way they turned many to the true faith.

When they came to Antioch[26], they entered one inn. The innkeeper's son, Philoxenus, was at that time sitting by the door in great distress. Being a disciple of the sophist Libanius, he had taken from him some verses of Homer[27] in order to render them into oratorical prose, but he could not do it, and in this difficulty he was deeply grieved. Basil, seeing him sad, asked:

"Why are you grieving, young man?"

Philoxenus replied:

"Even if I tell you the cause of my sorrow, what benefit will there be for me from you?"

When Basil insisted and promised that the young man would not speak of the cause of his sorrow in vain, the youth told him about the sophist and about the verses, adding that the cause of his grief was that he could not clearly convey the sense of those verses. Basil, taking the

24. That is, the various sacred sites, such as the Lord's tomb, Golgotha, and so forth.

25. Both now and in antiquity, the newly baptized, as a sign of the cleansing from sins they had received, were clothed in white garments.

26. Here is meant Syrian Antioch, on the river Orontes, which was called Great.

27. Homer, the greatest Greek poet, who lived in the ninth century B.C., wrote the famous poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

verses, began to interpret them, rendering them into plain speech; and the youth, marveling and rejoicing, asked him to write out that translation for him. Then Basil wrote out the translation of those Homeric verses in three different ways, and the youth, taking the translation with joy, went in the morning to his teacher Libanius. Libanius, after reading it, was astonished and said:

"I swear by Divine Providence, there is no one among the philosophers of our time who could give such an interpretation! Who wrote this for you, Philoxenus?"

The youth said:

"In my house there is a certain stranger, who wrote this interpretation very quickly and without any difficulty."

Libanius immediately hastened to the inn to see this stranger. There he saw Basil and Eubulus, and he was surprised at their unexpected arrival and rejoiced at them. He asked them to stay in his house, and when they came to him, he offered them a sumptuous meal. But Basil and Eubulus, according to their custom, partook of bread and water, and they offered thanksgiving to God, the Giver of all good things. After this, Libanius began to put various sophistical questions to them, and they proposed to him a discourse on the Christian faith. Libanius, listening attentively, said that the time had not yet come for him to accept this teaching, but that, if such was the will of Divine Providence, no one would be able to resist the doctrine of Christianity[28].

"You would oblige me greatly, Basil," he concluded, "if you would not refuse to set forth your teaching for the benefit of my disciples who are with me."

Soon the disciples of Libanius gathered, and Basil began to teach them that they should acquire purity of soul, bodily dispassion, a modest bearing, a quiet speech, and a restrained word; moderation in food and drink; silence in the presence of their elders; attentiveness to the words of the wise; obedience to their superiors; and unfeigned love for their equals and their inferiors. He taught them to keep away from the wicked, from the passionate, and from those attached to fleshly pleas-

28. That is, the time had not yet come to replace philosophy and the pagan religion with the Christian faith. Libanius indeed died a pagan (about 391, in Antioch).

ures; to speak less and to listen and reflect more; not to be rash in speech or talkative; not to laugh insolently at others; to adorn themselves with modesty; not to enter into conversation with immoral women; to cast their eyes down but raise their souls on high; to avoid disputes; not to seek the rank of teacher; and to count the honors of this world as nothing. If anyone did something for the benefit of his neighbors, he should expect a reward from God and eternal recompense from Jesus Christ, our Lord. Thus Basil spoke to the disciples of Libanius, and they listened to him with great wonder. After this he set out on the road again together with Eubulus.

When they came to Jerusalem and had gone around all the holy places with faith and love, and had prayed there to the one Creator of all, God, they presented themselves to the bishop of that city, Maximus,[29] and asked him to baptize them in the Jordan.[30] The bishop, seeing their great faith, granted their request. Taking his clergy with him, he went with Basil and Eubulus to the Jordan. When they stopped on the bank, Basil fell to the ground and with tears besought God to show him some sign to strengthen his faith. Then, rising with trembling, he took off his garments, and together with them "put off the former manner of life of the old man,"[31] and, entering the water, he prayed. When the hierarch approached to baptize him, suddenly a fiery lightning bolt descended upon them, and a dove came out of that lightning, plunged into the Jordan, stirred up the water, and flew up to heaven.[32] Those standing on the bank, seeing this, trembled and glorified God. Having received baptism, Basil came out of the water, and the bishop, marveling at his love for God, clothed him in the garment of Christ's resurrection,[33] offering a prayer as he did so. He also baptized Eubulus, and

29. Maximus III — Patriarch of Jerusalem — from 333 to 350.
30. The ancient Christians received holy baptism very late — partly out of humility, partly with the thought that, having been baptized shortly before their death, they would receive in baptism the forgiveness of all their sins.
31. That is, he was freed from the hereditary ancestral sin (Eph. 4:22).
32. This miracle recalled the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove upon Christ the Savior when He was baptized in the Jordan.
33. The Lord Jesus Christ, while in the tomb, was wrapped in white linen cloths.

then anointed both of them with chrism and gave them Holy Communion.

Having returned to the holy city, Basil and Eubulus remained there for one year. Then they set out for Antioch, where Basil was ordained deacon by Archbishop Meletius, and afterwards occupied himself with the interpretation of Scripture.[38] Some time later he went with Eubulus to his homeland, Cappadocia. When they approached the city of Caesarea, Leontius, archbishop of Caesarea, was informed in a dream of their arrival, and was told that Basil would in time become archbishop of that city. Therefore the archbishop, summoning his archdeacon[34] and several honored clergy, sent them to the eastern gate of the city, instructing them to bring with honor to him two wayfarers whom they would meet there. They went, and meeting Basil and Eubulus as they were entering the city, they led them to the archbishop. He, seeing them, was amazed, for it was precisely these men whom he had seen in the dream, and he glorified God. Having asked them where they were coming from and what their names were, and having learned their names, he ordered them to be taken to the refectory and given a meal. He himself, calling together his clergy and the honored citizens, related to them everything that had been revealed to him in the vision from God concerning Basil. Then the clergy, with one voice, said:

"Since God, on account of your virtuous life, has pointed out to you the heir of your throne, then do with him as you see fit; for truly that man is worthy of all respect whom the will of God plainly indicates."

After this the archbishop called Basil and Eubulus to himself and began to discuss Scripture with them, wishing to learn how well they understood it. Hearing their words, he marveled at the depth of their wisdom, and keeping them with him, he showed them special respect. Basil, while staying in Caesarea, lived the same kind of life he had learned from many ascetics while traveling through Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and observing the ascetic fathers who lived in those lands. Imitating their life, he was a good monk, and Eusebius, archbishop of Caesarea,[35] ordained him presbyter and head of the

34. In the ancient Church, archdeacons held great importance as the closest assistants of the bishops.

monks in Caesarea. Having received the rank of presbyter, St. Basil devoted all his time to the labors of this ministry, so that he even refused correspondence with his former friends.[41] The care of the monks he had gathered, the preaching of the word of God, and his other pastoral concerns did not allow him to be drawn away into outside occupations. In this new field he soon acquired such respect as the archbishop himself did not enjoy, for the archbishop, still not sufficiently experienced in church affairs, had been elected to the see of Caesarea from among the catechumens. But no sooner had one year of Basil's presbyterate passed than Bishop Eusebius, through human weakness, began to envy Basil and to bear him ill will. St. Basil, learning of this, and not wishing to be the object of envy, withdrew to the Pontic wilderness.[36] In the Pontic wilderness Basil settled by the river Iris, in the place where his mother Emmelia and his sister Macrina had previously retired, and which belonged to them. Macrina had established a monastery there. Near it, at the foot of a high mountain covered with dense forest and watered by cold and clear streams, Basil settled. The wilderness was so pleasing to Basil by its undisturbed stillness that he intended to end his days there. Here he imitated the exploits of those great men whom he had seen in Syria and Egypt. He lived in extreme privation, having for covering only one garment, a tunic and a cloak. He also wore a hair shirt, but only at night, so that it would not be seen. He fed on bread and water, seasoning this meager food with salt and roots. From his strict abstinence he became very pale and thin and fell into extreme exhaustion. He never went to the bathhouse and never lit a fire. But Basil did not live for himself alone: he gathered monks into a common life, and through his letters he drew to the wilderness his friend Gregory as well.

35. Eusebius was taken to the episcopal see at the demand of the people, directly from civil service, and therefore he could not have special authority as a theologian and teacher of the faith.

36. Pontus is a region in Asia Minor, on the southern shore of the Black Sea, not far from Neocaesarea. The Pontic desert was barren, and its climate was far from favorable to health. The hut in which Basil lived here had neither strong doors, nor a proper hearth, nor a roof. At table some hot dish was indeed served, but, according to Gregory the Theologian, with such bread that from its extreme dryness the teeth at first slipped over the pieces and then stuck fast in them. Besides common prayers, the reading of Holy Scripture, and scholarly labors, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and the other monks there also themselves carried firewood, hewed stones, tended the garden vegetables, and themselves hauled a huge cart of manure.

In their seclusion Basil and Gregory did everything together; they prayed together. Both gave up reading secular books, on which they had previously spent much time, and began to devote themselves solely to Holy Scripture. Wishing to study it more thoroughly, they read the writings of the fathers and church writers who had preceded them, especially Origen. Here Basil and Gregory, guided by the Holy Spirit, wrote the rules of monastic common life, by which the monks of the Eastern Church are for the most part guided even now.[37]

In regard to bodily life, Basil and Gregory found joy in endurance. They worked with their own hands, carrying firewood, hewing stones, planting and watering trees, hauling manure, and carrying loads, so that calluses remained on their hands for a long time. Their dwelling had neither roof nor gate; there was never any fire or smoke there. The bread they ate was so dry and poorly baked that it could scarcely be chewed with the teeth.

The time came, however, when both Basil and Gregory had to leave the wilderness, since their services were needed by the Church, which at that time was being troubled by heretics. Gregory's father, also named Gregory, an old man who therefore lacked the strength to contend firmly with the heretics, took Gregory to himself at Nazianzus to help the Orthodox. Basil was persuaded to return home by Eusebius, archbishop of Caesarea, who had been reconciled with him by letter and asked him to help the Church, which the Arians had risen up against.[38] Blessed Basil, seeing such need in the Church and preferring its benefit to the life of the wilderness hermit, left his seclusion and came to Caesarea, where he labored much, by word and by writings, to

37. These rules served, and still serve, as a guide for the life of monks throughout the East and, in particular, for our Russian monks. In his rules Basil gives preference to cenobitic life over the solitary and eremitic life, since, living together with others, the monk has more opportunity to serve the cause of Christian love. Basil establishes for monks the obligation of unquestioning obedience to the superior; he prescribes hospitality toward wayfarers, though he forbids serving them special dishes. Fasting, prayer, and constant labor are what monks should occupy themselves with according to Basil's rules, while, however, they must not forget the needs of the unfortunate and sick around them who require care.

38. The heretics, the Arians, taught that Christ was a created being, not eternally existing, and not of the same nature as God the Father. This heresy received its name from Arius, a presbyter of the Church of Alexandria, who began to preach these views in 319.

defend the Orthodox faith against heresy. When Archbishop Eusebius reposed, having yielded up his spirit to God in Basil's hands, Basil was raised to the archiepiscopal throne and consecrated by a council of bishops. Among those bishops was the aged Gregory, father of Gregory of Nazianzus. Being weak and worn down by old age, he ordered that he be conveyed to Caesarea, in order to persuade Basil to accept the archbishopric and to prevent any of the Arians from being raised to the throne.

Basil governed the Church of Christ successfully. He ordained his brother Peter as presbyter so that he might help him in the labors of church affairs, and later appointed him bishop of the city of Sebaste.[39] At this time their mother, the blessed Emmelia, departed to the Lord, having lived more than 90 years.

Some time later, the blessed Basil asked God to enlighten his mind so that he might offer the bloodless sacrifice to God in his own words, and that the grace of the Holy Spirit might be sent down to him for this purpose.[40] Six days later, on the seventh, when Basil, standing before the Holy Table in the church, began to perform the offering of the bread and the cup, the Lord Himself appeared to him in a vision with the apostles and said:

"At your request, let your lips be filled with praise, so that you may perform the bloodless service, pronouncing your prayers."

After this Basil began to speak and to write down such words as: "Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may sing thy glory," and "O Lord our God, who hast created us and brought us into this life," and other prayers of the holy Liturgy. At the end of the prayer he lifted up the bread, praying fervently in these words: "Hear, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, in the heavens, Thy dwelling, and at the throne of Thy kingdom, and come to sanctify us, Thou who sittest on high and abidest

39. Sebastia is a city in Cappadocia.

40. Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople (in the middle of the fifth century), says that St. Basil composed a shorter liturgy because many Christians of his time began to express their dissatisfaction with the length of the Church service. For this purpose he shortened the customary common prayers, while at the same time expanding the prayers of the clergy. – Besides the liturgies, Basil the Great composed: a) a prayer before Communion; b) prayers on the eve of Pentecost; and c) a prayer and exorcism over a demoniac.

here with us invisibly; and vouchsafe by Thy hand to give us Thy Most Pure Body and Blood, and to all of us the people."[41] While the hierarch was performing this, Eubulus and the higher clergy saw a heavenly light illuminating the sanctuary and the hierarch, and certain bright men in white vestments who stood around St. Basil. Seeing this, they were seized with great terror, fell prostrate, shed tears, and glorified God.[42][43]

At that time Basil summoned a goldsmith and ordered him to make a dove of pure gold, in the likeness of the dove that appeared over the Jordan, and he placed it above the Holy Table, so that it might, as it were, guard the Divine Mysteries.

The Lord God, by certain miraculous signs, bore witness to Basil's holiness even during his lifetime. Once, when he was celebrating the Divine service, a certain Jew, wishing to learn in what the holy Mysteries consisted, joined the other faithful as though he were a Christian, and on entering the church he saw that St. Basil was holding an infant in his hands and dividing it into pieces. When the faithful began to communicate from the saint's hands, the Jew also approached, and the hierarch gave him, as to the other Christians, a portion of the Holy Gifts. Receiving them into his hands, the Jew saw that it was indeed flesh, and when he came to the chalice he saw that in it was indeed blood. He hid the remnant of the holy Communion, and returning home he showed it to his wife and told her everything he had seen with his own eyes. Having come to believe that the Christian mystery is indeed awesome and glorious, he went the next morning to the blessed Basil and begged to be vouchsafed holy Baptism. Basil, giving thanks to God, immediately baptized the Jew together with his entire family.

Once, when the saint was walking along the road, a certain poor woman, wronged by a certain official, fell at Basil's feet, begging him to write to the official about her as a man whom the official greatly respected. The saint took a sheet of paper[44] and wrote to the official the

41. Prayer from the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.

42. The Russian edition reads "and sit upon this mountain", a misreading of the Slavonic gore, "on high". —Trans.

43. The Russian edition reads "create us and bring us into this life", misreading the Slavonic participles "who hast created us and brought us". —Trans.

following: "This poor woman has come to me, saying that my letter would carry great weight with you. If this is so, prove it in deed and show mercy to this woman." Having written these words, the saint gave the paper to the poor woman, and she took it and carried it to the official. Having read the letter, he wrote back to the saint as follows: "In accordance with your letter, holy father, I would wish to show mercy to that woman, but I cannot do so, because she is liable to the public tax." The saint wrote to him again: "Good, if you wished but could not do it; but if you could and did not wish to, God will place you yourself among the needy, so that you will not be able to do what you wish." These words of the hierarch were soon fulfilled: a little time after this the emperor became angry with that official, for he learned that he was inflicting great oppression upon the people, and he cast him into chains, so that he would repay all whom he had wronged. The official, from prison, sent a petition to St. Basil that he would take pity on him and by his intercession appease the emperor. Basil hastened to intercede for him with the emperor, and within six days a decree arrived releasing the official from condemnation. The official, seeing how merciful the saint was toward him, hastened to him to offer his thanks, and to the aforementioned poor woman he gave from his own estate twice what he had taken from her.

At the time when this servant of God, Basil the Great, was bravely struggling in Caesarea in Cappadocia for the holy Christian faith,[45] the Emperor Julian the Apostate, a blasphemer and great persecutor of Christians,[46] who boasted that he would destroy the Christians, was marching to war against the Persians. St. Basil was then praying in the church before an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, at whose feet there was also an image of the holy Great Martyr Mercurius in the guise of a warrior with a spear. The warrior Mercurius suffered martyrdom in

44. *Paper* (*khartiya*) – papyrus paper or parchment on which they wrote in antiquity; a manuscript, a scroll (3 Macc. 4:15; 2 Jn. 1:12).
45. "Had it not been for Basil," says the church historian Sozomen, "the heresy of Eunomius would have spread as far as the Taurus, and the heresy of Apollinaris from the Taurus to Egypt."
46. Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363. Having become emperor, he apostatized from the Christian faith and made it the object of his life to restore paganism; for this reason he is called "the Apostate."

Caesarea in Cappadocia (his memory is November 24). Basil was praying that God would not permit Julian, the persecutor and destroyer of Christians, to return alive from the Persian war. And behold, he saw that the image of St. Mercurius, standing near the Most Holy Theotokos, changed, and the image of the martyr for a time became invisible. After a little while the martyr appeared again, but with a bloodied spear. At that very time Julian was pierced in the Persian war by the holy martyr Mercurius, sent by the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos to destroy the enemy of God.

St. Basil the Great also had this gracious gift. When during the Liturgy he lifted up the Holy Gifts, the golden dove with the Divine Gifts, hanging above the Holy Table, was shaken three times by the power of God. Once, when Basil was serving and lifting up the Holy Gifts, the customary sign with the dove, which by its trembling indicated the descent of the Holy Spirit, did not occur. When Basil pondered the cause of this, he saw that one of the deacons holding the fans[47] was looking at a certain woman standing in the church. Basil ordered that deacon to withdraw from the holy altar and imposed upon him a penance: seven days of fasting and prayer, sleepless prayer through whole nights, and giving alms to the poor from his own property. From that time St. Basil ordered a curtain and a screen to be set up in the church before the sanctuary, so that no woman could look into the sanctuary during the celebration of the Divine service; and those who were disobedient he ordered to be led out of the church and cut off from holy Communion.[48]

At the time when St. Basil was bishop, the Church of Christ was troubled by the Emperor Valens,[49] blinded by the Arian heresy. He,

47. Ripidas (from the Greek for "fan," an implement for driving off flies). These are round metal fans on fairly long handles, bearing images of six-winged Seraphim. At an episcopal service deacons wave them over the holy gifts, so that no insect may fall into them. The ripidas also remind us that holy Angels are present at the celebration of the Liturgy and serve with us; their images appear upon the ripidas. Ripidas are used at episcopal services; at a priest's service a veil (*pokrovets*) takes their place.

having cast many Orthodox bishops from their thrones, set Arians in their places, and compelled others, the faint-hearted and fearful, to join his heresy. He was angered and tormented inwardly, seeing that Basil fearlessly remained on his throne as an unshaken pillar of his faith, and strengthened and exhorted others to abhor Arianism as a teaching hateful to God. Traversing his dominions and most severely oppressing the Orthodox everywhere, the Emperor, on the road to Antioch, arrived at Caesarea in Cappadocia, and here he began to employ every means to incline Basil to the side of Arianism. He instructed his voivodes, nobles, and counselors that they should, now by entreaties and promises, now by threats, persuade Basil to fulfill the Emperor's wish. And the Emperor's like-minded men insistently urged the saint to this; besides this, certain noble women who enjoyed the Emperor's favor began to send their eunuchs to the saint, insistently advising him to think in agreement with the Emperor. But no one could make this hierarch, unshaken in his faith, fall away from Orthodoxy. At last the eparch Modestus[50] summoned Basil to himself, and after finding himself unable to persuade him by flattering promises to fall away from Orthodoxy, he began furiously to threaten him with confiscation of his property, exile, and death. The saint, however, answered the threats boldly:

"If you take away my property, you will not enrich yourself by it, nor will you make me a beggar. I suppose you have no need of these worn garments of mine and a few books, in which all my wealth is contained. Exile is nothing to me, for I am not bound to a place, and the place where I live now is not mine, and wherever you may send me will be mine. Better to say: every place is God's, wherever I may be 'a stranger and a sojourner' (Ps. 38:13). And what can tortures do to me? I am so weak that perhaps only the first blow will be felt by me.

48. The curtains were originally hung before that part of the church where the women stood. They were lowered during the celebration of the Eucharist, and under threat of expulsion from the church women were forbidden to lift them during this time. The sanctuary, however, was separated from the rest of the church by an openwork grille, which later developed into the present iconostasis.

50. This eparch was ruler of the whole East and at the same time commander of the Praetorians, or imperial guard.

Death, for me, is a benefaction: it will sooner bring me to God, for whom I live and labor and toward whom I have long been striving."

Astonished by these words, the governor said to Basil:

"No one has spoken to me so boldly until now!"

"Yes," answered the hierarch, "because it has not happened to you before to speak with a bishop. In all other things we show gentleness and humility, but when the matter concerns God, and men dare to rise up against Him, then we, counting all else as nothing, look only to Him alone; then fire, sword, wild beasts, and iron tearing the body will sooner gladden us than frighten us."

Reporting to Valens the steadfastness and fearlessness of St. Basil, Modestus said:

"We are defeated, O Emperor, by the primate of the Church. This man is above threats, firmer than arguments, stronger than persuasion."

After this the Emperor forbade troubling Basil, and although he did not accept communion with him, being ashamed to show himself changed, he sought a more seemly pretext.

The feast of the Theophany of the Lord had come. The Emperor, with his retinue, entered the church where Basil was serving, and by stepping into the midst of the people he sought thereby to show the appearance of unity with the Church. Beholding the seemly order of the church and listening to the singing and the prayers of the faithful, the Emperor marvelled, saying that in his own Arian churches he had never seen such order and such seemliness. St. Basil, approaching the Emperor, began to converse with him, instructing him from Holy Scripture; a listener to this conversation was Gregory of Nazianzus, who happened to be there at that time, and who wrote of it. From that time the Emperor began to regard Basil more favorably. But, withdrawing to Antioch, he again grew irritated against Basil, being stirred up to this by evil men, and, believing their denunciations, he condemned Basil to exile. But when the Emperor was about to sign this sentence, the throne on which he sat rocked, and the reed[51] with which he was to

51. The instrument with which the ancients wrote was something like a pen, a pencil, or a stylus (see Ps. 44:1–3).

make his signature broke. The Emperor took another reed, but the same thing happened with it; the same happened with a third. Then his hand began to tremble, and fear came upon him; seeing in this the power of God, the Emperor tore up the paper. But the enemies of Orthodoxy again began to press the Emperor insistently regarding Basil, not to leave him in peace, and the Emperor sent a dignitary named Anastasius to bring Basil to Antioch. When this dignitary came to Caesarea and announced to Basil the Emperor's command, the saint answered:

"My son, I learned some time ago that the Emperor, having listened to the counsel of foolish men, broke three reeds, wishing to sign a decree for my imprisonment and thereby to obscure the truth. The insensible reeds restrained his unrestrained impetuosity, consenting rather to break than to serve as an instrument of his unrighteous sentence."

Brought to Antioch, Basil stood trial before the eparch, and, when asked, "Why does he not hold to the faith which the Emperor confesses?" he answered:

"It will never be that I, turning aside from the true Christian faith, should become a follower of the impious Arian teaching; for I have inherited from the fathers the faith in the consubstantiality[52], which I confess and glorify."

The judge threatened him with death, but Basil answered:

"Well? Let me suffer for the truth and be freed from the bonds of the body; I have long desired this, only do not you break your promise."

The eparch reported to the Emperor that Basil did not fear threats, that his convictions could not be changed, that his heart was unbending and firm. The Emperor, flaming with wrath, began to think how to destroy Basil. But at that very time the Emperor's son Galatus suddenly fell ill, and the physicians had already doomed him to death. His mother, coming to the Emperor, said to him with irritation:

"Because you believe incorrectly and persecute the bishop of God, the boy is dying for this."

Hearing this, Valens summoned Basil and said to him:

52. That is, that the Son of God is consubstantial with God the Father and equal to Him.

"If the teaching of your faith is pleasing to God, heal my son by your prayers!"

The saint answered:

"O Emperor! If you turn to the Orthodox faith and grant peace to the churches, your son will remain alive."

When the Emperor promised to do this, St. Basil at once turned to God in prayer, and the Lord sent the Emperor's son relief in his sickness. After this, Basil was dismissed with honors to his throne. The Arians, hearing and seeing this, were kindled with envy and malice and said to the Emperor:

"We could have done this too!"

They again beguiled the Emperor, so that he did not hinder them from performing baptism over his son. But when the Arians took the Emperor's son to baptize him, he died at once in their hands. This was witnessed with his own eyes by the aforementioned Anastasius, who related it to the Emperor Valentinian[53], who reigned in the West, brother of the Eastern Emperor Valens. Valentinian, marvelling at such a miracle, glorified God, and sent great gifts to St. Basil through Anastasius; receiving these, Basil established hospitals in the cities of his eparchy and gave shelter there to many infirm and poor.

The blessed Gregory of Nazianzus further reports that St. Basil, by his prayer, also healed of a grievous illness the eparch Modestus, who had been so harsh toward the saint, when in his sickness he humbly sought help from his holy prayers.

After some time, in place of Modestus, a kinsman of the Emperor named Eusebius was appointed eparch. In Caesarea, in his time, there lived a widow, young, wealthy and very beautiful, named Vestiana, daughter of Araxius, who was a member of the senate. The eparch Eusebius wished to force this widow to marry a certain dignitary; but she, being chaste and desiring to keep the purity of her widowhood unstained, for the glory of God, did not wish to marry. When she learned that they wished to seize her by force and compel her to enter a marriage, she fled to the church and fell at the feet of the bishop of God, St.

53. Valentinian reigned from 364 to 376.

Basil[54]. He, taking her under his protection, would not give her up from the church to the men who had come for her, and afterwards secretly sent her to a convent of virgins, to his sister, the Venerable Macrina. Angered at the blessed Basil, the eparch sent soldiers to take that widow from the church by force, and when she was not found there, he commanded that she be sought in the saint's bedchamber. The eparch, as an immoral man, thought that Basil had with sinful intent kept her with him and hidden her in his bedchamber. Not finding her anywhere, however, he summoned Basil to himself and with great fury reviled him, threatening to hand him over to torment if he did not deliver the widow to him. But St. Basil showed himself ready for torments.

"If you command that my body be scraped with iron," he said, "then you will thereby heal my liver, which, as you see, troubles me greatly."[55]

At this time the citizens, learning of the affair, rushed, all of them—not only men but also women—to the palace of the eparch with weapons and staves, intending to put him to death for the sake of their holy father and pastor. And if St. Basil had not calmed the people, the eparch would have been killed. The latter, seeing such popular uprising, was greatly frightened and released the saint unharmed and free.

Helladius, an eyewitness of Basil's miracles and his successor on the episcopal throne, a virtuous and holy man, related the following. A certain Orthodox senator named Proterius, visiting the holy places, resolved to give his daughter to the service of God in one of the monasteries; but the devil, the ancient enemy of good, stirred up in one of Proterius's slaves a passion for his master's daughter. Seeing the unattainability of his desire, and not daring to say anything of his passion to the maiden, the slave went to a magician living in that city and told him of his difficulty. He promised the magician much gold if, by his sorcery,

54. From the time of Constantine the Great, churches in antiquity were granted what was called the right of sanctuary: those unjustly pursued took refuge in them, and the authorities thus had time to establish their innocence.

55. St. Basil the Great was an extremely sickly man and often lost all bodily strength altogether. "Continual and severe fevers," he himself wrote, "have so worn down my body that I am no different from a cobweb. Every road is impassable to me; every breath of wind is more dangerous than a storm is to sailors... One illness follows upon another."

he would help him to marry his master's daughter. The magician at first refused, but at last said:

"If you wish, I will send you to my master, the devil; he will help you in this, if only you also fulfill his will."

The unhappy slave then said:

"Whatever he commands me, I promise to fulfill."

The magician then said:

"Will you renounce your Christ and give a written pledge of it?"

The slave said:

"I am ready for this too, if only I may obtain what I desire."

"If you give such a promise," said the magician, "then I too will be your helper."

Then, taking a sheet of paper, he wrote the following to the devil:

"Since I must strive, my lord, to turn people away from the Christian faith and bring them under your power, to increase your subjects, I now send you the bearer of this letter, a youth inflamed with passion for a maiden, and I ask on his behalf that you give him help in fulfilling his desire. Through this I too shall be glorified, and I shall draw more admirers to you."

Having written such an epistle to the devil, the magician gave it to that youth and sent him with these words:

"Go at this nighttime hour and stand in the Hellenic cemetery[56], holding the paper aloft; then at once there will appear to you those who will lead you to the devil."

The unhappy slave went quickly, and stopping in the cemetery, began to call upon the demons. And at once the wicked spirits appeared before him and gladly led the deluded man to their prince. Seeing him seated on a high throne, and the multitudes of evil spirits surrounding him, the slave gave him the letter from the magician. The devil, taking the letter, said to the slave:

"Do you believe in me?"

He answered: "I believe."

The devil asked again:

56. Among the early Christians, graves of pagans, being unclean, were considered the favorite dwelling places of demons.

"Do you renounce your Christ?"

"I renounce," answered the slave.

Then Satan said to him:

"Often you deceive me, Christians: when you ask help from me, you come to me, but when you attain your aim, you again renounce me and turn to your Christ, who, as good and loving to mankind, receives you. But give me a written pledge that you voluntarily renounce Christ and baptism and promise to be mine forever, and that from the day of judgment you will endure with me eternal torment; in that case I shall fulfill your desire."

The slave, taking the paper, wrote what the devil demanded of him. Then the destroyer of souls, the ancient serpent (that is, the devil), sent the demons of adultery, and they stirred up in the maiden such a strong love for the youth that she, from carnal passion, fell to the ground and began to cry out to her father:

"Have pity on me, have pity on your daughter, and give me in marriage to our slave, whom I have loved with all my strength. If you do not do this for me, your only daughter, you will soon see me dead from grievous torments, and you will answer for me on the day of judgment."

Hearing this, the father was struck with horror and said with weeping:

Woe is me, a sinner! What has befallen my daughter? Who has stolen my treasure from me? Who has beguiled my child? Who has darkened the light of my eyes? I wished, my daughter, to betroth you to the Heavenly Bridegroom, that you might be like the Angels and, in psalms and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19), glorify God; and for your sake I myself hoped to obtain salvation. Yet you shamelessly keep speaking of marriage! Do not bring me down with grief into the abyss, my child; do not shame your noble rank by marrying a slave.

She, however, paying no heed to her father's words, kept saying only one thing:

"If you do not do as I wish, I will kill myself."

The father, not knowing what to do, on the counsel of his relatives and friends, consented to fulfil her will rather than see her die a cruel

death. Summoning his slave, he gave him his daughter in marriage together with a large estate, and said to his daughter:

"Go, unhappy girl, and marry! But I think you will afterwards repent greatly of your deed, and that it will bring you no benefit."

Some time after this marriage had been concluded and the devilish business accomplished, it was noticed that the newly wedded husband did not go to church and did not partake of the Holy Mysteries. This was reported to his unhappy wife:

"Do you not know," they said to her, "that your husband, whom you have chosen, is not a Christian, but a stranger to the Christian faith?"

She, hearing this, was exceedingly grieved, and, falling to the ground, began to tear at her face with her nails, to beat her breast with her hands without ceasing, and to cry out thus:

"No one who has disobeyed his parents has ever been able to be saved! Who will tell my father of my shame? Woe is me, unhappy one! Into what ruin have I fallen! Why was I born, and why did I not perish at my birth?"

As she wept thus, her husband heard her and hastened to her to ask the cause of her weeping. Learning what had happened, he began to comfort her, saying that she had been told an untruth about him, and he assured her that he was a Christian. She, somewhat calmed by his words, said to him:

"If you wish to convince me fully and to lift the grief from my unhappy soul, then in the morning go with me to church and partake of the Most Pure Mysteries before me; then I will believe you."

Her unhappy husband, seeing that he could not conceal the truth, was obliged, against his will, to tell her everything about himself, how he had given himself over to the devil. She, forgetting her womanly weakness, hastened to St. Basil and cried out to him:

"Have mercy upon me, disciple of Christ, have mercy upon one who disobeyed her father's will and yielded to the seduction of demons!" And she told him everything in detail about her husband.

The Saint summoned her husband and asked him whether it was true, what his wife said about him. With tears he answered:

"Yes, holy hierarch of God, all this is true! And if I keep silent, my deeds will cry out about it"; and he related everything in order, how he had given himself to the demons.

The Saint said:

"Do you wish to turn again to our Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, I wish it, but I cannot," he answered.

"Why not?" asked Basil.

"Because," replied the man, "I have given a written bond renouncing Christ and surrendering myself to the devil."

But Basil said:

"Do not grieve over this, for God is loving toward mankind and receives those who repent."

The wife, prostrating herself at the Saint's feet, implored him, saying:

"Disciple of Christ! Help us in whatever way you can."

Then the Saint said to the slave:

"Do you believe that you can still be saved?"

He answered:

"I believe, master; help my unbelief."

After this the Saint, taking him by the hand, signed him with the sign of the Cross and shut him up in a room within the church enclosure, commanding him to pray to God without ceasing. He himself also spent three days in prayer, and then visited the penitent and asked him:

"How do you feel, child?"

"I am in an extremely wretched state, vladyka," the young man answered. "I cannot endure the shrieks of the demons, and the terrors, and the shooting, and the blows with stakes. For the demons, holding my written bond in their hands, revile me, saying: 'You came to us, and we did not come to you!'"

The Saint said:

"Do not be afraid, child, but only believe."

And, giving him a little food, he signed him with the sign of the Cross and shut him in again. After a few days he visited him again and said:

"How are you living, child?"

He answered:

"From afar I still hear their threats and their cries, but I do not see them themselves."

Basil, giving him a little food and praying for him, again shut him in and departed. Then he came to him on the fortieth day and asked him:

"How are you living, child?"

He said:

"Well, holy father, for I saw you in a dream, how you struggled for me and overcame the devil."

Having offered prayer, the Saint led him out of his confinement and brought him to a cell. The next morning he gathered the entire church clergy, the monks, and all the Christ-loving people, and said:

"Let us glorify, brethren, God who loves mankind, for now the Good Shepherd wishes to take upon His shoulder the lost sheep[57] and bring it into the church. On this night we must implore His goodness, that He may conquer and put to shame the enemy of our souls."

The faithful gathered in the church and prayed all night for the penitent, crying out: "Lord, have mercy."

When morning came, Basil, taking the penitent by the hand, led him with all the people into the church, chanting psalms and hymns. And behold, the devil shamelessly came there invisibly with all his destructive power, desiring to snatch the young man from the hands of the Saint. The young man began to cry out:

"Holy hierarch of God, help me!"

But the devil, armed against the young man with such boldness and shamelessness, caused pain even to St. Basil, drawing the young man along with him. Then the blessed one addressed the devil with these words:

"Most shameless murderer, prince of darkness and perdition! Is it not enough for you, your own ruin, which you have brought upon yourself and upon those who are with you? Will you not cease pursuing the creatures of my God?"

The devil cried out to him:

57. To take upon the shoulders, as an Eastern shepherd takes a weary sheep upon his shoulders.

"You are wronging me, Basil!" And many heard this devilish voice. Then the hierarch said:

"May the Lord rebuke you, O devil!"

The devil again said to him:

"Basil, you are wronging me! For it was not I who came to him, but he to me: he renounced his Christ, giving me a written bond, which I hold in my hand, and which I will show to the universal Judge on the Day of Judgment."

Basil said:

"Blessed is the Lord my God! These people will not lower their hands raised toward heaven[58] until you surrender that bond."

Then, turning to the people, the Saint said:

"Lift up your hands on high and cry: 'Lord, have mercy!'" And after the people, raising their hands to heaven, had for a long time cried out with tears: "Lord, have mercy!", the young man's written bond, before the eyes of all, flew through the air straight into the hands of the hierarch Basil. Taking this bond, the Saint rejoiced and gave thanks to God, and then said aloud before all to the young man:

"Do you know this bond, brother?"

The young man answered:

"Yes, holy hierarch of God, this is my bond; I wrote it with my own hand."

Then Basil the Great at once tore it into pieces before everyone, and, leading the young man into the church, communed him with the Divine Mysteries and provided an abundant feast for all who were present. After this, having given the young man instruction and set forth the rules of life befitting him, he returned him to his wife, and the young man, without ceasing, glorified and thanked God.

The same Helladius related also the following about St. Basil. Once our great father Basil, being illumined by Divine grace, said to his clergy:

58. The early Christians had the custom of raising their hands toward heaven during prayer. Hence our Church hymn says: *The lifting up of my hands is an evening sacrifice* (Stichera at Vespers).

"Come, children, follow me, and we shall see the glory of God, and together we shall glorify our Master."

With these words he went out of the city, but no one knew where he intended to go. At that time in a certain village there lived the presbyter Anastasius with his wife Theognia. For forty years they had lived with each other in virginity, and many thought that Theognia was barren, for no one knew of the pure virginity they kept in secret. Anastasius, for his holy life, had been counted worthy to receive the grace of the Spirit of God, and he was a seer. Perceiving in spirit that Basil wished to visit him, he said to Theognia:

"I am going to till the field, and you, sister, put the house in order, and at the ninth hour of the day, lighting the candles, go out to meet the holy archbishop Basil, for he is coming to visit us sinners."

She was amazed at the words of her master, but carried out his command. When St. Basil was not far from Anastasius's house, Theognia went out to meet him and bowed to him.

"Are you well, Lady Theognia?" asked Basil. She, hearing that he called her by name, was struck with terror and said:

"I am well, holy vladyka!"

The hierarch said:

"Where is Lord Anastasius, your brother?"

She answered:

"He is not my brother, but my husband; he has gone out into the field."

Basil said:

"He is at home—do not trouble yourself!"

Hearing this, she became still more frightened, for she understood that the Saint had penetrated their secret, and, trembling, she fell at the Saint's feet and said:

"Pray for me, sinful as I am, hierarch of God, for I see that you can accomplish great and wondrous things."

The hierarch prayed for her and went on. When he entered the presbyter's house, Anastasius himself met him, and, kissing the Saint's feet, said:

"Whence is this to me, that the hierarch of my Lord has come to me?"

The hierarch, giving him the kiss in the Lord, said:

"It is well that I have found you, disciple of Christ; let us go to church and perform the divine service."

That presbyter had the custom of fasting every day of the week except Saturday and Sunday, and ate nothing but bread and water. When they came to the church, St. Basil commanded Anastasius to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, but he refused, saying:

"You know, vladyka, what is written in Scripture: 'The less is blessed by the greater' (Heb. 7:7).

Basil said to him:

Besides all your other good works, have obedience also.

When Anastasius was celebrating the Liturgy, at the time of the elevation of the Holy Gifts, St. Basil and the others who were worthy saw the Holy Spirit come down in the form of fire and surround Anastasius and the holy altar. When the Divine service was over, everyone went into the house of Anastasius, and he set a meal before St. Basil and his clergy.

During the meal, the saint asked the presbyter:

"Where did you get your treasure, and what is your manner of life? Tell me."

The presbyter answered:

"Holy Hierarch of God! I am a sinful man, and I am liable to the common taxes. I have two pairs of oxen. With one pair I work myself, and with the other my hired man works. What I earn with the one pair I spend on the comfort of travelers, and what I earn with the other pair goes to pay the tax. My wife also labors with me, serving the travelers and me."

Basil said to him:

"Call her your sister, as she truly is, and tell me about your virtues."

Anastasius answered:

"I have done nothing good on earth."

Then Basil said:

"Let us rise and go together." And they rose and came to one of the rooms of his house.

"Open these doors for me," said Basil.

"No, holy Hierarch of God," said Anastasius, "do not go in there, for there is nothing in it but household goods."

But Basil said:

"It is for those very goods that I have come."

Since the presbyter still would not open the doors, the saint opened them by his word. Entering, he found there a man stricken with a very grievous leprosy[59], from whose body many parts had already fallen off through putrefaction. No one knew of him except the presbyter himself and his wife.

Basil said to the presbyter:

"Why did you want to hide this treasure of yours from me?"

"This is a man of an angry and abusive temper," the presbyter answered, "and so I was afraid to show him, lest he offend your holiness with some word."

Then Basil said:

"You are performing a good work. But allow me to serve him this night as well, so that I may share in the reward you will receive."

And so St. Basil remained alone with the leper, and, shutting himself in, he spent the whole night in prayer. In the morning he brought the man out completely unharmed and healthy. The presbyter with his wife, and all who were there, seeing such a miracle, glorified God. St. Basil, after a friendly conversation with the presbyter and an exhortation given to those present, returned to his house.

When Venerable Ephraim the Syrian[60], who lived in the desert, heard about St. Basil, he began to beseech God to show him what Basil was like. And one day, while in a state of spiritual rapture, he saw a pillar of fire whose top reached to heaven, and he heard a voice saying:

"Ephraim, Ephraim! As you see this pillar of fire, such is Basil."

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59. Leprosy is a disease that destroys the whole body and is, moreover, contagious.

60. St. Ephraim the Syrian was a famous Christian ascetic and writer. His memory is kept on January 28. Ephraim is called "the Syrian," that is, a Syrian, because Mesopotamia, where he was born, was in antiquity counted as part of Syria.

Venerable Ephraim at once took with him an interpreter, for he did not know Greek, and went to Caesarea, arriving there on the feast of the Theophany of our Lord. Standing at a distance, unnoticed by anyone, he saw St. Basil going to church with great solemnity, clothed in bright vestments, and his clergy also clothed in bright vestments. Turning to the interpreter who accompanied him, Ephraim said:

"It seems, brother, that we have labored in vain, for this man is of so high a rank that I have never seen the like of him."

Entering the church, Ephraim stood in a corner, unseen by anyone, and spoke to himself thus:

"We, who 'have borne the burden of the day and the heat' (Mt. 20:12), have gained nothing, while this man, who enjoys such glory and honor among people, is at the same time a pillar of fire. This amazes me."

While St. Ephraim was reasoning thus about him, Basil the Great learned it by the Holy Spirit and sent his archdeacon to him, saying:

"Go to the western doors of the church. There you will find in a corner of the church a monk standing with another man, almost beardless and of small stature. Say to him: 'Go and enter the sanctuary, for the archbishop calls you.'"

The archdeacon, pushing with great difficulty through the crowd, came to the place where Venerable Ephraim was standing, and said:

"Father! Please go and enter the sanctuary, for the archbishop calls you."

Ephraim, learning through the interpreter what the archdeacon had said, answered him:

"You are mistaken, brother! We are strangers, and the archbishop does not know us."

The archdeacon went to tell this to Basil, who at that time was expounding Holy Scripture to the people. And Venerable Ephraim saw that fire came forth from the mouth of Basil as he spoke.

Then Basil again said to the archdeacon:

"Go and say to that stranger monk: 'Sir Ephraim! Please enter the holy sanctuary, for the archbishop calls you.'"

The archdeacon went and said what he had been told. Ephraim was astonished at this and glorified God. Then, making a prostration to the ground, he said:

"Truly great is Basil! Truly he is a pillar of fire! Truly the Holy Spirit speaks through his lips!"

Afterwards he asked the archdeacon to tell the archbishop that, when the holy service was over, he wished to bow to him and greet him in some quiet place.

When the Divine service was over, St. Basil entered the sacristy, and, calling Venerable Ephraim to him, he gave him the kiss of peace in the Lord and said:

"I greet you, Father, who have multiplied the disciples of Christ in the desert and by the power of Christ have driven out the demons from it! Why, Father, have you undertaken such labor, coming to see a sinful man? May the Lord reward you for your labor!"

Ephraim, answering Basil through the interpreter, told him all that was in his heart. He and his companion then received the Holy Mysteries from the holy hands of Basil. When they afterwards sat down to a meal in Basil's house, Venerable Ephraim said to St. Basil:

"Most holy Father! I ask one favor of you. Please grant it to me."

Basil the Great said to him:

"Tell me what you need. I am deeply in your debt for your labor, since you undertook so distant a journey for my sake."

"I know, Father," said the honorable Ephraim, "that God gives you whatever you ask of Him. I want you to entreat His goodness that He grant me the ability to speak Greek."

Basil answered:

"Your request is beyond my power. But since you ask with firm hope, let us go, honored Father and teacher of the desert, into the house of the Lord and pray to the Lord, who can fulfill your prayer, for it is written: 'He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry and will save them' (Ps. 144:19)."

Choosing a convenient time, they began to pray in the church, and they prayed for a long time. Then Basil the Great said:

"Why, honorable Father, do you not accept ordination to the rank of presbyter, since you are worthy of it?"

"Because I am sinful, Vladyka!" Ephraim answered him through the interpreter.

"Oh, if only I had your sins!" said Basil, and he added, "Let us make a prostration to the ground."

When they had fallen down upon the ground, St. Basil laid his hand on the head of Venerable Ephraim and said the prayer appointed for the ordination of a deacon. Then he said to the Venerable:

"Now bid us rise from the ground."

And for Ephraim the Greek speech suddenly became clear, and he said in Greek: "Help, save, have mercy, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace"[61].

All glorified God, who had given Ephraim the ability to understand and speak Greek. Venerable Ephraim spent three days with St. Basil in spiritual joy. Basil ordained him deacon, and his interpreter presbyter, and then dismissed them in peace.

In the city of Nicaea[62] an impious emperor once stopped, and representatives of the Arian heresy petitioned him to drive the Orthodox out of the cathedral church of that city and give the church to their Arian assembly. The emperor, himself a heretic, did so: he forcibly took the church from the Orthodox and gave it to the Arians, and then went on to Constantinople. When the large congregation of the Orthodox was plunged into great sorrow, St. Basil the Great, the common intercessor and protector of all the churches, came to Nicaea. Then the whole Orthodox flock came to him with cries and tears and told him of the wrong done to them by the emperor. The saint, comforting them with his words, at once went to the emperor in Constantinople, and, standing before him, said:

"'The king's strength also loveth judgment' (Ps. 98:4). Why, then, O emperor, have you pronounced an unjust sentence, driving the Ortho-

61. An exclamation from the small litany pronounced by the deacon at Vespers on the feast of Pentecost.

62. Nicaea was a city in the Asia Minor province of Bithynia. Here the First Ecumenical Council was held in 325.

dox out of the holy church and handing over its administration to those of false opinion?"

The emperor said to him:

"You are insulting me again, Basil! It is not fitting for you to act thus."

Basil replied:

"It is good even to die for the truth."

While they were disputing and wrangling with one another, the chief imperial cook, named Demosthenes, who was present there, listened. Wishing to help the Arians, he said something coarse in reproach of the saint.

The saint said:

"Here before us we see even the unlearned Demosthenes[63]."

The abashed cook again said something in reply, but the saint said:

"Your business is to think about dishes, not to busy yourself with boiling church dogmas."

Demosthenes, being put to shame, fell silent. The emperor, now stirred to anger, now feeling shame, said to Basil:

"Go and examine their case. However, judge in such a way as not to appear to be a helper of your co-religionists."

"If I judge unjustly," the saint answered, "then send me off to imprisonment, but drive out my co-religionists and give the church to the Arians."

Taking the imperial decree, the saint returned to Nicaea, and, summoning the Arians, said to them:

"Behold, the emperor has given me authority to render judgment between you and the Orthodox concerning the church which you have seized by force."

They answered him:

"Judge, but according to the emperor's judgment."[64]

The Saint then said:

"Go, you Arians, and you Orthodox, and lock the church. Having locked it, seal it with seals: you with your seals, and you with yours;

63. Demosthenes was the most famous orator of ancient Greece; he lived from 384 to 322 before the Nativity of Christ.

and set a trustworthy guard on either side. Then first you Arians shall pray for three days and three nights, and afterwards approach the church. If, by your prayer, the church doors open of their own accord, then let the church be yours forever. If this does not come to pass, then we shall pray for one night, and go with a litany,[65] singing the holy hymns, to the church. If it opens for us, we shall possess it forever; but if it does not open for us either, then the church shall again be yours."

This proposal pleased the Arians, but the Orthodox were grieved with the Saint, saying that he had judged not in truth but out of fear of the emperor. Then, when both sides had firmly and securely locked the holy church, and it had been sealed, a vigilant guard was posted at it. When the Arians, having prayed three days and three nights, came to the church, nothing miraculous happened: they prayed there from morning until the sixth hour, standing and crying, "Lord, have mercy." But the church doors did not open before them, and they departed in shame. Then Basil the Great, gathering all the Orthodox with their wives and children, went out of the city to the church of the holy martyr Diomedes; and having performed the All-night Vigil there, in the morning he went with everyone to the sealed cathedral church, singing:

"Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy upon us!"

Standing before the church doors, he said to the people:

"Lift up your hands to heaven and with fervor cry: 'Lord, have mercy!'"

Then the Saint commanded everyone to be silent, and approaching the doors, he made the sign of the Cross over them three times and said:

"Blessed is the Christian God always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages."

When the people cried, "Amen," at once the earth shook, the bolts began to break, the locks fell off, the seals were broken, and the gates opened as if by a strong wind and storm, so that the doors struck against the walls. And Saint Basil began to sing:

64. That is, as the emperor himself would judge.

65. *Litia*, in Greek, means fervent supplication. It was usually celebrated outside the church, but is now celebrated in the narthex.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in!" (Ps. 23:7).

Then he entered the church with a multitude of the Orthodox, and having performed the Divine Service, dismissed the people with joy. The countless multitude of Arians, seeing that miracle, abandoned their error and joined the Orthodox. When the emperor learned of Basil's just decision and of that glorious miracle, he was exceedingly astonished and began to revile Arianism; yet, blinded by impiety, he did not turn to Orthodoxy, and afterwards perished a wretched death. Indeed, when he was struck and wounded in war in the land of Thrace, he fled and hid himself in a shed where straw lay. His pursuers surrounded the shed and set it on fire, and the emperor, burned there, went into the unquenchable fire.[66] The emperor's death followed after the repose of our holy father Basil, but in the same year in which the Saint also reposed.

Once, before Saint Basil, his brother, Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, was slandered. It was said of him that he was, so they claimed, continuing to cohabit with his wife, whom he had left before his consecration as bishop, whereas a bishop ought not to be married. Hearing of this, Basil said:

"It is good that you have told me this; I will go with you and rebuke him."

When the Saint approached the city of Sebaste, Peter, through the Spirit, learned of his brother's coming, for Peter too was filled with the Spirit of God and lived with his so-called wife not as with a wife, but as with a sister, in chastity. So he went out of the city to meet Saint Basil, eight stadia[67] away, and seeing his brother with a great number of companions, he smiled and said:

"Brother, why have you come out against me as against a robber?"

Having exchanged the kiss of peace in the Lord, they entered the city, and after praying in the church of the Holy Forty Martyrs, they came to the episcopal house. Basil, seeing his sister-in-law, said:

"Greetings, my sister, or rather, bride of the Lord; I have come here on your account."

66. This took place in the city of Adrianople, in what is now Bulgaria.
67. A *poprishche* was a measure of distance; it equaled 690 of our sazhens.

She answered:

"Greetings to you too, most honorable father; I have long desired to kiss your honorable feet."

And Basil said to Peter:

"I beg you, brother, spend this night with your wife in the church."

"I will do all that you command me," Peter answered.

When night came and Peter lay down to rest in the church with his wife, Saint Basil was there too, with five virtuous men. Around midnight he woke these men and said to them:

"What do you see above my brother and my sister-in-law?"

They said:

"We see the Angels of God hovering over them and anointing their undefiled bed with fragrant oils."

Then Basil said to them:

"Be silent, and tell no one what you have seen."

In the morning Basil commanded the people to gather in the church and to bring there a brazier with glowing coals. After this he said:

"Spread out, honorable sister-in-law, your garment."

When she had done so, the Saint said to those holding the brazier:

"Put glowing coals into her garment."

They carried out this command. Then the Saint said to her:

"Hold these coals in your garment until I tell you."

Then he again commanded fresh glowing coals to be brought, and said to his brother:

"Spread out, brother, your phelonion[68]."

When he had obeyed this command, Basil said to the servants:

"Pour the coals from the brazier into the phelonion," and they poured them.

When Peter and his wife had for a long time held the glowing coals in their garments and suffered no harm from it, the people who saw this marveled and said:

68. The *phelonion* was the name in antiquity for a long, wide outer garment without sleeves, enveloping the body on all sides. The Christian Church, out of reverence for the Savior and His apostles, who wore if not such a garment then a similar outer garment, received the phelonion among the sacred vestments and from the earliest times adopted it for both bishops and priests.

"The Lord keeps His venerable ones and bestows blessings upon them even on earth."

When Peter and his wife threw the coals down on the ground, no smell of smoke was perceived from them, and their garments remained unscorched. Then Basil commanded the five virtuous men mentioned above to tell everyone what they had seen, and they told the people how they had seen in the church the Angels of God hovering over the bed of the blessed Peter and his wife, anointing their undefiled bed with fragrant oils. After this, all glorified God, who cleanses His saints from false human slander.

In the days of our venerable father Basil, there was in Caesarea a widow of noble birth, exceedingly rich; living voluptuously and indulging her flesh, she had wholly enslaved herself to sin and for many years remained in sinful impurity. But God, who wills that all should repent (2 Pet. 3:8), touched her heart also with His grace, and the woman began to repent of her sinful life. Once, being alone with herself, she pondered the immeasurable multitude of her sins and began to lament her condition thus:

"Woe is me, sinful and immoral! How shall I answer the righteous Judge for the sins I have committed? I have defiled the temple of my body, I have polluted my soul. Woe is me, the most grievous of sinners! With whom can I compare myself in my sins? With a harlot, or with a publican? But no one has sinned as I have. And, what is especially terrible, I have committed so much evil even after receiving baptism. And who will tell me whether God will accept my repentance?"

Weeping thus, she recalled everything she had done from youth to old age, and sitting down, she wrote it all on a sheet of paper. Afterward she also recorded one sin, the most grievous of all, and sealed this paper with a leaden seal. Then, choosing a time when Saint Basil went into the church, she rushed to him and, throwing herself at his feet with the paper, cried out:

"Have mercy upon me, O hierarch of God, for I have sinned more than all!"

The Saint, stopping, asked her what she wanted of him; she, handing him the sealed paper, said:

"Behold, Vladyka, I have written all my sins and iniquities on this paper and sealed it. Do not read it, O man of God, nor break the seal, but only cleanse them by your prayer, for I believe that He who put this thought into my mind will hear you when you pray for me."

Basil, taking the paper, lifted up his eyes to heaven and said:

"Lord, this is possible for You alone. For if You have taken upon Yourself the sins of the whole world, how much more can You cleanse the transgressions of this one soul! For although all our sins are numbered before You, Your mercy is boundless and unsearchable!"

Having said this, Saint Basil entered the church holding the paper in his hands, and prostrating himself before the table of oblation, spent the whole night in prayer for that woman.

In the morning, having performed the Divine Service, the hierarch summoned the woman and returned to her the sealed paper just as he had received it, and said to her:

"Have you heard, woman, that 'who can forgive sins but God alone?' (Mk. 2:7)?"

She said:

"I have heard, honorable father, and for that reason I have troubled you with the request to implore His goodness."

Having said this, the woman untied her paper and saw that her sins had been blotted out here; only that grievous sin which she had written last had not been blotted out. Seeing this, the woman was terrified, and striking her breast, fell at the feet of the Saint, crying:

"Have mercy on me, servant of the Most High God; and as you have had compassion on all my iniquities and interceded with God for them, so intercede also for this, that it may be wholly cleansed."

The Archbishop, weeping with pity for her, said:

Arise, woman: I am myself a sinful man, and I too stand in need of mercy and forgiveness. He who cleansed your other sins can also cleanse the sin not yet blotted out. If, from now on, you guard yourself from sin and begin to walk in the way of the Lord, you will not only be forgiven but will be made worthy of heavenly glorification. This is my counsel: go into the desert, and there you will find a holy man named

Ephraim. Give him this paper, and ask him to entreat God, the Lover of mankind, for mercy on your behalf.

The woman, according to the saint's word, went into the desert and, having traveled a great distance, found the cell of the Blessed Ephraim. Knocking at the door, she said:

– Have mercy on me, a sinner, Venerable Father!

St. Ephraim, perceiving in his spirit the purpose for which she had come to him, answered her:

– Depart from me, woman, for I am a sinful man and myself stand in need of the help of other people.

Then she cast the paper before him and said:

– Archbishop Basil sent me to you, that you, having prayed to God, might cleanse my sin which is written in this paper. He has cleansed my other sins, but do not refuse to pray about this one sin, since I have been sent to you.

The Venerable Ephraim said:

– No, child, he who could entreat God about your many sins can all the more entreat Him about one. Go, then, go at once, so that you may find him alive before he departs to the Lord.

Then the woman, bowing to the Venerable Father, returned to Caesarea.

But she arrived just at the burial of St. Basil, for he had already reposed, and his holy body was being carried to the place of burial. Meeting the funeral procession, the woman wept aloud, threw herself on the ground, and spoke to the saint as though he were alive:

– Woe is me, holy hierarch of God! Woe is me, unhappy one! Was it for this that you sent me into the desert, that, undisturbed by me, you might depart from the body? And so I have returned with empty hands, having made the difficult journey into the desert in vain. Let God see this, and let Him judge between me and you, for you, having the power to give me help yourself, sent me on to another.

Crying out thus, she threw the paper upon the bier of the saint, telling all the people of her grief. One of the clerics, wishing to see what was written in the paper, took it and, unfolding it, found no words on it at all: the whole paper had become clean.

– Nothing is written here, – he said to the woman, – and you grieve in vain, not knowing the ineffable love for mankind of God which has been revealed toward you.

All the people, seeing this miracle, glorified God, who gave such power to His servants even after their repose.

In Caesarea there lived a Jew named Joseph. He was so skilled in the science of healing that he could determine, by observing the movement of the blood in the veins, the day of a sick man's death three or five days in advance, and could even point to the very hour of his departure. Our God-bearing Father Basil, foreseeing his future conversion to Christ, loved him greatly, and often inviting him to converse with himself, urged him to abandon the Jewish faith and accept holy baptism. But Joseph refused, saying:

– In the faith into which I was born, in that I wish to die.

The saint said to him:

– Believe me, neither I nor you shall die until you are "born of water and the Spirit" (Jn. 3:5), for without such grace one cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Did not your fathers get baptized "in the clouds and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:1)? Did they not drink from the rock, which was a figure of the spiritual Rock, Christ, born of the Virgin for our salvation? This Christ your fathers crucified, but He, having been buried, rose on the third day and, ascending into heaven, sat at the right hand of the Father, and from there shall come to judge the living and the dead.

Much else that was profitable for the soul the saint said to him, but the Jew still remained in his unbelief. When the time of the saint's repose came, he fell ill and summoned the Jew to himself, as though needing his medical help, and asked him:

– What do you say about me, Joseph?

The other, examining the saint, said to his household:

– Prepare everything for the burial, for his death must be expected any moment now.

But Basil said:

– You do not know what you are saying!

The Jew answered:

– Believe me, Vladyka, that your death will come before the sun sets.

Then Basil said to him:

– And if I remain alive until morning, until the sixth hour, what will you do then?

Joseph replied:

– Then let me die!

– Yes, – said the saint to this, – die, but die to sin, that you may live for God!

– I know what you are speaking of, master! – the Jew answered, – and so I swear to you that if you live until morning, I will fulfill your wish.

Then St. Basil began to pray to God that He would prolong his life until morning for the salvation of the Jew's soul, and he received what he asked. In the morning he sent for him; but the other did not believe the servant who told him that Basil was alive, yet he went to see him, as he thought, already dead. When he saw him truly alive, he was as though beside himself, and then, falling at the saint's feet, said in the outpouring of his heart:

– Great is the Christian God, and there is no other God but Him! I renounce God-opposing Judaism and turn to the true, Christian faith. Command, then, holy father, that holy baptism be given to me at once, and to all my household as well.

St. Basil said to him:

– I myself will baptize you with my own hands!

The Jew, coming up to him, touched the saint's right hand and said:

– Your strength, Vladyka, has grown weak, and your whole nature is utterly exhausted; you will not be able to baptize me yourself.

– We have a Creator who strengthens us, – Basil answered.

And, rising, he entered the church and, before the face of the whole people, baptized the Jew and his entire family; he gave him the name John, and communed him of the Divine Mysteries, himself celebrating the Liturgy that day. Having given instruction to the newly baptized about eternal life, and having addressed a word of edification to all his rational sheep, the hierarch remained in the church until the ninth

hour. Then, giving everyone the last kiss and forgiveness, he began to give thanks to God for all His ineffable benefactions, and while the word of thanksgiving was still on his lips, he gave up his soul into the hands of God, and as a hierarch joined the hierarchs who had gone before, and as a great thunder of the Word[69] joined the preachers, on the first day of January 379, in the reign of Gratian,[70] who had succeeded his father Valentinian.

St. Basil the Great shepherded the Church of God for eight years, six months and sixteen days, and the whole span of his life was forty-nine years.

The newly baptized Jew, seeing the saint dead, fell upon his face and said with tears:

– Truly, servant of God Basil, you would not die even now, if you did not wish it yourself.

The burial of St. Basil was a remarkable event and showed the high esteem in which he was held. Not only Christians but also Jews and pagans thronged the streets in great multitudes and pressed insistently about the coffin of the departed hierarch. To the burial of Basil came also St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and he wept much over the saint. The bishops gathered here sang the funeral hymns and buried the honorable relics of the great servant of God Basil in the church of the holy martyr Eupsychius,[71] glorifying God, Who is One in Trinity, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.[76]

Troparion, Tone 1:

Thy teaching went forth into all the earth, for it received thy word, whereby thou didst teach divinely, clarifying the nature of beings and adorning human customs, O royal priest, Venerable Father: entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.[72]

Kontakion, Tone 4:

69. That is, one who had a particular gift of eloquence, persuasiveness, and force of speech.
70. Gratian ruled the empire (at first together with his father Valentinian I) from 375 to 383.
71. Where the relics of St. Basil are at present is unknown: on Athos (in the Lavra of St. Athanasius) only his head is shown. According to the accounts of Western writers, his holy body was taken from Caesarea during the Crusades and carried westward by the Crusaders, to Flanders.

Thou didst appear as the unshakable foundation of the Church, granting to all men the unstolen dominion, sealing them with thy commandments, O Venerable Basil, revealed from heaven.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Basil of Ancyra

Память святого мученика Василия Анкирского

The holy martyr Basil belonged to the noble citizens of Ancyra[73]. In the reign of the emperor Julian the Apostate[74], he was seized for confessing and preaching the Christian faith and was brought before the governor Saturninus. When the governor asked him whether he believed in Christ, Basil cried out in a loud voice:

– There is no God but Him.

Thus the saint, without the slightest fear, bore witness to his faith in Christ, for which he was subjected to cruel torture: he was hung on a tree, and his body was mercilessly scraped with iron instruments.

Then the bold confessor of Christ was sent to Constantinople and there again subjected to the same grievous trial. After that the tormentors began to stretch the passion-bearer's body with such force that his bones came out of their joints; at the same time they cut the skin from the soldier of Christ in strips and pricked his body with red-hot iron spikes.

St. Basil bore all these torments with courage, being strengthened by the Divine power. At last his tormentors cast him into a red-hot furnace. Preserved unharmed from the fire by the power of God, Basil was led in chains from Constantinople to Caesarea[75], and there he was condemned to be torn apart by wild beasts. St. Basil awaited the martyr's

72. The words "by which Thou hast taught divinely" point to St. Basil's great learning and to his profound knowledge of the laws of nature. St. Basil left behind many writings in which he explained, among other things, God's wise ordering of all that exists. The words "Thou hast adorned human customs" point to the fact that St. Basil wrote many rules and statutes by which he introduced into use many pious customs.

73. Ancyra, the chief city of the Asia Minor province of Galatia (now Ankara).

74. Julian reigned from 361 to 363.

75. Caesarea in Cappadocia is meant here.

crown with fervent prayer, and he obtained it after he was torn to pieces by a lioness[76].

Some of the relatives and friends of the holy passion-bearer carefully gathered his sacred remains, anointed them with fragrant oils, wrapped them in shrouds, and gave them an honorable burial. Afterward a church was built over the tomb of the holy martyr Basil.

* * *

NOTES

38. Basil the Great has many works. Just as all the deeds of St. Basil were marked by extraordinary grandeur and importance, so all his writings bear the same character of Christian loftiness and majesty. In his works he appears as preacher, as dogmatic polemicist, as interpreter of Holy Scripture, as teacher of morality and piety, and finally as the organizer of Church worship. Among his homilies, the best in power and inspiration are considered to be those against usurers, against drunkenness and luxury, on glory, and on famine. In his letters St. Basil vividly portrays the events of his time. Many of the letters contain excellent instruction on love, meekness, forgiveness of injuries, the upbringing of children, against the avarice and pride of the rich, and against vain oaths, or else offer spiritual counsel for monks. As a dogmatist and polemicist he appears before us in his three books written against the Arian false teacher Eunomius, and in his work against Sabellius and the Anomoeans on the divinity of the Holy Spirit. In addition, Basil the Great wrote a separate book on the Holy Spirit against Aetius, whose champion Eunomius also was. Among the dogmatic writings belong also some homilies and letters of St. Basil. As an interpreter of Holy Scripture, St. Basil acquired particular renown by his nine homilies on the Hexaemeron, in which he showed himself a master not only of the Word of God but also of philosophy and natural science. His homilies on the Psalms and on the sixteen chapters of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah are also known. The homilies on the Hexaemeron as well as those on the Psalms were delivered in church, and therefore, alongside exposition, they contain exhortations, consolations, and instructions. He touched on the teachings of piety in his famous *Address to Young Men on How to Profit from the Pagan Writers*, and in two books on ascetic life. Among the canonical writings belong Basil the Great's letters to certain bishops. – Gregory the Theologian speaks thus of the worth of Basil the Great's works: "Everywhere there is one and the greatest delight: the writings and works of Basil. After him writers need no other wealth than his writings. Instead of all, he alone has become sufficient for those who learn, for their education." "Whoever wishes to be an outstanding civil orator," says the learned Patriarch Photius, "has no need of Demosthenes or Plato, if only he takes Basil's words as his model and studies them. In all his words St. Basil is excellent. He especially commands a language that is pure, elegant, and majestic; in the order of

76. St. Basil the Martyr reposed around 362.

his thoughts he holds first place. He unites persuasiveness with pleasantness and clarity." St. Gregory the Theologian speaks thus of the knowledge and writings of St. Basil: "Who has been more enlightened than Basil by the light of knowledge, who has gazed into the depths of the Spirit, and who with God has investigated all that is known of God? In Basil virtue was his beauty, theology his greatness, unceasing aspiration and ascent to God his progress, the sowing and dispensing of the word his strength. And therefore I may say without hesitation: 'Their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world,' which St. Paul said of the apostles (Rom. 10:18)... – When I have his Hexaemeron in my hands and read it aloud, then I converse with the Creator, I grasp the laws of creation, and I marvel at the Creator more than before, having had only sight as my teacher. When I have before me his refutations of the false teachers, then I see the fire of Sodom by which the crafty and lawless tongues are consumed. When I read his words on the Spirit, then I find again the God whom I possess, and I feel in myself boldness to speak the truth, ascending by the steps of his theology and contemplation. When I read his other interpretations, which he clarifies even for those of weak sight, then I am persuaded not to stop at the letter alone, nor to look only at the surface, but to press further, passing from one depth into a new one, calling deep unto deep and gaining light by light, until I attain the higher meaning. When I occupy myself with his praises of the ascetics, then I forget the body, I converse with those who are praised, and I am stirred to ascetic struggle. When I read his moral and practical words, then I am cleansed in soul and body, and I become a temple well-pleasing to God, an instrument upon which the Spirit plays, a singer of the glory of God and of His power; and through this I am transformed, I come into good order, from one man I become another, and I am changed by a divine change" (Gregory the Theologian's funeral oration on St. Basil).

41. One of his most important occupations at this time was the preaching of the Word of God. He often preached not only daily but even twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. Sometimes, after preaching in one church, he went to preach in another. In his teachings Basil vividly and convincingly revealed to mind and heart the beauty of Christian virtues and exposed the vileness of vices; he set forth motives for striving toward the former and turning away from the latter, and he pointed out to all the paths to the attainment of perfection, since he himself was an experienced ascetic. His very interpretations are directed, above all, to the spiritual edification of his hearers. Does he expound the history of the creation of the world? He sets himself the goal, first, to show that "the world is a school of the knowledge of God" (first homily on the Hexaemeron), and thereby to awaken in his hearers reverence for the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, revealed in His creatures, small and great, beautiful, varied, and innumerable. Second, he wishes to show how nature always teaches man a good moral life. The mode of life, the qualities, and the habits of quadrupeds, birds, fish, and reptiles, all things, even the one-day grass, give him occasion to draw edifying lessons for the lord of the earth, man. Does he expound the Book of Psalms, which, in his phrase, combines within itself everything useful found in the others: both prophecy, and history, and instruction? He chiefly applies the sayings of the Psalmist to the life and activity of the Christian.

76. For his services to the Church and his extraordinarily high moral and ascetic life, St. Basil is called Great and is glorified as "the glory and beauty of the Church," "the luminary and eye of the universe," "teacher of dogmas," "chamber of learning," "guide of life." At the All-night Vigil on the memory of St. Basil the Great, the Church, in honor of the Circumcision of the Lord, reads two paremias, and one in honor of the universal teacher and hierarch Basil, on the high perfection of the righteous and the benefit they bring to their neighbors (Prov. 10:31–32, 11:1–12). The morning Gospel in honor of the hierarch (Jn. 10:1–9) proclaims the dignity of the true shepherd, who lays down his soul for the sheep. At the Liturgy, which on January 1 is that of St. Basil the Great, the reading of the Apostle in his honor proclaims the most perfect high priest, the Son of God, whom St. Basil the Great imitated in his life (Heb. 7:26–8:2). The Gospel at the Liturgy (one for the Circumcision, the other for St. Basil) in honor of the hierarch proclaims the teaching of Jesus Christ on the blessedness of the poor in spirit, of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and of those persecuted for the faith of Christ (Lk. 6:17–23), as St. Basil the Great was.

THE SECOND DAY OF JANUARY

January 2

2 января

New Calendar January 2 · Old Calendar January 15 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Seraphim of Sarov

Житие преподобного отца нашего Серафима Саровского

Commemoration, 2 January

Venerable Seraphim, Elder of Sarov, was a native of Kursk. He came from pious and well-to-do parents of the Moshnin family, who belonged to the distinguished merchant class of the city. He was born on 19 July 1759, and at holy baptism he was named Prokhor. His father, Isidore, had great zeal for the churches of God, and his mother, Agatha, was even more esteemed than her husband for her piety and charity. In the third year of his life, Prokhor lost his father, and his only upbringing came from his pious mother, Agatha, under whose guidance he grew up in Christian piety and in love for prayer and the church of God. From earliest childhood, a wondrous protection of God was manifest over the blessed youth, clearly foretelling that he was a chosen vessel of God's grace. Once, while his mother was inspecting the construction of a church that her husband had begun, she took the seven-year-old Prokhor with her to the very top of the bell tower then being built. Through carelessness the boy fell from the bell tower to the ground. Agatha ran down from the tower in terror, thinking that her son had been killed, but she saw him, to her astonishment and joy, standing on his feet whole and unharmed. Thus the words of Scripture were fulfilled over the child of grace: **"No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He will give His angels charge over you, to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone"** (Ps. 90:10–12).

When Prokhor was ten years old, he began to be taught to read, and the boy quickly learned church reading, showing a bright mind and memory and at the same time adorning himself with meekness and humility. But suddenly he fell into a grievous illness, so that his household did not expect him to recover. In this difficult time, Prokhor saw in a dream the Most Holy Theotokos, who promised to visit him and heal him of his sickness. Soon the words of the Mother of God were fulfilled. At that time a procession took place in Kursk, led by the wonderworking Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of the Sign [1]. Because of rain and mud, the procession, to shorten the way, passed through Moshnina's courtyard. The pious Agatha hastened to bring out her sick son and pressed him to the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, after which the boy was completely healed.

The pious youth applied himself with love to book learning, studying Holy Scripture and other divine and spiritually profitable books, fixing his whole mind on God, with whose love his pure soul burned. Meanwhile his elder brother, who was engaged in trade, gradually began to accustom Prokhor to it, but the youth's heart was not drawn to this business. His soul strove to acquire a spiritual treasure, incorruptible and unfailing. Unable to attend the Divine Liturgy on weekdays, Prokhor nevertheless let almost no day pass without visiting the church of God, and he rose at dawn to hear Matins. On Sundays and feast days he especially loved to devote his free time to reading spiritually edifying books, sometimes reading aloud to his companions, but he preferred solitude and silence. His mother did not fail to notice the direction of her son's inclinations, but she did not oppose his desire. And so, when the pious youth had reached seventeen years of age, he firmly resolved to leave the world. With his mother's blessing, she sent him off with a

1. The Icon of the Sign of the Mother of God is in the Kursk Znamensky Monastery. It is also called "Korennaya" ("of the Root"), because it was miraculously discovered at the root of a tree, where afterward, in 1597, the Nativity of the Theotokos Hermitage (now a cenobitic one) was founded, 27 versts from Kursk. Solemn festivities in honor of the wonderworking Korennaya Icon of the Sign of the Mother of God are celebrated on November 27 and September 13, the day of its return to the Znamensky Monastery from the Korennaya Hermitage, whither it is annually conveyed by the ninth Friday after Pascha, remaining there until September 12.

copper cross, which he never parted with from that time on, and he dedicated himself to the monastic life.

Having left the world, the blessed one first set out on a pilgrimage to the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, where a far-seeing recluse named Dositheus, perceiving in the youth a good ascetic of Christ, blessed him to go and be saved in the Sarov Hermitage [34].

"Go, child of God," said the far-seeing elder to the young ascetic, "and abide in the Sarov monastery. That place will be for your salvation; with God's help you will there also finish your earthly pilgrimage. The Holy Spirit, the Treasury of good things, will direct your life in holiness."

Obeying the counsel of the far-seeing elder, Prokhor came to the Sarov Hermitage, where he was received with love by the superior of the hermitage, Elder Pachomius, a meek and humble-minded monk who had labored greatly in fasting and prayer and was an example to the monks. Perceiving the good intention of Prokhor, Pachomius enrolled him among the novices and placed him under the instruction of the elder, Hieromonk Joseph, who was the treasurer of the monastery. While under the cell obedience of the elder, Prokhor zealously fulfilled all the monastic rules and regulations and the various brotherly obediences: in the bakery, in the prosphora room, and in the carpentry shop. Besides this, he performed the duties of sexton in the church. He was never idle, but by constant labor he sought to protect himself from boredom, which he regarded as one of the most dangerous temptations for a monk.

"This ailment is cured," he said later, from his own experience, "by prayer, by abstaining from idle talk, by useful handwork, by reading the word of God, and by patience, for it arises from faint-heartedness, carelessness, and idle talk."

Prokhor was the first to come to the church services, standing motionless through the entire worship, however long it might be. Outside the church he loved to withdraw into his cell. Engaged in handwork or some other obedience, he constantly kept the Jesus Prayer in his memory and heart, overcoming various enemy temptations by its power. Not content with the quiet and solitude of the Sarov monastery,

the young ascetic, emulating certain elders who, with the superior's blessing, had withdrawn into complete solitude beyond the monastery enclosure, into the depths of the monastery forest [2], also, by the blessing of his elder Joseph, retreated in his free hours into the forest thicket for prayerful silence. He joined prayer with abstinence and fasting: on Wednesdays and Fridays he took no food at all, and on other days he ate only once. All held the extraordinary ascetic in respect and love, and his constant and striking labors were hard to conceal, despite his profound humility. Elders Pachomius and Joseph showed him particular love and trust, as to their own child. This love and the general respect of the Sarov monks for the young ascetic of Christ were especially clearly shown in the following incident.

In 1780 Prokhor fell gravely ill. His whole body swelled, and, suffering terrible pain, he lay motionless on his hard bed. There was no physician, and the illness yielded to no remedy; apparently it was dropsy. The sickness lasted for three years, half of which the sufferer spent in bed. Yet not a word of complaint ever passed the lips of Prokhor; he gave himself entirely, body and soul, to the Lord and prayed unceasingly, washing his bed with his tears [3]. His spiritual father and teacher, Elder Joseph, served him during his illness as a simple novice would. Pachomius, the superior of the monastery, was constantly at his side. Elder Isaiah and the other elders and brethren also took much care of him. At last, fearing for the very life of the sufferer, Pachomius firmly proposed that he call a physician. But the blessed one, even more firmly, refused medical help.

"I have committed myself, holy father," he said to the elder, "to the true Physician of souls and bodies, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to His Most Pure Mother. But if your love so judges, provide me, the poor one, for the sake of the Lord, with heavenly medicine (that is, with Communion of the Holy Mysteries)."

2. Such, for example, were the renowned abbot and restorer of the Valaam Monastery, Nazarius, who began his monastic life at Sarov and spent the last years of his life there as well; Hieromonk Dositheus; and especially Schemamonk Mark, who, having become famous for his ascetic feats, was for a long time a silent one.

3. In the manner of the holy psalmist, who, amid sorrows and sicknesses, cried out: I water my bed with my tears. (Ps. 6:7).

Then Elder Joseph, at the sick man's request and out of his own zeal, celebrated an All-night Vigil and the Divine Liturgy for the health of Prokhor. The brethren gathered for the service, out of zeal to pray for the suffering one. After the Liturgy, Prokhor made his confession and received the holy Mysteries of Christ on his bed of sickness.

And after he had communed, the Most Holy Virgin Mary appeared to him in ineffable light, accompanied by the Apostles John the Theologian and Peter. Turning Her divine countenance to the Theologian, she said, pointing with her finger to Prokhor:

"This one is of our kind!" [4]

Then she laid her right hand on his head, and at once the matter that filled the sick man's body began to flow out through an opening formed in his right side. Soon Prokhor was completely healed, and only the marks of the wound that had been the source of his illness always remained on his body, as a witness to his wondrous healing. Soon afterward, on the site of the Mother of God's appearance, by a special providence of God, a two-story church with two Holy Tables was erected, and beside it a hospital, on the spot of Prokhor's demolished cell. Prokhor, by the superior's commission, collected donations for this construction, and with his own hands he built a Holy Table of cypress wood in the lower hospital church. When this Holy Table was consecrated, Venerable Seraphim received Holy Communion in this church, preferably, for the rest of his life, in constant remembrance of the great benefaction of God shown to him in this place [5].

After eight years in the Sarov Hermitage as a novice, Prokhor was tonsured into the angelic image on August 18, 1786, at the age of

4. The expression "of our race" clearly indicates that Venerable Seraphim was an especially fervent intercessor before the Mother of God, and therefore was himself under her special protection and intercession. This is also clearly confirmed by numerous examples from the life of the Venerable himself.

5. About this the elder himself later spoke very often and to very many people. The Holy Table, erected by Venerable Seraphim, was consecrated on August 17, 1786, in honor of the Venerable Zosimas and Sabbatius of Solovki, and it still stands in its place. The upper Holy Table was dedicated in the name of the Transfiguration of the Lord. During the difficult labor of collecting for this construction, Seraphim was also in his homeland of Kursk, but he no longer found his pious mother alive. His brother, who after their mother's death became the sole master of the parental estate, for his part gave Prokhor a generous contribution toward the building of the monastery church.

twenty-seven, and was given the new name Seraphim. With the taking of the monastic rank, the very meaning of this new name [6], which recalled to Seraphim the purity and burning service to God of the Angels, kindled in him an even stronger desire and holy zeal to serve the Lord. Seraphim redoubled his labors and ascetic feats and began to keep himself still more solitary, immersing himself in inward God-minded contemplation.

A little over a year after that, the Venerable Father was ordained to the rank of hierodeacon.[7] From that time, for about six years, he served almost without interruption in this rank, adding new labors to his labors and new feats to his feats, burning in spirit and aflame with divine love. On the nights before Sundays and feast days he kept vigil and offered fervent prayer without rest, standing at his prayer rule until the Liturgy. After the Divine Service was over, he remained for a long time in the church, putting the sacred vessels in order and caring for the cleanliness of the Lord's sanctuary. Yet, for all this, the blessed Seraphim hardly felt his labors; he did not grow weary and did not need a long rest afterward, often forgetting food and drink altogether. When he withdrew to rest, he grieved that man cannot, like the Angels, serve God without ceasing.

Higher and higher rose the soul of Seraphim on the ladder of virtues and God-minded contemplations. And, as if in response to his burning holy zeal, the Lord comforted and strengthened him in his struggles with blessed heavenly visions, which he became able to behold by virtue of the purity of his heart, his unceasing abstinence, and the constant lifting of his soul to God. Thus, at times during the church services, he beheld the holy Angels concelebrating and chanting with the brethren, in the form of youths flashing like lightning and clothed in white gar-

6. The Hebrew word "Seraphim" means "flame" or "burning." Its further meaning, by some interpretations, is "exalted" or "noble." It is properly an angelic name, by which bright spirits are called and have been called. They belong to one of the orders of the heavenly hierarchy nearest to God, and they occupy the first place in the first rank before the throne of the Most High. This name was given to Prokhor at his tonsure into the monastic habit, without his knowledge or consent. It may be regarded as an expression of the view the monastic authorities held of him. They had seen Prokhor's zeal for a God-pleasing life, and they foresaw in him an even greater flame for God.

7. This was in December 1787.

ments woven with gold. Their singing could be expressed neither in words nor compared to any earthly melody. "**My heart has become like wax; it has melted**" (Ps. 21:15), he would say later, using the words of the Psalmist, recalling the ineffable joy he experienced at these heavenly appearances. Yet he remembered nothing of that joy at the time; he recalled only that he entered the church and that he came out of it.

But the Venerable Father was once granted an especially gracious and remarkable vision, during the Divine Liturgy in Holy Week. It was on Great Thursday. The Liturgy was celebrated by the reverend elders Pachomius and Joseph together with the blessed Seraphim, for Pachomius had grown deeply attached to the young but skillful monk and almost always served the Divine Service with him. When Seraphim, after the Little Entrance and the Old Testament readings, exclaimed, "Lord, save the pious," and, coming out through the Royal Doors, with the words "and unto ages of ages," lifted the orarion over those standing before him, an extraordinary light suddenly shone upon him from above, as if from the rays of the sun. Raising his eyes to the radiance, the blessed Seraphim beheld our Lord Jesus Christ in the form of the Son of Man in glory, shining brighter than the sun with ineffable light, and surrounded, as by a swarm of bees, by the Heavenly Powers: Angels, Archangels, Cherubim, and Seraphim. He came through the western church doors, walking through the air, stopped opposite the ambo, and, raising His hands, blessed those serving and those praying. Then He entered the local icon near the Royal Doors.[8] The heart of the blessed one was filled with ineffable joy, in the sweetness of burning love for the Lord, and was illumined by the divine light of heavenly grace. From this mystical vision he himself was instantly changed in appearance, and he could neither move from his place nor say a single

8. It is notable in this connection that the blessed vision of the Venerable Seraphim came at the point in the Liturgy when the entrance of the clergy into the sanctuary portrays their procession, as it were, into heaven itself. At that moment the priest prays silently: "O Master, Lord our God, who establishest in heaven the orders and ranks of Angels and Archangels for Thy glory, grant that with our entrance there may be the entrance of holy Angels to minister unto us and to glorify Thee." At that moment the angelic Trisagion hymn is also sung: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us." In this way the vision showed plainly that we do not believe in vain that during the Divine Liturgy the Heavenly Powers serve with us invisibly, and that the King of Glory Himself, Christ, is present with us at that time.

word. Many noticed this, but no one understood the true cause of what was happening. Immediately two hierodeacons approached Seraphim and led him into the sanctuary; yet even after that he stood motionless in one place for about two hours, only his face changing from moment to moment: now it was covered with a whiteness like snow, now a living rosiness played over it. The elders Pachomius and Joseph, who were serving the Liturgy, thought that Seraphim might have felt a sudden weakness of strength, which could quite naturally have happened to him on Great Thursday after the long fast, especially considering the reverence Seraphim had long felt for Pachomius. But afterward they understood that he had been granted a vision. When Seraphim came to himself, the elders asked him what had happened to him. Seraphim, meekly and with childlike trust, told them of his vision. The elders, experienced in the spiritual life, kept his account in their hearts; and the blessed Seraphim was instructed not to become proud and not to allow in his soul the destructive thought of any worth of his own before God. But no one except the said elders learned then what wondrous visitation of God the blessed Seraphim had been granted.

After this gracious heavenly vision, the saint did not imagine himself to be anything, nor did he think highly of his spiritual gifts; instead he became still more firmly established in humble wisdom. Guarded by deep humility, he advanced from strength to strength, and, unceasingly struggling in spiritual self-abasement, walked surely and steadily along the royal road of the Cross of the Lord. From this time Seraphim sought solitude even more, and withdrew for prayer more often than before into the Sarov forest, where a desert cell had been built for him. Spending his days from morning until evening in the monastery, performing the services, and fulfilling the monastic rules and obediences, he would withdraw in the evening to his desert cell for nightly prayer, and early in the morning return again to the monastery to fulfill his duties.

In 1793, in the thirty-fifth year of his life, Seraphim was ordained to the rank of hieromonk.[9] In this rank, too, he continued for a long time, as before but with still greater love, to serve continuously in the

sacred ministry, communing daily with faith and reverence in the holy Mysteries of Christ.

Soon after this, the Venerable Seraphim undertook an even higher feat and voluntarily withdrew into the desert. This came after the death of his beloved superior and teacher, the blessed elder Pachomius, who had blessed him to undertake this feat before his own end. Having accompanied the body of his teacher to the grave with bitter weeping, Seraphim, receiving the blessing of the new abbot, the elder Isaiah, his spiritual father, left the monastery for silent struggles in the desert.[43]

The cell of the Venerable Seraphim stood in a dense pine forest on the bank of the Sarovka River, on a high hill about five or six versts from the monastery, and consisted of a single small wooden room with a stove. Beside the cell the Venerable Father laid out a small vegetable garden, and later an apiary, which he enclosed with a fence. Not far from Seraphim other Sarov hermits lived in seclusion, and the whole surrounding area, made up of various heights, strewn with forest, scrub, and the cells of desert-dwellers, seemed to recall the holy Mount Athos. For this reason the Venerable Father named his desert hill the Athonite Mountain, and gave to other most secluded places in the forest the names of various holy sites: Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Jordan, the Brook Kidron, Golgotha, the Mount of Olives, Tabor, in order to represent most vividly the sacred events of the earthly life of the Savior, to whom he had wholly surrendered his will and his whole life. Unceasingly occupied with reading the holy Gospel, he especially loved to read in these places about the Gospel events corresponding to their names. In his Bethlehem garden he would sing the Gospel hymn: "**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!**"[10] On the bank of the Sarovka, as if on the banks of the Jordan, he recalled the preaching of St. John the Baptist and the baptism of the Savior. He heard the Lord's Sermon on the Mount, on the nine Beatitudes, on one hill lying by the Sarovka, and on another elevation, called the Mountain

9. By Bishop Theophilus of Tambov, on 2 September 1793, on the representation of the monastery authorities, who clearly saw that Father Seraphim, by his ascetic labors, was immeasurably above the other brethren and therefore deserved preference when being raised to the higher degrees of ecclesiastical service.

10. The angelic glorification at the Nativity to the shepherds of Bethlehem (Lk. 2:14).

of the Transfiguration, he contemplated, in spiritual companionship with the Apostles, the glory of the Transfigured Lord. Making his way into the thick of the dense forest, he would recall by the Gospel the prayer of the Lord concerning the cup,[11] and, moved to the depths of his soul by His inward sufferings, he poured forth tearful prayers for his own salvation. On the mountain he called the Mount of Olives he contemplated the glory of Christ's Ascension into heaven and His sitting at the right hand of God.

The Venerable Seraphim always wore the same clothing, plain and even poor: on his head a worn kamilavka, on his shoulders a half-caftan in the form of a smock of white linen, on his hands leather mittens, on his feet leather stockings and bast shoes. On his smock there always hung the same cross with which his mother had blessed him when she sent him from home to the holy monastery; and on his back lay a bag, in which the ascetic constantly carried the holy Gospel, which always reminded him of the saving bearing of the good yoke and light burden of Christ. The whole of the time of this zealous ascetic of Christ passed in unceasing prayers and psalmody, the reading of sacred books, and bodily labors.

In the cold season the Venerable one gathered twigs and brushwood and chopped firewood with his little axe for heating his poor cell. In summer he worked in his small vegetable garden, which he tilled and manured himself, and whose vegetables formed the greater part of his food. To manure the soil he went on hot summer days to the marshy places for moss; and since he entered them stripped, girded only about his loins, the gnats and other insects swarming over the bog cruelly stung his body, so that it often not only swelled but even turned blue and crusted over with blood. Yet the ascetic of God willingly endured these tormenting sores for the Lord's sake, and even rejoiced in them, because, as he said afterwards, "passions are destroyed by suffering and sorrow, whether voluntary or sent by Providence"; and therefore, for the most perfect and surest cleansing of the soul, he took upon himself voluntary sufferings. Having gathered the moss in this way, the

11. In the Garden of Gethsemane, before the Passion on the Cross.

servant of God manured the beds, sowed the seeds, watered and weeded them, and gathered the vegetables, ceaselessly glorifying God and pouring forth his quiet, holy joy in the singing of sacred hymns, by which he refreshed and edified his spirit amid the monotony of bodily labors. Possessing a clear memory, and from childhood reverently attentive to the church services, Seraphim knew by heart a great number of church chants, which he loved to sing amid his labors in his silent, solitary hermitage; and some who were closest to the Venerable one observed that many of these chants had the closest application to the place and to his solitary monastic good works. Thus St. Seraphim especially loved often to sing: "**Universal glory**" [12] in honor of the Mother of God, whom he regarded as the protectress of his hermitage; "**Unceasing divine longing belongs to those who dwell in the wilderness, apart from the vain world**" [13] — an antiphon depicting the hermit life and lifting the soul of the solitary upward to divine things; and also chants raising the soul of man to the great work of the love of God, to the creation of the world and of man, such as: "**In those that are not is all truth, created by the Word and perfected by the Spirit**" [14], "**Descend upon the unclean earth by Thy command**" [15], and so forth.

And thus, amid this laborious prayer, whether working somewhere in the vegetable garden, at the apiary or in the forest, the Venerable one would sink into so deep a contemplation of spiritual mysteries that, without noticing it himself, he would interrupt his work; the tools would fall from his hands, his arms would drop, and his eyes would give his face a particular, grace-filled character of self-recollection. The elder, with his whole soul, plunged into himself, rose in mind to heaven, and hovered in contemplation of God. And if anyone happened to be near or to pass by at such moments, no one dared to disturb the grace-filled stillness and peace of the Venerable one, and each quietly withdrew from him. In every object, in every activity, Seraphim saw their hidden relation to the spiritual life, and from this he learned and raised

12. Sunday Theotokion at Vespers (Dogmatikon), Tone 1.
13. Sunday Antiphon 2, Tone 1, at Matins.
14. Irmos of the 3rd Ode of the Sunday Canon, Tone 3.
15. Irmos of the 3rd Ode of the Sunday Canon, Tone 8.

his intellectual eyes on high. Thus, when chopping wood, after chopping off one or three pieces, he would be absorbed in contemplating the great mystery of the One God, glorified in the Trinity.

Besides his bodily labors, the Venerable Seraphim, so that he might rise ever higher in spiritual perfection, devoted himself to the most sublime occupations of mind and heart, and read many books, especially Holy Scripture, as well as the writings of the Holy Fathers [16] and the liturgical books. The very first book for him was the Holy Gospel, which he never parted with, carrying it always with him. His ascetic life, purity of heart, prayerful converse with God, spiritual self-recollection, and vast familiarity with Holy Scripture and edifying books illumined his mind with such light that he clearly understood, and with his whole soul penetrated, the meaning of the word of God. In the wilderness he made it a constant rule to read daily, with explanation for himself, several sections from the Gospel and the Apostle. "The soul must be provided for," he said afterwards, "with the word of God, for the word of God is the Angelic bread, by which souls hungering for God are nourished. Above all one should exercise oneself in reading the New Testament and the Psalter. From reading Holy Scripture comes enlightenment of the mind, which is changed by a divine change. One must so train oneself that the mind as it were swims in the law of the Lord, and by its guidance one should order one's life. It is very useful to occupy oneself with reading the word of God in solitude, and to read the whole Bible with understanding. For this one exercise, besides other good deeds, the Lord will not leave a man without His mercy, but will bestow the gift of understanding." And the holy elder, through unceasing exercise in reading the Word of God, acquired this grace-filled gift of understanding, and together with it peace of soul and the higher gift of heartfelt compunction. In Holy Scripture he sought not only truth but also warmth of spirit, and often, during sacred reading, tears of compunction flowed from his eyes, by which, as the elder himself

16. Such were especially the ascetic patristic works, namely those of the Venerable John Climacus and Abba Barsanuphius, of Ephraim and Isaac the Syrians, the Margarita (compiled chiefly from the works of St. John Chrysostom), and others.

confessed, a man is warmed through and filled with spiritual gifts that delight mind and heart more than any word.

Every day the Venerable one performed the monastic prayer rule according to the Psalter in course, after the order of the most ancient Christian hermits: at the appointed times he sang and read the First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours, Vespers, the small Compline, the prayers before sleep, often also, in place of the evening rule, making a thousand prostrations at one time, the Midnight Office, and the other church services. Having experienced all the forms and degrees of prayer, he ascended not only to the ascetic feat of the so-called intellectual prayer, but also to the highest height on earth of contemplative prayer, when mind and heart are united in prayer, thoughts are not scattered, and the heart is warmed with spiritual warmth, in which the light of Christ shines forth, filling the whole inner man with peace and joy.

Thus, saving himself in the wilderness throughout the week, St. Seraphim, on the eves of Sundays and feast days, came to the Sarov monastery, attended Vespers, the All-night Vigil or Matins, and at the early Liturgy received the Holy Mysteries; after which, until Vespers, he received the brethren who came to him with their needs, and then, taking with him bread for the week, he returned to his hermitage cell. Throughout the whole first week of the Great Fast he remained in the monastery, and during those days he kept the fast, confessed, and received the Holy Mysteries.

With his prayerful ascetic labors the blessed elder combined feats of great abstinence and fasting. At the beginning of his hermit, solitary life he nourished himself on stale, dry bread, which he took with him from the monastery on Sundays for a whole week; but even from this quantity of bread he gave a good portion to the wild animals and birds of the wilderness, which loved him very much and often visited the place of his prayerful feats. Even wild beasts were awed by the elder. Thus a huge bear often came to him, and he fed it; at his word the bear would go off into the forest and then come back again, and the elder fed it, and sometimes let his visitors feed it too. Later, the Venerable Seraphim intensified his fasting still more, renouncing even bread, and he trained his body to such abstinence that he nourished himself, accord-

ing to the word of the Apostle, "**working with his own hands**" (1 Cor. 4:12), on the vegetables of his garden alone. During the first week of the Great Fast he took no food at all until the Communion of the Holy Mysteries on Saturday. Having entirely ceased taking bread from the monastery, he lived for more than two and a half years without any provision from it, and the brethren wondered what the elder could have eaten all this time, not only in summer but also in winter; only shortly before his death did the elder reveal to some persons close to him that for about three years he had subsisted only on a decoction of the herb *snyti* [17], which he gathered in summer and dried for the winter.

Meanwhile many began to disturb the silence of the blessed hermit, visiting him often for spiritual instruction and consolation. Many of the Sarov brethren came to him for counsel and guidance, or merely to see him. Able to discern and distinguish people, the elder withdrew from some of them, keeping silence. But those who had a genuine spiritual need he received willingly, and guided them with love through his counsels, instructions, and spiritual conversations. Such were, for example, his constant visitors Schemamonk Mark and Hierodeacon Alexander [18]; yet even they, finding the elder at times completely absorbed in contemplation of God, and not daring to break his peace, either waited for the end of his prayerful labors or, after waiting for some time, quietly withdrew from the elder. Outside visitors also came to the venerable man. If, however, outside his desert cell, the elder unexpectedly met someone in the forest, he would usually, without entering into conversation, bow to them humbly and go on his way, for, as he later said in his instructions, no one ever repented of silence. But in general Seraphim was burdened by visitors who disturbed his silence. It was especially hard for him when women came to him; yet he could not refuse them instruction, considering this a matter displeasing to God. Then the holy elder, on the incidental ground that women were forbidden entry to the Holy Mountain of Athos, resolved to extend this prohibition to his own hill,

17. A grass widespread in Russia, multiplying abundantly by underground roots. It is for the most part a weed of poor nutritive value, but it is used in folk medicine for certain ailments, and its young leaves are sometimes used as a vegetable in shchi.

18. The first of them came to him about twice a month, and the last came only once. The Venerable Seraphim gladly conversed with them on various subjects profitable to the soul.

which he named by the same name. Once, coming to the monastery during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, Seraphim asked the blessing for this from the builder of Sarov, Elder Isaiah, who, after some hesitation [19], blessed him to do so with the icon of the Mother of God called "Blessed Womb" [20]. At the same time Elder Seraphim turned with fervent prayer to God and the Most Holy Theotokos, that his desire might be fulfilled and women be forbidden entry to his desert hill, so that this would not become a stumbling-block and a cause of offense, as it was to some of the brethren, and even more so to laymen. As confirmation of God's will in this petition, he asked for a sign in the form of the bending of the branches of a tree past which he walked, returning from the feast of the Nativity of Christ from Sarov to his desert cell. And so, when on the night of 26 December he went to Sarov for the Divine Liturgy, on reaching the place where the ground slopes steeply downward, he saw that on both sides of the path huge branches from ancient pine trees had fallen and blocked the way to his cell, whereas the evening before there had been nothing of the kind. Then the holy elder, in a feeling of most lively gratitude to God, fell to his knees, understanding from what had happened that his desire was pleasing to the Lord. He himself hastened to block the path to his dwelling with logs, and from that time not only women but outsiders in general were completely barred from entering to him.

At the sight of such feats of the great elder, the ancient enemy of the human race armed himself against him with every kind of temptation and snare. Thus he brought upon the ascetic various terrors: sometimes outside the doors there was heard as it were the howl of a wild beast; at other times it was made to seem that a crowd of people was battering the door of his cell, breaking the door-posts, hurling a block of wood at the elder, and so forth. At times, by day but especially at

19. Giving his blessing to the Venerable Seraphim, Isaiah remarked in perplexity: "But how can I, from five versts away, see to it that women do not enter?" Seraphim replied to this with faith and conviction: "Just give your blessing, and none of them will ever climb my mountain."

20. This icon, named after the Gospel expression (Lk. 11:27), "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts which nursed Thee," is celebrated on the Sunday of All Saints and on 26 December. It was on that day that the Elder Seraphim asked the builder of the monastery, Isaiah, for a blessing that women might not enter his desert mountain.

night, during the prayerful standing of the Venerable Elder Seraphim, it would suddenly seem to him that his cell was collapsing and terrible beasts were bursting in from all sides with furious roaring; sometimes open coffins appeared before him with the dead rising out of them. And when afterward a layman, in the simplicity of his heart, asked him: "Batyushka, have you seen evil spirits?" he answered with a smile: "They are loathsome. Just as it is impossible for a sinner to look upon the light of an Angel, so it is terrible to see demons, because they are loathsome." But all these frightful visions, terrors, and temptations, sometimes accompanied by bodily sufferings, the blessed elder overcame with fervent prayer and vanquished with the power of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross of the Lord. Several times Elder Seraphim was tempted by the spirit of ambition, being chosen as hegumen and archimandrite of various monasteries [21]; but he always in such cases, with unshakable firmness mingled with deep humility, declined these appointments, striving for true ascetic labor and seeking in the monastic life only the salvation of his own soul and of his neighbors.

Seeing the humble wisdom of the holy elder, the devil raised against him a strong battle of thoughts [22], sustaining it with such force that some even among the great ascetics fell. Then Elder Seraphim, in grievous distress of soul, turned with heartfelt prayer to the Author of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to His Most Pure Mother; and at the same time, for the averting and destruction of the devilish snares, he resolved to take upon himself a new and higher prayerful labor after the example of the ancient Christian stylites. In the depths of the dense forest, at night, unseen by anyone, he climbed upon a high

21. Thus the Venerable Seraphim was at one time destined to be abbot in the town of Alatyr (a district town of Simbirsk Province), with elevation to the rank of archimandrite. On the one hand, the Sarov hermitage had repeatedly provided good abbots from its brethren to other monasteries; on the other hand, the ecclesiastical authorities knew Elder Seraphim and understood how useful it would be for many to make such an elder an abba, the abbot of some monastery. On another occasion Seraphim was destined to be builder of the Krasnoslobodsk Monastery of the Savior. But in both cases, at the earnest request of the elder, and through the mutual love and consent of the brethren, he was replaced by other Sarov monks.

22. "Battle" (*bran'*) is a monastic ascetic expression meaning the persistent and prolonged temptation to which the devil subjects monks who resist him. Because of this struggle with the devil, monks are often called spiritual warriors in the language of the ascetics.

granite stone, to intensify his prayerful labor, and long prayed upon it, standing or kneeling, crying out from the depths of his soul the prayer of the publican:

– **God, be merciful to me, a sinner!**

In his cell this new stylite also set up a small stone, on which he prayed from morning until evening, leaving that stone only to rest from extreme exhaustion of strength or to strengthen himself a little with scant food. In this great labor the Venerable Seraphim spent a thousand days and a thousand nights. The enemy was finally vanquished, and the battle of thoughts ceased. But from such an extraordinary prayerful labor and an almost three-year standing on his feet, the elder came to extreme bodily exhaustion and received grievous, painful sores on his feet, which did not leave him until his death. And only then at last did he end his unbearably heavy labor of stylitism, which even in antiquity only very few ascetics had undertaken. But during the elder's lifetime no one knew of this extraordinary prayerful labor of his, which he had managed to hide from curious human eyes. To Hegumen Nifont, who succeeded Elder Isaiah, a secret inquiry about Seraphim came from the Most Reverend Bishop of Tambov, to which the abbot of Sarov replied: "We know about the labors and life of Fr. Seraphim; but of his secret deeds, and likewise of his standing for 1000 days and nights on a stone, nothing was known to anyone" [23]. And only shortly before his blessed repose did the Venerable Seraphim, following the example of many other ascetics, among other circumstances of his life, reveal this wondrous labor of his to some of the Sarov brethren. One of the listeners then remarked that this labor was beyond human strength. To this the holy elder remarked with humility of faith:

– Saint Symeon the Stylite stood on his pillar for forty-seven years: are my labors at all like his feat?

When his interlocutor remarked that the elder had probably felt the help of strengthening grace at that time, the Venerable one replied:

23. This testimony of Hegumen Nifont has been preserved in draft among the papers of the monastery.

– Yes, otherwise human strength would not suffice... I was inwardly strengthened and consoled by this heavenly gift, descending from above from the Father of lights.

Then, after a little silence, he added:

– When there is compunction in the heart, God is also with us [24].

The devil, put to shame, began to devise new snares against the holy elder in order to drive him from the hermitage. He sent evil men against him, who, meeting the Venerable one in the forest, began to demand money from him, supposedly received by him from laymen who came to him. The elder answered that he received money from no one. But they did not believe him, and one of the villains rushed at him, but fell himself. Seraphim possessed bodily strength and, with an axe in his hands, could have defended himself against three robbers. But he remembered the words of the Savior: «**all who take the sword will perish by the sword**» (Mt. 26:52); and, lowering the axe, he folded his hands crosswise upon his breast and said meekly:

– Do what you need to do.

One villain raised an axe and struck the elder on the head with its butt so hard that blood gushed from his mouth and ears. Venerable Seraphim fell unconscious. The villains went on beating him furiously with the butt of the axe, with logs, and with their hands and feet. At last, noticing that he was not breathing and thinking him dead, they bound his hands and feet with ropes, intending to throw his body into the river to conceal their crime. They themselves rushed into the elder's cell in search of the booty they supposed was there, but after thoroughly searching, rummaging through, and breaking everything in it, they found nothing except a holy icon and a few potatoes. Then they were seized with fear and remorse, for they had killed a holy, non-ac-

24. The stones on which the Venerable Seraphim labored are preserved to this day. For some time after his repose they remained in the places where they lay. The brethren of the monastery and the pilgrims went to look at them, so that in place of the former footpath to Seraphim's hermitage a broad road was later opened, along which carriages drove. Many chipped off and took for themselves fragments of the stone bearing the image of Elder Seraphim standing on the stones in a prayerful posture. As a result, of the large stone on which he prayed in the depths of the forest, only one fragment remains, preserved in the Diveyevo monastery. The stone on which the elder prayed in his cell is also kept there.

quisitive man of God to no profit of their own, and they fled. Meanwhile Seraphim came to himself, somehow untied his hands, and lifted up to God a prayer for the forgiveness of his murderers. With difficulty he crawled to his cell, where he spent the whole night in cruel suffering. The next day, with the greatest effort, he made his way to the monastery during the Liturgy. His appearance was dreadful: his hair was matted with blood, tangled, and covered with dust and debris; his face and hands were battered; his ears and lips were caked with blood; and several teeth had been knocked out. The brethren were horrified at this sight and asked him questions, but the elder kept silent. Instead, he asked for the abbot, Elder Isaiah, and the monastery confessor, and told them what had happened. And so, to the malicious joy of the devil, Seraphim was compelled to remain in the monastery. He suffered unbearably and lay barely alive, taking no food. Eight days passed. Then, despairing of his life, they sent for physicians, who examined Seraphim and found that his head was fractured, his ribs broken, his chest trampled, and his whole body covered in various places with mortal wounds. They marvelled that the elder could have survived such a beating. The brethren gathered in his cell to consult on what could best be done to relieve him, and they sent for the abbot. Then, just as they were told the abbot was coming, Venerable Seraphim fell into a light, gentle, peaceful sleep. In his sleep he saw a wondrous vision, like the one he had seen long before, when, while still a novice, he lay in a mortal illness. The Most Holy Theotokos approached him, in a royal purple, surrounded by heavenly glory; behind her walked the Apostles Peter and John the Theologian. Stopping at the bed, the Most Holy Virgin pointed with the finger of her right hand at the sick man, and, turning her Most Pure Face toward the place where the physicians stood, she said:

"Why do you trouble yourselves?"

Then, turning again to the elder Seraphim, she said:

"This one is of My kin!"

After this the vision, which those present did not suspect, ended. When the abbot entered the cell, the patient had come to himself again. Father Isaiah began earnestly and lovingly to urge him to accept the

counsel and help of the physicians. But the sick man, despite his desperate condition and, to the surprise of all, after so much care for him, firmly replied that he no longer wished for any help from men, and he begged the abbot to allow him to commit his life to God and the Most Holy Theotokos. The abbot was obliged to fulfil the elder's wish. For several hours, from this wondrous Divine visitation, the elder was in an indescribable, unearthly joy. Afterward he grew calm and felt relief from his illness and a gradual return of strength. Before long he rose from his bed, began to walk a little about the cell, and in the evening took some nourishment. From that same day he again began gradually to devote himself to spiritual labours.

From the day of his illness the elder remained in the monastery for about five months. The illness left him bent over, a stoop that had already been noticed in him earlier, after he was once crushed by a falling tree while felling timber. But, feeling in himself a renewed strength for the solitary life, Seraphim petitioned the abbot to let him go back into the wilderness. Elder Isaiah and the brethren begged him to remain in the monastery for good. But the Venerable Father firmly replied that he counted such assaults as the one he had suffered as nothing, and that he was ready to endure to death whatever insults might come. Then Father Isaiah blessed his desire, and Seraphim returned to his hermit's cell.

Soon afterward the robbers who had beaten the elder were found; they were serfs of a local landowner named Tatishchev. Then Venerable Seraphim, lovingly forgiving them, asked the abbot and the landowner not to punish them, declaring that otherwise he would leave the Sarov monastery and secretly withdraw to other distant holy places. At the elder's entreaty the malefactors were pardoned, but God punished them for His servant: before long a great fire completely destroyed their dwellings. Then the robbers repented and, with tears, asked Venerable Seraphim for forgiveness and his holy prayers, and, with his blessing, they returned to the path of virtuous living.

For his lofty labours and God-pleasing life the holy elder was granted by God the gracious gift of clairvoyance. But all the more he shunned human glory and strove for silence.

In 1806 the abbot of the Sarov monastery, Elder Isaiah, withdrew from affairs because of his infirm condition and advanced age, and the brethren unanimously chose Venerable Seraphim to succeed him. But Seraphim declined, both from his deep humility and from his great love for the wilderness and silence. Then Father Nifont, known to Seraphim from childhood, was chosen as abbot. Meanwhile Elder Isaiah, because of his ailments and weakness, could not walk the six versts to the hermitage of Venerable Seraphim, and yet he did not wish to be deprived of the comfort of conversing with him, and he grieved deeply over this. Then the brethren, out of zeal, began to carry the aged Isaiah to the hermitage to Venerable Seraphim, since both were bodily frail. But soon this last of Seraphim's dearest friends in the spiritual life also departed to the Lord. This loss struck Seraphim with deep sorrow, and from that time he reflected still more and more often on the transience of this temporal life, on the life to come, and on the Last Judgment of Christ. At the same time he prayed with special zeal for the repose of the souls of the blessed Pachomius, Joseph, and Isaiah, dear to his heart. Passing the monastery cemetery, he always offered fervent prayers to the Most High on their graves, both for them and for the other elders and ascetics of Sarov, calling them, for the fervour and height of their prayers, "fiery from earth to heaven." He also urged others to remember them more often in their prayers. Thus he gave this injunction to a certain nun, a friend, who often visited Sarov and called on Seraphim:

"When you come to me, stop at the graves, make three prostrations, asking God to grant rest to the souls of His servants Isaiah, Pachomius, Joseph, Mark, and the rest; and then say to yourself: 'Forgive me, holy Fathers, and pray for me.'"

After the death of Elder Isaiah, Venerable Seraphim did not change his manner of hermit life, but he gave a new character to his ascetic struggle by taking upon himself the heavy labour of silence. If visitors came to him in the wilderness, he did not go out to them. If he himself met anyone in the forest, he fell prostrate on the ground and did not raise his eyes until the person had passed by. He lived in this silence for about three years. Shortly before this period ended, he stopped even

visiting the Sarov monastery on Sundays and feast days. One brother brought him food to his hermitage cell, especially in winter, when the elder had none of his own vegetables. The food was brought once a week, on Sunday. When the brother entered the vestibule, the elder, saying to himself, "Amen," opened the door, his face cast down to the ground, and only when the brother had gone did the elder place on a tray lying on the table a small piece of bread or a little cabbage, as a sign of what to bring him the following Sunday.

But these were only the outward signs of his silence. The essence of the elder's laborious ascetic struggle lay not in an outward withdrawal from society, but in the silence of the mind, in renouncing all worldly thoughts, for the purest and most perfect dedication of himself to God.

Many of the brethren greatly regretted that the gracious elder had withdrawn so far from their company and had taken upon himself the labour of silence. Some even reproached him, as it were, for living in seclusion, since by staying in close fellowship with the brethren he might edify them by word and example, without loss to the good ordering of his own soul. But to all such reproaches the elder answered with the words of St. Isaac the Syrian: "Love the leisure of silence above feeding the hungry of the world," and with the words of St. Gregory the Theologian: "It is fine to theologize for God, but finer still, if a man purifies himself for God."

Taking upon himself the laborious ascetic feat of silence, the Venerable Seraphim cleansed and enlightened his righteous soul in the most perfect manner, lifting it higher and higher into the mysteries of contemplation of God, and utterly disarming the devil in his struggle with the desert dweller. What fruits of the spirit this feat bore for Seraphim can be clearly judged from the instructions of the holy elder concerning silence, which were undoubtedly based on his own experience. "When we remain in silence," the Venerable Seraphim said later, "then the enemy, the devil, cannot accomplish anything against the hidden man of the heart; and this must be understood of silence of the mind. It gives birth in the soul of the one who keeps silence to various fruits of the spirit. From solitude and silence are born tenderness and meekness. In union with other spiritual labors, the keeping of silence raises a man to

piety. Silence draws a man near to God and makes him, as it were, an earthly angel. Only sit in your cell in attention and silence, and by every means strive to draw yourself near to the Lord, and the Lord is ready to make you an angel out of a man: **'But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word'** (Is. 66:2). Among other spiritual gains, the fruit of silence is peace of soul. Silence teaches stillness and constant prayer, and abstinence makes the thought undistracted. Finally, the one who has attained this is awaited by a peaceful state." Thus the Venerable Seraphim passed through the feat of silence, and as he attained the higher spiritual gifts, he also received new gracious consolations, feeling in his heart the ineffable **"joy in the Holy Spirit"** (Rom. 14:17).

Advancing further up the ladder of virtues and monastic ascetic labor, the Venerable Seraphim took upon himself yet a higher feat, that of seclusion. This happened as follows. At that time, after Isaiah, the abbot of Sarov was Father Nifont, a God-fearing and virtuous man and at the same time a great zealot of the rule and of church order. Meanwhile Seraphim, since the death of Isaiah, having bound himself by a vow of silence, lived in his desert without respite, as in an enclosure. Previously he had walked to the Sarov monastery on Sundays to receive the Holy Mysteries. But now, because of an illness of the legs that had developed from long standing on stones, he could no longer walk. Many of the monks were troubled by this circumstance, wondering who was giving him the Holy Mysteries, and therefore the superior at last convened a council of the senior hieromonks, submitting to them for decision the question of Communion for the elder Seraphim. After deliberation the elders resolved to propose to Seraphim that either, if he was healthy and strong in his legs, he should walk to the monastery on Sundays and feast days as before to receive the Holy Mysteries, or, if his legs failed him, he should permanently move to live in a monastery cell. By common counsel it was decided to ask, through the brother who carried food to the elder Seraphim on Sundays, which he would choose. The brother did so, but at first the elder did not answer him a word. The brother was then instructed to convey the council's proposal to Seraphim a second time on the following Sunday. Then the elder

Seraphim, having blessed the brother, set out with him on foot to the monastery, giving them to understand by a sign that, because of his illness, he was unable to walk to the monastery on Sundays and feast days as before. This was on the 8th of May 1810, when the Venerable Seraphim was fifty years old. Having returned to the monastery after fifteen years spent in the desert, Seraphim, without going to his cell, went to the infirmary building. This was on the day before the All-night Vigil. At the sound of the bell the elder appeared at the All-night Vigil in the Dormition church. All the brethren were greatly astonished when a rumor instantly spread among them that the elder Seraphim had resolved to settle in the monastery. On the following morning, 9 May, the day of the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas, Wonderworker and Hierarch, Seraphim came, as was his custom, to the infirmary church for the early Liturgy and received the Holy Mysteries of Christ. From the church he went to the cell of the superior Nifont, and, having received his blessing, settled in his former monastery cell. But in this the elder did not receive anyone, did not go out anywhere himself, and did not speak a word with anyone, thus taking upon himself a new and most difficult feat of seclusion.

Very little is known of the feats of the Venerable Seraphim in seclusion, for he admitted no one to himself and did not utter a word with anyone. In his cell he had nothing, not even the most necessary things: an icon of the Mother of God, before which a lamp always burned, and a stump of wood that served as a stool; these made up everything. For himself he did not even use fire. On his shoulders, beneath his shirt, he wore on ropes a large five-vershok iron cross for the mortification of the flesh, **"that the spirit may be saved"** (1 Cor. 5:5). But he never wore chains or a hair shirt. "Whoever insults us by word or deed," he said, "and if we bear the offenses in the manner of the Gospel, these are our chains, this is our hair shirt. These spiritual chains and hair shirts are higher than iron ones." The Venerable Seraphim continued to wear the same clothing he had worn in the desert. He drank only water, and for food he ate only tolokno and white sauerkraut. Water and food were brought to him by a monk named Paul, who lived nearby. Having said a prayer at the elder's cell, the brother set the food down at the door.

And the recluse, so that no one should see him, covered himself with a large cloth, and, having taken the dish, kneeling, carried it into his cell, as if receiving it from the hands of God. Then, having refreshed himself, he put the dishes back in their former place, again hiding his face with the cloth, after the example of the desert dwellers, who concealed their faces under the kukul.[25]

The prayer feats of the elder in seclusion were unknown to anyone; it is known only that they were very heavy, great, and manifold. Here too he continued as before to observe his desert rule and all the daily services, except the Divine Liturgy. Besides this, he often performed the "noetic" prayer of Jesus or of the Theotokos.[26] In prayer the holy elder sometimes sank into a deep contemplative, prayerful state, standing before the icon, yet reciting no prayer and making no prostrations, but only contemplating the Lord in his heart with the mind. Over the course of each week he read through the whole New Testament in order: from Monday to Thursday the four Gospels, one each day. In the vestibule, through the door, one could sometimes hear how, as he read, he interpreted the New Testament sacred books to himself, and many came and listened to his word to their delight, consolation, and edification. Throughout all the years of his seclusion the elder received the Holy Mysteries of Christ on all Sundays and feast days. So that he might never forget the hour of death, and might see it more clearly and closer before him, the holy Seraphim asked that a coffin be made for him and set in the vestibule of his recluse's cell. The holy elder's wish was fulfilled: a coffin with a lid was hollowed out for him from a single piece of oak, and unpainted, it always stood in the vestibule. Here the elder often prayed, preparing himself for departure from this present life. In conversations with the Sarov brethren the Blessed Seraphim often spoke concerning this coffin:

"When I die, I beg you, brethren, lay me in my coffin."

Along with his spiritual labors the ascetic elder also began to combine bodily toil, refreshing his aging chest with fresh air at times. In

25. The *kukol* is a monastic head covering in the form of a klobuk, with a crepe veil descending onto the shoulders. In the ancient Church it was a usual part of the monastic vestments.

the early hours before dawn, when everything was still asleep, the holy elder often moved briskly about the cemetery, among the gravestones or elsewhere, back and forth, reciting the Jesus Prayer, carrying a small stack of firewood quietly from one place to another, nearer to the cell. Once, when a novice-waker, delighted by such a sight, rushed to the elder, kissing his feet and asking for his blessing, Seraphim, blessing him, said:

"Guard yourself in silence and attend to yourself!"

Having spent five years in seclusion, the holy elder afterward somewhat relaxed it, at first more in an outward way: the door of his cell was open, and anyone could come to him, but to the questions of those in need of his instruction he, having taken upon himself a vow of silence before God, gave no answer, continuing his spiritual labor in silence. The then Bishop Iona of Tambov, who often visited the Sarov monastery, once wished to see Father Seraphim personally and with this aim approached his cell; but the Venerable, firmly fulfilling his vows before God and fearing man-pleasing, did not on this occasion break his silence or his seclusion.[27] Evidently the time had not yet come for the Venerable Seraphim to leave his seclusion. The Most Reverend also understood it so: when the abbot Nifont proposed removing the door of the elder's cell from its hooks, he refused, saying, "Lest we sin." And he left the elder in peace.

But soon afterwards the hour truly came for Venerable Seraphim to lay down entirely the ascetic labour of his seclusion and silence. Having walked, in complete self-renunciation, patience, humility and unshamed faith, the path of a cenobitic monk, hermit, stylite, silent one and recluse, he acquired great purity of soul and was granted by God the higher gifts of spiritual grace. Then, by the Higher Will, it fell to him to leave off silence and, continuing his whole life in God and for God,

26. The "noetic" prayer, in the language of the ascetics, is the contemplative, God-thinking prayer, when the ascetic immerses himself in it with his whole soul in silence.

27. In the present circumstance the Venerable Seraphim could be guided by the example of the Venerable Arsenius the Great, whose ascetic seclusion and silence he imitated. The Archbishop of Alexandria, Theophilus, wishing to come to Arsenius, sent ahead to learn whether he would open the door to him. Arsenius replied: "If I open to you, I shall open to everyone." Then Theophilus said: "It is better for me not to go to him."

marked by the highest renunciation of the world, to step forth into service to that same world: by his love, by the gifts of grace sent down from God—the gifts of teaching, of clairvoyance, of miracles and healings—and by his spiritual guidance, prayer, consolation and counsel. Thus Venerable Seraphim took upon himself the supreme labour of what is called eldership[28], in which he also ended his laborious and righteous life.

This labour of the great elder began when, five years later, he began to enter into conversation with the visitors who came to him, first of all with monks. In these conversations Venerable Seraphim directed them chiefly towards steadfastness in keeping all the monastic rules, urging them to perform and listen to the Church's prayers without fail, to fulfil their obediences unremittingly and zealously, with humility, to sit at table with the fear of God, not to leave the monastery without a weighty reason, to restrain self-will and arbitrariness, and to keep mutual peace, and so on. After this the holy elder began to be visited also by outsiders, lay visitors. The doors of his cell stood open to all, from the early Liturgy until eight o'clock in the evening. And the elder received everyone, giving each his blessing and suitable brief instruction. The blessed elder received visitors dressed, as a rule, in a long white garment in the form of a smock, and in a half-mantle, with an epitrachelion and cuffs; yet he wore the cuffs only on Sundays and feast days, when he partook of the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

The holy elder received with particular love those who came to him sincerely and humbly repentant, and those who showed in themselves a fervent zeal for the spiritual life of the Christian. After conversation with them, Venerable Seraphim was accustomed to lay the end of his epitrachelion and his right hand upon their bowed heads. In doing so he would have them say after him a brief prayer of repentance, after which he himself pronounced the prayer of absolution[29], whereby those who

28. Eldership (*starchestvo*) represents one of the highest ascetic labors of monasticism, to which only a few chosen people are capable of rising. It is the spiritual guidance and healing, by "elders," of monks and of all who come in need of spiritual consolation and counsel. Voluntary disciples, coming to an elder, lay open before him their whole soul and surrender themselves in complete obedience to him. The elder, for his part, takes upon himself the most difficult labor of Christian love and great responsibility before God for their souls.

came received relief of conscience and a certain special spiritual delight. Then the elder would anoint the visitor's brow in the form of a cross with oil from the lamp burning before the icon of the Mother of God of Tenderness that stood in his cell, which he called the icon of the Mother of God, *Joy of All Joys*. If it was before noon (that is, before the proper time for taking food), he gave them to taste of the *great agiasma* (the water of Theophany) and blessed them with a particle of antidoron or of the bread blessed at the All-night Vigil. Then he exchanged the Paschal greeting with each, at whatever hour it happened, reminding them thereby of the saving power of Christ's Resurrection, and let them kiss the icon of the Mother of God or the cross that hung upon his breast. Those who revealed to him some particular infirmity or sorrow of heart he consoled and eased with special, fitting, kind fatherly counsel and spiritual remedies; in other cases the elder offered common Christian instruction, especially concerning unceasing remembrance of God, prayer and chastity. In all such cases he particularly enjoined always keeping upon the lips and in the heart the Prayer of the Lord, "Our Father"; the Archangelic Salutation, "Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos"; the Creed; and the Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me, a sinner," which he considered especially effective and saving. Among the other visitors, at times men of rank and statesmen also came to Venerable Seraphim, to whom he gave appropriate instruction, treating them with due honour and Christian love, drawing their attention to the importance of their rank and thence teaching them fidelity to the Holy Orthodox Church and to the fatherland. The elder was also visited by persons of the Imperial family; thus in 1825 Grand Prince Michael Pavlovich received his blessing. But above all there came to the holy elder great numbers of common folk, who asked of him not only instruction but sometimes also help in worldly needs, with faith in his holiness and clairvoyance—and he not only consoled such persons spiritually, but also helped them in their sorrows and needs by the power of his clairvoyance, by which he showed, for example, to poor peasants where to find goods they had

29. The elder did this according to a custom still existing in the East among the "consecrated" abbas, that is, those who hold the degree of priesthood.

lost or that had been stolen from them, charging them only to guard themselves by silence in this matter. He also often healed the sick, anointing them in such cases with oil from the lamp that hung before the aforementioned icon of the Mother of God of Tenderness in his cell. Yet for all this Venerable Seraphim had still not wholly abandoned his seclusion; though he had taken the seal of silence from his lips and received visitors, he himself did not go out anywhere from his cell.

Soon the time came for Venerable Seraphim to leave his seclusion altogether. But before deciding upon this, he turned to God with prayer for the higher good pleasure concerning the open ending of his seclusion. And so, in the night of 25 November 1825, the Mother of God appeared to the elder in a dream vision, together with the Saints Clement of Rome and Peter of Alexandria, whose feast was celebrated that day, and gave him leave to come out of seclusion and visit the hermitage. On the following day, rising from sleep and performing his customary rule of prayer, he informed the abbot, Hegumen Nifont, of his desire, and from him received a blessing for it. From this time Venerable Seraphim began to visit his hermitage cell and to pray in it.

The elder especially often went to the so-called "Theologian" spring. This spring lay about two versts from the monastery and had existed from long before Seraphim's entrance into Sarov; but it lay in neglect: its basin was covered with a layer of logs and buried in earth, and water flowed out of it only through a single pipe. Near the spring, on a little post, stood an icon of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, from which the spring had received its name. This place greatly pleased Venerable Seraphim. In accordance with his wish, the spring was cleared and restored; the layer of logs covering the basin was taken away, and in its place a new log frame with a pipe was made. Here the elder began to spend long periods, occupied with contemplation of God and with bodily labours, for because of illness he could no longer walk to his former cell. The elder gathered little pebbles in the river Sarovka and lined the basin of the spring with them; he laid out beds for himself nearby and planted vegetables. On the hillock near the spring a small log hut was built for the elder, without windows and even without a door, with an earthen entrance on the side beneath the

wall. Creeping under the wall, Venerable Seraphim rested in this poor refuge after his labours, hiding from the midday heat; afterwards a new cell was built for him, with a door and a stove but without windows. Here, in his hermitage, he spent all the working days, returning to the monastery towards evening. The place came to be called Father Seraphim's Lower Hermitage, and the spring Father Seraphim's Well.

It was touching to see this humble, stooping elder, leaning on a hoe [30] or an axe, in the wilderness, cutting firewood or tilling his garden beds, in a poor cap without a veil, in a white linen smock, with a bag on his shoulders in which lay the Gospel and a load of stones and sand for the mortification of his flesh. When some asked him why he did this, the elder answered:

"I am wearing down him who wears me down."

The number of the blessed elder's visitors increased considerably. Some awaited him in the monastery, others visited him in the hermitage, thirsting to see him and to receive from him blessing and instruction. It was touching to see Venerable Seraphim, when he returned to his hermitage cell after receiving the Holy Mysteries, in his mantle, epitrachelion and cuffs. His progress was slowed by the multitude of people thronging about him. But at such times he spoke with no one, blessed no one, and as it were saw no one, wholly absorbed in reflection upon the grace-filled power of the Holy Mysteries. Hegumen Nifont, who deeply respected and loved the blessed elder, would say of the multitude of Venerable Seraphim's visitors:

"When Father Seraphim lived in the hermitage (the first and more distant one), he closed all the approaches to himself with trees, so that the people would not go there; but now he has begun to receive everyone, so that I am unable to close the monastery gates even till midnight."

From that time on, God revealed in Venerable Seraphim a truly great and precious treasure to the faithful. His soul-profiting conversation was especially sweet, imbued with a particular love and at the same time breathing a quiet, life-giving power. All his manner of deal-

30. *Motyka*: a pickaxe, an iron spade, an iron trowel.

ing with visitors was marked above all by profound humility and an all-forgiving, active Christian love. His words warmed hearts, even hard and cold ones, illumined souls with spiritual understanding, softened them to tearful and contrite repentance, and aroused a comforting hope of correction and salvation even in hardened and despairing sinners. They filled the soul with a grace-filled peace. The servant of God never struck anyone with harsh reproaches or stern rebukes, nor laid a heavy burden on anyone. He often voiced rebukes as well, but he gently tempered his word with humility and love. Seeking to rouse the voice of conscience through his counsels, he pointed out the paths of salvation, and often so subtly that the listener at first did not even understand that the talk concerned his own soul. Afterward, however, the power of the word, seasoned with grace, invariably produced its effect. Venerable Seraphim always grounded his word, as he did his whole life and all his actions, in the Word of God, in the writings of the Fathers, and in instructive examples from the lives of the saints who were well-pleasing to God. In doing so, the elder especially honored those saints who had appeared as the most valiant zealots and champions of the Orthodox faith: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, Clement, Pope of Rome, Athanasius of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, and others. He constantly urged steadfastness in the faith and loved to explain wherein the purity of Orthodoxy consists. He also loved to speak of the saints of the native Church, for example the Moscow hierarchs Peter, Alexis, Jonah and Philip, Demetrius of Rostov, Venerable Sergius, Stephen of Perm, and others, setting their lives as a rule for the way to salvation. All these discourses of the gracious elder, besides the qualities already mentioned, had a special force because they were directly applied to the needs of the hearers and bore the closest relation to their lives and to the particular needs and circumstances for which they had come to Sarov to see Venerable Seraphim.

Saint Seraphim especially maintained and guarded the purity of Orthodoxy. Thus, when a schismatic asked which faith was better—the present Church faith or the old—the elder replied with authority:

"Leave off your nonsense. Our life is a sea, our holy Orthodox Church is the ship, and the Helmsman is the Savior Himself. If people with such a Helmsman, by reason of their sinful weakness, cross the sea of worldly life with difficulty, and not all are saved from drowning, then where are you heading with your little boat, and on what do you base your hope of being saved without a helmsman?"

On another occasion a sick woman was brought to the Sarov monastery, so doubled up that her knees were drawn to her chest. When she was carried into the cell of Venerable Seraphim, he began to question her: where was she from, and how had she come to suffer such an illness? The sick woman sincerely and openly, concealing nothing, laid bare her soul before the elder, as though in confession. She said that she had been born in the Orthodox Church but had married a schismatic who was very obstinate in his false teaching. Through the long-standing influence of her husband and his family, she had turned away from Orthodoxy, and for this God had suddenly punished her: it was as though she had been scorched, after which violent convulsions began. For four years a terrible aching tormented the unfortunate woman, during which she could not move either her foot or her hand. The gracious elder asked the sick woman whether she now believed in our holy mother, the Orthodox Church. When she answered in the affirmative, he told her to cross herself with the three-fingered sign. She replied that from weakness she could not even lift her hand. Then the Venerable, praying, anointed her breast and hands with oil from the lamp hanging in his cell, and the illness immediately left her. She gave thanks to the elder, who had granted her healing. The people marveled at the sight of this miracle, and news of it quickly spread through the monastery and its surroundings.

Having acquired, through the purity of his spirit, the gift of clairvoyance, Venerable Seraphim often gave some people instructions that bore directly on their inner feelings and the thoughts of their hearts, before they had disclosed to him the circumstances for which they had come to him. In such cases his word acted all the more irresistibly. Here is a particularly striking example of this.

Once a distinguished Lieutenant General L. came to Sarov out of curiosity. Having inspected the monastery buildings and gained nothing for his soul, he was already preparing to leave, but a landowner named Prokudin stopped him, urging the general to call on the recluse, the elder Seraphim. The general, proud in bearing, at first refused, but then, yielding to Prokudin's insistent entreaties, agreed to see the elder. As soon as they entered the cell, the Venerable, coming forward to meet them, bowed down at the general's feet. Such humility struck the proud general. Prokudin, noticing that he should not remain with them in the cell, went out into the vestibule, and the general, decorated with orders, conversed with the elder for about half an hour. After a few minutes, weeping was heard from Seraphim's cell: it was the general weeping like a little child. After half an hour the door opened, and Saint Seraphim led the general out by the arms. The general continued to weep, covering his face with his hands. His orders and his cap had been left behind by him in the elder's cell. The Venerable brought them out and fastened the orders onto the cap. Afterward this general said that he had traveled through all of Europe and knew many people of every kind, but for the first time in his life he had seen such humility as that with which the Sarov recluse had received him. He had never known that such clairvoyance was possible, by which the elder had disclosed to him his whole life down to the most secret details. Among other things, during the general's conversation with Seraphim, his orders fell off, and the elder remarked:

"This is because you received them undeservedly."

The love of the gracious elder seemed all-embracing and boundless; it seemed that he loved each and every person more than a mother loves her one beloved son. There was no suffering, no sorrow of a neighbor, which he did not share, which he did not take into his own soul, and for the healing of which he did not find suitable life-giving remedies. And so he became, in the eyes of the Orthodox Russian people, a refuge, a spiritual support and a consolation for all who suffered and were burdened, grieving and embittered, in need of the mercy of God and of gracious help. People of every age, rank and condition, of both sexes, with a complete, almost childlike trust, sincerely and openly laid before

him their minds and hearts, their doubts and perplexities, their spiritual needs and sorrows, their transgressions and sinful thoughts. For the humble confession of these, without any false shame or concealment, the gracious elder himself often came to their aid, clairvoyantly reading the visitor's soul and aloud disclosing before him his sins and thoughts. And the loving holy elder satisfied and comforted everyone; no one left him without relief and inner tranquility, without real instruction and gracious consolation: neither the rich nor the poor, neither the simple nor the learned, neither the humble nor the noble. Especially during the last ten years of his life, up to a thousand people, and sometimes two thousand or more, came to him daily. But the holy elder was not burdened by this, and to each one he found time for a conversation for the benefit of the soul, explaining in a few words what was specifically beneficial for each. And all felt his great love and its gracious power, and streams of tears often burst forth even from those who had hard and stony hearts.

Often Venerable Seraphim aroused envy, reproaches or perplexity in many, because he received everyone without distinction, did good to all alike, listened to all equally, comforted and instructed them, making no distinction between the sex, rank, condition or moral worth of the visitors who came to him. Concerning this, Venerable Seraphim said more than once:

"Suppose I shut the doors of my cell. Those who come to it, needing a word of comfort, will adjure me by God to open the doors, and not receiving an answer from me, will go home in sorrow... What justification could I offer to God at His Dread Judgment?"

On another occasion, when a monk asked the elder, "Why do you teach everyone?", he answered:

"I follow the teaching of the Church, which sings: **"Do not conceal the words of God, but proclaim His wonders"**[31]."

Thus the holy elder regarded receiving all who came to him as a matter of conscience, an obligation of his life, for which God would demand an accounting from him at the Last Judgment. Yet, for all this,

31. At Vespers on Tuesday of Holy Week, from the stichera on "Lord, I Have Cried," Tone 4.

when the elder saw that those who came to him heeded his counsels, followed his instructions, and turned from the path of sin and perdition onto the path of virtue and salvation, he did not exult in this as the fruit of his own work. He attributed nothing to himself, but blessed God, the Benefactor, for everything, saying in such cases:

""**Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake**" (Ps. 113:9)."

He also said the following on the same subject:

We must cast away from ourselves every earthly joy, following the teaching of Jesus Christ, Who said: "**Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven**" (Lk. 10:20).

Once, there came together into the cell of Venerable Seraphim a merchant of the Vladimir Province and Father Antony, builder of the Vysokogorsk Hermitage [32]. The Venerable One, with love, began to reprove the merchant gently and kindly for his sins and to offer him fitting instruction. The speech of the grace-filled elder was so suffused with the warmth of his heart that both the merchant, to whom it was addressed, and Father Antony, who was present by chance, were moved to tears. When the merchant had left the cell, the latter addressed the holy elder in these words:

"Batiushka! The soul of man lies open before you as a face in a mirror: even before hearing this pilgrim out, you had already told him everything. I see now that your mind is so pure that nothing hidden in the heart of one's neighbor is concealed from it."

But Venerable Seraphim, as if stopping the mouth of his interlocutor, laid his hand upon it and said:

"You do not speak rightly, my joy: the human heart is open to the one Lord alone, and God alone is the Searcher of hearts, for He **penetrates even to the inner life of man and to the depths of the heart**" (Ps. 63:7).

32. Later the well-known vicar of the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra.

"But how is it, batiushka," asked Father Antony again, "that you did not ask the merchant a single word, and yet told him all that he needed?"

Then Venerable Seraphim answered with humility:

"He came to me as others do, as you do, as to a servant of God: I, sinful Seraphim, think of myself as a sinful servant of God; whatever the Lord bids me, as His servant, that I pass on to the one who asks for what is profitable. The first thought that arises in my soul I count as a sign from God, and I speak without knowing what is in my interlocutor's soul, only believing that thus the will of God points out to me what is for his benefit. As iron is in the hands of the smith, so I surrender myself and my will to the Lord God: as it pleases Him, so I act; I have no will of my own; and what is pleasing to God, that I pass on."

Indeed, this grace-filled foresight of Venerable Seraphim was truly remarkable. Receiving letters, he often knew their contents without opening them and gave answers: "Say this from the poor Seraphim," and so on. After his blessed repose, many such unopened letters were found, to which replies had been given at the proper time. In spirit the holy elder was in communion with many ascetics whom he had never seen and who lived thousands of versts from him. When a recluse of the Zadonsk Monastery of the Mother of God, George, conceived the thought of changing his place for a more secluded one, and no one but himself knew of this secret disquiet, a certain wanderer from the Sarov Hermitage suddenly came to him from Father Seraphim and said:

"Father Seraphim has bidden me tell you: it is shameful, having sat in seclusion for so many years, to be overcome by such hostile thoughts as to leave your place. Go nowhere. The Most Holy Theotokos bids you remain here."

With these words the wanderer bowed and went away. When they sought him, they could not find him, either in the monastery or beyond it.

Nothing had yet been heard of the man of God Mitrophan, the first Bishop of Voronezh, nor of his impending glorification: there had as yet been no revelations or appearances. Yet Venerable Seraphim, in a few words written in his own hand, congratulated the Most Reverend Ant-

ony, Archbishop of Voronezh, on the uncovering of the holy relics of the man of God Mitrophan.

To a layman, one A. G. Vorotilov, the elder more than once said that three powers would rise up against Russia and greatly afflict her; but for the sake of Orthodoxy, the Lord would have mercy on her and preserve her. At the time this speech was incomprehensible; but later events explained that the elder had spoken of the Crimean Campaign.

From 1831 Seraphim foretold to many the coming famine, and on his counsel the Sarov monastery laid up a store of bread for six years' consumption, and as a result there was no hunger in the monastery. When the first cholera appeared in Russia, the Venerable One openly foretold that it would not come either to Sarov or to Diveyevo, and these predictions were fulfilled in every detail, so that from the first cholera not one person died either at Sarov or at Diveyevo.

The elder equally saw the past and the future, outlined in a few words the life that lay ahead of a person, and spoke and gave counsels that seemed strange, but which later circumstances justified, and they proved to be full of the spirit of foresight.

Besides the gift of foresight, the Lord continued to manifest in Venerable Seraphim the grace of healing sicknesses and bodily infirmities. Earlier still, in 1823, before the elder finally left his seclusion, one of the first and most striking manifestations of this God-given wonderworking grace was his healing of M. V. Mantorov, a neighboring landowner of the Ardatov district, from an illness that yielded to no treatment. When the disease took threatening proportions, so that pieces of bone even fell out of the sufferer's legs, and all hope of medical help was lost, Mantorov, on the advice of his kinsmen and acquaintances, resolved to go to Sarov, forty versts from his estate of Nuch, to Father Seraphim, whose reputation for holy life had by then spread throughout all Russia. With great difficulty Mantorov was carried into the vestibule of the grace-filled recluse's cell, and he tearfully begged him for healing from his dreadful affliction. Then the elder, with heartfelt sympathy and fatherly love, asked him whether he believed in God. Having received from the sufferer a threefold firm and sincere assur-

ance of unconditional faith in God, the Venerable One said to him kindly:

"My joy! If you so believe, then believe also that all things are possible from God to the one who believes; therefore believe that the Lord will heal you too, and I, the poor Seraphim, will pray."

After that he withdrew into his cell, and a little while later came out from there with holy oil from the lamp hanging before the icon of the Mother of God of Tenderness; he bade Mantorov bare his legs and anointed the diseased places. And at once the scabs that covered the body fell off instantly, and Mantorov received healing and left the cell of the Sarov wonderworker without any outside help. When Mantorov, feeling healed, joyfully threw himself at the Venerable One's feet, kissing them and giving thanks for his healing, the elder, raising him up, said sternly:

"Is it Seraphim's work to kill and to make alive, to bring down to hell and to raise up? What are you saying, batiushka? This is the work of the One Lord, Who fulfils the will of those who fear Him and hears their prayer. Give thanks to the Almighty Lord and to His Most Pure Mother."

With these words the humble-wise man of God dismissed Mantorov.

No less striking was the healing accomplished by the holy elder in 1827 of a certain woman, Alexandra, wife of a house-serf named Lebedev. For more than a year she suffered from terrible seizures that had apparently come upon her without cause, accompanied by vomiting, gnashing of teeth, and convulsions of the whole body, after which the sufferer fell into complete unconsciousness; such fits recurred with her daily. The remedies applied by physicians to bring the affliction to an end had no success at all, and one experienced, believing and honest doctor, who took a particularly heartfelt interest in the patient and expended on her all his attention, knowledge and skill, at last advised her to rely on the will of the Most High and to ask of Him help and protection, since no man could cure her. This plunged all the patient's household into deep sorrow and threw her into despair. And then one night there appeared to her an unknown, very old woman, and when the

frightened sufferer began to read the prayer to the Holy Cross, she said to her:

"Do not be afraid of me: I am a man like you, only now not of this world, but from the kingdom of the dead. Rise from your bed and hasten quickly to the Sarov monastery to Father Seraphim: he awaits you tomorrow and will heal you."

The patient ventured to ask her:

"Who are you, and whence?"

The apparition answered:

"I am Agatha, the first abbess of the Diveyevo community."

On the next day the relatives took the patient to Sarov, and on the way she had terrible fainting spells and convulsions. The patient reached Sarov after the late Liturgy, during the brethren's meal, when the Venerable One had shut himself in and received no one. But before the patient, approaching his cell, had even made the customary prayer, the elder came out to her, took her by the hands and led her into his cell. There he laid his epitrachelion upon her and quietly recited prayers to the Lord and the Most Holy Theotokos; then he gave the patient Theophany water to drink, gave her a particle of the antidoron and three small rusks, and said:

"Each day take one rusk with holy water, and go to Diveyevo to the grave of the handmaid of God Agatha, take some earth for yourself and make as many prostrations as you can: she (Agatha) grieves for you and desires your healing."

Having given a few further brief instructions on prayer, the Venerable One dismissed the patient in peace; and the illness left her at that very moment, very perceptibly and as if with a kind of noise. Afterwards the sickness never returned to her, and she had many sons and daughters.

Venerable Seraphim worked many different healings upon those who were grievously sick. Many of them have been recorded, while others remain recorded only upon the tablets of the hearts of those whom he benefited; in a brief account of the life of the servant of God there would not be room for them. In all these cases the elder, as we have mentioned, had the custom of anointing the sick with oil from the lamp

that burned before his cell icon of the Mother of God, *of Tenderness*; and when he was asked why he did this, he answered:

"We read in Scripture that the Apostles anointed with oil, and many of the sick were healed by this. Whom should we follow, if not the Apostles?"

And the sick who were anointed by the Venerable received healing.

In Seraphim's cell many lamps burned and a multitude of wax candles, large and small, glowed on various round trays. In answer to the unspoken thought of one of the visitors, wondering why this was so, the far-seeing elder answered:

"As you know, I have many persons who are zealous toward me and who do good to my 'mill orphans' (the sisters of the Seraphim-Diveyevo Monastery). They bring me oil and candles and ask me to pray for them. So when I read my rule, I commemorate them first, once. And since I cannot repeat them at every place in the rule, I set these candles up for them as an offering to God, one candle for each person; for some, one large candle for several persons; and where it is fitting, without naming names, I say: 'Lord, remember all those people, Thy servants, for whose souls I, the poor one, have lit these candles and lamps unto Thee.' And that this is not a human invention of mine, of the poor Seraphim, or merely my own zeal, founded on nothing divine, I will cite for you in confirmation the words of Divine Scripture. The Bible says that Moses heard the voice of the Lord speaking to him: **'Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, Aaron [and his sons] shall order it from the evening to the morning before the Lord continually: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations'** (Cf. Lev. 24:3). That is why the holy Church of God has received the custom of kindling in the holy churches and in the homes of faithful Christians lamps or vigil-lamps before the holy icons of the Lord, of the Mother of God, of the holy Angels and of the holy men who were pleasing to God."

And about the Theological spring, which received the name of the "Seraphim well," the elder later related:

"I prayed that the water of this well would be healing from sicknesses."

And from that time the water of this spring received special, extraordinary and healing properties, which are preserved to this day. This water does not spoil, even if it stands for many years in unsealed vessels. With it, at any season of the year, the sick and the healthy pour water over themselves and wash, even in severe cold, and receive benefit. To many who suffered grievously from painful ulcers, the Venerable Seraphim commanded them to wash with water from his spring, and all received healing from this. Some received sight from washing with this water; others, drinking it, received swift healing from internal ailments and rose from a bed of grievous sickness healthy and vigorous. A certain woman, M. V. Sipyagina, was gravely ill; she felt a terrible anguish from her sickness and, despite her zeal, could not eat on fast days the food prescribed by the Rule. The Venerable Seraphim commanded her to drink water from his spring. After this, without any compulsion, a great deal of bile came up from her throat, and she was healed. During the cholera in the 30s of the last century, not a few believers flocked to the "Seraphim well," even from distant lands, and by their faith received relief and healing from its healing waters. Thus Rittmeister Teplov, who had an estate in Yekaterinoslav Province, where the cholera had begun to cause great mortality, seeing the widespread sicknesses among his people, remembered that the Venerable Seraphim had earlier, as if by chance, said to him:

"When you are in sorrow, come to the cell of the poor Seraphim: he will pray for you."

This recollection moved him and his wife to turn to the elder Seraphim from afar, asking him to deliver them from the deadly sickness. And so, on that same night, in a dream-vision, the elder appeared to Teplov's wife and commanded her to go to the Theological spring, take water from it, and drink and wash with it, both herself and her husband Teplov and their people. With full faith in the power of the intercession of the servant of God Seraphim, the Teplovs went to the spring, drank and washed with its water, and filled a whole barrel with it, which they carried to their estate. And indeed, Teplov's sick people, many of whom were already at the point of death, received a marvelous healing, using

only the water sent to them; and from that time no one died of cholera on the Teplov estate.

But the Venerable Seraphim saw not only earthly things: heavenly mysteries were also repeatedly revealed to him. Once, after a lengthy conversation with the monk John, who approached the holy elder with childlike trust, about the lives of the holy servants of God, their gifts and heavenly promises, the latter repeated to him several times:

"My joy, I beg you, acquire the peaceful spirit, and then a thousand souls will be saved around you."

Then the Venerable also spoke about himself:

"I was delighted by the word of my Lord Jesus Christ: '**In My Father's house are many mansions**' (Jn. 14:2). And I, the poor one, paused on these words, and desired to see those heavenly mansions, and I besought the Lord Jesus Christ to show them to me, and the Lord did not deprive me, the poor one, of His mercy. And so I was caught up into those heavenly mansions, only I do not know whether in the body or out of the body; God knows, it is beyond comprehension. But of that heavenly joy and sweetness which I tasted there, it is impossible for me to tell you."

With these words the Venerable fell silent, bent somewhat forward, his head drooped, his eyes closed, and the elder gently and quietly moved his outstretched right hand before his heart. His face was wondrously changed and gave forth such an extraordinary light that it was impossible even to look at it; and on his lips and throughout the expression of his illumined face there shone such spiritual joy that he seemed like an earthly Angel, as though contemplating and listening to something with tenderness.

So about half an hour passed, after which the Venerable began to speak:

"Ah, if you only knew, beloved, what joy, what sweetness awaits the righteous in heaven, you would resolve to bear sorrows in temporal life with thanksgiving. Even if this very cell were full of worms, and they were to eat our flesh all our life, then even so one ought to consent to it with every desire, if only not to lose that heavenly joy."

The influence of the grace-filled elder was not limited to the Sarov Hermitage alone. He had an exceptional significance for the development of local women's monasticism. Particularly touching were St. Seraphim's relations with the Diveyevo community, founded around 1780 by a landowning lady of Vladimir Province, the widow of Colonel Agafya Semyonovna Melgunova. Having lost her husband in her young years, she resolved to dedicate her life to God, and with this aim she visited many holy places. And so, resting some twelve versts from the Sarov monastery, in the village of Diveyevo, she saw in a half-sleep the Mother of God, who entrusted her to remain in that place and to raise a church in honor of Her wonderworking Kazan icon. Afterwards, other ascetic women joined Melgunova, who had taken monastic vows with the name Alexandra, and thus was laid the beginning of the Diveyevo monastery, with which the name of the Venerable Seraphim of Sarov is inseparably bound. Even the first foundress of the Diveyevo monastery, when dying, entrusted the future lot of the sisters to the Venerable Seraphim, who was then a hierodeacon; and the blessed elder Pachomius, abbot of Sarov, leaving this world, likewise laid upon him the care of the Diveyevo community. The Venerable Seraphim cared for it with truly fatherly love and solicitude. The Diveyevo sisters came to him for a blessing and for the resolution of various perplexities, and told him of their needs. The elder, in turn, solicitously gave them good and soul-profitable counsel, entering with all care into the life and order of the community.

Through the prayers of the Venerable, and by means of the funds of benefactors who had a special faith in him and had received healings through his prayers, the Diveyevo community was considerably enlarged, as its populousness required. At the same time, St. Seraphim divided the monastery under one general authority and direction into two parts, so that at some distance, behind a separate fence, new cells with a separate church were erected, and there appeared as it were a new little monastery. "For this," he said, "there is the will of the Lord and of the Mother of God." The servant of God did so because he considered it inconvenient and unprofitable for pure virgins to live together with widows who had spent some time in married life. Following the

direction of the Most Holy Theotokos, the elder chose for this a place some hundred sazhens from the Kazan Diveyevo church, on a plot of land donated for this purpose; and on the newly acquired land he built a mill of his own for the Diveyevo sisters. Thus St. Seraphim formed a separate community, called the Seraphim-Diveyevo community, distinct from the earlier one founded by the aforementioned Agafya Semyonovna Melgunova.[33]

Caring for the sisters of Diveyevo, and especially for "his mill orphans," as St. Seraphim customarily called the sisters of the newly separated community, he unceasingly comforted them in the sorrows of their laborious monastic life, which was filled with severe privations. He steadied the faint-hearted, some of whom wished to return even to secular life, for many were distressed by extreme want, since the convent at that time had no means of support. Yet through the gracious influence of St. Seraphim, the Diveyevo convent drew to itself more and more sisters who sought, under the fatherly guidance of the holy elder, a God-pleasing monastic life. Some dedicated their lives to God in the Diveyevo convent out of gratitude for healings received through the elder's prayers. Others he, by his foresight, had as it were destined for this from childhood, and he guided them toward entering the convent, mindful of this destiny. When the sisters of the community, fearing for its future in view of its material insecurity and the uncertainty of its position, grew dismayed, the elder comforted them, saying that the Queen of Heaven Herself had chosen this place for them and would help them in everything, so that they would have their own bread and their own churches, and the church rule would be as at Sarov, and that he, "the poor Seraphim," would always bend his knees for them. The sisters of the Diveyevo convent were in complete obedience to St. Seraphim. They undertook nothing without the elder's blessing. When any sister wished to leave the convent for a time, she would come to the Venerable Father for his blessing both before her departure and upon her return.

33. On 27 July 1842 a decree of the Holy Synod was received confirming the cenobitic Diveyevo monastery in the composition of both of its divisions. In 1861 the Diveyevo community was raised to a third-class women's monastery. At present it is one of the most populous and well-ordered women's monasteries in Rus', housing up to 1000 sisters and even more.

For the sisters of the Diveyevo convent Seraphim left a special prayer rule, and likewise gave them instructions concerning the keeping of the sacristy and the church property, and so forth. At first the sisters of the "mill community" had no separate, dedicated church, which caused them considerable inconvenience. But after the servant of God miraculously healed the aforementioned Mantorov, the latter, out of gratitude to the elder and in accordance with his counsel, sold his estate and gave all his possessions toward the building of a large stone church for the "mill" sisters. The church was built with two Holy Tables, in honor of the Nativity of Christ and the Nativity of the Theotokos, and was consecrated in 1829.

As for labors and ascetic exertions of handiwork, St. Seraphim ordained that the Diveyevo sisters should occupy themselves exclusively with the kind of work proper to the common people. But painting, embroidery with silk and gold, and other similar work requiring a certain exertion of the mind and pertaining more to art and objects of luxury, the elder would not permit.

All these testaments of the elder were strictly observed in the Diveyevo community. Departures from them usually brought unpleasant consequences for the convent; but Seraphim by his prayers guarded it from want and calamity. Thus the Venerable Father enjoined that in the Church of the Nativity of Christ which he had founded, where the Psalter should always be read, an unfailing candle should burn before the icon of the Savior and an unfailing lamp before the icon of the Mother of God, and he added that if this testament of his were exactly fulfilled, the Diveyevo community would not suffer want or calamity, and the oil for this need would never fail. But once, when everyone had left the church, the church attendant saw that the oil had all burned away and the lamp had gone out, and this was the last of the oil. Then, recalling the testament of the elder Seraphim, she thought: here his words have not been fulfilled, and therefore his other predictions cannot be trusted either. Her faith in the foresight of the gracious elder began to leave her. But suddenly she heard a crackling and, lifting her head, saw that the lamp had been lit and was full of oil, and in it floated two small banknotes. In a state of agitation she hastened to the elder nun

Elena Vasilyevna Mantorova, under whose obedience she was, to tell of the wondrous vision. On the way she met a peasant who handed her 300 rubles in banknotes, to be delivered for oil for the unfailing lamp for the repose of his parents.

Not limiting himself to the testaments given to the Diveyevo nuns, and extending his designs much further, the Venerable Father Seraphim, even during his lifetime, prepared a place for the building of a cathedral, whereas previously the sisters had used the parish church for prayer.

"We too, Mother," he said to one Diveyevo elder nun, comforting her, "will have our own cathedral. On our land there will be our own herds, both sheep and oxen. Why should we despair, Mother? Everything will be our own. The sisters will both plow and sow grain."

Thinking of the building of a cathedral, the Venerable Father chose a site for it not far from the Kazan church, halfway between the old and the new convent, and he obtained money for the purchase of the land; but owing to circumstances, the construction of the church was halted for an indefinite time.

Thus Seraphim formed a separate community, called the Seraphim-Diveyevo community, distinct from the earlier one founded by the aforementioned Agafya Semyonovna Melgunova. But in spirit he did not separate the mill community from the Diveyevo one, and he considered the nun Alexandra (Melgunova), whose memory he deeply revered, the first foundress of both. The patroness of the newly established community, however, the elder acknowledged to be the Mother of God.

"Know this, Mother," he said to one elder nun, "that the Queen of Heaven Herself has chosen this place for the glorification of Her name. She will be a wall and a protection to you."

With the same solicitude and love the Venerable Father Seraphim also cared for the Ardatov convent [34] and the Zelenogorsk women's community [35], in fulfillment of the gracious command of the Mother of

34. In 1861 the Pokrov Ardatov community, founded around 1800 by the townswoman Vasilissa Dmitreva Pakhomova, was raised to the rank of a third-class monastery.
35. Now the Spaso-Zelenogorsk third-class cenobitic women's monastery.

God, who in a wondrous vision had entrusted him with the guidance and organization of these three women's convents.

Toward the end of his life the Venerable Father was granted by God especially wondrous gifts of grace. He never again locked the doors of his cell. In his dealings with his neighbors the spirit of Christian meekness and humble wisdom always manifested itself clearly in him. His conversations, both with monastics and with laypeople, striking by their wondrous simplicity, produced a profound and irresistible impression even upon unbelievers and those of little faith, turning them to the path of saving repentance. Simple folk, learned men, and schismatics alike received great spiritual edification and consolation from conversing with him. The gift of foresight and of miracles grew in the gracious elder more and more. According to the testimony of many generals, officers, and soldiers who took part in the Sevastopol campaign, those who received from the Venerable Father a blessing and holy water as a parting gift, and who with faith repeated on the field of battle, "Lord, have mercy, through the prayers of Elder Seraphim!", remained unharmed even in the face of extreme danger and imminent death. Very often the Venerable Father Seraphim gave soul-profiting counsel concerning the future, which an ordinary mortal could never foresee, and he would perceive with foresight the questions of those seeking counsel in their souls before they had time to voice them. Once two young women came to him: one already advanced in years, who from her youth had burned with love for God and desired the monastic life, and the other young, who had not thought of monasticism at all. But the holy elder told the first that there was no path for her to monasticism, and that she would be happy in marriage; and to the second he said that she would be a nun, even naming the monastery in which she would labor. Both young women left the elder with bewilderment and displeasure, but the outcome justified him, and the elder's predictions came true exactly. The human soul lay open before the Venerable Father as a face in a mirror. Some, who from false shame feared the elder's rebuke, he heard in confession, himself telling their sins as though they had been committed in his presence. Often the servant of God, by his mere appearance and a simple word, brought sinners to consciousness of their

sins, and they resolved to amend their vices. Thus once a peasant tried to make his way through the crowd to him, but each time he was as it were pushed back by someone. At last the elder himself turned to him and sternly asked, "Where are you pushing to?" Large drops of sweat stood out on the peasant's face, and with a feeling of deepest humility in the presence of all those there, he began aloud to repent of his vices, and especially of a theft he had committed shortly before, confessing that he was unworthy to appear before the face of such a luminary.

Unfailing healings flowed from the holy ascetic, but when people remarked on them he would humbly object that this was accomplished not by him, "the poor one," but by the intercessory prayer of the Mother of God and the Apostles of Christ. All who drank of and washed themselves with the water of the Seraphim spring, by his blessing, received wondrous healings from their infirmities; this water acquired such healing power through the prayer of St. Seraphim. To a monk who suffered from complete paralysis of the hands, the elder, taking a vessel of holy water, said, "Take and drink." He drank the water and was healed.

He healed others with oil from the lamp that burned continually in his cell before the icon of the Mother of God. The man of God healed one peasant who was dying of cholera by bringing him to the icon of the Mother of God, giving him holy water to drink, and bidding him walk around the monastery and, on entering the cathedral, pray there. According to the elder's prediction, the "mercy of God" healed the dying man in that place. Many times, even during his lifetime, Venerable Seraphim appeared to people in dreams and healed them of deadly diseases, especially during the time of cholera, when by the mercy of God not only individuals but whole villages were healed with water hallowed at Seraphim's spring. The man of God sometimes healed the demoniacs by his mere presence, by the sign of the cross, and by prayer. The prayers of Seraphim were so powerful before God that there were instances of the sick being restored from their deathbeds. Thus the wife of a certain Vorotilov was at the point of death. Her husband, having great faith in the Venerable, came to him with tearful entreaty to help his sick wife. But the elder declared that his wife must die. Then

Vorotilov, bathed in tears, fell at his feet, beseeching him to pray that she might be restored to life and health. The Venerable sank into the "noetic" prayer for about ten minutes, then opened his eyes, raised Vorotilov to his feet, and said to him joyfully: "Well, my joy, the Lord grants your wife life. Go in peace to your house." Vorotilov hastened home with joy, where he learned that his wife had felt relief at the very moment when Venerable Seraphim was engaged in his prayerful struggle. Soon she recovered completely.

To some the elder foretold a near death, wishing that they should not pass into eternity without a Christian burial; to others he foretold, for their correction, the punishment of God that would befall them should they remain unrepentant. Concerning the late Archimandrite Anthony [36], deputy of the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra, who was at that time superior of the Vysokogorsk monastery, he foretold a sudden and unexpected transfer to "the great Lavra, which the providence of God entrusts to him."

As he drew near the end of his laborious life, the Venerable not only did not lessen his sufferings but added new labors and feats to his former ones. In the last years of his life the elder slept sitting on the floor, his back propped against the wall and his legs stretched out. Sometimes he rested his head on a stone or a wooden block, or lay on sacks, bricks and logs that were in his cell. As the hour of his departure from this world drew near, he would kneel and sleep with his face to the floor, resting on his elbows and supporting his head with his hands. He took food once a day, in the evening. He wore poor and humble clothing. When a certain rich man asked him why he wore such rags, the elder answered:

"Prince Josaphat counted the mantle given him by the hermit Barlaam higher and dearer than the royal purple [37]."

Venerable Seraphim had already died entirely to the world, while never ceasing, with boundless love, to intercede in prayer before God

36. Antony, in the world A. G. Medvedev, a well-known associate and companion of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, was vicar of the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra from 1831 to 1877. He was chosen for this post at the personal wish of the holy hierarch, and during his long tenure as vicar he brought the Lavra to a flourishing state in every respect.
37. See the Chet'i-Minei, under 19 November.

for those living in it. Heaven had become wholly his home. When the visitors from Kursk asked Seraphim whether he had any message for his relatives, he pointed to the icons of the Savior and the Mother of God and said with a smile:

"Here are my relatives. As for living relatives, I am already a living dead man to them."

At this time all Russia knew and honored Venerable Seraphim as a great ascetic and wonderworker [38]. Once it was observed that during prayer the elder was standing in the air. When the witness cried out in terror, the elder strictly forbade him to speak of it until his death, under threat of a return of the illness from which he had been healed [39].

One year and ten months before his death, Venerable Seraphim was granted a blessed visitation of the Mother of God. It took place on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25. Two days earlier he told of it to a pious elder of Diveyevo, who was granted to see this wondrous vision, for the consolation of her and of the other Diveyevo sisters in their sorrowful monastic life. The man of God forewarned the elder that she should fear nothing, and he himself knelt, raising his hands to heaven. A sound was heard, as of a great wind, and then church chanting resounded.

"Behold, the Most Glorious, Most Pure Lady, our Most Holy Theotokos, is coming to us!" said the Venerable.

A bright light filled the cell, and a wondrous fragrance spread

Two Angels went ahead, holding branches with newly opened blossoms. Behind them came, in white shining garments, Saint John the Forerunner and the Evangelist John the Theologian, and then the Mother of God, accompanied by twelve holy virgins, martyrs and venerable women. The Queen of Heaven was clothed in a mantle such as is

38. Pious priests and bishops of the Orthodox Church, distinguished by their ascetic labors and spiritual life, cherished deep respect and faith toward the Venerable Seraphim. They wrote him letters asking for his counsel. Particular respect for him was felt by Antony, Archbishop of Voronezh, known for his holy life and monastic labors. Soon after the blessed repose of God's ascetic, Antony said of him: "We are like kopeck candles, but he is like a pood candle, always burning before the Lord, both by his past life and by his present boldness before the Holy Trinity."

39. This event was recorded by Princess E. S. Sh., on the testimony of her paralytic son, whom the Venerable healed. The elder, noticing that the sick man had seen this, sternly charged him to "keep silent" and not to speak of it until his death, which he did.

painted on the icon of the Mother of God "the Sorrowing," and she shone with an extraordinary light and ineffable beauty. Over the mantle was something like an epitrachelion, and on her arms were cuffs. On her head was a lofty, beautiful crown, variously adorned with crosses, shining with such a light that it was impossible to look at it, as also at the divine face of the Mother of God herself. The virgins followed the Mother of God two by two, wearing crowns, in unspeakable heavenly glory and beauty. The cell suddenly became spacious and was filled entirely with lights of a special radiance, brighter and whiter than the sun. The Most Holy Virgin conversed graciously with the venerable elder, as with a kinsman. The elderess, however, in fear fell prostrate; but the Mother of God calmed her and bade her rise. The holy virgins, comforting the elderess in her sorrowful life, told her, pointing to their bright crowns, that they had received them for their earthly sufferings and reproaches. The Most Holy Theotokos conversed at length with Venerable Seraphim, but the elderess did not hear their conversation. She heard only that the Most Pure One asked him not to forsake Her Diveyevo virgins, promising him Her help and intercession. The vision ended with the Mother of God, pointing to the crowns of the holy virgins, promising such crowns also to other virgins and ascetic women. Then, turning to the holy elder, she added:

"Soon, my beloved, you will be with us."

Then she blessed him, after which all the holy ones present took their leave of him.

Ascending higher and higher the ladder of virtues and monastic labors, Venerable Seraphim at last drew near his departure from this world. A year before his death he felt extreme exhaustion. By this time he had reached 72 years of age. He no longer went often to his hermitage, and he grew weary of receiving numerous visitors even at Sarov. The severe pains in his legs, which tormented him from unceasing vigils, from earlier prayerful standing on stone through a thousand days and nights, and from the cruel beatings of robbers, gave him no rest until the end of his life. From the sores on his legs there constantly flowed matter, yet in appearance the Venerable remained radiant and joyful in

spirit, feeling that heavenly joy and glory which God has prepared for those who love Him.

As before, giving believers many gracious healings and, by the wondrous gift of his foresight, contributing to the good order and salvation of many, Venerable Seraphim now began to foretell his own near death. Giving some of them his last instructions, he insistently repeated: "We shall no longer see each other." To some monastics and to laypeople he recommended that from then on they take all the arrangements and cares for their salvation upon themselves, remarking that they would never see him again and were bidding him farewell forever, and asking them for their prayers for him. During this time the holy elder was often seen in the entryway near his cell, beside the coffin prepared for him at his own request, where he gave himself to reflections on the life beyond the grave, often accompanied by bitter weeping. He spoke of this, half-hinting and sometimes directly, to some of the Diveyevo sisters, repeating:

"I am growing weak in strength. Live now by yourselves. I leave you to the Lord and to His Most Pure Mother."

Some asked the man of God for his blessing to visit him at Sarov during the Great Lent that was still ahead, but he answered:

"Then my doors will be shut, and you will not see me."

And from his bodily appearance it became very evident that the life of Venerable Seraphim was rapidly fading, yet in spirit he remained more watchful than before. He also hinted at his near death to his closest friends and companions in labor, for example, to the blessed hieromonk Timon, his faithful disciple who labored in the Nadeyevo hermitage, to whom he gave his last edifying instructions.

"Sow," he repeated to him, "sow, Father Timon, the wheat given you. Sow on good ground, sow also on sand, sow on stone, sow by the wayside, sow among the thorns. Somewhere everything will take root and grow and bear fruit, though not quickly. And do not hide in the earth the talent given you, lest you be called to account by your Master; but give it to the bankers, that they may give back the interest."

Four months before the blessed repose of the Venerable Seraphim, in August 1832, Bishop Arsenius of Tambov (later Metropolitan of

Kiev) visited his hermitage. After inspecting Sarov, the bishop examined Seraphim's hermitage in detail, his humble cell, and also the small space between the cell wall and the stove, where the man of God often labored in prayer and where only one person could barely enter, remaining there standing or kneeling, since it was impossible to sit or lean there at all. The holy elder presented the bishop with a gift "from the poor sinner Seraphim": a rosary, a bundle of wax candles wrapped in linen, a vessel of red wine, and a bottle of olive oil. The bishop received the offering graciously but did not understand its meaning. Later events showed that the ascetic of God had foreseen his approaching death and had designated the wine, oil, and candles for his commemoration, which he had also requested of the bishop in words. Afterward Bishop Arsenius carried out the holy elder's wish exactly, keeping the linen and the rosary for himself and using the rest at the funeral liturgy for the Venerable Seraphim.

Repeatedly, hinting at his approaching death, the Venerable said to his cell attendant:

“Soon the end will come!”

To one of the Sarov elders, after giving him instruction, he commanded him to blow out a candle, and when it went out, he said:

"Just so shall I be extinguished."

Shortly before his death, the Venerable asked that letters be sent to certain persons close to him, summoning them to the monastery. To others who could not come in time, he asked that after his death his soul-profitable counsel be passed on to them from him. Explaining this instruction, he added:

"They themselves will not see me!"

Before the beginning of 1833, the Venerable measured out his own grave beside the sanctuary of the Dormition Cathedral. A week before his repose, on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, he was present at the Divine Liturgy, received the Holy Mysteries of Christ, and after the liturgy spoke with the builder of the monastery, Abbot Nifont, asking him to take particular care of the younger brethren, and he directed that after his death he be buried in the coffin he had prepared for himself. On Sunday, January 1, 1833, the holy elder went for the last time

to the infirmary church of Sts. Zosimas and Sabbatius, kissed all the icons, set the candles himself, and then received the Holy Mysteries of Christ according to custom. At the end of the liturgy he took leave of all the brethren who were praying there, blessed them all, kissed them, and, comforting them, said:

"Be saved, do not despair, keep watch; today crowns are being prepared for you."

Then the holy elder kissed the Holy Cross and the icon of the Mother of God, and, having walked around the holy table and made the customary reverence to it, he left the sanctuary by the north doors, as if to signify that through one gate, the gate of birth, a person enters life, and through the other, the gate of death, he departs from it.

That same day, Brother Paul, who lived in the neighboring cell, often performed the duties of his cell attendant and brought him food, noticed that the Venerable went out about three times to the place of burial he had prepared for himself, stayed there for quite a long time, and looked at the ground. In the evening the same monk heard the elder singing Paschal hymns in his cell, glorifying the Resurrection of Christ.

On the next day, January 2, at about the sixth hour of the morning, Father Paul left his cell for the early liturgy and smelled smoke and burning in the entryway. Candles always burned in Seraphim's cell, which the elder never allowed to go out; to all warnings about this he would usually reply:

"As long as I am alive there will be no fire; and when I die, my departure will be revealed by a fire."

So it was.

After making the customary prayer, Brother Paul knocked at the elder's door, but it proved locked. Then he informed the others, supposing that the elder had gone to his hermitage and that the cell was on fire.

When the door was torn from its inner hook, they saw that there was no flame, but the books lying in disorder, as well as various linen articles that many had brought to the Venerable out of devotion, were smoldering; the elder himself was neither heard nor seen. They extinguished the smoldering things and informed the other monks who were

present at the early liturgy about everything that had happened. Many of the brotherhood hurried to the elder's cell. Lighting a candle, they saw Seraphim in his usual white smock, in his accustomed place of prayerful labor, on his knees before the small analogion, with a bronze crucifix on his neck. His hands, folded crosswise on his breast, lay on the analogion upon the book from which he performed his prayer rule before the icon of the Mother of God. Thinking that the elder had fallen asleep, the monks began to wake him; but his soul had already left its earthly dwelling and returned to its Creator. Seraphim's eyes were closed, but his face was alive and animated with contemplation and prayer; his body was still warm.

With the blessing of the superior, Abbot Nifont, the brethren washed the body of the departed ascetic, dressed him in the monastic habit, and laid him, according to his testament, in the oak coffin he had prepared during his life, which bore an enamel image of the Venerable Sergius sent to him by his beloved disciple, Archimandrite Anthony, deputy of the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra.

News of the holy elder's death spread quickly everywhere, and the whole Sarov region hastened to the monastery. The grief of the Diveyevo sisters was especially heavy, for they had lost in him their beloved spiritual father and protector, and their sorrow was all the more inconsolable because there was no one who could replace him as their spiritual guide.

On the night of the Venerable Seraphim's blessed repose, the hieromonk Philaret, who labored in the Hermitage of Glinsk in Kursk Province, coming out of the church after Matins, pointed out to the brethren an unusual light in the sky and said:

"Just so do the souls of the righteous depart to heaven! Now the soul of Father Seraphim is ascending to heaven."

For eight days the body of the Venerable Seraphim lay uncovered in the Dormition Cathedral. The grave for the blessed elder was prepared on the very spot that he himself had long before designated. Before the day of burial the Sarov monastery was filled with thousands of people who had gathered from the surrounding regions and provinces. All with one accord mourned the death of the gracious elder. On the day of

his burial, so many people attended the liturgy that the candles around the coffin went out from the stifling air. The burial of the body of the Venerable Seraphim was performed by Abbot Nifont of Sarov with the numerous brotherhood; the body was laid in the earth on the right side of the cathedral sanctuary. Later a cast-iron monument in the form of a tomb was erected over the grave, with the inscription: "He lived to the glory of God 72 years, 6 months and 12 days."

And after his blessed repose, the Venerable Seraphim continued to grant various healings and wonders to all who turned to him with faith. Even after his earthly pilgrimage had ended, he went on showing people the same love and help, bestowing upon all his relations with them inexpressible treasures of sympathy, and addressing them with inexpressible kindness as "my joy," as he had called everyone during his life. He appeared especially often to the Sarov monks and the Diveyevo sisters, for their healing and consolation.

Thus, not more than half a year after the blessed life of the elder Seraphim, a sister of the Diveyevo monastery was seized by fits of demonic possession. Then one night she saw that she was in the Diveyevo church, where the Venerable Seraphim was also present. The elder, taking the sick woman by the hands together with another sister who was there, seemed to lead her into the sanctuary and walked around the Holy Table with her, and she suddenly felt light and well. Upon waking she made the sign of the cross and came fully to herself; she awoke completely healthy, and from that time she was not subject to her former fits and enjoyed perfect health.

Another sister of the Diveyevo monastery became seriously ill in her eyes. On the eve of the new year 1835 she had a dream that she was in the church of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God, and that from the royal doors there came out, in a white vestment, the Venerable Seraphim, who handed her the aer and bade her wipe her eyes with it.

She asked him:

"Is it you, Father?"

Seraphim answered:

"How unbelieving you are, my joy! You yourself asked me, and yet you do not believe. Why, I am serving the liturgy for you here."

After this the elder became invisible. From that time the sister's eye disease passed away.

The Russian ascetic of Mount Athos known and esteemed by all under the name "Svyatogorets," Hieromonk Seraphim, in schema Sergius, relates the following in his cell notes:

"In 1849 I fell ill. My illness was deadly, and I did not think I would remain alive. No remedies could restore me, and I despaired. Then, only late in the evening of 1850, someone quietly said to me: 'Tomorrow is the day of the repose of Father Seraphim, the Elder of Sarov. Serve a memorial Divine Liturgy and a panikhida for him, and he will heal you.' This greatly comforted me. Although I did not know Father Seraphim personally, in 1838, when I was at Sarov, I conceived faith and love for him. These feelings became still firmer in me in 1839, when I dreamed that I was serving a moleben to Father Seraphim from my whole soul and loudly singing: 'Venerable Father Seraphim, pray to God for us!' Only, when the Gospel was to be read, I did not know which reading to take, the one for a Venerable or another. Suddenly someone said to me: 'Read the thirty-sixth lection from Matthew.' At these words of the mysterious voice I awoke. From that time until now I have sincerely believed that Father Seraphim is a great servant of God. But let me return to what I began (that is, to my account of my illness in 1849). By a secret prompting, urging me to commemorate Father Seraphim, I asked someone, being unable myself to serve the Divine Liturgy and the panikhida for him; and as soon as this was done, my illness passed. I felt an extraordinary calm and was delivered from the hostile force. And from that time until now, by the grace of God, I have been healthy."

In 1858 Eudocia, a nun of Diveyevo, on the Wednesday of the fifth week of Great Lent, was together with other sisters packing ice into a large common icehouse when she accidentally slipped and fell to the bottom from a height of three sazhens. She was lifted up as one dead; she complained of mortal pain in her side and in her head, and the slightest touch threw her into a prolonged faint. A physician who came found her condition very dangerous. Two weeks later, during which she almost could not sleep for the pain, at midnight on Maundy Thursday

she fell into a light sleep, in which she saw that the Venerable Seraphim entered her cell and said: "I have come to visit my poor ones" (so he had called the Diveyevo sisters entrusted to his care even during his life), "I have not been here for a long time." The sick woman exclaimed with bitter tears: "Batyushka, how my side aches!" The elder, folding three fingers of his right hand, made the sign of the cross three times over the bruised place, saying: "I am applying a plaster and bandages to you," after which he became invisible. Eudocia woke, but the cell was completely empty and quiet, and she fell asleep again. At five o'clock in the morning she awoke lying on her injured side, feeling no pain at all. Recalling the appearance to her of the Elder Seraphim, she said that "for a long time she felt as if a plaster were lying on the injured place." That same day she rose from her bed alone, without any help, and told everyone of her miraculous healing.

To many the Venerable gave healing, advising them to drink water from his spring and to bathe in it. Thus, two years after the elder's repose, one of the sisters of the Diveyevo convent was ill with a fever and lay at the point of death, and had completely lost the ability to use her hand. And she saw in a dream the Venerable, who asked why she did not come to him at the spring, and, taking her sick hand, raised her up, commanding that she certainly carry this out. On waking, the nun felt that her hand was healed; and when the sisters took her to Sarov to the Seraphim spring and poured water from it over her, she made a complete recovery.

Rittmeister Teplov, who held a particular reverence for the Venerable Seraphim, came to Sarov in 1834 with his three-year-old daughter, who suffered from her legs. After serving a panikhida at the elder's grave, they carried the child to the Seraphim spring, firmly believing that the Lord, for the elder's prayers, would have mercy on the sick girl. Having given the child water from this spring to drink and having washed her legs, they took water into the monastery with the intention of serving a moleben with the blessing of water over it. But, on entering the monastery, the girl tore herself from her nurse's hands and ran ahead like a healthy child, and received complete healing.

In 1856 the only son of the vice-governor of Kostroma Province, A. A. Borzko, aged eight, began to suffer from spasms of the stomach, which developed into a grave illness with terrible, exhausting fits, so that the parents began to despair for his life. At this time S. D. Davydova, a rassophore nun of the Kostroma women's monastery, gave the mother of the sick child an account of the life and labors of Seraphim of Sarov, which both parents of the child began to read, marveling at the workings of the grace of God that had shone forth in the Venerable. One night the child saw in a dream the Savior, surrounded by Angels, who promised the patient recovery if he would carry out what an elder who would come to him should command. Then the elder appeared to him, and, calling himself Seraphim, said:

"If you wish to be healthy, take water from the spring that is in the Sarov forest and is called Seraphim's, and for three days, morning and evening, wash your head, chest, hands and feet, and drink it."

In the morning the child told his dream to his parents, who wondered how they could obtain the water, and grieved over it. The next morning the child told another dream: the Mother of God, surrounded by Angels, had appeared to him and lovingly commanded him to carry out the elder's words. On that very day Madame Davydova, who had been traveling to Sarov, returned, and the parents asked her to help them obtain water from the Seraphim spring. She at once sent them a bottle of this water. And when they acted according to the elder's instruction, the child, gradually recovering, became completely well.

Others the Venerable Seraphim saved from robbers and thieves, appearing to them miraculously with threats. Thus, once a female pilgrim was walking through the Murom forests. Hearing terrible cries and groans in a remote place, she took out an image of Seraphim she had with her and made the sign of the cross with it over herself and over the place from which the cries came. Soon two mutilated men were found nearby, who related that the robbers had wanted to kill them, but suddenly ran off. The robbers, caught afterwards, repenting of their brigandage in the Murom forest, related that when they were about to deliver the last blow to their victims, suddenly out of the forest there

ran a gray-haired, stooping monk in a crumpled kamilavka and a white smock, with a threatening finger, crying: "Here I am, I'll get you!" And behind him ran a crowd of people with stakes. They were shown the image of Seraphim taken from the pilgrim woman, and they recognized it.

To the merchant's wife Petakovskaya of Shatsk, who had known the elder during his lifetime and had deeply revered him, the Venerable Seraphim once appeared in a dream and said:

"During the night thieves broke into your son's shop, but I took a broom and began to sweep around the shop, and they went away."

Indeed, in the morning all the locks were found torn off, but the shop was whole and untouched.

In 1865, in the house of a certain Madame Bar, before Christmas, when, according to custom, alms were being distributed there to the needy, the Venerable appeared in the form of a stooping, gray-haired elder. He explained to the woman distributing the alms that he had come not for alms, but that he needed to see the mistress of the house herself. When one of the servants whispered to another that he was probably a vagrant, the elder, promising to come by again when the mistress was at home, went away. The distributor of alms was seized with remorse and ran after him onto the porch. But he had vanished, and the mistress had been kept in ignorance of everything.

To the suspicious servant someone said in a dream:

"You spoke in vain: it was not a vagrant who came to you, but a great elder of God."

The very next morning there was delivered to Madame Bar by post a parcel containing an image of the Venerable Seraphim feeding a bear; in this image those who had spoken with the holy elder the day before recognized him.

The Venerable Seraphim worked many other miraculous signs and healings after his blessed repose. For seventy years after the death of the Venerable Seraphim, healings were continually granted to those who came to him with prayer and with faith in his intercession before the Lord. In 1891 a chapel was built over the tomb of the Venerable Seraphim. The memory of the lofty ascetic life of the holy elder, and

faith in the power of his prayerful intercession, not only did not weaken with the passing of time, but grew more and more and became firmly established among the Orthodox people of every estate. Fully sharing the popular faith in the holiness of Elder Seraphim, the Most Holy Synod on several occasions recognized the necessity of taking the proper measures for the glorification of the servant of God. In 1895 the Most Reverend Bishop of Tambov presented to the Most Holy Synod the investigation of miraculous signs and healings granted through the prayers of Elder Seraphim, conducted by a special commission, in which up to 94 cases had been examined. After that, the Most Reverend Bishop of Tambov twice presented to the Most Holy Synod, at the beginning and at the end of 1897, collections of copies of written statements by various persons concerning miraculous signs and healings that had taken place through the prayers of St. Seraphim. Finally, in 1902, on July 19, the birthday of Elder Seraphim, His Imperial Majesty, the Sovereign Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, was pleased to remember the prayerful labors of the departed and the zeal of the whole nation in his memory, and to express the desire that the matter of glorifying the devout elder, already begun in the Most Holy Synod, be brought to completion. At the beginning of the following year, 1903, the Most Holy Synod, in full conviction of the truth and reliability of the miracles taking place through the prayers of Elder Seraphim, resolved to acknowledge him in the choir of saints glorified by the grace of God, and his most venerable remains as holy relics. At the expense of Their Imperial Majesties a rich shrine of silver gilt was made for them. The solemn glorification of the newly revealed servant of God was performed on July 19, 1903, in the presence of Their Imperial Majesties, the Sovereign Emperor and the Empresses, and of the other members of the August Family, and of many thousands of people; it was accompanied by numerous healings that flowed from the prayerful intercession of the Venerable Seraphim, Wonderworker of Sarov.

May the Lord God, through his prayers, preserve us all from every sorrow and sickness! And to God, wondrous in His saints, be all honor, glory, and worship—always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

From thy youth thou didst love Christ, O blessed one, and, desiring to labor fervently for Him alone, thou didst struggle in the wilderness by unceasing prayer and toil; and having acquired the love of Christ in a tender heart, thou wast revealed as the chosen beloved of the Mother of God. Wherefore we cry unto thee: Save us by thy prayers, O Seraphim, our Venerable Father.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having left behind the beauty of the world and the corruptible things therein, O Venerable Father, thou didst settle in the Monastery of Sarov; and there, living angelically, thou wast a way to salvation for many. Wherefore Christ also glorified thee, O Father Seraphim, and enriched thee with the gift of healings and miracles. Therefore we cry unto thee: Rejoice, Seraphim, our Venerable Father.

* * *

Life of our Holy Father Sylvester, Pope of Rome

Житие святого отца нашего Сильвестра, папы Римского

St. Sylvester was born in Rome. He was brought up in the holy faith and was taught by the presbyter Quirinus both the sciences and good morals. Having attained maturity, he became a great lover of strangers, and out of love for God and his neighbor he brought wayfarers into his house, washed their feet, fed them, and gave them complete rest. When the holy man and confessor of Christ[40], Bishop Timothy, came to Rome from Antioch to preach there the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ, Sylvester received him into his house, and, seeing his holy life and hearing his teaching, advanced still more in virtue and in faith. Having lived in Sylvester's house for a year and several months, Timothy turned many Romans from idolatry to the true God, for which he was seized by the city prefect[41] Tarquinius and cast into

40. In the ancient Church, those Christians who during the persecutions openly declared themselves Christians and endured torments, but remained alive, were called Confessors. Such persons enjoyed especial respect in the Christian community, since the right to reconcile the fallen to the Church was granted to them.

41. Prefect – city governor.

prison. After a long stay in bonds and in the dungeon, he was subjected to beating, but even after that he refused to offer sacrifice to the idols, for which he was beheaded by the sword and received a martyr's death. The blessed Sylvester, taking his holy relics by night, buried them with fitting funeral chants in his own house. Afterward a pious woman named Theonisia, at her own expense, built a church in honor of St. Timothy, with the blessing of the Roman bishop Melchiades[42], who also transferred the relics of the holy martyr into this church. The city prefect Tarquinius, however, summoned Sylvester, demanded the property left after Timothy, and compelled him to offer sacrifice to the idols, threatening him with terrible torments for disobedience. But Sylvester, foreseeing the unexpectedly swift death of the prefect, said to him in the words of the Gospel:

– "This night thy soul shall be required of thee" (Lk. 12:20), and what you threaten to do to me shall not come to pass.

Angered by these words, the prefect ordered the saint to be bound in iron fetters and cast into prison, and then sat down to dine. During the meal a fish bone lodged in his throat, and it could not be removed by any means, even with the help of physicians; having suffered from the meal until midnight, Tarquinius died, in accordance with the saint's prediction, and in the morning his kinsmen carried his body away with weeping to the place of burial. The believers joyfully led Sylvester out of the prison, and from that time he was honored not only by the faithful but also by unbelievers. For many of the servants of the prefect's household, seeing how Sylvester's prediction had been fulfilled, grew afraid and fell at his feet, fearing that some misfortune might befall them as it had befallen their master; others, persuaded by that miracle, turned directly to Christ. Soon after this, St. Sylvester was received into the clergy of the Roman Church and received the rank of presbyter from Pope Marcellinus[43]. After the death of the Roman Pope Melchiades, he was unanimously chosen by all as pope[44] and ascended the episcopal throne. He was set before the eyes of all like a brightly burn-

42. St. Miltiades – Pope of Rome from 311 to 314.
43. St. Marcellinus – Pope of Rome from 296 to 304.
44. In antiquity the people took part in the election of a bishop.

ing candle on a candlestand, and he shepherded the flock of Christ like a new apostle, guiding it by his words and deeds to the saving pasture.

Noticing that some members of the clergy had forgotten the duties of their ministry and had taken up worldly affairs, he again compelled them to return to the service of the Church, and at the same time issued a decree that none of those who had been ordained should engage in commercial affairs. He also established new names for the days of the week for the Roman Christians. At that time the Romans called the first day, which we call Sunday, the day of the sun, and the remaining days were named by them the days of the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Zeus, Venus, and Saturn[45]. Abhorring the impious names of the pagan gods, Sylvester ordered that the first day be called the Lord's Day[46], because on that day the glorious Resurrection of our Lord from the dead took place, and the other days be named as the Roman Christians still name them today[47]. He also made a decree that Christians should keep a fast only on the one Saturday on which Christ died and descended into hell, to despoil it and to bring up from there our forefather Adam together with the other forefathers; and he forbade fasting on the other Saturdays[48].

At that time in Rome, in a deep cave beneath the Tarpeian Rock[49], there dwelt a huge serpent, to which the pagans brought sacrifices

45. These were all gods whom the Romans honored, and who were considered the patrons of one or another day.

46. This is the name given to Sunday already in the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian.

47. In the Roman Church, from ancient times, the days of the week have been called *feriae*, that is, days of divine service, which, according to the derivation from the Latin, indicates the obligation of the Christian to perform the service of God every day. Monday is *feria prima*, Tuesday is *feria secunda*, and so on. Saturday has retained among the Roman Christians its Hebrew name, while Sunday is called by its ancient name, *the Lord's Day* (*Dominica*).

48. The same thing about Saturday is stated already in the 64th canon of the Holy Apostles. Balsamon, in his commentary on this canon, observes that we do not fast on Saturday so as not to appear to be Judaizers; but if fasting is forbidden on Saturday, this means only that on Saturday one should not keep complete abstinence from food until evening, as is prescribed on Great Saturday, and does not indicate that on all Saturdays except Great Saturday one must eat non-Lenten food. According to the Church Typikon, on Saturday, immediately after the Liturgy, one may partake of wine, oil, and that food which is prescribed by the Church rules: in the meat-eating season, non-Lenten food; in the fasting seasons, Lenten food.

49. The Tarpeian Rock is the southern, steep cliff of the Capitoline Hill. It is named Tarpeian because the Sabines threw Tarpeia, the daughter of the commandant of the Capitol, from it, when they had taken this fortress. Its height is 150 feet above sea level.

every month as to a god; and when this serpent came out of the cave, it poisoned the air with its venomous breath, and many of the living near that place died, most often children. St. Sylvester, wishing to deliver the people from the deadly serpent and to turn them from godlessness[50] to the true God, gathered the Christians living in the city and commanded them to fast and pray for three days, while he himself fasted and prayed more than all. One night the holy Apostle Peter appeared to him in a vision and commanded him to take with him several priests and deacons and go without fear to the cave where the serpent lived. At the entrance to the cave Sylvester was to celebrate the Divine Service, then enter within the cave and, calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, shut the serpent up there so that it would never come out again. The saint, by the Apostle's command, went to the cave, and after the celebration of the Divine Service he entered it, and finding in it certain doors, he closed them, saying:

– Let these doors not be opened until the day of the Second Coming of Christ!

Thus, having shut the serpent up in the cave, he deprived it of any exit forever. The pagans, however, thought that Sylvester with his clergy would be devoured by the serpent. But when they saw him come out without any harm to himself, they were amazed; and seeing that the serpent no longer came out from that time on, many recognized the power of the true God and joined the faithful.

At that time Constantine the Great, who had not yet received holy Baptism, though he had believed in Christ with all his heart, ruled the Roman empire. He issued a decree that no one should dare to blaspheme Christ or persecute Christians; he commanded that the idol temples be shut and the pagan sacrifices brought to an end; and he released from exile the Christians who had been banished and freed those who had been imprisoned in dungeons. At the same time the emperor was attentive to petitioners and granted every just request; from his own estate he distributed generous alms to the poor. In Rome and beyond it, throughout the empire, Constantine ordered Christian churches

50. The pagans had many deities, but they did not know the true God; for this reason St. Paul calls them godless (Eph. 2:12).

to be erected. The Church of Christ grew and multiplied in the number of her children day by day, while idolatry diminished. This brought joy to the faithful, who were by then so numerous in Rome that they wished to drive out of the city all who did not wish to become Christians. The emperor, however, forbade the people to do this, saying:

"Our God does not wish anyone to come to Him under compulsion; whoever approaches Him of his own inclination and with a good intention, to him He is well-pleased and receives him with mercy. Let each therefore believe as he wills, in complete freedom, and let no one persecute another."

From this imperial word the people rejoiced all the more, seeing that the emperor permitted each to live according to his own faith, as he desired.

The faithful rejoiced not only in Rome but throughout the whole empire, for everywhere those who had been tormented for Christ were released from their bonds and dungeons, the confessors of Christ returned from their imprisonment, Christians who had hidden in the deserts for fear of their tormentors returned home without fear, and the persecution ceased everywhere.

But the ancient enemy of Christianity, the devil, unable to bear such a spectacle of church peace and the spreading light of piety, put into the minds of the Jews the thought of appealing to the most praiseworthy Helena, the emperor's mother, who was then living in her homeland, Bithynia.[51]

"Your son the emperor has done well," they said to Helena, "in abandoning impiety and overthrowing the idol temples. But it is not well that he has believed in Jesus and honors Him as the Son of God and the true God, when He was a Jew and a sorcerer who deceived people with various apparitions which He called up by His magical power. Pilate, after torturing Him as a criminal, hanged Him on a cross. Therefore you, O Empress, must lead the emperor out of such error, lest God be angered with him and some misfortune befall him."

Having heard this, Helena informed her son Constantine in writing. On reading the letter he replied to his mother, also in writing, that the

Jews who had reported this to her should come with her to Rome and that here they should enter into a dispute about the faith with the Christian bishops; whichever side prevailed, that faith, evidently, was the truer. When the empress announced this command of the emperor to the Jews, a multitude of learned Jews at once assembled, versed in their law, knowing also the teaching of the prophets and Greek philosophy, and ready for the disputation; and all of them set out for Rome with Empress Helena. Among them was one most wise rabbi,[52] named Zamvrius, who not only had thoroughly studied Hellenic philosophy and the Hebrew books but was at the same time a great sorcerer. It was upon him that the Jews placed all their hope, thinking that if he did not overcome the Christians in verbal debate, he would strike them down with his magical signs.

When the day came for the Jews' disputation with the Christians, the emperor sat on his throne, surrounded by his whole senate,[53] and before him stood St. Sylvester with a small company of those accompanying him, among whom were several bishops who had arrived in Rome at that time. The Jews then entered, to the number of one hundred and twenty, and the conversation began at once. Empress Helena listened to it, seated behind a curtain, while the emperor with the senate weighed what was said on both sides. At first the Jews demanded that twelve of the wisest Christians come forward to dispute with them; but St. Sylvester objected to them, saying:

"We place our hope not in a multitude of men but in God, who strengthens all; calling upon Him for help we say: Arise, O God, judge Thine own cause!"[54]

"These are words from your Scripture," the Jews replied, "for our prophet wrote them. You ought to speak in the words of your own books, not ours!"

Sylvester answered this:

51. The north-western province of Asia Minor.
52. Rabbi – an honorary title in Palestine, given to outstanding teachers and interpreters of the Old Testament law.
53. Synclite – the military and civil government, consisting of the most important royal counselors and dignitaries.
54. A slightly altered expression (Ps. 34:23).

"It is true that the Scripture of the Old Testament and the preaching of the prophets were first entrusted to you, but at the same time they are ours too, for they speak much of Christ our Lord. Therefore our dispute must be founded on your books, for while your books have become ours also, ours are foreign to you, and you will sooner believe your own books than ours. Thus on the basis of your books we shall show you the truth you resist; such a victory will be more glorious and more evident when, having taken the weapon from the hand of the enemy, we conquer him with that very weapon!"

"These words of the bishop," remarked the emperor, "are just, and it is impossible to contradict him in this; for if the Christians bring you evidence from your own books concerning their Christ God, then certainly the victory will remain with them, and you will be struck down by your own books."

The whole senate expressed approval of this imperial decision. Then the Jews began to say the following to the Christians:

"Our Almighty God says in the Book of Deuteronomy: See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me (Deut. 32:39). How, then, do you call Jesus God, when He was a mere man and our fathers crucified Him? How do you introduce three gods: the Father, whom we also believe in, and Jesus, whom you call the Son of God, and a third God whom you call the Spirit? In believing thus, do you not go against the Creator of all, God, who teaches that there are no gods besides Him?"

To this the God-inspired Sylvester replied:

"If you consider the Scriptures with your minds without any prejudice or irritation, you will be convinced that we introduce nothing new when we confess the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, for these are not our words but the Revelation of God contained in the books of the prophets of God. First of all, the prophet and king David, foretelling the rising of your fathers against our Savior, said: Why do the nations rage, and the tribes imagine a vain thing? They take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed (Ps. 2:1–2). Thus here, in calling Him Christ and Lord, he indicates not one person but two. And that Christ is the Son of God, the same prophet proclaims in such

words: 'The Lord said to Me: Thou art My Son; now (this day) I have begotten Thee' (Ps. 2:7). Another who begets and another who is begotten!"

To this the Jews said:

"In saying that God begot, you make the impassible passible. How can the Son, who was begotten at a certain time and had temporal being, be God? For the word 'this day' points to a certain time and does not allow us to acknowledge the Son as eternal God."

Sylvester answered:

We do not say that any passible begetting took place in relation to God. We confess that the Godhead is impassible, and that the begetting of the Son is such as the begetting of a word from a thought. We do not introduce a doctrine of a temporal begetting of the Son from the Father. We believe in His eternal begetting, which is not subject to the condition of time, for we know that the Creator of time is the Son together with the Father and the Spirit, and the Creator of time Himself is not under time. The expression, "I have today begotten Thee," does not signify the lofty and pre-eternal Divine begetting, but the lowly begetting, which took place at a certain time and was accomplished in the flesh assumed for our salvation.[55] The prophet knew that Christ is God pre-eternal, and therefore says: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever" (Ps. 44:7). But foretelling the incarnation that was to be accomplished at a later time, he said: "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Thus by the words "Thou art My Son" he points not to a temporal but to His pre-eternal begetting, and by the words "I have today begotten Thee" he signifies His begetting accomplished at a certain time. In saying "I have today begotten Thee," the prophet showed that the begetting of the Son which was to take place at a certain appointed time the Father ascribes to Himself, because it was to be according to His will. Yet even the expression "I have today begotten Thee" points to the eternity of the Divine begetting, in which there is no past or future action, but always only the present. Concerning the Holy Spirit, the same David bears witness in these words: "By the word of the Lord were the heav-

55. Almost all the holy Fathers refer this expression to the temporal birth of the Son of God in human flesh.

ens made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 32:6). Here, then, he mentions three Persons: God the Father, and the Son, whom he calls the Word on account of His lofty and impassible begetting, and the Holy Spirit. And elsewhere he says: "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. 50:13). And again: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?" (Ps. 138:7). By these words the prophet clearly shows that there exists a Holy Spirit who fills all things. And he also says: "Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, and they are created" (Ps. 103:30). Was not all this said by David? But Moses, the beholder of God, in the Book of Genesis also records these words of God: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). With whom, then, did God speak, if there was not with Him some other Person? No one will say that God said this to the heavenly Powers, for the very words "in our image" do not allow us to think so. God and the Angels do not have one and the same image and likeness, just as their essence and power are not the same as God's; the essence of God is one thing, and the essence of the Angels is another. Therefore we must suppose that there was Someone else in the conversation, with whom God spoke the words "in our image." This Other had to be one who had an essence identical with the God who spoke, and who was wholly identical with God in image and likeness. Who could this be, if not the Son, who is consubstantial with the Father, equal to Him in glory and power, being the unchanging image of God? What new thing do we introduce when we believe and affirm that there exist the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? And if this seems incredible and unfounded to the pagans, that is no wonder, for they do not know the Holy Scripture. But why do you not believe this, you who study the words of the holy prophets, not one of whom failed to prophesy of ours?

After that, St. Sylvester wished to speak more fully about the Holy Trinity, but the emperor, interrupting his speech, said to the Jews:

"Are the words which the bishop has quoted to us from Scripture read thus in your books also, Jews?"

They answered:

"Yes."

Then the emperor said:

"So, in that dispute about the Holy Trinity, it seems to me that you have been defeated."

"No, good emperor," replied the Jews, "Sylvester will by no means defeat us, if we also state what we have against him. We could say much, but we see that it is vain for us to dispute with such zeal about the Trinity. We did not come to speak about whether God is one or three, but about the fact that the Nazarene is not God. For even if we agree that there are three Gods, it still does not follow that we must believe that Jesus is God. He was not God but a man, born of men and living with sinful men, eating and drinking with publicans; and, as is written of him in the Gospel, he was tempted by the devil, then betrayed by a disciple, seized, mocked, beaten, given gall and vinegar to drink, stripped of his garments, which were divided among the soldiers by lot, nailed to the cross, and he died and was buried. How can such a one be called God? It is about this, O emperor, that we now speak against the Christians, that they introduce this new god. So, if they can say anything about Him, and if they have any testimonies, let them tell us!"

After this, St. Sylvester began to speak:

"We do not acknowledge three Gods, O Jews, as it seems to you, but we confess one God, whom we honor and worship as Existing in Three Persons or Hypostases. You should have considered the justice of those words which I quoted from your own books in answer to the first question you put, and should have entered into disputation about them; but since you now refuse to speak about this, let us talk about our Lord Jesus Christ, which you yourselves also wish. Let us begin with the following. God, who brought all things into being, when He created man and saw him inclined to every evil, did not disdain His perishing handiwork, but was pleased that His Son, remaining inseparable from Him (for God is everywhere), should descend to us on earth. So He came down and, being born of a Virgin, was made under the law, 'that He might redeem them that were under the law' (Gal. 4:4–5). And that He was to be born of a Virgin, the divine prophet Isaiah foretold in these words: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel' (Is. 7:14). This name, as you also know, sig-

nifies the coming of God to men, and in Greek translation means: God with us. Thus the prophet foretold long before that God would be born of a Virgin."

The Jews objected:

"In our Hebrew text the book of the prophet Isaiah does not contain the word 'virgin,' but speaks of a 'young woman.' You have falsified the Scripture, writing in your books 'virgin' in place of 'young woman.'"

Holy Bishop Sylvester answered:

"If your books read not 'virgin' but 'young woman,' is it not the same thing whether it is 'young woman' or 'virgin'? When the prophet Isaiah, on behalf of God, said to Ahaz: 'Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, either in the depth, or in the height,'[56] Ahaz answered: 'I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.'[57] Then the prophet said: 'Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign.' What sign? 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb.' But if you say that the prophet spoke not of a virgin but of a young woman, and that a young woman is not a virgin,[58] then the sign promised by the prophet could not be called a sign at all, for if a young woman who has married bears a child, there is no miracle there, but an ordinary event. To bear, however, without entering into union with a husband is truly a miracle; it is an extraordinary deed, surpassing the ordinances of nature. Therefore that Maiden of whom it is written among you was a Virgin, because the Lord promised through Her to give a sign, and precisely such a sign, that She, having known no man, would bear a Son supernaturally. Nor have we falsified the Scripture by writing 'Virgin' in place of 'young woman'; rather, we have expressed its meaning exactly, so that it may be seen more clearly in this the most wondrous Divine sign, surpassing human nature. Who among men was born without male seed, except Adam, created from

56. *Into the depth*, that is, on the earth or from under the earth; *into the height*, that is, from heaven.

57. Ahaz did not believe the prophet, but did not dare to say this to him directly, and therefore hypocritically cited in his justification the words of the Law of Moses, which forbade the Jews to tempt the Lord by demanding miracles (Ex. 17).

58. *Maiden* (*otrokovitsa*), that is, a young woman in general – she may be married, or she may still be a virgin, the Jews interpreted. This interpretation is incorrect. The word used here in the Hebrew Bible (*almah*) can mean, by its derivation, only a very young girl, still growing up. Moreover, throughout the Old Testament this word is never applied to a married woman.

the earth, and Eve, formed from his rib? And where has a woman given birth without entering into union with a husband? Thus there would have been no sign, which God promised to give, if that maiden had conceived in the womb not beyond nature, but by natural union with a husband, and it would have been an ordinary event of human nature. But since the pure Virgin conceived without a husband by the Holy Spirit, this must be counted as the new and glorious sign of God, and God is with us, according to the promise, born beyond nature of a pure Virgin."

"But since He who was born of Mary is named not Emmanuel but Jesus," objected the Jews, "then He is not the one whom God promised through the prophet, but another?"

St. Sylvester answered:

In Holy Scripture a person is sometimes not named but indicated by the deed of this or that person, as for example: "Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz" (Is. 8:3). Even if there never was anyone who bore such a name, still, since Christ was to conquer His enemies and take their spoil, the prophet names Him not by a name but by the deeds He was to accomplish. In the same sense the same prophet speaks of Jerusalem: "Afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness" (Is. 1:26). Although no one ever called that city the city of righteousness, and all called it by its usual name, Jerusalem, yet since at that time Jerusalem had made itself righteous before God, therefore, from the event that took place in it, the prophecy gives it the name "city of righteousness."[59] And there may be still other places in Scripture where an event is indicated in place of a name. That God was to dwell among men, listen to the prophet Baruch, who foretold: "This is our God, and no other shall be compared with Him. He found every way of wisdom and gave it to His servant Jacob and to Israel His beloved. After that He appeared upon earth and conversed with men."[60] And that He was to be tempted by the devil, Zechariah foretold: "And he showed me Je-

59. That is, because there the Savior of the world was born, Whom St. Paul names the king of righteousness (Heb. 7:2).

60. (Bar. 3:36–38), that is, acts always with supreme wisdom and knows the best paths leading to the goal.

sus, the great priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to Satan: The Lord rebuke thee, Satan; the Lord rebuke thee, Devil."[61] Of His seizure the Book of Solomon foretold: "The ungodly, reasoning wrongly, said among themselves: Let us lay snares for the righteous man, for he is a burden to us and opposes our deeds" (Wis. 2:1, 12). And that He was to be betrayed by His disciple, the psalmist foretold: "He who ate my bread has lifted up his heel against me" (Ps. 40:10). And of the false witnesses he said: "For false witnesses have risen up against me" (Ps. 26:12). Of the crucifixion he said: "They pierced my hands and my feet. I could count all my bones"[62]. The same prophet also foretold the dividing of Christ's garments: "They divide my garments among them, and upon my clothing they cast lots" (Ps. 21:19). And of His being given vinegar mixed with gall, he too said: "They gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink"[63]. And further, he foretold His burial: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit" (Ps. 87:7). And Jacob, your forefather, foreseeing this in spirit, said: "He bowed down, he lay down as a lion and as a lioness"[64].

By adducing these and many other testimonies of the holy prophets concerning Christ the Lord, St. Sylvester defeated the Jews, for since the Holy Spirit Himself spoke through his lips, he clearly proved that Christ is the true God, born of a Virgin.

Then the Jews said:

– What need was there for God to be born in the flesh of man? Could He not have saved the human race in some other way?

The saint answered:

61. (Zech. 3:1–2). The Jewish high priest Joshua, against whom the devil slandered before the Lord, is recognized by many Fathers of the Church as a prototype of Jesus Christ, Who likewise endured various attacks from the devil and his servants.

62. (Ps. 21:17–18), that is, in the Body of Christ, when it hung on the cross, the bones protruded so that they could be counted.

63. (Ps. 68:22). *Gall* – bitterness; *vinegar* – vinegar. These substances, according to the interpretation of the Blessed Theodoret, were added to the drink in order to make it bitter and unpleasant.

64. (Gen. 49:9). Jacob here properly spoke of his son Judah, but all that is said of Judah, according to the interpretation of the Fathers of the Church, must also be referred, in the higher sense, to the Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom Judah was a prototype.

– For God nothing is impossible, but the devil had to be conquered by the one who had previously been conquered by him. Man was conquered by him, a man born not in the ordinary course of nature, not from the seed of a man, but formed from earth, and moreover from earth that was pure and undefiled, like a virgin, for it had not yet been cursed by God, nor defiled by the blood of a murdered brother or by the slaughter of animals, so that it was not yet infected with decaying bodies nor polluted by any impure or unseemly deeds. From such earth was created the flesh for our forefather, which was quickened by the divine breath. But if the all-evil devil overcame such a man, it was necessary that he himself should be conquered by a man of the same kind. And such is our Lord Jesus Christ, born not according to the custom and law of nature, but from the pure and holy womb of a virgin, just as Adam came forth from earth untainted by sin. And as Adam was quickened by the divine breath, so He was incarnate through the action of the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the Most Holy Virgin, and became perfect God and perfect man, in all things except sin, having two natures, the divine and the human, but in one person; and therefore the human nature suffered for us, while the Godhead remained impassible.

In this connection the saint gave the following example:

– When a tree illumined by the rays of the sun is cut with an axe, the ray of sunlight is not cut together with the tree that is being cut. So also the humanity of Christ, united with the Godhead, if it endured sufferings, those sufferings did not touch the Godhead.

The emperor and the whole senate approved these proofs adduced by St. Sylvester, and acknowledged him the victor in the dispute, because the Jews could no longer say anything against Sylvester. Then the sorcerer Zamvrius said to the emperor:

– Although Sylvester overcomes us with his words, being wordy and skilled in discourse, yet for all that we shall not depart from our ancestral law, nor follow a man whom our fathers, by common agreement, delivered to death. And that there is only that one God whom we worship, and no other, I am ready to prove not by words, as Sylvester does, but by deed. Only command, O emperor, that a large and fierce

bull be brought here, and at once your majesty and all those present will be convinced that there is no God except our God.

One of those present said:

– Such a bull is in my herd, not far from the city gates. No one can put a yoke upon him, no one can even stroke him with the hand or touch him.

The emperor at once ordered that bull to be brought. Meanwhile, continuing the conversation, St. Sylvester asked Zamvrius:

– Why do you need the bull, and when it is brought, what will you do with it?

Zamvrius answered:

– I wish to demonstrate the power of our God, for if I whisper into the bull's ear, he will die at once. For a mortal creature cannot endure the name of God, and whoever hears that name cannot remain alive. And our fathers, when bulls were brought for sacrifice, spoke that name into the bulls' ears, and they at once fell with a loud roar and died, and so were made ready for sacrifice.[65]

Sylvester objected:

– But if this name, as you say, kills everyone who hears it, how did you come to know it?

Zamvrius answered:

– You may not know this mystery, because you are our enemy.

When Zamvrius gave this answer, the king said to him:

– If you do not wish to disclose this mystery to the bishop, then disclose it to us, for truly this matter is doubtful, unless one supposes that the name could be learned by reading it, as it is written somewhere.

Zamvrius answered:

– Neither skin, nor paper, nor wood, nor stone, nor anything else can contain the writing of that name, for at once both the writer and the thing on which it is written perish.

– Tell us, then, – remarked the emperor, – how did you yourself learn it? For it cannot be learned unless it is transmitted in words or set down in writing?

65. This was a false invention of Zamvrius. Oxen, as stated in the Law (Lev. 1 ff.), were slaughtered by priests.

– I, O emperor, – answered Zamvrius, – fasted seven days, then poured clean running water into a new silver basin and began to pray; then words were written upon the water by an invisible finger, and these made the name of God known to me.

The wise Sylvester said:

– If you really learned that name in the way you say, then still, when you speak it to someone in the ear, do you not hear the name yourself just as the one to whom you speak it hears it? How is it that you yourself, hearing it, do not die?

The sorcerer answered:

– I have already said that you should not know this mystery, since you are our enemy. And what need is there of words, when it is best to prove in deed what one says? Choose one of two things: either you, invoking the name of your Nazarene, kill the bull, that we too may believe in that Nazarene, or I will speak the name of our God into the bull's ear and kill the bull, so that you will then have to believe in our God.

All those present, hearing this, approved Zamvrius's proposal; the Christians, however, were thrown into confusion, although the holy bishop tried to calm them.

The emperor then said to Zamvrius:

– You must first fulfill your promise, for you promised to kill the bull with a single word.

The sorcerer answered:

– If you command me to do this, O emperor, then look upon the power of my God!

Saying this, he approached the bull, which strong men could scarcely lead, having fastened stout ropes to its horns. Coming up to the bull, Zamvrius whispered something into its ear, and the bull at once, letting out a loud bellow, shuddered and fell dead.[66] All who saw this were greatly amazed, and the Jews cried out with a loud voice, clapping their hands:

– We have conquered, we have conquered!

66. St. Sylvester attributes this matter to the help of demons, who, according to the teaching of the ancient Fathers and Teachers of the Church, used at that time all means to place obstacles in the way of the strengthening of the Christian religion.

Then Sylvester asked the emperor to command that all be silent, and when silence was established, the bishop said to the Jews:

– Is it not written in your books that Almighty God said: "I kill and I make alive; I smite and I heal" (Deut. 32:39)?

They answered:

– Yes, so it is written.

Then Sylvester said:

If Zamvrius killed the ox by the name of God, then let him also raise it up by the same name. For God is the God who does good and not evil. By His essence it belongs to Him to do good, and to do evil is contrary to His essence. His will, which is always good, wills always to do what is good. It sometimes happens that He punishes someone with some evil for the benefit of others, but this is not because He wills it, but because He is moved to it by our wicked deeds. Therefore, if Zamvrius could easily do what God does not favor by His very essence, then it is all the easier for him to do what is natural to God. Let him revive the ox by the same name of God by which he put it to death, and I will turn to his faith.

"Emperor!" replied Zamvrius. "Sylvester wishes once again to engage in a verbal dispute. But what need is there for words, when a plain deed has taken place?"

Then, turning to Sylvester, he continued:

"If you too, bishop, possess some power, then work a miracle by the name of your Jesus!"

"If you wish," answered St. Sylvester, "I will show you the power of my Christ: by calling upon His holy name I will raise up the ox which you have killed."

"You boast in vain, Sylvester," replied Zamvrius. "It cannot be that the ox will come to life!"

Then the tsar said to Zamvri:

"So then, if the bishop does what you say is impossible, will you believe in his God?"

Zamvri answered:

Zamvrius answered:

"I swear to you, emperor, that if I see the ox come to life, I will confess that Christ is God, and I will accept Sylvester's faith."

All the Jews said the same. Then the bishop, kneeling, prayed earnestly and with tears to God. Afterward, rising and raising his hands to heaven, he uttered aloud, so that all could hear:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and God, Thou who canst slay and make alive, smite and heal, graciously vouchsafe, through the invocation of Thy most holy and life-giving name, to revive the ox which Zamvrius killed through the invocation of demons. For the time has come for Thy wonders to be accomplished for the salvation of many. Hear me, Thy servant, at this hour, that Thy most holy name may be glorified!"

After the prayer he approached the ox and said in a loud voice:

"If Jesus Christ, whom I preach, born of the Virgin Mary, is the true God, then rise and stand upon thy feet, and, laying aside thy former fierceness, be gentle!"

No sooner had the saint said this than the ox immediately came to life, rose, and stood quietly and calmly. The saint commanded that the ropes be taken from its horns, and said:

"Go back to where you came from, and do harm to no one, but be gentle. So Jesus Christ, our God, commands you!"

And the ox went away quietly, although before it had been extremely fierce. Seeing this, everyone cried out as if with one voice:

"Great is the God whom Sylvester preaches!"

The Jews, together with Zamvrius, ran up to the saint, embraced his honorable feet, and asked him to pray to God for them and to receive them into the Christian faith. Also the Blessed Helena, lifting the curtain behind which she had been sitting while listening to the disputation and watching what took place, came out and fell at the saint's feet, confessing Christ as the true God. All the Jews present there, headed by Zamvrius, and an innumerable multitude of people turned to the true God and joined the Church of Christ.

After this triumph of the Christian faith, St. Sylvester spent the rest of his days in unceasing labors and cares for the Church of Christ.

Then, having well governed the rational flock entrusted to him and having reached a great old age,[67] he departed to the Lord. He had spent twenty-one years and eleven months on the episcopal throne. Now in endless life he, together with the Angels, glorifies the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God in the Trinity, to whom be glory from us also forever, amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Among priests thou didst appear as a priest, O God-bearer of the King and God, having become a companion of the ascetics.
Wherefore now thou dost rejoice with the Angelic choirs, O Father, rejoicing among the heavenly ones, O glorious Shepherd Sylvester.
Save those who celebrate thy memory with love.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Theogenes, Bishop of Parium

Память святого священномученика Феогена, епископа Парийского

The holy hieromartyr Theogenes was bishop in the city of Parium.[68] Taken by soldiers during the reign of Licinius[69] in Phrygia,[70] he was compelled by the tribune[71] Zalikintius to perform military service. But, because of his resistance, he was hanged on four posts and subjected to a cruel beating with clubs. The saint bore the torments bravely, and in the midst of them he foretold to the optio[72] and the tribune the breaking of their shins, and to Licinius defeat.

67. St. Sylvester, Pope of Rome, died in 335. His relics were buried on the Salarian Way, in the catacombs of St. Priscilla, one mile from Rome.
68. Parium – a city on the Hellespont (Dardanelles), in Mysia, the north-western province of Asia Minor, between Lampsacus and Cyzicus.
69. Licinius – Roman emperor, co-ruler with Constantine the Great.
70. Phrygia – a large region of Asia Minor, which originally embraced the whole middle part of the western half of the peninsula; in addition, the southern shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) up to the Hellespont, which was later counted as part of Mysia, so that the city of Parium was also counted as part of Phrygia in the 4th century, in the years 304–320.
71. Tribune – the commander-in-chief of the troops of the province.
72. Optio – assistant to the centurion; centurion – commander of a century, a military unit of 100 men.

After that, Theogenes was cast into prison, and while there the saint refused all food. When word of him was brought to Licinius, the latter ordered him to be thrown into the sea. Then the saint, having asked the executioners for time to pray, stood facing the east, raised his hands on high, and prayed for three hours. During his prayer he was surrounded by an extraordinary light, so that the executioners, the sailors and some of the soldiers, were converted to the Christian faith. Thus the hieromartyr Theogenes committed his holy soul to the Lord, drowned in the depths of the sea.[73] Afterward Christians retrieved his body from the water and buried it near the city walls. At the relics of St. Theogenes many miracles took place, and healings from various diseases flowed forth.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the memory of the Venerable Sylvester of the Kiev Caves, continuator of the chronicle after Nestor (the first Russian chronicler), who lived in the twelfth century and rests incorrupt in the nearby Caves of St. Anthony.

NOTES

34. The Sarov Men's Hermitage, in Tambov Province, Temnikov District, lies 37 versts from the town of Temnikov. It was founded in 1770 by Hieroschemamonk John at the confluence of the River Sarovka with the River Satis, on the site of the Tatar town of Saraklych. This place had been sanctified even earlier by the labors of virtuous ascetics: first the monk Theodosius, and then Gerasim. Both were witnesses to various gracious signs that clearly foretold the future significance of this locality (for example, in the form of a fiery ray descending from on high, loud peals of many bells, and so forth). Six years after the founding of the monastery, on the day appointed for raising the cross on the head of the first church built at Sarov, on the hill where the monastery is situated, a loud bell-ringing was heard at night, although there was not a single bell; the same occurred before noon, when an extraordinary light illumined those working. Among the successors of Hieroschemamonk John, especially notable for his ascetic life and for the good order of the monastery was the builder Ephraim. The Sarov Hermitage had long been famous for its strict observance of monastic rules and for the ascetic life of its her-

73. St. Theogenes, hieromartyr, suffered martyrdom about the year 320.

mits. At present the Sarov Hermitage is among the best-ordered and most well-provided Russian monasteries. It has up to seven churches. Its sacristy is remarkable for the exceptional value, beauty and elegance of the liturgical objects kept there. The monastery possesses extensive estates.

43. This was on 20 November 1794, the day of the saint's arrival at the Sarov hermitage. To this day one copy of the pass is preserved at the Sarov monastery. It was issued to the Venerable Seraphim so that he might live in the hermitage without hindrance, and it bears the signature of the builder, Elder Isaiah. The text of this pass follows: "The bearer hereof, Hieromonk Seraphim of the Sarov hermitage, is dismissed to dwell in the hermitage, in his own (that is, the monastery's) allotment, on account of his unfitness for community life because of illness. (From ceaseless cell vigil, constant presence at services in the church, and standing on his feet for many years with little rest except at night, Seraphim, before his departure into the desert life, fell ill; his legs swelled and sores opened on them, so that for some time he lost the ability to celebrate the sacred rites. This illness was no small impulse to his choosing the life of a desert dweller.) And for his zeal (meaning his particular, exceptional monastic labors, which required silence and solitude), and after many years of trial (probation, monastic testing) in that monastery and in the hermitage, he is dismissed solely for the peace of his spirit, for God's sake, and with the rule given him in accordance with the provisions of the Holy Fathers; and I further direct that no one shall hinder him from having his dwelling in one place, and I confirm this: Builder Hieromonk Isaiah, 20 November 1797. For certainty I attach my seal herewith."



THE THIRD DAY OF JANUARY

January 3

3 января

New Calendar January 3 · Old Calendar January 16 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Gordius

Страдание святого мученика Гордия

The Martyr of Christ Gordius was born in Caesarea in Cappadocia to Christian parents, and was brought up in the Orthodox Christian faith. Upon reaching manhood he was taken into military service and appointed centurion, for he surpassed many both in the strength of his body and in the power of his spirit.

At that time the Roman emperor Licinius[1] poured out all his malice upon the Christians and raised his God-fighting hand against the Church of Christ. Imperial commands and edicts were dispatched to all the marketplaces and to all the most crowded places, that no one should worship Christ, and that every transgressor of this imperial prohibition should be subjected to capital punishment. All were brought before stone and wooden idol images, to worship the work of human hands, and those who refused to obey were compelled to it by torments. Confusion began throughout the whole city; the property of the Christians was given over to plunder, houses were laid waste, people were beaten; pious women were dragged through the city; there was no mercy for youth, nor reverence for old age; those who were guiltless in anything suffered as criminals; the prisons were crowded; and good and wealthy houses were left without their inhabitants; the wilderness was filled with people exiled only for believing in Christ; a father delivered his son to death, a son dragged his father to judgment, a brother raged against his brother, and a slave rose against his master. The devil brought upon men's souls, as it were, some dreadful night of madness,

1. Licinius – Roman emperor who governed the eastern half of the Empire from 307 to 321.

so that one did not recognize another, as if in darkness. The houses of prayer were ravaged by the hands of the impious, the holy altars were overthrown, and there was no offering, no incense, no place where the Divine service could be performed: all was seized with dejection, as if by some dark cloud; the servants of God were driven out, every pious assembly went on in terror, and the demons rejoiced, defiling the universe with the smoke and blood of sacrifice.

Seeing such calamities, Gordius resolved to withdraw voluntarily from the city; casting off the military belt[2] and leaving wealth, relatives, friends, slaves, the comforts of life, and everything that is desired by those who love the world and its pleasures, he went off into the deep and impassable deserts, considering life with the wild beasts more pleasant for himself than fellowship with idolaters. He imitated the holy Prophet Elijah, who, seeing the service of the Sidonian idols, withdrew to Mount Horeb, entered a cave, seeking God, whom he saw as far as the human eye could behold Him (4 Kgdms. 19). Such was this Gordius, who fled from the tumults of the city, from the clamor of the marketplace, from the arrogance of officials, from the courts of slanderers who sell, buy, swear, lie and curse, who fled from the games and mockery and the indecent merriment of the city, for he had pure hearing, pure eyes, and above all a pure heart, which could behold God. He was granted divine revelations and came to know great mysteries "not from men, nor through man" (Gal. 1:1), but having the great teacher, the Spirit of truth (Jn. 15:26). Thence, passing to reflection upon life, how useless and brief it is, like a dream and a shadow, he longed with all the strength of his soul for eternal dwelling in heaven, and, like a strong wrestler, began to prepare for the struggle by fasting, vigil, prayer and instruction in the Word of God. With particular impatience he awaited the day on which the whole city was to celebrate the feast of the vile god Mars, or, more correctly, the demon who loves battles[3]. When this day arrived, the whole people went to the circus to

2. A special belt, on which the sword was hung, served as the distinction of persons holding honorable posts in the army.

3. The Roman god of war Mars was honored as one of the most important deities of the Roman state religion.

watch the horse races, and all took their places on the high seats. No one remained in the city; among the spectators watching the swift course of the horses and the skill of the charioteers there were also many Christians, who did not care for their souls and did not avoid the idle gathering. On that day the slaves were freed from their labors and gathered there as well; children hurried there from the schools, and wanton and shameless women were present there too.

Thus the circus was filled with a countless multitude of people, attentively watching the horse races. Then the valiant and great-spirited Gordius, descending from the high mountain into the circus, was not afraid of the people, nor did he pause to consider to how many armed hands he was delivering himself; but with an undaunted heart and a fearless soul, pressing through the people sitting in the circus, he stood in the middle, confirming the word of Scripture: "The righteous is bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1)[4]. But more than this: standing with such boldness in the open place of the circus, he proclaimed in a loud voice, like the apostles, the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "I was found by those who sought Me not" (Is. 65:1), showing them clearly that he had not been brought there by necessity, but offered himself willingly to the martyr's struggle in imitation of the Lord Christ, who Himself delivered Himself into the hands of the Jews who had sought Him in the darkness of night. When those present in the circus recognized who stood before them, a cry immediately arose: the believers applauded with joy, while the unbelievers shouted to the judge that he should give the order to execute Gordius. Everything was filled with shouting and confusion; they ceased to look at the horses, ceased to look at the charioteers; in vain the noise of the chariots filled the air: no one wished to see anything but Gordius, no one wished to hear anything but the words of Gordius. The whole circus was filled with a cry which, spreading through the air like the wind, covered the noise of the horses. When the herald gave the sign for silence, the trumpets fell silent, the flutes ceased, the musical instruments were stilled: all looked only at Gordius, all listened to him alone. There in the circus sat also the governor, who

4. That is, the righteous man fears nothing, like a lion.

oversaw order at the races and assigned the prizes to the participants. The saint was brought to him at once, and the following question was put to him:

"Who is he, and whence? From what family and lineage?"

Then Gordius told about himself everything: what rank he held, and why, having left the service, he had withdrawn into the wilderness, and why he had returned.

"I have returned," said Gordius, "in order to show by deed that I despise your commands and confess Jesus Christ, my hope and protection. Having learned that you surpass many in your savagery, I deliberately chose this day as a convenient time for the fulfillment of my purpose and vow."

At these words the governor's anger flared up like fire, and he turned all his fury upon the holy Gordius.

"Call the executioners to me!" he cried. "Where are the scourges? Where are the leaden balls? Where are the wheels? Let them stretch him upon the wheels and tear his body to pieces[5]; let them hang him on a tree, bring the instruments of execution; let him be given to the beasts, beheaded with the sword and cast into the abyss. Yet all this is still too little for this impious man, who deserves to perish not by one death, but by many."

Then the holy Gordius said:

"Truly, I would do myself great harm if I did not wish to die for Christ!"

These words brought the governor into even greater fury, intensifying his natural savagery. But the more cruel he became, the more manfully the holy Gordius showed himself under torments. No torments, no deadly instruments could turn him from his chosen purpose. Lifting his eyes to heaven, he sang the verses of the psalm: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do to me?" (Ps. 117:6), and again: "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (Ps. 22:4); and other such sayings which he had learned from the Divine books Gordius sang,

5. Instruments of torture of the first Christians.

rousing himself to courage and endurance. He was so far from fear that he himself called down torments upon himself.

"Why," he said, "do you delay? Why do you stand? Flay my body and divide it into pieces, torment me as you please. Do not deprive me of the hope of receiving those good things that have been promised me: the more you increase my sufferings, the greater reward I shall receive from my Master. The sorrow of this life brings eternal joy, and instead of the wounds which you lay upon our bodies, we shall receive on the day of the general resurrection bright garments; for dishonor, heavenly crowns will be given us. Instead of condemnation with the wicked, we shall be granted to dwell with the Angels."

Unable to turn the holy Gordius from the holy faith by his fury and tortures, the crafty governor began to entice him with flatteries; for such is the custom of the devil: he frightens the timid, and softens and enfeebles the steadfast with flattery. So the tormentor began to offer the saint various gifts, and promised even greater rewards in the name of the emperor.

"The emperor," he said, "will give you a high post in the army, great estates, riches and glory, and everything that you may desire."

The saint, however, hearing his promises, laughed at his folly and said:

"Can you indeed give me anything that could be better than the Kingdom of Heaven?"

Then the impious governor, drawing his sword in anger and ordering the executioner to be called, condemned the holy Gordius to beheading. Before the execution, in the presence of a multitude of people, Gordius was surrounded by men who knew him; they embraced him and gave him the last kiss. With tears they besought him not to deliver himself to death, not to destroy his life in the flower of his years, and not to leave this sun, pleasing to all. They advised him at least to renounce Christ in words, and said:

In a single word you may save yourself from death: deny Christ with your lips; but believe in Him in your heart as you wish, for God regards not the tongue but the thought of him who speaks. If you do this, you will both soften the judge's anger and propitiate God.

He, however, remained unshaken in his good resolve, like a cliff standing in the midst of the sea, which stays unbroken though the waves of the sea strike it with force. And as a house built upon rock is not destroyed by any strong winds, nor by heavy rains and overflowing rivers, so that steadfast man was immovable in his faith.

Seeing with his spiritual eyes that the devil was going about his acquaintances, urging one to tears and another to supplications and to ill counsel, the martyr said to the weeping ones in the words of the Lord: "Weep not for Me" (Lk. 23:28), but weep for the enemies of God who persecute Christians. Of them I speak: weep for those who, "preparing fire for us, kindle Gehenna for themselves and store up wrath for themselves against the day of wrath" (Rom. 2:5). Cease to break my heart; for I am ready to die for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ not once, but many times.

To those who advised Gordius to deny Christ only in words, he answered thus:

– The tongue that by the grace of Christ has been given to me, I cannot compel to deny its Creator: "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). How, then, shall I deny the Lord, Whom I have worshipped from my very childhood? I was brought up in the holy faith. Would not heaven be struck with horror if I were to deny God? Would not the heavenly luminaries hide their light from before me? Would the earth bear with me, or would it not swallow me up alive? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked" (Gal. 6:7)[6] "and out of thy mouth will I judge thee, and out of thy words will I justify thee, and out of thy words will I condemn thee" (Lk. 19:22; Mt. 12:37). Have you not heard the dread threat of the Lord: "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 10:33)? Why, then, do you counsel me to deny my God with my lips? Is it that I may prolong my life? Is it that I may for a time escape death and gain a few days of life? But by this I shall lose eternal life. Is it that I may avoid bodily torments? But then I shall not behold the bless-

6. That is, God cannot be deceived.

ings prepared for the righteous, there where there is no sickness. It would be plain madness if I were to purchase for myself a short-lived life at the price of eternal torment and perdition together with my soul. No, I counsel you as well: if you think so ill, then learn prudence and truth, and "putting away lying, speak every man truth" (Eph. 4:25); say that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11), for such words shall every tongue confess, since "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Phil. 2:10).

Having said this and made the sign of the cross upon himself, St. Gordius went to execution without fear, his countenance unchanged in its brightness, and he stood at the place of execution in such a frame of spirit as though no executioner were behind him, and as though he saw before him the Angels to whose hands he wished to entrust his soul. Beheaded by the sword, he attained a blessed life: like Lazarus, amid joyful acclamations he was carried to the place of eternal rest, where, receiving his recompense, he together with the Angels forever glorifies Christ, the Leader of the contest, for whom he suffered.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Thy sweats, most glorious one, have watered the whole earth, and by thy honorable blood, O Gordius, thou hast gladdened the whole world. Through thy prayers, O God-wise one, save all who in faith sing to thee and bless thee, crying out a worthy song, O all-praised one, as the much-suffering one.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Prophet Malachi

Память святого пророка Малахии

The Holy Prophet Malachi was of the tribe of Zebulun[7]. He lived and prophesied in the times of Nehemiah[8], after the return of the

7. Zebulun – the sixth son of the Patriarch Jacob by Leah. – His tribe occupied the better part of the land to the north of Palestine, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Lake of Gennesaret, bordering on the north with the tribes of Asher and Naphtali, and on the south with Issachar, which occupied the great plain of Israel.

Jews from the Babylonian captivity[9], when the Temple of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, and divine service was celebrated in it and sacrifices were offered by the priests. By his pious life he amazed the people, who, seeing that he was by the purity of his life like unto an Angel of God, named him Malachi, which means "Angel of the Lord." Called to the prophetic ministry, Malachi appeared as a zealous champion of faith, law, and piety. After the return of the Jews from captivity, there was much disorder among them in their moral and religious condition, which, through the negligence and carelessness of the priests, increased and grew even more, and could not but stir and grieve the prophet. He came forward with a strong and terrible rebuke of the people and the priests. The prophet rebuked the people and the priests for not having due reverence for God and for offering Him poor sacrifices (Mal. 1). He rebuked the priests because by their unrighteousness, their deviation from the right path, their non-observance of the commandments, and their hypocrisy in the works of the law, they dishonored God, causing offense among the people (Mal. 2:1–9). Sternly rebuking the people for their treachery and for breaking the covenant of their fathers, in that they acted lawlessly toward their wives, unjustly casting off their lawful wives and taking foreign women (Mal. 2:10–16), the Holy Prophet Malachi threatened them with the judgment of God for their various other vices as well: their sorceries and adulteries, their false oaths, their withholding of wages from hired laborers, their oppression of widows and orphans, their rejection of strangers, and their failure to keep the law concerning tithes and offerings to the house of God (Mal. 3:5–12). Finally, the prophet rebuked the Hebrews for their blasphemy, for their bold and reviling words that it was supposedly vain to serve God, useless to keep His ordinances and to walk before His face in mourning garments, and that the wicked and those who do iniquity live happier, arrange their affairs better, and remain

8. Nehemiah – a Jew, cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus; afterwards he encircled the half-ruined Jerusalem with walls, and together with the learned priest Ezra, who led many Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem, organized the ecclesiastical and civil life of the Jews in Jerusalem after the captivity. He set forth his deeds in a book known under his name, which was included in the Bible.

9. That is, approximately 400 years B.C.

unharmed (Mal. 3:13–15, 2:17). In rebuking these vices, the Holy Prophet Malachi at the same time foresaw the glory of the second Temple, and most clearly foretold the coming of the Messiah, the appearance of the Forerunner before His coming, the coming judgment of God upon the wicked, the glorification of the righteous, and the spread of the glory of God before all nations (Mal. 1:5, 11; 2:1–5; 3:16–18; Mal. 4).

The Holy Prophet Malachi died in his youth and was buried with his ancestors in his native village of Sufa. He was the last of the Old Testament prophets, for which reason the holy Fathers call him the seal of the prophets[10].

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Enriched with the gift of prophecy, O Prophet, thou didst clearly foretell the coming of Christ and the salvation of the world, by whose radiance the world was illumined.

* * *

10. The name of the prophet Malachi is attached to a book, the last among the books of the "Minor" prophets. It consists of four chapters and sets forth one prophetic discourse of his, in all probability expressing the substance of many discourses he uttered orally. The content of this discourse is a rebuke of the moral failings of the Jewish people of the prophet's time, a threat of punishment by God, and a promise concerning the Savior. The book of the prophet Malachi abounds in Messianic prophecies; in keeping with the Messianic character of the book's content (Mal. 3:1–3, 6–7, 12, 17–18; 4:4–6), where prophecies are contained concerning the coming of the Forerunner of the Lord, it is read as a parimia on all feasts in honor of the Holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John.

THE FOURTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 4

4 января

New Calendar January 4 · Old Calendar January 17 (civil dates)

Synaxis of the Holy Seventy Apostles

Собор святых семидесяти Апостолов

Besides the twelve apostles, the Lord Jesus Christ chose seventy others. The holy Evangelist Luke speaks of this thus: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face" (Lk. 10:1). The Twelve were with Him as witnesses of His life, while the seventy prepared people to receive Christ the Savior, preaching beforehand in those cities which the Lord Christ intended to visit. Afterwards many of the Lord's disciples, and certainly many of the seventy among them, fell away from Christ and ceased to serve Him. The holy Evangelist John writes: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" (Jn. 6:66–67) When the days of Christ's sufferings came, the number of Christ's disciples was diminished still more, and scarcely anyone of the seventy remained with Him, when even one of the Twelve fell away from Him. After the Resurrection of Christ, the choir of the holy twelve apostles was completed by Matthias, but the choir of the seventy was not filled at once, but little by little, from among those who were converted to Christ by the twelve apostles and by the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul, who was called from above into the same foremost choir and became, together with Peter, the chief in that choir.

On the basis of Divine Scripture, the tradition of the holy Fathers, the ancient historians and the trustworthy ecclesiastical chroniclers, the choir of the holy seventy apostles may be presented in the following manner.

The first of the seventy apostles was the holy James, brother of the Lord, of whom the holy Apostle Paul makes mention in his Epistle to the Galatians, saying: “I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter; but other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:18–19). He was appointed the first Bishop of Jerusalem according to the testimony of tradition, being chosen for this and consecrated by Christ Himself during His earthly life. While preaching Christ in Jerusalem, the Apostle James was thrown down by the Jews from the roof of the Temple to the ground, then stoned, and died from a blow of a club to the head.[1]

The holy Evangelist Mark, who wrote the Holy Gospel under the guidance of the holy Apostle Peter, who mentions him in his first Catholic Epistle in these words: "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son" (1 Pet. 5:13). The same holy Apostle Peter ordained Mark Bishop of the city of Alexandria,[2] where, for his preaching about Christ, the idolaters bound him, dragged him over the stones and beat him. At that time the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him, calling him to heavenly glory, and the apostle yielded up his spirit to Him.[3]

The holy Evangelist Luke, who wrote the Holy Gospel under the guidance of the holy Apostle Paul, who also mentions him in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Luke, the beloved physician, greeteth you" (Col. 4:14). He also wrote the Book of the Acts of the Apostles and preached much about Christ,[4] chiefly in Boeotia.[5] He died a martyr's death in Achaia.[6]

The holy Cleopas, younger brother of the holy Joseph the Betrothed. On the road to Emmaus, together with the holy Luke, he saw

1. His memory is celebrated by the Church on 23 October.
2. Alexandria – the famous city founded by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C., on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, in Lower (Northern) Egypt, at the mouth of the Nile. In antiquity it was a very wealthy commercial and industrial city. At present Alexandria belongs to the number of the most fortified port cities and most important trading points on the Mediterranean, with a population of up to 230,000.
3. His memory is celebrated on 25 April.
4. The memory of the holy apostle and evangelist Luke is celebrated by the Orthodox Church on 18 October, and the day of the translation of his relics on 22 April.
5. Boeotia – a region of central Greece.

the Lord after His Resurrection, then recognized the risen Christ when He appeared to the gathered disciples in one house, where He broke bread (Lk. 24:13–35). For his preaching about Christ, the holy Cleopas was put to death by the Jews.[7]

The holy Simeon, a kinsman of the Lord according to the flesh, was the second Bishop after the Apostle James in Jerusalem, where he also ended his life, being crucified for the crucified Christ.[8]

The holy Barnabas, named so by the Apostles, and previously called Joses (Acts 4:36). He is mentioned in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 11:24) and in the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians: "I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas," says the Apostle Paul (Gal. 2:1). This Apostle Barnabas, together with the holy Apostle Paul, served the preaching of the Gospel, first preaching about Christ in Rome, and afterwards was ordained Bishop of Milan.[9] He died in his homeland, on the island of Cyprus, where he was stoned to death by the persecutors of the faith of Christ. The Christians honorably buried him and laid with him in the grave, according to his testament, the Holy Gospel of Matthew, which Barnabas had once copied himself and from which he never parted.[10]

The holy Joses, or Joseph, also called Barsabbas and Justus. He is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is related that he was nominated together with Matthias for the place of the fallen apostle Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:23), and in the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Colossians, in which the Apostle, enumerating the greetings of the faithful of the Colossian Church, says: "And Jesus, which is called Justus" (Col. 4:11). The teachers of the Church say that this Joses was the son of Joseph the Betrothed, as were James, Simon and Judas, not Iscariot, and occupied the episcopal see in Eleutheropolis,[11] where he also died a martyr's death.[12]

6. As St. Gregory the Theologian testifies in his first oration against the Emperor Julian.
7. According to tradition, in that same house in which he, with St. Luke, recognized the risen Christ through His breaking of bread.
8. The commemoration of him was established by the Church on 27 April.
9. Mediolanum – now Milan – the most important city of Northern Italy, in the region of Lombardy; founded in remote antiquity and always of great significance.
10. The memory of the holy apostle Barnabas is celebrated separately on 11 June.

The holy Thaddeus was first a disciple of the holy John the Forerunner, and afterwards a disciple of Christ. He must be distinguished from the holy Apostle Jude Thaddeus, or Levi, one of the Twelve. He baptized the Prince of Edessa, Abgar, and healed him of leprosy. After long labors in the work of preaching about Christ, he fell asleep in the Lord[13] in the Phoenician city of Berytus.[14]

The holy Ananias, who baptized the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:10–18), was first Bishop in the city of Damascus.[15] The holy Ananias ended his life in Eleutheropolis, where he was stoned by order of the hegemon Lucian.[16]

The holy first martyr Stephen, archdeacon, was the first to receive the crown of martyrdom for Christ, being stoned, for which reason he is called "the First Martyr."[17] Shortly before his death he was granted to see the open heavens and the Lord Jesus, in the likeness of the Son of Man, standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55).

The holy Philip, one of the seven deacons, who baptized Simon the sorcerer in Samaria[18] and the eunuch of Candace the queen (Acts

11. Eleutheropolis – a city in Southern Palestine, on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. At present a village lies here, at the exit from the Shephelah plain into the highland of Judea. Not far from it lie the ruins of ancient Eleutheropolis.

12. The commemoration of him is on 30 October.

13. The memory of the holy apostle Thaddaeus is celebrated by the Church on 21 August.

14. Berytus – the present Beirut – an ancient city of Phoenicia, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; in the fifth century it flourished and was famed for its higher school of rhetoric, poetry and law; today it is the main administrative city of Asiatic Turkish Syria and the most important trading point of the Syrian coast, with a population of up to 180,000 inhabitants.

15. Damascus – the principal and wealthiest commercial city of Syria, one of the most ancient cities in the whole world; it lies to the north-east of Palestine, on the river Barada, which flows through it, in a beautiful and fertile plain at the eastern foot of Anti-Lebanon. Even now the city of Damascus, which is part of the Turkish Empire, is one of the richest cities of Asia and has 150 thousand inhabitants.

16. The memory of the holy apostle Ananias is celebrated by the Holy Church on 1 October.

17. The memory of the holy protomartyr Stephen is celebrated by the Church three times a year: on 27 December, the day of the saint's martyrdom; on 15 September, when the finding of his relics is celebrated; and on 2 August, the day of the translation of the relics of St. Stephen from Jerusalem to Constantinople.

18. Samaria, as a country or region of Palestine, occupied the middle of Palestine, west of the Jordan. Its boundaries were Galilee to the north, Judea to the south, the Jordan to the east, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Samaria, the principal city of the Samaritan country and once the capital of the kingdom of Israel, lay about three versts north of Jerusalem. At present not one stone remains upon another of the ancient glorious city. On its site stands only a poor little village, Sabustiye (formerly the city of Sebaste).

8:26–39), was Bishop in the city of Tralles,[19] and there, having enlightened many with the Christian faith, in deep old age departed to the Lord.[20]

The holy Prochorus, one of the seven deacons (Acts 6:5), companion of the holy Apostle John the Theologian and participant in his labors. He was the first Bishop in the Bithynian city of Nicomedia,[21] and afterwards preached about Christ in Antioch,[22] where he died a martyr's death.

The holy Nicanor, one of the seven deacons, was put to death together with two thousand who had believed in Christ, on the same day on which the holy Stephen the First Martyr was stoned; this happened, as is written in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, during the great persecution raised against the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).

The holy Timon, one of the seven deacons, was Bishop of the city of Bostra in Arabia,[23] and, while preaching the name of Christ, endured much suffering from the Jews and Greeks. Then, having been cast into a heated furnace, he came out from there unharmed, and afterwards departed to the Lord.

The holy Parmenas, one of the seven deacons, while carrying out the work of preaching the Gospel entrusted to him by the Apostles, died a martyr's death before the eyes of the Apostles.[24]

The holy Timothy, who labored in the work of preaching Christ together with the holy Apostle Paul, who wrote two epistles to him, was Bishop in Ephesus,[25] where he also died a martyr's death.[26]

19. Tralles was a Lydian city in the northwest of Asia Minor.
20. The memory of the Apostle Philip is celebrated by the Church on October 11.
21. Nicomedia was a rich and flourishing city in the region of Bithynia, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor. Many ruins of the ancient flourishing Nicomedia remain to this day, bearing witness to its glorious past.
22. Antioch, the capital of Syria, was the most ancient and richest city. Antioch lies on the river Orontes, about 10 versts from its outflow into the Mediterranean Sea, between the mountain ranges of Lebanon and Taurus. At present Antioch is under Turkish rule and is a small, poor town with up to 10 thousand inhabitants.
23. Bostra was a city in Arabia. In antiquity it was a rich trading city; now it lies in ruins. The long rows of preserved stone storehouses bear witness to its former power and wealth.
24. The memory of the holy Apostles Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon and Parmenas is celebrated together on July 28. St. Nicanor is celebrated on December 28, and the memory of St. Timon on December 30.

The holy Titus also labored together with the holy Apostle Paul in the work of preaching. The holy Apostle Paul mentions him in his epistles (2 Cor. 2:12–13, 12:18; 2 Tim. 4:10), and also wrote an epistle to him. The holy Titus was Bishop of Gortyna, on the island of Crete. He died in peace in deep old age.[27]

The holy Philemon, to whom the holy Apostle Paul wrote a special epistle, was Bishop in Gaza.[28] He died a martyr's death in the reign of Nero.[29]

The holy Onesimus, of whom the holy Apostle Paul writes in his epistle to Philemon (Philem. 1:10–19), preached Christianity in Spain, Greece and Asia Minor. He died a martyr's death soon after the repose of the holy Ignatius the God-bearer, being stoned in Rome.[30]

The holy Epaphras, of whom the holy Apostle Paul also makes mention in the same epistle to Philemon, saying: "There saluteth thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner for Christ Jesus" (Philem. 1:23), was Bishop of the city of Colossae and of the churches of Laodicea and Hierapolis.[31] Together with the holy Apostle Paul he was held in bonds in Rome, whence Paul wrote to the Colossians: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis" (Col. 4:12–13).

The holy Archippus, mentioned in the same epistle to Philemon, was, after the holy Epaphras (who was imprisoned in Rome), Bishop in the city of Colossae;[32] of which the holy Apostle Paul writes to the Colossians: "And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou

25. Ephesus was the principal city of the province of Asia, situated on the river Cayster. At present, on the site of ancient Ephesus stands a poor Turkish village called *Ayasoluk*.
26. The memory of the holy Apostle Timothy is celebrated by the Church on January 22.
27. The memory of the holy Apostle Titus is celebrated on August 25.
28. Gaza was one of the most ancient Philistine cities and served as the boundary of the Canaanites in the south of Palestine. Subsequently this flourishing city lost all its importance, and now only sandy hills and miserable ruins bear witness that a great city once existed here. Not far from here is situated a new town of later origin, bearing the same name.
29. The Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of the holy Apostle Philemon on February 19.
30. In the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan, about the year 109. The memory of the holy Apostle Onesimus is celebrated on February 15.
31. Cities in Asia Minor.

hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Col. 4:17). There the holy Archippus also died a martyr's death.[33]

Saint Silas was a disciple and close companion of the holy Apostle Paul, with whom he preached the word of God and endured many sufferings, wounds, and imprisonment (Acts 16:13–24). He is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles: "Paul chose Silas and strengthened the churches" (Acts 15:40–41). Afterwards he was bishop in Corinth[34], and, having laboured much in the preaching of the word of God and having wrought signs and wonders, he departed to the Lord.[35]

Saint Silvanus preached the word of God together with the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. The holy Apostle Peter mentions him in his Catholic Epistle in these words: "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly unto you" (1 Pet. 5:12). The holy Apostle Paul likewise, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, by me and Silvanus" (2 Cor. 1:19). The Apostle Silvanus was bishop in Thessalonica[36], where, after enduring many hardships in his labours for the establishment of the holy Christian faith, he departed to Christ, the Lord of the ascetic struggle.

Saint Crescens[37], whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in his second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:10), was bishop in Galatia[38], and

32. Colossae was a city in the southwestern part of Phrygia, on the river Lycus, near Laodicea and Hierapolis. In antiquity it was a large, populous, and rich city. At present it is a small village on one of the slopes of Mount Hokas, near which there still remain the ruins of the ancient city of Colossae.

33. The memory of the holy Apostle Archippus is celebrated by the Church on February 19.

34. Corinth, the most ancient, famous and rich trading city of Achaia, lies on a beautiful and fruitful plain at the southeastern corner of the Gulf of Corinth, between the Ionian and Aegean Seas. At present the ruins of ancient Corinth are located near the modern Corinth, called Kurunto, which has about 5000 inhabitants.

35. His memory is celebrated on July 30.

36. Thessalonica, or Thessaloniki, a very significant ancient city of Macedonia, lay at the bottom of the large Thessalonian, or Thermaic, Gulf on the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago). At present this city, under the name Salonica, is after Constantinople the first trading and manufacturing city in European Turkey, with a very numerous population.

37. His memory is celebrated on July 30.

38. Galatia is a small, mountainous but fertile province of Asia Minor, lying between Phrygia, Bithynia, Pontus and Cappadocia. It received its name from the Galatians, warlike tribes of Gallic or Celtic origin.

afterwards preached Christ in Gaul. There, in the city of Vienne[39], Crescens ordained his disciple Zacharias as bishop, and returned again to Galatia, where he died a martyr's death in the reign of Trajan[40].

Saint Crispus, of whom the Acts of the Apostles speak in these words: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house" (Acts 18:8), and of whom the holy Apostle Paul writes in his Epistle to the Corinthians that he "baptized Crispus" (1 Cor. 1:19), was bishop on the island of Aegina, near the Peloponnese[41], between the Aegean and Ionian Seas. He died in peace.

Saint Epaenetus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Romans, saying: "Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ" (Rom. 16:5), was bishop in Carthage[42].

Saint Andronicus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle to the Romans, saying: "Salute Andronicus," and calls him his kinsman and fellow-prisoner, one of the notable apostles, who were in Christ before him (Rom. 16:7), was bishop in Pannonia[43]. He died in peace[44].

Saint Stachys, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle, saying: "Salute Stachys, my beloved" (Rom. 16:9), was appointed the first bishop of Byzantium by the holy Apostle Andrew the First-called. Together with him, Saint Stachys built in Argyropolis[45] a church, to which many believers gathered, and he taught them the commandments of Christ.

39. Vienna, now Vienne, was an ancient Roman colony and afterwards the capital of various states founded by Germanic tribes. It is situated on the left bank of the river Rhone. At present the city is rich in remains of Roman antiquities.
40. Trajan, Roman emperor, reigned from 98 to 117 A.D.
41. The Peloponnese is the southern part of Greece.
42. Carthage was the most ancient and famous colony of the Phoenicians in north Africa. In ancient history it attained the highest degree of power and was destroyed in 146 B.C. On the ruins of ancient Carthage, under the first Roman emperors, a new Carthage arose, which existed with great splendor for a very long time.
43. Pannonia was one of the significant Danubian regions of the Roman Empire; now Pannonia forms part of Hungary.
44. The Holy Church commemorates the holy Apostle Andronicus three times a year: on May 17, July 30, and February 22.
45. Argyropolis, now Fundukli, is a suburb of Constantinople, near Pera and Galata.

Saint Ampliatus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle, saying: "Salute Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord" (Rom. 16:8), was bishop in the city of Diospolis[46], where he preached Christ. He died in the city of Odessa[47], having been put to death by the Hellenes for his preaching of Christ[48].

Saint Urbanus, whom the holy Apostle Paul recalls in the same Epistle, saying: "Salute Urbanus, our helper in Christ" (Rom. 16:9), was bishop in Macedonia[49] and died a martyr's death[50].

Saint Narcissus (his memory is kept on 31 October), whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle, saying: "Salute them that are of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord" (Rom. 16:11), was bishop in Athens[51].

Saint Apelles, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle, saying: "Salute Apelles, approved in Christ" (Rom. 16:10), was bishop of the city of Smyrna[52].

Saint Aristobulus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle, saying: "Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household" (Rom. 16:10), was bishop in Britain[53], and there, after long labours and sufferings, he died[54].

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46. Diospolis was located in Palestine, to the northwest of Jerusalem.

47. Odessos was a city in Mysia, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor. It is now Varna, a port on the northeastern slope of the Balkans, on the shore of the Black Sea, which has more than 25,000 inhabitants.

48. His memory is celebrated by the Church on October 31.

49. Macedonia lay north of Greece, between Illyria, Thrace, the Aegean Sea, and the Haemus or Balkan range. For some time it constituted an independent state, which became especially prominent and famous under King Alexander the Great. In the times of the Apostles, Macedonia was part of the Roman Empire. Now it is under Turkish rule.

50. The memory of the holy Apostle Urban is celebrated on October 31.

51. Athens was the capital of the ancient Greek state. It was renowned for its buildings, statues, the development of trade and industry, and especially for its schools. Here, until later times (6th century B.C.), there were famous philosophical schools, in which the inhabitants of ancient lands received their education.

52. Smyrna was a famous trading city of Ionia, on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea (or Archipelago), and one of the most ancient cities of Asia Minor. Smyrna was enlightened with Christianity by the holy Apostle John the Theologian. At present Smyrna belongs to the Turks, but the Christian Orthodox faith is still preserved there to this day. The city remains to this day one of the most flourishing and densely populated cities of the Turkish Empire.

53. Britain is the ancient name of England.

54. The holy Apostle Aristobulus is commemorated by the Church twice a year: on March 16 and October 31.

Saint Herodion, or Rodion, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle, saying: "Salute Herodion, my kinsman" (Rom. 16:11), was bishop in Patras[55]. He died a martyr's death in Rome[56].

Saint Agabus had the gift of prophecy. He is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles in these words: "a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own hands and feet and said: Thus saith the Holy Spirit: So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man whose girdle this is, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts 21:10–11; cf. 11:28). The Apostle Agabus preached in many lands and converted many to Christ.[57]

Saint Rufus (his memory is celebrated on 8 April), whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Romans, saying: "Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord" (Rom. 16:13), was bishop in Thebes, a city of Greece[58].

Saint Asyncritus, who is mentioned in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:14), was bishop in Hyrcania, a region of Asia Minor, where he suffered much for the name of Christ[59].

Saint Phlegon, mentioned in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:14), was bishop in Marathon, a city of Thrace[60].

Saint Hermas, who is mentioned in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:14), was bishop in Philippopolis[61], where he died a martyr's death[62].

Saint Patrobas, mentioned in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:14), was bishop in Naples[63] and Puteoli[64], where he converted many to Christ[65].

55. Patra, or Patara, was a seaport trading city in the Asia Minor province of Lycia (now Anatolia). Founded by the Phoenicians, it now lies in ruins.
56. The Church commemorates the holy Apostle Herodion on April 8 and November 10.
57. His memory is on April 8.
58. Thebes was the principal city of Boeotia, a region of Greece.
59. His memory is on April 8.
60. Marathon was an ancient city in Thrace, which lay to the northeast of Macedonia.
61. Philippopolis was an ancient fortified city in Thrace, now in Eastern Rumelia, on the river Maritsa. To this day it is very considerable for its industry and population.
62. His memory is celebrated by the Church on March 8 and November 5.
63. Naples is the principal city of the province of the Kingdom of Italy of the same name, situated on the northern shore of the Gulf of Naples.
64. Puteoli was a seaport city of Italy on the shore of the Tyrrhenian Sea, near Naples, in the region of Campania.
65. The memory of the holy Apostle Patrobas is celebrated on November 5.

Saint Hermias (the memory of the holy Apostle Hermias is celebrated by the Orthodox Church twice a year: 8 April and 31 May), who is mentioned in the same Epistle, was bishop in Dalmatia[66].

The holy Apostle Paul mentions these five apostles in the Epistle to the Romans in these words: “Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermias” (Rom. 16:14).

Saint Linus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:21), was bishop in Rome, after the holy Apostle Peter[67].

Saint Gaius, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Romans, saying: "Gaius, mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you" (Rom. 16:23), was bishop in Ephesus, after Saint Timothy.

Saint Philologus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle, saying: "Salute Philologus" (Rom. 16:15), was ordained bishop of Sinope[68] by the holy Apostle Andrew, and there he died in peace.[69]

Saint Lucius, or Luke (his memory is celebrated on 10 September), whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:21), was bishop in Laodicea of Syria[70].

Saint Jason, who is mentioned in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:21), was bishop in Tarsus[71], where he suffered much for the name of Christ. He died in deep old age, in peace[72].

Saint Sosipater, also mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:21), was bishop in Iconium[73]. Sosipater died in peace[74].

66. Dalmatia was the southern part of the Illyrian province, which bordered on Pannonia to the north, on Italy to the west, and on the Adriatic Sea.
67. His memory is on November 5.
68. Sinope is a city on the southern shore of the Black Sea.
69. His memory is on November 5.
70. Laodicea of Syria was once the principal city of Phrygia, in its southwestern part, in Asia Minor, on the river Lycus, and was famed for its extensive trade. At present only ruins remain, on a low hill near the devastated village of Eski-Gassara, serving as a monument to that ancient city.
71. *Tarsus* was a large and populous city of Cilicia (the southeastern province of Asia Minor), in its southern part, on a fertile plain, on the river Cydnus, not far from where that river flows into the Mediterranean Sea. Even at present Tarsus is still a fairly considerable trading city.
72. The memory of the Apostle Jason is celebrated on April 28.
73. Iconium was a city on a high, fertile plain in the interior of Asia Minor, at the foot of the Taurus mountains. It was once the principal city of Lycaonia; now it is Konya, the principal city of the Turkish district of Karamania in Asia Minor.

Concerning these last three apostles, the holy Apostle Paul writes in the Epistle to the Romans as follows: "Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you" (Rom. 16:21).

Saint Olympas, or Olympus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:15), was present at the martyric death of the holy Apostle Peter in Rome, and afterwards he himself, together with the holy Apostle Herodion, was beheaded by the command of Nero, as Metaphrastes writes in the narrative for the day of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul[75].

Saint Tertius wrote the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Romans, as he himself says in this Epistle: "I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord" (Rom. 16:22). He was the second bishop of Iconium, after Saint Sosipater, and there he won the crown of martyrdom[76].

Saint Erastus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the same Epistle (Rom. 16:23), was a deacon and treasurer of the Jerusalem church, and afterwards bishop in Paneas[77].

Saint Quartus, or Quart, who is mentioned in the same Epistle, was bishop in Berytus.

Concerning these two apostles the holy Apostle Paul writes as follows: "Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, saluteth you, and Quartus a brother" (Rom. 16:23).

Saint Evodius was bishop of Antioch after Saint Peter. He is mentioned by Saint Ignatius the God-bearer in his Epistle to the Antiochians, saying: "Remember the blessed Evodius, your father, who was your first pastor." He died a martyr's death[78].

Saint Onesiphorus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the second Epistle to Timothy, saying: "The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of

74. His memory is on April 28.
75. The memory of the holy Apostle Olympas is celebrated on November 10.
76. The memory of the holy Apostle Tertius is celebrated by the Church on October 30.
77. Paneas is a city in the north of Palestine; it is otherwise called Caesarea Philippi.
78. The repose of St. Evodus took place in 66 A.D., during the persecution of the Roman emperor Nero. The memory of Evodus is celebrated on September 7.

my chain" (2 Tim. 1:16), was bishop in Colophon[79] and Cyrene[80]. He died a martyr's death[81].

Saint Clement, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Philippians, saying: “who laboured with me and Clement” (Phil. 4:3), was bishop in Sardica[82].

Saint Sosthenes, who after Saint Crispus was ruler of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth, was converted to Christianity by the holy Apostle Paul. Concerning him the Acts of the Apostles say: “Then all the pagans took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat” (Acts 18:17). The holy Apostle Paul himself mentions his name together with his own in the Epistle to the Corinthians, which begins thus: “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother” (1 Cor. 1:1). Afterwards the holy Apostle Sosthenes was bishop in Colophon[83].

St. Apollos is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles: "A certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord" (Acts 18:24–25). The holy Apostle Paul also mentions him in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, saying: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). Afterward Apollos was in Crete[84], and later still he was Bishop of Caesarea[85].

St. Tychicus is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 20:4) and in the epistles of the holy Apostle Paul to the Colossians (Col. 4:7) and to the Ephesians, where it is said: "But that ye also may know my

79. Colophon was an ancient city of Lydia, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor. In recent times the ruins of this city have been discovered.

80. Cyrene, the principal city of the region of the same name, was located in Libya, on the northern shore of Africa, west of Egypt. It was the most magnificent and richest city in northern Africa. At present only ruins remain of it.

81. The holy Apostle Onesiphorus is commemorated by the Church twice: on September 7 and December 8.

82. Sardica, ancient Sardis or Sardes, was a rich city of Lydia, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor, formerly the capital and residence of the king Croesus, known for his wealth. In apostolic times it was still a significant city, and a Christian Church arose there early. At present only an insignificant village stands there, and only ruins bear witness to the past greatness of this city.

83. The Church commemorates the holy Apostle Sosthenes twice a year: on March 30 and on December 8.

affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things; whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts" (Eph. 6:21–22). Again, in the second Epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul says: "And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus" (2 Tim. 4:12; cf. Titus 3:12). Tychicus was Bishop of Colophon after St. Sosthenes[86].

St. Epaphroditus is mentioned in the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Philippians, where the Apostle Paul says: "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants" (Phil. 2:25). Epaphroditus was Bishop in Adriace[87].

St. Carpus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in his second Epistle to Timothy in these words: "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books" (2 Tim. 4:13), was Bishop in Berea of Thrace[88]. He ended his life in peace[89].

St. Quadratus was Bishop in Athens and Magnesia, where, preaching the word of the Lord, he received a martyr's death at the hand of the Athenians[90] under the emperor Hadrian[91].

St. Mark, who is also John, of whom the Acts of the Apostles many times makes mention as a companion of Paul and Barnabas, as, for example, in the following place: "And Barnabas and Saul returned from

84. The island of Crete (also called Candia, after its principal city of the same name) lies in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, south of the Aegean Sea. Because of its extent and fertility it was formerly called the "queen of the islands" of the Mediterranean. Christianity here began already in apostolic times. Its first beginnings were laid by eyewitnesses of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, for Cretans were present at that event (Acts 2:11). At present Crete is held by the Turks.

85. The Church commemorates the holy Apostle Apollos twice a year: on March 30 and on December 8.

86. His memory is celebrated on December 8.

87. Adria, or Adriaca, was a city in Thrace on the Black Sea, not far from Philippi, the Macedonian city that lay on the border with Thrace.

88. Berea was a city in the eastern part of Macedonia. The Apostle Paul preached Christianity there between A.D. 40 and 65. It is now called Verria or Kara Verria (Black Verria), and it has about 10,000 inhabitants.

89. The memory of the Apostle Carpus is celebrated on May 26.

90. His memory is on September 21.

91. Hadrian, Roman emperor, reigned from A.D. 117 to 138.

Jerusalem (to Antioch), when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark" (Acts 12, etc.), was Bishop in the city of Byblos in Phoenicia[92]. St. Mark worked many miracles and had such grace-filled power that the sick were healed by his shadow alone[93].

St. Zenas, surnamed the Lawyer, that is, a teacher of the law of Moses, of whom the holy Apostle Paul makes mention in his Epistle to Titus, saying: "Bring Zenas the lawyer on his way diligently" (Titus 3:13), was Bishop in Diospolis.

St. Aristarchus, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 19:29) and in the epistles of the holy Apostle Paul to the Colossians (Col. 4:10) and to Philemon (Philem. 1:23), was Bishop in the city of Apamea[94].

St. Pudens, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in his second Epistle to Timothy, saying: "Pudens greets you" (2 Tim. 4:21), was a member of the Roman senate. He was a pious man, who received the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and many believers in his house. Afterward his house was converted into a church, which was called "Pastoral," and in which, according to tradition, the holy Apostle Peter celebrated the divine services.

St. Trophimus, whom the Acts of the Apostles mention twice (Acts 20:4, 21:29), and whom the holy Apostle Paul names in the same epistle to Timothy, saying, "Trophimus I left at Miletus sick" (2 Tim. 4:20), accompanied the Apostle Paul in all his persecutions together with the Apostles Pudens and Aristarchus; and at last, when the holy Apostle Paul was beheaded by the sword at Rome under Nero, he was likewise beheaded together with his two companions.[95]

St. Mark (his memory is celebrated on October 30), nephew of the Apostle Barnabas, was Bishop in Apolloniatis of Bithynia[96]. The holy

92. Byblos was an ancient city in Phoenicia, near the sea, between Tripolis and Beirut. It was famous as a center of the cult of Adonis, to whom a magnificent temple was built here. Today the site of Byblos is a small township called Jebel, with only 600 inhabitants. It is surrounded by ruins from Roman times and from the time of the Crusades, as well as by extensive cemeteries containing Egyptian and Phoenician antiquities.

93. The Church commemorates him on September 27.

94. Apamea was one of the cities of Syria.

Apostle Paul mentions him in the Epistle to the Colossians together with the above-mentioned Apostle Aristarchus: "Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas" (Col. 4:10).

St. Artemas (his memory is celebrated on October 30), of whom the holy Apostle Paul speaks in his Epistle to Titus: "When I shall send Artemas unto thee" (Titus 3:12), was Bishop in Lystra[97].

St. Aquila, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 18:1–3) and in the epistles of the Apostle Paul (Rom. 16:3–4, etc.), was Bishop in Heraclea. He preached the word of God in Asia and Achaia, and for his preaching he received the crown of martyrdom[98].

St. Fortunatus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:17–18), labored tirelessly, preaching the name of Christ; and after many labors he received a blessed repose.

St. Achaicus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions together with Fortunatus in the same Epistle to the Corinthians, saying: "I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours" (1 Cor. 16:17–18).

St. Dionysius the Areopagite, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 17:34), was first Bishop in Athens, and afterward preached Christ in Gaul[99], and there was beheaded. That he too belonged to the apostolic choir is witnessed by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine[100], who, enumerating the seventy Apostles, says: "Add to them that Areopagite named Dionysius, of whom Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles that he was converted to the faith through the preaching of Paul at Athens."

St. Simeon, surnamed Niger; of him the holy Apostle Luke makes mention in the Acts, saying: "Now there were in the church that was at

95. The holy Church celebrates the memory of the Apostles Aristarchus, Pudens and Trophimus on April 15.

97. Lystra was one of the cities of Lycaonia, a central region of Asia Minor bordering on Phrygia. Here the Apostle Paul healed a lame man, and the pagans, seeing this miracle, took him and Barnabas for gods (Acts 14:6–18).

98. His memory is celebrated on July 14.

Antioch certain prophets and teachers: as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger" (Acts 13:1). That he too belonged to the apostolic choir is witnessed by St. Epiphanius, who places him among the Apostles, for he enumerates their names thus: "Mark, Luke, Justus, Barnabas, Apelles, Rufus, Niger (that is, Simeon Niger), and the other seventy-two[101]." Thus St. Epiphanius assures us that the choir of these lesser Apostles consists of seventy-two persons, and that St. Simeon Niger was one of this number of Apostles. Moreover, St. John of Damascus[102], in the Octoechos of the fifth tone, on Wednesday at Vespers, after the twelve Apostles, also mentions the assembly of the seventy-two Apostles, saying: "The all-praised number of ten, doubled, appeared complete, beholding the assembly of like zeal, seventy and two."

By the grace-filled prayers of all these Apostles, may we too be made worthy to be partakers of heavenly blessedness and to behold the Supreme Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ, glorifying Him with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, in the first book of his History, in the twelfth chapter, writes the following: "The name of each (of the twelve) Apostles of Christ is sufficiently known to everyone from the evangelical testimonies, but a precisely exact list of the seventy Apostles is nowhere to be found. If, however, one looks more attentively into the matter, one can find more than seventy, adhering only to the testimony of the holy Apostle Paul, who in the first Epistle to the

100. Eusebius, who for a long time held the episcopal see of Caesarea in Palestine and was closely connected with many great events of his time, is known as the father of church history and in general as a theologian whose writings were highly valued in the Christian Church. He was distinguished by vast learning; he lived from A.D. 268 to 340. Eusebius gathered together all the records and accounts of the martyrs into a collection entitled *The Collection of Ancient Martyrdoms*. This collection contained accounts of martyrs, bishops, confessors, and holy women and virgins from all the dioceses. According to some it consisted of 20 books, and according to the testimony of others, of 16.

99. Gaul is present-day France.

101. St. Epiphanius, a contemporary of St. John Chrysostom, was Bishop on the island of Cyprus for 36 years. He was a well-known Father of the Church who left behind many writings directed against the heresies of his time. He died in 408. His memory is celebrated on May 12.

102. St. John of Damascus, the most eminent Christian hymnographer and theologian, died in 776. For his zealous defense of the holy icons against the iconoclasts, his hand was cut off, but by God's will it grew back to his body. The Church celebrates his memory on December 4.

Corinthians says: 'That He appeared (Christ after His resurrection) to Cephas, then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep' (1 Cor. 15:5–6). Of the many who labored in the work of preaching the gospel of Christ in the primitive Church, who enlightened various countries with faith in the manner of the holy Apostles, and who are therefore worthy of the apostolic name, we shall here mention some in particular."

St. Lazarus, who was dead for four days and was raised by the Lord. During the persecution of the Church of Jerusalem, after the murder of the holy protomartyr Stephen, he was expelled from the borders of Judea (Acts 8:1) and set adrift at sea in a boat without oars, together with the holy disciple of the Lord, Maximinus, and with the holy Celidonius, who was born blind but was healed by the Lord. By divine providence the boat reached the island of Cyprus, and St. Lazarus began to preach Christ in the city of Kidonia. Afterward he was ordained Bishop in that city by the Apostle Barnabas, and there on the island of Cyprus he reposed in peace. His holy body was discovered many years later on that island in a marble coffin, on which was the inscription: "Lazarus of the four days, friend of Christ"[103].

St. Joseph, who came from Arimathea[104] and was a secret disciple of Jesus Christ, and who afterward asked Pilate for His most pure Body (Lk. 23:50–52; Mt. 27:67; Mk. 15:42; Jn. 19:38), was also expelled from the Jewish lands by envious Jews and preached Christ in England, where he reposed. The inhabitants of England venerate him as the Apostle of their land[105].

St. Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night to hear His teaching (Jn. 3:1–2), and who gave the good counsel to the Jews not to con-

103. The memory of St. Lazarus of Four Days is celebrated by the Church on October 17, when the translation of his relics from Cyprus to Constantinople is commemorated.

104. According to Eusebius and Jerome, Arimathea is the same as Rama, or Ramatha, a city on Mount Ephraim, two hours' journey north of Jerusalem, not far from Lydda; it is also called Ramathaim-Zophim. It was the native place of Joseph of Arimathea, one of the disciples of Christ (Jn. 19:38), a member of the Jewish supreme council, who buried Jesus Christ in his tomb, hewn out of rock.

105. No feast is appointed for St. Joseph, but he is commemorated on the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

demn Him before they had heard Him Himself and examined His case (Jn. 7:50–51), and who afterward, together with Joseph, committed the body of Jesus to burial and anointed it with spices (Jn. 19:39), also suffered from the Jews for his faith in Christ and apostolic preaching, and was expelled from Judea[106].

St. Gamaliel was the teacher of the holy Apostle Paul. He gave the Sanhedrin a prudent counsel concerning the preaching of the holy Apostles, saying: "If this work is of men, it will come to nought; but if it is of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 6:34–40). After the martyrdom of the Archdeacon Stephen, he took his body and buried it in his village not far from Jerusalem. He also gave shelter to St. Nicodemus, who had been expelled for preaching Christ, and after Nicodemus's death he buried him near the tomb of the holy First-Martyr Stephen, where he himself was later laid to rest[107].

The eunuch of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, who was baptized by the holy Apostle Philip on the road (Acts 8:26–39) and who converted that queen to Christ, was the first preacher of Christ in Ethiopia[108], where he also died a martyr's death.

St. Zacchaeus, who received the Lord joyfully into his house and heard from Him: "This day is salvation come to this house" (Lk. 19:1–10). After the Ascension of the Lord, Zacchaeus followed the holy Apostle Peter, and was ordained by him Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine[109], where he also preached Christ[110].

106. The memory of St. Nicodemus is celebrated by the Church on August 2 and on the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

107. Together with St. Gamaliel, his pious son Aviv also died; he too believed in Christ. The memory of Sts. Gamaliel and Aviv is celebrated by the Church on August 2.

108. Ethiopia lies in Africa and corresponds to present-day Abyssinia. It was located in the upper reaches of the Nile and bordered on the Thebaid region of Egypt to the north, on Libya to the west, on southern Ethiopia to the south, and on the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea to the east.

109. Caesarea in Palestine was a city on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, built by the Jewish king Herod on the site of the ancient city of Strato and named in honor of Caesar Augustus (the Roman emperor Octavian Augustus). The city suffered repeated destructions, and at present only ruins overgrown with wild plants remain on its site.

110. The Church observes the commemoration of the holy Zacchaeus in the 32nd week, before the beginning of the Lenten Triodion.

St. Cornelius the centurion, baptized by the holy Apostle Peter (Acts 10), who was afterwards ordained bishop, preached Christ in the city of Scepsis[111], where he also reposed in peace[112].

St. Longinus the centurion, who stood guard at the Cross of the Lord and confessed that Jesus was truly the Son of God (Mt. 27:54). After the burial of the Lord, Longinus again stood guard at the Tomb of the Lord and was an eyewitness of the Resurrection of Christ, of which he bore witness before all. Afterwards he preached Christ in Cappadocia, where he also suffered martyrdom[113].

St. Ignatius the God-bearer, according to tradition, was the very child whom the Lord took into His arms and pointed out to the Apostles, saying: "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:2–5; Mk. 9:37). He was ordained Bishop of Antioch by the holy Apostle Peter, and there he preached Christ. He ended his life by martyrdom in Rome, being given to the lions to be torn apart[114].

St. Polycarp was Bishop of the city of Smyrna. Like the Apostles, he untiringly preached the word of God, wrote an epistle to the newly converted Christians, and vigilantly cared for the welfare and spiritual profit of his flock. The Blessed Symeon Metaphrastes[115], in the Life of St. Ignatius the God-bearer, directly calls Polycarp the Divine Apostle, saying: "They came to Smyrna, and there St. Ignatius kissed St. Polycarp, the Divine Apostle, his fellow-disciple." He died a martyr's death in Rome[116].

111. Scepsis was a city in Mysia, a western province of Asia Minor.

112. The memory of St. Cornelius is observed on September 13.

113. The memory of St. Longinus the Centurion is celebrated by the Holy Church on October 16.

114. The memory of St. Ignatius the God-Bearer is celebrated by the Church twice a year: on January 29, when the translation of his relics by his disciples from Rome to Antioch is commemorated, and on December 20, the day of the saint's repose.

115. Symeon Metaphrastes was a well-known church writer of the 10th century (ca. 940), the compiler and collector of the Lives of the Saints, which he did at the commission of the Constantinopolitan emperor Constantine VII (912–954). Moved by great zeal for the glory of the holy ascetics, Symeon not only gathered accounts of them, but reworked many of them, partly abridged them, and, most important of all, replaced the ancient, heavy and in many places hard-to-understand language with the pure and better style of his own time. For this Symeon received the name Metaphrastes, which means "paraphraser," "reworker." His labors in this field later served as the principal source for the Chet'i-Minei of St. Demetrius of Rostov.

St. Hierotheus, one of the members of the Areopagus of Athens, was taught the holy Christian faith by the holy Apostle Paul, by whom he was also ordained Bishop of Athens. Together with the other holy Apostles, St. Hierotheus was carried through the air to the tomb of the Theotokos after the Dormition of the Most Pure Mother of God in Jerusalem. He died a martyr's death[117].

St. Antipas, Bishop of Pergamum, also suffered for the apostolic preaching of Christ[118]. Concerning him the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said in the Revelation of St. John the Theologian: "Antipas, My faithful witness, was killed" (Rev. 2:13).

St. Demetrius, whom the holy Apostle John the Theologian mentions in his third epistle (3 Jn. 1:12). St. Demetrius was Bishop in the Asian city of Philadelphia[119].

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O faithful, let us divinely praise in hymns the choir of the seventy disciples of Christ; for through them we have all learned to worship the undivided Trinity, and they abide as lamps of the divine faith.

* * *

Life of St. Eustathius, Archbishop of Serbia[120]

Житие святого Евстафия, архиепископа Сербского

St. Eustathius lived and labored in the second half of the thirteenth century, in the days of the pious Serbian King Stephen Uroš II Milutin, who reigned over Serbia from 1262 to 1320. He was born in the Budimlje region[121] to pious parents. Loving his parents dearly,

116. The memory of St. Polycarp is celebrated on February 23.
117. The memory of Hieromartyr Hierotheus is celebrated on October 4.
118. His memory is celebrated by the holy Church on April 11.
119. Philadelphia was a city of Lydia in Asia Minor, not far from Sardis, at the foot of Mount Tmolus. It received its name from its founder, Attalus II Philadelphus, king of Pergamum. In antiquity it was a rich, flourishing city with a large population. At present it is a small Christian town under Turkish rule.
120. The Life of St. Eustathius was written by his younger contemporary, St. Daniel II, Archbishop of the Serbs, and was included in his *Rodoslov* or *Tsarostavnik*. The best edition is in the book *The Lives of the King and Archbishop of Serbia*, published by Danichich in 1866 (pp. 292–319). For the Life of St. Daniel, see under December 20.

from early childhood he grew in the love of God: avoiding vain amusements, he strove to acquire good morals, constantly attended church, and listened with delight to divine chanting and reading, committed to memory what he heard, and sought to understand its meaning. One day he came to his parents and said:

"A strong desire to learn has kindled within me. Give me over to the study of the books."

His parents, hearing such words, rejoiced and gave thanks to God, who had inspired such a good desire in their child; they found a teacher and entrusted their son to him for instruction in the wisdom of books. Aided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he soon learned so well that, though a young pupil, he proved more learned than the most erudite teachers. The youth gave no thought or care to food, drink, or clothing, and paid little attention even to his parents; but, directing his mind wholly to divine teaching, he placed all his heartfelt love and hope in the Lord. Having reached greater maturity and weighed his calling carefully, he resolved to leave his parental home and walk the way of the Lord. He went to the Zeta region[122], to the monastery of the Archangel Michael, where the Zeta episcopal see was located. There, from Bishop Neophytus, he received the tonsure into the monastic order and began an ascetic life, strictly fulfilling the monastic vows. Distinguished by abstinence and purity of life, wearing himself down with fasting and vigil, he was diligent in attending the church services by day and by night, kept strictly to his cell rule of prayer, and in the remaining time he devoted himself to contemplation of God and to noetic prayer. Having no property of his own, he tried to save something from his allotted share of food and clothing in the monastery to distribute to the poor.

121. The Budimlje district, or "zhupa," was located where the Serbian tribe of the Vasojevići now lives in the northeastern part of Montenegro. The village of Budimlje still exists there. In antiquity the Budimlje diocese had its see in the monastery of St. George, which still exists in semi-ruin north of the town of Gusinje, in the village of Berane.

122. The Zeta district, Zeta, or in antiquity Diocleia, is now Montenegro. The monastery of St. Michael was located on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Kotor, not far south of the town of Kotor.

Labouring in monastic quiet with complete humility, he soon, however, became known throughout that land as a great ascetic who imitated the ancient fathers.

Not content with monastic asceticism in his own monastery, Eustathius burned with desire to visit the holy city of Jerusalem, to venerate the Tomb of the Lord and the other sanctuaries at the place of the Lord's Passion. Revealing his intention to no one, he turned with fervent prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ, asking that He grant him to complete the journey safely to the holy city and to see the place where He shed His blood for the salvation of the human race and where He worked great wonders. The prayer of the godly man was heard. As he was pondering where he might find God-fearing companions, two monks appeared to him, as if sent by the Lord Himself, and in conversation told him that they were going to Jerusalem to venerate the Tomb of the Lord and the honorable Passion of Christ. Giving thanks to the Lord God, and bowing before His most pure image and the image of the Archistrategos Michael, he set out with joy and gladness in his heart on the long-desired journey.

By the help of God he completed the journey easily and safely, and reached Jerusalem. Here he venerated with reverence the Tomb of the Lord and all the sanctuaries at the place of the Lord's Passion; unhurriedly he went around all the holy places and delighted in beholding them. He also visited all the surroundings of Jerusalem, where the venerable and God-fearing ascetics dwelt, observing and learning their rules of life and their labors.

Having spent a long time in the Holy Land, he set out on his return journey, but not directly to his homeland; he went to the Holy Mountain of Athos, desiring to see the monastic life there and to enjoy edifying conversations about asceticism and purity of soul and body.

Arriving at the Holy Mountain, the Venerable Eustathius settled in the Serbian Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos at Chilandar, built by St. Symeon, who in the world was the Great Serbian Zhupan Stephen Nemanja, and by his son Sava, the first Archbishop of Serbia. Here he devoted himself with great zeal to monastic labors, performing with humility and obedience every task assigned to him in obedience, never

missing any church service, and giving himself to nightly prayer and contemplation in solitude. So he spent many years, and became known among all the Athonite ascetics. Many of the ancient elders, and not only younger monks, often came to Eustathius and held with love and spiritual comfort edifying conversations with him.

After several years of such ascetic life, by the common counsel and persuasion of the council of the whole Holy Mountain, Eustathius was raised to the rank of abbot of the Chilandar monastery. Having become the head of the monastery, Eustathius labored even more zealously, setting an example in every work and virtue, teaching by word and deed. Occupying such a prominent place and living a virtuous life, the Venerable Eustathius gained great renown and universal love not only among the Athonite ascetics but also among the laity, not only among simple people but also among nobles and kings. All hastened to show honor to Eustathius and gave generous gifts. But these gifts he did not gather for himself; with an open hand he distributed them to the poor, to widows, to orphans, and to those without food or shelter.

It is no wonder that, with such merits and virtues, the Venerable Eustathius was chosen and ordained bishop of the Eparchy of Zeta, where he had received the tonsure. Having become a hierarch, experienced in the spiritual life and in ecclesiastical affairs, Eustathius discharged his pastoral duties with great success and became the most outstanding Serbian bishop. When the Serbian Archbishop Ioannicius died, the pious King of Serbia, Stephen Uroš Milutin, convened a council of bishops, abbots and boyars, and this council unanimously elected this pious Bishop Eustathius of Zeta to the archiepiscopal throne of St. Sava. Out of humility, the Venerable Eustathius tried to refuse so high a rank, which was joined with great responsibility, but his words were not heeded, and he was soon solemnly enthroned as archbishop before the whole council. St. Eustathius submitted to the providence of God and gave thanks to the Lord God in fervent prayer for His great mercies, of which he considered himself unworthy.

Labouring without ceasing for the salvation of his soul, St. Eustathius also bestowed fervent care upon the welfare of the Serbian Church entrusted to him. The Serbian archiepiscopal see then already pos-

sessed great wealth, and St. Eustathius took every pains that no church in his region should suffer want in its essential needs, generously distributing from the reserves of his see for the needs of the poor churches.

St. Eustathius governed the Serbian Church for only a few years: seven years after his enthronement on the high see, he fell ill and saw the approach of his death. Lying in his mortal sickness, he did not murmur but awaited with joy his departure from this earthly world to the heavenly mansions. Being then in his archiepiscopal see, in Žiča[123], he earnestly prepared himself and prayed the Lord to grant him a peaceful end. Around the sick man's bed gathered the whole Serbian church council: the neighbouring bishops, the abbots of the monasteries and the monks, and the entire clergy. All wept, seeing the approach of the death of their teacher and archpastor. But the sick man, raising himself from the bed, addressed the weeping ones:

"Leave off such sorrow. 'O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together' (Ps. 33:4)."

All those present turned from weeping to prayer and to hymns for the departure of the soul. Then St. Eustathius received the Holy Mysteries, and after some rest he addressed those around him:

"Go, beloved ones, let us give one another the last kiss, for I am already parting from you."

This farewell called forth many tears from the spiritual children of St. Eustathius. At last, raising his hands to heaven, he said:

"O Thou who knowest the end of each man's life, God of gods and Lord of lords, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!"

Thus fittingly and gloriously did St. Eustathius depart, rejoicing in the Lord.

The clergy and laity gathered at the grave together performed a solemn burial in Žiča, in the church of the Savior, laying the body in a marble coffin which Eustathius himself had earlier prepared for himself.

123. The monastery of Zhicha (Zhitcha, Zhidcha), which exists to this day, is located on the right bank of the river Ibar, not far from its confluence with the Serbian Morava, within the bounds of the present Serbian Kingdom.

Soon after the burial, within the aforementioned church of the Savior, signs and miracles began to occur at the coffin of the departed. Sometimes candles were seen as if burning at the coffin; sometimes at night one clearly heard at the tomb some speech and murmur, as if many thousands of people had gathered there. One man who served at the church of the Savior suffered from an illness of the nose. He had tried many remedies and spent much money on his cure, but there was no benefit. Having lost hope in earthly means, the sick man turned with fervent prayer to the Lord God and His Most Pure Mother in the church of the Saviour, standing without ceasing at the coffin of the Venerable Eustathius through every service. One night the sick man saw in a dream that he was standing, as was his custom in waking life, beside the coffin of Eustathius; a radiant man in hierarchal vestments appeared to him and asked what he needed. The sick man told everything in order. Then the man who had come said:

"The Lord has sent me to heal you, only do not sin any more, lest you suffer worse."

With these words he made the sign of the cross over the sick man and touched his wound. The sick man asked:

"Who are you, holy master?"

The one who had come answered:

"I am a servant of Christ, a monk named Eustathius, who lies in this place."

The sick man awoke and was struck with awe; trembling, he hastened to the then archbishop, James, and told him and the whole council of this miraculous vision. The sick man was completely healed at that very time, and all glorified the Lord and His saint Eustathius. The miracles at the tomb of Eustathius began to multiply. Once three flowers of wondrous beauty were found growing on his marble coffin, although it was a wholly dry stone—there was no earth, not even any moisture upon it. This miraculous sign led everyone to think that God glorifies His servant and renews his body with incorruption. At that same time, to one of the monks of that monastery, the ecclesiarch, there appeared in a night vision a certain terrible youth with a flaming weapon in his hands, who said in anger:

"Why are you negligent, seeing such signs? Or do you not understand that the body of the departed is not destined to see corruption, but must be taken out of the earth?"

All these miracles were reported to the pious King Uroš Milutin, who, after consultation with the archbishop, commanded that the coffin be solemnly opened, and there the body of the hierarch Eustathius was found incorrupt and laid openly in a new coffin. Some time later, in view of the danger from enemy invasions, the relics of St. Eustathius were, through the care of Archbishop James, transferred from Žiča to Ipek (or Peć)[124] and placed in the archiepiscopal cathedral church there, of the holy apostles Peter and Paul.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Venerable Martyr Zosimas and Martyr Athanasius

Память святых преподобномученика Зосимы и мученика Афанасия

The Venerable Martyr Zosimas was a native of Cilicia[125] and lived as an ascetic in the desert. By order of the impious Diocletian[126] he was taken and subjected to torments for the faith of Christ. They burned his ears with red-hot iron, threw him into a cauldron filled with filth, hung him upside down by his feet, and subjected him to various tortures. But by a miraculous means the saint was delivered from death. During his torments a lion came from the desert and spoke with a human voice. At the sight of this miracle all were seized with terror, and Zosimas was released. The commentarisios[127] Athanasius, seeing him unharmed after cruel tortures, believed in Christ and was baptized. Zosimas withdrew with Athanasius into the desert, and there, amid their ascetic labours, in a cleft of a mountain, both peacefully yielded up their souls to the Lord.

124. Ipek, Pesht, Peć was the second seat of the Serbian archbishops. The town with its monastery exists still today; it is located in Old Serbia (belonging to Turkey) on the river Bystrica, which flows into the White Drin in its upper course.
125. Cilicia is the southeastern region of Asia Minor on the Mediterranean Sea.
126. Diocletian was a Roman emperor who reigned from 284 to 305.
127. A commentarisius was an overseer of prisoners who kept count of them.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable **Theoctistus**, abbot in Kukumo of Sicily (†800).

THE FIFTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 5

5 января

New Calendar January 5 · Old Calendar January 18 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Theopemptus and Theona

Страдание святых мучеников Феопемпта и Феоны

The Emperor Diocletian, in the first year of the persecution of Christians which he had raised, once arrived during his journey at the city of Nicomedia, and here, having set up a multitude of idol images, he worshipped them.

A few days later, in the environs of the city, Theopemptus, Bishop of Nicomedia (he was the first to suffer in the persecution of the Christians under Diocletian), was seized; and when he had been brought before the Emperor for judgment, he said:

"These gods, silver and gold, wood and stone, to whom thou dost pay worship, are not gods at all, for they can neither breathe nor speak, nor do anything good or evil; but the Almighty Heavenly God created the heaven, the earth and the sea, and all that is in them."

When the Saint said this, and much else concerning the Christian faith, the Emperor said to him in anger:

"I did not summon thee in order to argue, but so that thou mayest without further words offer sacrifice to the god Apollo."

To this the Holy Theopemptus answered in these words:

"To such gods I will never offer sacrifice, and I shall never fear the tortures which you may appoint for me, for it is written: 'And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul' (Mt. 10:28). And you, having power over my body, do what seems good to you!"

Then the Emperor commanded that a furnace be heated, so that he might afterwards cast the holy bishop into it; and the soldiers heated the furnace as hot as they could, from morning until noon. At this time the holy bishop said to them:

"Wait a little, and I will show you the power of the Lord my God, for the sake of Whose holy Name this furnace is being heated for me."

Having said this, the Saint threw himself into the blazing furnace and sat down in the midst of it; and the soldiers, supposing that he was immediately burned up, departed. But at midnight the holy man, coming out of the furnace, entered the Emperor's bedchamber, whose doors opened before him of their own accord, and, awakening the Emperor, said to him:

"I am Theopemptus the bishop, a servant of Jesus Christ: I have not died, but am alive, although thou didst command that I be put to death."

Having said this, he went back into the furnace. The Emperor, seeing the Saint and hearing his words, was seized with terror and as it were struck dumb by great fear. In the morning, summoning his soldiers, he said to them:

"Did you throw into the heated furnace that Christian whom I ordered you to cast in?"

The soldiers answered:

"We did, O sovereign, as thou didst command: we cast him in, and yesterday he perished in the fire."

Then Diocletian rose, went with the soldiers to the furnace, and there heard the holy bishop, in the midst of the blazing furnace, singing and glorifying God. This filled the Emperor with extreme astonishment, and when the Saint came out of the furnace unharmed, the Emperor said to those around him:

"Look how mighty is Christian sorcery; I have heard that the Christians perform their magic works in the name of some Jesus."

After this the Emperor at once commanded that a dog be taken and cast into the furnace, to see whether the dog would remain whole as the bishop had miraculously remained whole; but the dog was immediately burned up. Seeing this, the Emperor said to the man of God:

"I will deliver thee to the most cruel torments as an impious man, because I have become convinced that thou art a seducer and a sorcerer."

He ordered him to be shut up in a narrow dungeon and given neither bread nor water until the day on which the Emperor should wish to judge him; and the man of God remained in that dungeon twenty-two days without food or drink, being strengthened by God. At the end of this time the Emperor said to his soldiers:

"Let us go and see whether that Christian is alive or already dead."

Finding him alive and joyful, as though after an imperial dinner, Diocletian was angered; and, leading the blessed bishop out of the dungeon, he tore his garments, clapped his hands and said:

"Look, then, how mighty is Christian sorcery!"

But the blessed bishop said in reply:

"How long, unhappy man, wilt thou remain blinded, and how long wilt thou not acknowledge the true God, in Whom I believe? For He has given me strength and firmness, so that I might conquer thee, and rise above all the torments which thou wilt devise for me, and disdain them."

At these words the Emperor commanded that the saint's right eye be torn out and placed in the martyr's right hand, and then that he be led back to the dungeon. When the Saint began to pray there, a great light shone before him in the dungeon, and at once the pupil of his eye was restored, whole and healthy, like the other. Learning of this, and seeing the Saint, the Emperor was angered still more and said:

"By the Roman Apollo[1] I swear that I will not rest until I find a stronger sorcerer who can destroy all thy tricks and magical works!"

Having said this, the Emperor again ordered him to be led back to the dungeon, and he himself sent edicts throughout all the lands subject to him, of the following content:

"If any sorcerer," the Emperor wrote, "can destroy the Christian incantations, let him come forward as quickly as possible; he shall receive great gifts and high honors."

1. A Greco-Roman god, revered as the patron of intellectual enlightenment, a deity of the sun.

And there came a certain sorcerer named Theona, who, standing before the face of Diocletian, said:

"At your command I have come to destroy the Christian sorcery as quickly as possible, and I will most certainly accomplish what I promise thee."

Hearing this, the Emperor rejoiced and said:

"I have in the dungeon a certain Christian prince. When thou hast destroyed his magical power, thou shalt receive great honors from us."

Theona said to him in reply:

"Let this Christian perform before me some miracle, and I will in thy presence destroy all his works."

The Emperor rejoiced at this and said to Theona:

"Yet I should like first to see some sign accomplished by thee."

Theona then asked that the fiercest bull be brought to him. When the bull had been brought, Theona whispered some words into its ears, and at that same moment the bull split into two parts, and each part lay apart.

Then the astonished Emperor said:

"Truly, thou canst destroy the Christian sorcery!"

"Wait yet a while, O Emperor," Theona answered him, "and thou shalt understand the full greatness of what has taken place!"

Having said this, he commanded that scales be brought to him, and placed on them both parts of the ox, which were found to be equal in weight. Immediately after this, Diocletian commanded that the holy bishop Theopemptus be brought before him, and, setting him over against the sorcerer, he said:

"I know that thou art a deceiver and a sorcerer! Behold, this sorcerer has come from Egypt, and I now wish to learn which of you two is the mightier in sorcery."

Then Theona said to the bishop:

"I will show upon thee two works of my magical power, and if they do not harm thee, I too will believe in thy God."

Having prepared two round cakes from flour, he offered them to the bishop to eat. The bishop took them and ate them, and they seemed to him sweet to the taste as honey, and did him no harm whatever.

Seeing this, Theona was amazed and said:

"I will test upon thee one more wondrous work of my art, and if it does thee no harm, I will believe in thy God."

Taking a cup of water, he put into it a certain poisonous herb, and called upon the most powerful demons to his aid, so that the poison might act more strongly; then he gave the water to the Saint to drink.

When the Saint drank it without any harm to himself, Theona at once fell at the feet of the holy bishop and said:

"There is no other God on Whom we may hope, save the one Jesus!"

And then he said to the Emperor:

"I am a Christian, and I worship the Crucified One!"

Hearing this, the Emperor was greatly confounded and cried out:

"Great are the miracles of the Christian sorcerers!"

And he commanded that both be led back to the dungeon. There the holy bishop, having taught Theona the faith, renamed him Synesius (which means: full of understanding, since with a pure heart he came to know and recognize Christ God and Lord), and baptized him.

In the morning the Emperor commanded that the holy bishop be brought before him, and, bowing his head before him, said to him:

"Greetings, teacher of sorcerers."

And afterwards he began to persuade him to turn to the impious Hellenic faith. When the Saint refused to offer sacrifice to the gods, the Emperor commanded that he be stretched out on the ground, face upward, and bound by the hands and feet to four trees; then they brought a rather large fragment of a stone column, which eight men could scarcely carry, and laid it upon the Saint's belly. But the holy bishop turned in prayer to God, and at once that stone which had been laid upon his belly rose of its own accord and was cast far from him, nearly fifteen cubits' distance. Then Diocletian commanded that the Saint be hanged by the feet, head downward, with a heavy stone tied to his neck, and left him hanging in that position from morning until the third hour of the day. Afterwards he ordered the rope by which the Saint was hanged by the feet suddenly cut; he thought that in falling he would be crushed by the heavy stone, be dashed to pieces, and thus shamefully perish. But when this was done, the holy bishop, by the

power of God, stood upright on his feet. After this the tormentor pronounced the sentence of death upon him.

The Saint, hearing it with joy, cried aloud:

"Blessed is God, the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, Who has granted me to attain the day, the coming of which I have always desired. Therefore I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember me for ever, and at this present hour!"

Having said this, he bent his knees, and, submitting to decapitation, reposed in peace, confessing the Most Holy Trinity.

Then the emperor commanded that the sorcerer Theona, who had come to believe in Christ, be brought before him. When neither flattery nor threats could persuade him to offer sacrifice to the idols, the emperor ordered him thrown into a deep pit and covered with earth. Fierce horses were also brought, which trampled the earth heaped upon the saint who had been cast into the pit. Thus St. Theona, covered with earth and trampled for a long time under the horses' hooves, departed to the Lord.[2]

The holy martyrs, Bishop Theopemptus and Theona, who is also called Synesius, accomplished their martyric struggle in Nicomedia under the emperor Diocletian, remaining under the dominion of the Supreme King, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever, amen.

* * *

Commemoration of Venerable Syncletica

Память преподобной Синклитикии

Venerable Syncletica was born in Egypt, in the city of Alexandria, whither her parents, persons of noble family, renowned for their piety and very wealthy, had moved from Macedonia.[3] When she reached marriageable age, many noble and wealthy young men, captivated by the extraordinary beauty of her face and by her virtue, acknow-

2. His death took place in 303.

3. Macedonia: a province of the Roman Empire in the south of the Balkan Peninsula, to the north of Greece.

ledged by all, sought to wed her. But she did not wish to marry, for from her youth she burned with love for her Heavenly Bridegroom, Christ God. For this reason she took care not to adorn her outward self, but her inward self, cleansing her soul by fasting, chastity and purity of mind, so that she might appear pleasing in the eyes of Christ. Directing her whole mind toward God, she gained the victory over the invisible enemy, the devil, who incites people to sin. After the death of her parents she distributed all her property to the poor and needy, and she herself renounced the world, reaching, for God's sake, the extremity of poverty. She took with her a sister who had lost her sight and settled in the tomb-monument of a kinsman. She regarded the monastic state as so great that she did not know how to thank God, who had shown her such mercy. In the first years of her ascetic life she surpassed many, yet she concealed her labors. She not only ate little bread and drank a meager measure of water, but her bread was made of bran. She increased her fasting whenever the enemy waged war against her. The fame of her labors drew many women to her, who asked her for edification. For a long time she answered their requests only with silence, but their insistent entreaties compelled her to give instruction to the many ascetic women who gathered around her and formed a community. At the end of her life she suffered from the tempter the same things that the righteous Job once suffered, for grievous infirmities befell her, and her whole body was covered with scabs, worn away and eaten by sores and worms. Thus she suffered for three years and six months, not permitting a physician to give her aid, and placing her hope in God alone. When the time of her departure from this life drew near, she saw in a vision the holy Angels and a host of radiant virgins calling her to them, and she beheld the dwellings of Paradise. After this vision she addressed the virgin nuns, and foretold the day and hour of her separation from the body. It was to take place three days later. As she had said, so it came to pass: after three days, at the hour she had appointed, she was parted from her much-suffering body and her grievous sores, and as a martyr she passed to the Lord, into the painless life which the

saints enjoy in heaven.[4] She lived on earth about eighty years in many labors and struggles; now she dwells in the eternal heavenly mansions.

* * *

Life of Venerable Apollinaria

Житие преподобной Аполлинарии

After the death of the Greek emperor Arcadius,[5] his son Theodosius[6] remained a young boy of eight and could not govern the realm. Therefore Arcadius's brother, the Roman emperor Honorius,[7] entrusted the guardianship of the young emperor and the administration of the entire Greek empire to one of the chief dignitaries, the anthypatos[8] named Anthemius,[9] a wise man and very pious. Until Theodosius grew up, this anthypatos was honored by all at that time as emperor; for this reason St. Symeon Metaphrastes, beginning to write this Life, says: "during the reign of the pious emperor Anthemius," and throughout the whole account he calls him emperor. This Anthemius had two daughters: the younger, from her earliest childhood, had an unclean spirit within her, while the elder from her youth spent her time in the holy churches and in prayer. The name of the latter was Apollinaria. When she reached maturity, her parents began to consider how to marry her off, but she refused and said to them:

"I wish to go into a monastery, to hear the Divine Scriptures there and to see the order of monastic life."

4. The Venerable Synklitikia died about 350.

5. Arcadius, who after the division of the Roman Empire by his father Theodosius I the Great reigned in the Eastern Roman Empire, or Byzantium, from 395 to 408.

6. Theodosius II, son of Arcadius, called "the Younger" to distinguish him from his grandfather Theodosius I the Great; he reigned in Byzantium from 408 to 450.

7. Honorius, the other son of Theodosius the Great, received the West in the division of the empire and reigned from 395 to 423.

8. Anthypatos (Greek Ἀνθύπατος), or proconsul: an official in the Byzantine Empire holding the civil office of governor of a separate region or province.

9. Anthemius, the father of Apollinaria, was anthypatos, or proconsul, from 405, and enjoyed influence at court, so that after the death of Emperor Arcadius in 408, his brother Honorius, Emperor of the Western Empire, appointed this Anthemius guardian of the eight-year-old son of Arcadius, Theodosius, and entrusted to him the temporary rule of the entire Eastern Empire. For this reason Anthemius is called a tsar in the Life. The blessed Theodoret mentions him, and a letter to him from St. John Chrysostom has been preserved.

Her parents said to her:

"We wish to give you in marriage."

She answered them:

"I do not wish to marry, but I hope that God will keep me pure in the fear of Him, as He preserves His holy virgins in chastity!"

It seemed very remarkable to her parents that she spoke so, being still so young, and that she was so possessed by love for the Divine. But Apollinaria again begged her parents to bring to her some nun who would teach her the Psalter and the reading of the holy writings. Anthemius, however, grieved much over her intention, for he wished to marry her off. When the maiden did not change her desire and refused all the gifts offered to her by the noble young men who sought her hand, her parents said to her:

"What then do you want, daughter?"

She answered them:

"I beg you, give me to God, and you will receive a reward for my virginity!"

Seeing that her intention was firm, strong and pious, they said:

"Let the will of the Lord be done!"

And they brought to her an experienced nun, who taught her to read the Divine books. After this she said to her parents:

"I beg you, let me go on a journey, that I may see the holy places in Jerusalem. There I will pray and venerate the Precious Cross and the Holy Resurrection of Christ!"

They did not want to let her go, for she was their only delight in the house, and they loved her greatly, since her other sister was possessed by a demon. Apollinaria, however, for a long time begged her parents with her entreaties, and at last they, against their wish, agreed to let her go. They gave her many male and female slaves, much gold and silver, and said:

"Take these, daughter, and go, fulfill your vow, for God wishes you to be His servant!"

Having seated her on a ship, they bade her farewell and said:

"Remember us, daughter, in your prayers at the holy places!"

She said to them:

"As you have fulfilled the desire of my heart, so may God fulfill your petitions and deliver you in the day of sorrow!"

Thus, parting from her parents, she set out on the voyage. Having reached Ascalon,[10] she stayed there several days because of the rough sea, and she visited all the churches and monasteries there, praying and giving alms to the needy. Here she also found companions for the journey to Jerusalem, and, arriving in the holy city, she venerated the Resurrection of the Lord and the Precious Cross, offering fervent prayer for her parents. During these days of pilgrimage Apollinaria also visited women's monasteries, giving large sums for their needs. At the same time she began to set free her superfluous male and female slaves, giving them generous rewards for their service and commending herself to their prayers. After some days, when she had finished her prayers at the holy places, Apollinaria, having visited the Jordan, said to those who remained with her:

"My brothers, I wish to set you free too, but first let us go to Alexandria and venerate St. Menas."

They said:

"Let it be as you, our lady, command!"

When they drew near to Alexandria, the proconsul[11] learned of her arrival and sent honorable men to meet her and greet her as a king's daughter. But she, not wishing the honors prepared for her, entered the city at night and, coming herself to the proconsul's house, greeted him and his wife. The proconsul and his wife fell at her feet, saying:

"Why have you done this, our lady? We sent to greet you, and you, our lady, came to us yourself with a bow."

The blessed Apollinaria said to them:

"Would you do me a kindness?"

They answered:

"Certainly, lady!" Then the saint said to them:

10. Ashkelon: one of the five principal Philistine cities in Palestine, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, between Gaza and Ashdod. Assigned as an allotment to the tribe of Judah and conquered by it, it nevertheless later became independent and, like the other Philistine cities, was at enmity with Israel.

11. Proconsul: a governor of a region.

"Then let me go at once, do not burden me with honors, for I wish to go and pray to the holy martyr Menas."

And they, having honored her with precious gifts, let her go. The blessed woman distributed those gifts to the poor. After that she remained in Alexandria for several days, visiting churches and monasteries. There, in the house where she was staying, she found an elderly woman, to whom Apollinaria gave a generous alms and asked her to buy secretly for her a mantle, a paramand,[12] a klobuk, a leather belt, and all the men's garments of the monastic order. The old woman agreed, bought all of these, and, bringing them to the blessed one, said:

"May God help you, my mother!"

Having received the monastic garments, Apollinaria hid them away so that her companions would not learn of them. Then she dismissed the male and female slaves who remained with her, except for two—one an old slave and the other a eunuch. Boarding a ship, she sailed to Limn. From there she hired four animals and went to the tomb of the holy Martyr Menas. After venerating the relics of the saint and offering her prayers, Apollinaria set out in a closed carriage for the skete, to venerate the holy fathers who lived there. It was evening when she departed. She ordered the eunuch to remain behind the carriage, while the slave who was in front drove the animals. The blessed woman, seated in the closed carriage with the monastic garments in her possession, offered secret prayer, asking the Lord for help in the undertaking she had begun. Darkness fell and midnight drew near. The carriage approached a marsh beside a spring, which afterward came to be called the Spring of Apollinaria. Lifting the cover of the carriage, the blessed Apollinaria saw that both her attendants, the eunuch and the driver,

12. The paramand, otherwise called the analav, is a part of monastic dress. In antiquity the paramand consisted of two straps, worn over the tunic or shirt crosswise on the shoulders, as a sign of taking up the cross of Christ upon the shoulders. In another form the paramand was made of double woolen bands, hanging from the neck and embracing the shoulders crosswise beneath the arms, and then girding the lower garment. Later a small linen cloth bearing an image of the sufferings of Christ was attached to the breast, and the wearer girded himself crosswise with the ends of the straps or bands, like a deacon's orarion. Some monks wore the paramand over the monastic garment, others only over the tunic or shirt, as is still done today. At present, only schemamonks wear the elongated paramand, or analav, over their outer garment.

had fallen asleep. Then she took off her worldly clothing and put on the monastic garb of a man, addressing God with these words:

"Thou, O Lord, hast given me the beginning of this way of life. Grant that by Thy holy will I may be enabled to bear it to the end!"

Then, making the sign of the Cross, she quietly descended from the carriage while her servants slept, and entering the marsh she remained hidden there until the carriage had driven on. The saint settled in that desert by the marsh and lived alone before the face of the One God, whom she loved. God, seeing her heartfelt longing toward Him, covered her with His right hand, helping her in her struggle against invisible enemies and providing her bodily sustenance in the form of fruit from a date palm.

When the carriage from which the saint had secretly alighted moved on, the servants, the eunuch and the old man, awoke in the light of the coming day and, noticing that the carriage was empty, were greatly frightened. They saw only the garments of their mistress, but could not find her herself. They wondered, not knowing when she had gone down, where she had gone, or for what purpose, and why she had taken off all her clothing. They searched for her for a long time and called to her in a loud voice, but, not finding her, they decided to return, not knowing what else to do. Therefore, returning to Alexandria, they reported everything to the Alexandrian proconsul. He, greatly astonished by the report made to him, at once wrote down everything in detail to the anthypatos Anthemius, Apollinaria's father, and sent him, with the eunuch and the old man, the garments that had been left in her carriage. Anthemius, having read the proconsul's letter, together with his wife, Apollinaria's mother, wept long and inconsolably as they looked over the garments of their beloved daughter, and all the nobles wept with them. Then Anthemius exclaimed in prayer:

"O God! Thou hast chosen her; confirm her, then, in Thy fear!"

When, after this, they all wept anew, some of the nobles began to comfort the emperor with these words:

"Here is a true daughter of a virtuous father, here is a true offspring of a pious emperor! In this, sovereign, your virtue has received before

all men its testimony, for which God has blessed you with such a daughter!"

Saying this and much else, they somewhat soothed the emperor's bitter grief. And they all prayed to God for Apollinaria, that He would strengthen her in such a life, for they understood that she had gone out to the difficult life of a desert dweller, as indeed came to pass.

The holy maiden lived for several years in the place where she had stepped down from the carriage, dwelling in the desert near the marsh, from which clouds of stinging gnats rose. There she waged war with the devil and with her own body, which had once been tender, like the body of a girl raised in royal luxury, but afterward became like the shell of a tortoise, for she wore it down with labors, fasting and vigil, and gave it over to be devoured by the gnats. Besides this, the heat of the sun scorched her. When the Lord willed that she should find refuge among the holy desert-dwelling fathers, and that people should learn of her for their benefit, He led her out of that marsh. An angel appeared to her in a dream and commanded her to go to the skete and be called Dorotheus. She left her place of abode with such an appearance that no one could say with certainty whether a man or a woman stood before him. Once, when she was walking through the desert early in the morning, she was met by the holy hermit Macarius, who said to her:

"Bless me, father!"

She asked him for his blessing, and then, having blessed one another, they went together to the skete. To the saint's question:

"Who are you, father?"

He answered:

"I am Macarius."

Then she said to him:

"Be kind, father, and allow me to remain with your brotherhood!"

The elder, bringing her into the skete, assigned her a cell, not knowing that she was a woman and considering her a eunuch. God did not reveal this secret to him, so that in time all might receive great benefit from it and for the glory of His holy name. When Macarius asked her what her name was, she answered:

"My name is Dorotheus. Having heard of the holy fathers who dwell here, I have come to live with them, if only I prove worthy of it."

The elder then asked her:

"What can you do, brother?"

Dorotheus answered that he was willing to do whatever he was commanded. Then the elder directed him to make mats of reed. And the holy maiden lived as a man, in a separate cell, among men, as the desert fathers live; God did not allow anyone to penetrate her secret. Day and night she spent in unceasing prayer and in handiwork. In time she came to stand out among the fathers for the strictness of her life. Moreover, God granted her the grace of healing infirmities, and the name of Dorotheus was on everyone's lips, for all loved this so-called Dorotheus and regarded him as a great father.

Some time passed, and the evil spirit that possessed the younger daughter of the emperor Anthemius, Apollinaria's sister, began to torment her more severely and cried out:

"If you do not take me into the desert, I will not leave her."

The devil resorted to this trick so that it would become known that Apollinaria was living among men, and so that she would be driven out of the skete. But since God did not permit the devil to say anything about Apollinaria, he tormented her sister so that she would be sent into the desert. The nobles advised the emperor to send her to the holy fathers in the skete, so that they might pray over her. The emperor did so, sending his demon-possessed daughter to the desert fathers with a multitude of servants.

When they all arrived at the skete, the holy Macarius came out to meet them and asked:

"Why have you come here, children?"

They said:

"Our pious sovereign Anthemius has sent his daughter, so that you may pray to God and heal her of her affliction."

The elder received her from the hands of the imperial official and led her to Abba Dorotheus, that is, Apollinaria, and said:

"Here is an imperial daughter who stands in need of the prayers of the fathers who dwell here and of your prayer. Pray for her and heal her, for this power of healing has been granted to you by the Lord."

Apollinaria, hearing this, began to weep and said:

"Who am I, a sinner, that you ascribe to me the power to cast out demons?"

And, bowing down on her knees, she implored the elder with these words:

"Leave me, father, to weep over my many sins. I am weak and unable to do anything in such a matter."

But Macarius said to her:

"Do not the other fathers work signs by the power of God? This work has been entrusted to you as well."

Then Apollinaria said:

"May the will of the Lord be done!"

And, moved with compassion for the demoniac, she took her into her own cell. Recognizing her sister, the Venerable woman embraced her with tears of joy and said:

"It is good that you have come here, sister!"

God, however, forbade the demon to reveal anything about Apollinaria, who continued to conceal her sex under the appearance and name of a man. The saint struggled with the devil through prayer. Once, when the devil tormented the girl with particular force, the blessed Apollinaria, raising her hands to God, prayed with tears for her sister. Then the devil, being unable to resist the power of prayer, cried out loudly:

"Woe is me! I am being driven out of here, and I am departing!"

And, casting the girl down on the ground, he came out of her. The holy Apollinaria then took her recovered sister with her and brought her into the church, and, falling at the feet of the holy fathers, said:

"Forgive me, a sinner! I sin greatly by living in your midst."

They, summoning the messengers sent by the emperor, gave them back the healed imperial daughter and dismissed her with prayers and blessing to the emperor. The parents were very glad when they saw their daughter healthy, and all the nobles rejoiced at the good fortune

of their sovereign and glorified God for so great a mercy, for they saw that the maiden had become well, beautiful of face and gentle. The holy Apollinaria, however, humbled herself all the more among the fathers, taking upon herself more and more new labors.

Afterward the devil again resorted to a trick, to grieve the emperor and dishonor his house, and also to bring disgrace and harm upon the so-called Dorotheus. He entered the emperor's daughter once more, but did not torment her as before; instead he gave her the appearance of a pregnant woman. Seeing her in this condition, her parents were greatly disturbed and began to question her about with whom she had sinned. The girl, however, being pure in body and soul, answered that she did not know herself how this had happened to her. When the parents, by beatings, began to force her to say with whom she had fallen, the devil spoke through her lips and said:

"That monk in the cell, in whose company I lived in the skete, is guilty of my fall."

The emperor was greatly provoked and ordered that the skete be destroyed. The imperial voivodes came to the skete with soldiers and angrily demanded that they be given the black-robed monk who had so cruelly wronged the emperor's daughter. They threatened to put all the hermits to death if they resisted. Hearing this, all the fathers were thrown into extreme confusion, but the Blessed Dorotheus went out to the emperor's servants and said:

"I am the one you are seeking. Take me alone as the guilty one, and leave the other fathers in peace as innocent men."

The fathers, hearing this, were grieved and said to Dorotheus, "We will go with you!" for they did not consider him guilty of that sin. But the Blessed Dorotheus said to them:

"My lords! Only pray for me. I trust in God and in your prayers, and I believe that I shall soon return to you safely."

Then they led him with the whole assembly into the church, and after offering prayer over him and commending him to God, they handed him over to the messengers sent by Anthemius. Abba Macarius and the other fathers, however, were certain that Dorotheus was not at

fault in any way. When Dorotheus was brought to Anthemius, he fell at his feet and said:

"I beg you, pious sovereign, to hear patiently and in silence what I shall say about your daughter. But I will tell you everything only in private. The maiden is pure and has suffered no violence whatever."

The emperor and empress were then left alone with Dorotheus, and he said to them:

"I beg you in the name of God: promise me that, when you learn the truth, you will let me go back to my dwelling place."

When they had given him their imperial promise to do this, the Blessed Apollinaria said to them:

"It was I, the humble one, who healed your daughter, with the help of God and through the prayers of the holy fathers."

The emperor and empress were as if struck dumb with amazement, and they listened attentively to the blessed one.

"I will reveal to you," she continued, "a great mystery, which until now I have carefully kept hidden, in order to put to shame the devil, who slanders the innocent."

Saying this, she uncovered her breast, and the emperor and empress saw that before them stood not a man but a woman.

"Father," said the blessed one then, "I am your daughter, Apollinaria!"

Hearing this, the parents at first seemed to die of horror and amazement, but then, recognizing in her their own daughter, they rejoiced exceedingly and shed many tears of joy that day. Then they brought to the Blessed Apollinaria her sister, whom they had believed to be with child, and said to her:

"Do you know this monk?"

She answered:

"Yes, this is indeed the very man who healed me by the power of God."

And the maiden fell at the saint's feet and begged her to heal her womb. Apollinaria, raising her sister from the ground, laid her hand upon her womb, and the demon immediately fled, and the maiden was made whole as before. Seeing this, the parents glorified God and said:

"Truly, this is our daughter, Apollinaria!"

And in the imperial household there arose a joyful weeping, both because the elder daughter, Apollinaria, whose whereabouts had been unknown until then, had unexpectedly been found, and because the other daughter had been freed from undeserved disgrace. The holy Apollinaria remained with her parents for several days and told them everything about herself in detail, and her parents, listening to her, glorified God for His wondrous providence.

When the saint intended to return to her dwelling place, her parents begged her to stay with them. But they could not persuade her, and besides, they did not wish to break their imperial word, given to her before her secret was revealed, that they would let her go to her dwelling place. And so, against their own wishes, they let their beloved daughter go, weeping and sobbing, yet at the same time rejoicing in their hearts over such a virtuous daughter, who had devoted herself to the service of God. The Blessed Apollinaria asked her parents to pray for her, and they said to her:

"May God, to Whom you have betrothed yourself, perfect you in the fear and love of Him, and cover you with His mercy. And you, beloved daughter, remember us in your holy prayers."

They wished to give her much gold, to carry to the skete for the needs of the holy fathers, but she would not take it.

"My fathers," she said, "have no need of the riches of this world. We care only that we not be deprived of the good things of heaven."

And so, after offering prayer and weeping for a long time, embracing and kissing their beloved daughter, the emperor and empress let her go to her dwelling place. The blessed one rejoiced and exulted in the Lord.

When she came to the skete, the fathers and brethren rejoiced that their brother Dorotheus had returned to them unharmed and in good health, and they held a festive celebration that day in thanksgiving to the Lord. No one ever learned what had happened to her at the emperor's court, and it also remained unknown that Dorotheus was a woman. And the holy Apollinaria, this supposed Dorotheus, lived among the

brethren as before, remaining in her cell. After some time, foreseeing her departure to God, she said to Abba Macarius:

"Do me a kindness, father: when the time comes for me to pass into the other life, let the brethren not wash my body or lay it out."

The elder said:

"How can that be?"

When she had reposed in the Lord[13], the brethren came to wash her body, and seeing before them a woman, they cried out in a loud voice:

"Glory to Thee, O Christ God, who hast many hidden saints with Thee!"

Saint Macarius marveled that this mystery had not been revealed to him. But in a dream he saw a man who said to him:

"Do not grieve that this mystery was hidden from you. It is fitting for you to be crowned with the holy fathers who lived in ancient times."

The one who appeared then spoke of the origin and life of the Blessed Apollinaria and named her. Awakening from sleep, the elder gathered the brethren and told them what he had seen, and all marveled and glorified God, Who is wondrous in His saints. The brethren adorned the saint's body and buried it with honor on the east side of the church, in the tomb of Saint Macarius. From her holy relics many healings took place, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever, amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Prophet Micah

Память святого пророка Михея

The Holy Prophet Micah, son of Imlah[14], was a contemporary of the prophet of God Elijah, and lived in the days of Ahab, king of Israel[15], and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah[16]. Micah prophesied orally and foretold the unhappy end of Ahab's war against Syria. Once Jehoshaphat came to Samaria[17] to visit Ahab. Remembering that

13. Around 470.

14. This Prophet Micaiah did not belong to the number of the twelve so-called "Minor Prophets," and lived in the ninth century B.C. The holy Prophet Micah, from the number of the "Minor Prophets," lived and prophesied about 130 years later.

Ramoth, a city of Gilead[18], which the Syrians then held, had formerly belonged to the kingdom of Israel, Ahab asked Jehoshaphat to march with him in joint force against Syria[19]. The pious king of Judah agreed, but before setting out on campaign he wished to learn the will of God from the mouths of prophets. Then Ahab summoned the prophets of Baal[20]. These false prophets, standing before both kings, who were seated on magnificent thrones at the gate of Samaria, foretold victory over the Syrians for Ahab. But Jehoshaphat asked whether there was not yet a prophet of the Lord here, through whom he might inquire of the Lord.

"There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the Lord," answered Ahab, "but I do not like him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, only evil. This is Micah, son of Imlah."

"Do not speak so, O king," Jehoshaphat replied.

Ahab at once gave orders to summon Micah.

The king asked him:

"Micah, shall we go up against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?"

Micah answered:

15. Ahab, son of Omri, was king of Israel. He married the impious Jezebel, daughter of the king of Sidon, and together with her introduced new idolatry into the kingdom of Israel: the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, the deities of Sidon. In his time lived the Prophet of God Elijah the Tishbite, who sternly rebuked his impiety.

16. Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, the pious king of Judah, reigned from 914 to 889 B.C.

17. Samaria was the principal city of the kingdom of Israel. This city was built by Omri, king of Israel, the father of Ahab, 925 years before Christ, and remained the principal city and residence of the kings of Israel until the destruction of the kingdom by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria.

18. Ramoth: a city of Gilead, now Salt, lying at the foot of the mountain of Gilead. Gilead is a land beyond the Jordan.

19. Syria, in the broad sense, denotes the vast land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates. During its independence it was divided into many kingdoms, of which the most powerful was the kingdom of Damascus, which is the one meant in this case. In the reigns of Baasha and Omri, kings of Israel, Ben-hadad, king of Syria, seized several Israelite cities. In the time of Omri's son, Ahab, Ben-hadad II, son of the former, besieged Samaria itself, but was taken captive and was compelled to conclude peace, returning to Ahab the cities his father had conquered; however, Ramoth of Gilead remained in the hands of the Syrians.

20. Baal was the chief deity of the Phoenicians, under whose name they worshipped chiefly the sun. Having introduced, together with Jezebel, the worship of Baal and Astarte into the kingdom of Israel, Ahab especially favored the false prophets of Baal, maintaining them at his royal expense, about a thousand men in number.

"I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep that have no shepherd, and the Lord said: They have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace."

Then Ahab gave orders to put the prophet Micah in prison and to give him only a little bread and water there, until he (Ahab) returned in peace.

To this Micah remarked:

"If you return in peace, then the Lord has not spoken through me."

Ahab did not heed the prophetic words of Saint Micah, and opened war against the Syrians, but in the very first battle he received a mortal wound[21], while Jehoshaphat returned with his army to Judah.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Gregory of Crete

Память преподобного Григория Критского

Our Venerable Father Gregory was born in 760 on the island of Crete[22] to the pious spouses Theophanes and Juliana. Having been raised well at home, he also received a book education. At that time the confessors of the Orthodox faith suffered great oppression at the hands of the heretical iconoclasts. Devoted to Orthodoxy from childhood and ardently desiring to keep the true faith in all its purity, the youth once took a supply of food from home and withdrew to Seleucia[23]. He lived there for no small time, nourishing himself on bread and water and leading a God-pleasing life in ascetic struggles of piety.

After the death of the iconoclast Emperor Leo IV[24], the Venerable Gregory, in the twentieth year of his life, set out for the holy city of Jerusalem to venerate its shrines. He remained there for twelve years, bearing with patience and joy the cruel oppression of the Arabs[25] and

21. This was about 878 B.C.

22. The island of Crete, also called Candia after its principal city of the same name, lay in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, south of the Aegean Sea. By reason of its vastness and fertility it was formerly called the "queen of the islands" of the Mediterranean.

23. In antiquity several cities bore the name Seleucia: in Asia Minor, in Mesopotamia, in Syria, and in Palestine. Because of its proximity to the island of Crete, the reference here should be understood as the maritime city of Asia Minor in Cilicia, in the southeastern part of Asia Minor.

24. Leo was Byzantine emperor; he reigned from 776 to 780.

the Jews. From there Saint Gregory moved to Rome, where he received the tonsure into the angelic image, in which he lived and struggled, mortifying his flesh by abstinence.

In 811, St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, sent St. Michael the Confessor, Bishop of Synnada,[26] to Pope St. Leo III[27] with a synodal letter concerning the crowning of the Emperor Michael Kouropalates.[28] At Rome, St. Michael became closely united in spirit with Venerable Gregory, and when he returned to Constantinople he took Gregory with him and afterward settled him in a monastery on Cape Akrites.[29] Here the Venerable Gregory, for Christ's sake, subjected himself to great privations. He went barefoot and had only one garment. His food consisted of a small amount of bread and water, and he took it only once every two or three days. He slept on a mat and chose for his dwelling a deep pit, where he bitterly lamented the disorders that then troubled the Christian Churches.[30] Later, the holy ascetic shut himself up in a narrow cell. From there he came out, clad in a single leather garment, to carry water to a vat standing near the monastery wall. When he had finished this heavy labor, the Venerable Gregory withdrew to his cell and performed his cell rule there. Thus, struggling with a good struggle, he gave his holy soul into the hands of God.[31]

* * *

Memory of Venerable Phostirius

Память преподобного Фостирия

Venerable Phostirius, shining like the sun in the East, enlightened those who dwelt in darkness. Withdrawing to a high, desert mountain, he remained in unceasing prayer to God, mortifying his

25. The Arabs took Jerusalem in 636, under the caliph Omar.
26. His memory is celebrated on May 23.
27. From 795 to 816.
28. Michael Kuropalates, also called Rangabe, reigned from 811 to 813.
29. On the Asia Minor shore of the Sea of Marmara.
30. The reference is to the disturbances raised in the East by the iconoclasts, and in the West by the new teaching on the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.
31. St. Gregory died about 820.

flesh by fasting, nightly vigils, and a life full of privations. He shone with great asceticism like a luminary in the universe, thereby justifying the name he bore.[32] Having cleansed his body and sanctified his soul by fulfilling the commandment of the Lord, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24), the Venerable Phostirius became a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. By the grace given him from God, he healed infirmities and all manner of wounds in those who came to him in faith.

Like the glorious Prophet Elijah, our Venerable Father Phostirius received food from heaven. But it was not ravens that brought him food, as Scripture tells of the prophet (3 Kgdms. 17:6), but an Angel of the Lord. This heavenly messenger laid bread for the Venerable Father each day in a certain place, and when visitors came to the holy man, the Venerable Father found loaves in that same place for them as well. This most glorious miracle of God's goodwill was not performed for a few days, as in the time of the holy Prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel, but throughout all those many years when the Venerable Phostirius dwelt in solitude and stillness.

When afterward, with God's help, the Venerable Phostirius founded a monastery in which a numerous brotherhood gathered, he no longer received bread from heaven as before, but provided them with food from the labor of his hands. This did not happen because God had grown weary in His gracious help, nor because He turned away from the prayer of the saint, especially since the holy father himself never prayed for food, remembering the commandment of Christ: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). Rather, the Lord so willed to give them food in return for their labors, and therefore He commanded His servant Phostirius to accept nothing from anyone, but to obtain all that was needful from the labor of his hands. Accepting no offerings himself, the Venerable Phostirius also diligently instructed his brethren to devote themselves to prayer, to spiritually profitable reading, and to handiwork, and in this he was himself a constant example to them.

32. Phostirius is a Greek name (from the word meaning "luminary"), and signifies "illuminator."

During the lifetime of St. Phostirius, certain heresies arose in the Church. To put an end to this scandal, a council of many fathers was convened, and the Venerable Phostirius was also invited to it. The blessed man did not shrink from this new labor, and on arriving at the council he bravely and persuasively confessed the true faith, so that many of the heretics returned to communion with the Church. Others entered the monastic life, moved to do so by the holy life of this great ascetic, by whose prayers many miracles were wrought both during his earthly life and after his blessed repose to God, which took place in the evening on the eve of the feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Mina

Память преподобного Мины

Our Venerable Father Mina labored in one of the coenobitic monasteries of Mount Sinai[33] in the sixth century after the Nativity of Christ. For fifty years he performed various monastic obediences. On the third day after the blessed repose of this ascetic, the whole brotherhood gathered in the church to perform, according to the church rule, the funeral service for the departed. During this service, the church was suddenly filled with fragrance that issued from the place where the departed lay. When, at the command of the superior, the coffin containing the remains of the deceased Venerable Mina was opened, all who were present saw that fragrant myrrh was flowing in two streams down both his legs. Then the superior said to the brethren:

"Behold, this is, as it were, the sweat of the labors undertaken by the feet of the departed during his life. It is filled with fragrance as a witness that these labors have been accepted by God. Therefore, bear

33. Sinai is the mountain from which the Lord gave the law to the Hebrew people through Moses. It forms one of the peaks of the Horeb mountain range on the peninsula of the Red (Chermny) Sea. This mountain range, cut by narrow rocky gorges and containing many caves, from the earliest days of Christianity became a favorite place of ascetics, who established there several sketes and monasteries. Among the Sinai ascetics the best known are: St. John the Faster, afterwards Patriarch of Constantinople; Venerable John Climacus, author of the *Ladder*, who at the end of his life was abbot of Mount Sinai, that is, of the monasteries located there; and many others.

also, with a pure conscience and with full diligence, the obediences laid upon you, that you may receive a reward for your labors from the Lord God and our Savior."

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THE SIXTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 6

6 января

New Calendar January 6 · Old Calendar January 19 (civil dates)

Baptism of the Lord

Крещение Господне

Our Lord Jesus Christ, after His return from Egypt, dwelt in Galilee, in His own city of Nazareth, where He was brought up, concealing the power of His Godhead and His wisdom from men until the age of thirty. For among the Jews no one could be admitted to the office of teacher or priest before the age of thirty. Therefore Christ did not begin His preaching, nor reveal Himself as the Son of God and "a great high priest that is passed into the heavens" (Heb. 4:14), until He had reached that age. In Nazareth He lived with His Most Pure Mother, first with His reputed father Joseph the carpenter, while Joseph was still alive, and worked with him at the carpenter's trade. After Joseph died, He Himself continued the same work, earning by the labor of His hands His own sustenance and that of the Most Pure Mother of God, so that He might teach us also to be diligent in labor (Lk. 3:23). When the thirtieth year of His earthly life was complete and the time had come for His Divine manifestation to the people of Israel, then, as the Gospel says, "the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" (Lk. 3:2). This word sent him to baptize with water and gave him a sign by which John was to recognize the Messiah who had come into the world. The Forerunner himself speaks of this in his preaching in these words: "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (Jn. 1:33).

Accordingly John, heeding the word of God, went through all the country about the Jordan, preaching "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Lk. 3:3), for he was the one of whom Isaiah prophesied: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Is. 40:3; cf. Lk. 3:4). And all the land of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him, and were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins (Mk. 1:5). Then came Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him (Mt. 3:13). He came at the time when John had made Him known to the people, saying: "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mk. 1:7–8). After this announcement Jesus came to be baptized. Although He had no need of this, being sinless and spotless, born of the Most Pure and All-Holy Virgin Mary, and Himself the source of all purity and holiness, yet, since He had taken upon Himself the sins of the whole world, He came to the river in order to cleanse them by baptism. He came to be baptized also in order to sanctify the nature of water, and He came to be baptized so as to establish for us the font of holy baptism. He came to John, moreover, so that John, seeing the Holy Spirit descending upon the one being baptized and hearing from on high the voice of God the Father, might be a true witness concerning Christ.

"But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Mt. 3:14). He recognized in spirit Him of whom, thirty years earlier, he "leaped for joy" in his mother's womb (Lk. 1:44). Therefore he himself asked to be baptized by Him, as one under the guilt of disobedience, which had passed from Adam to the whole human race. But the Lord said to John: "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Mt. 3:15).

By "righteousness" Saint Chrysostom understands here the commandments of God, as if Jesus were saying: "Since I have fulfilled all the commandments given in the Law, and only one remains, concerning baptism, it behooves Me to fulfil this one also." The baptism of John was also a Divine commandment, as is evident from John's words: "He

that sent me to baptize with water" (Jn. 1:33). Who sent him? Clearly God Himself, for the Gospel says: "the word of God came unto John" (Lk. 3:2). Jesus was also baptized at the age of thirty for another reason, namely, as Chrysostom and Theophylact say, that the age of thirty is prone to every sin. The age of youth is subject to the fire of carnal passions, while at thirty, the time when male strength is fully developed, a man yields to the love of gold, vainglory, wrath, anger, and every kind of sin. For this reason Christ the Lord delayed receiving baptism until this age, so that He might fulfil the law at every stage of human life, sanctify our whole nature, and give us the strength to overcome the passions and to guard against mortal sins.

After receiving baptism, the Lord came up out of the water at once, without any delay. There is a tradition that Saint John the Baptist, when baptizing, immersed each person up to the neck and held him there until he had confessed all his sins; only after this was the one being baptized permitted to come out of the water. But Christ, who had no sins, was not detained in the water, and therefore the Gospel adds that He came up out of the water straightway (Mt. 3:16).

As the Lord came up out of the water, the heavens were opened above Him, a light like lightning shone from on high, and the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove upon the Lord who was being baptized. Just as in the days of Noah the dove announced the subsiding of the waters of the flood, so here the likeness of a dove foreshadowed the end of the sinful flood. The Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove because this bird is pure, loves people, is gentle, guileless, and cannot endure anything foul. So too the Holy Spirit is the source of purity, the deep of love for mankind, the teacher of meekness, and the establisher of peace. Moreover, He always withdraws from the man who crawls in the foul mire of sins. When the Holy Spirit descended from heaven upon Christ Jesus in the form of a dove, a voice was heard saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). To Him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Homily of St. John Chrysostom on the Theophany of the Lord

Слово святого Иоанна Златоустого на Богоявление Господне

I wish, beloved, to celebrate and rejoice, for the holy day of enlightenment is the seal of the feast and the day of triumph. It seals the Bethlehem cave, where the Ancient of Days lay in the manger as an infant at His mother's breast. It also opens the springs of the Jordan, where that same Ancient of Days is now baptized with sinners, bestowing on the world the forgiveness of sins through His most pure body. In the first case, He who came forth from the womb of the Most Pure Virgin appeared to the infants as an infant, to the mother as a son, to the Magi as a gift, and to the shepherds as the good shepherd who, as the divine Scripture says, lays down His soul for the sheep (Jn. 10:11). In the second case, namely at His baptism, He comes to the waters of the Jordan in order to wash away the sins of the tax collectors and sinners. Speaking of the extraordinary wonder of such an event, the wise Paul exclaims: "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). For now the world is being enlightened in all its parts. Heaven first rejoices, passing on to men the voice of God descending from the heights of heaven. The air is sanctified by the flight of the Holy Spirit. The nature of water is sanctified, as if being taught to cleanse souls together with bodies. And all the earthly creation rejoices. Only the devil weeps, seeing the holy font prepared for the drowning of his power.

What more does the Gospel tell us? "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Mt. 3:13, 14). Who has seen a Lord standing before his servant? Who has seen a king bow his head before his soldier? Who has seen a shepherd whom a sheep showed the way? Who has seen the judge of a race take his reward from the one who runs in the contest?[1] "I have need to be baptized of thee": that is, bestow upon me, Lord, that Baptism which

1. The *ristania* was a footrace held publicly in Greece at certain festivals during the public games. The victor in this contest received a reward from special officials who awarded the prizes.

You Yourself wish to give to the world. I need You to baptize me, for I lie under the burden of the ancestral sin and carry within me the venom of the serpent. I need to be cleansed of the defilement of the ancient transgression. But for what sins have You come to be baptized? The Prophet bore witness to You as well, saying: "because he had done no sin, neither was any deceit in his mouth" (Is. 53:9). How then, You who grant deliverance, do You seek purification? Those who are baptized, according to custom, confess their sins. But what have You to confess, when You are wholly without sin? Why do You require of me what I have not been taught? I do not dare to do what is beyond my strength. I do not know how to wash the light; I cannot make the sun of righteousness shine. Night does not give light to day; gold cannot be purer than tin; clay cannot correct the potter; the sea does not take its streams from the spring; the river has no need of a drop of water; purity is not sanctified by defilement; and the condemned man does not release his judge. "I have need to be baptized of thee." The dead cannot raise the living; the sick cannot heal the physician. I know the weakness of my nature! "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord" (Mt. 10:24). The Cherubim do not approach me in fear; the Seraphim do not worship me or cry out the Thrice-Holy hymn.[2] I do not have heaven for my throne; a star did not go before me to guide the Magi. Moses, Your servant, barely earned the grace to see "Your back parts" (Ex. 33:23). How then shall I dare to touch Your most holy head? Why do You command me to do what surpasses my powers? I have no hand with which I could baptize God: "I have need to be baptized of thee." I was born of a woman advanced in years, for nature could not oppose Your command. While I was still in my mother's womb and unable to speak, I used her lips; now I myself, with my own lips, will glorify You, the Incomprehensible, whom the virginal ark contained.[3] I am not blind like the Jews, for I know that You are the Lord, who only for a time took the form of a servant in order to heal

2. An allusion to the vision of the Prophet Isaiah, who was granted to behold the Lord sitting on a throne, while the Cherubim and Seraphim surrounding the throne sang: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Sabaoth! All the earth is full of His glory!" (Is. 6:3).
3. The virginal womb of the Most Holy Theotokos is evidently meant.

man. I know that You have come to save us. I know that You are the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, a stone whoever believes in will not be deceived. The visible signs of Your humility shall not mislead me; in spirit I perceive the greatness of Your Divinity. I am mortal, but You are immortal; I am born of a barren woman, but You of a Virgin. I was born before You, but I am not above You. I could only come forth to preach before You, but I dare not baptize You. I know that You are the axe laid at the root of the tree (Mt. 3:10), the axe that cuts down the barren trees of the Jewish garden. I saw the sickle ready to cut away the passions, and I proclaimed that soon sources of healing would open everywhere. For what place will remain inaccessible to Your Jews? With a single word You will cleanse the lepers; the flow of blood will cease through a single touch of the hem of Your garments; at one command of Yours the paralytic will regain his strength. You feed the daughter of the Canaanite with crumbs of Your miracles, and with clay You open the eyes of the blind. How, then, do You ask me to lay my hands upon You? "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me, who lookest on the earth and it trembleth" (Mt. 3:14; Ps. 103:32), You who walk upon the waters as upon dry land, You of whom I have so often cried out in my preaching: "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose" (Mk. 1:7). I rely only upon Your ineffable goodness, and I hope in Your boundless love for mankind, by which You even permit the harlot to wipe Your most pure feet and to touch Your most holy head.

What then does the Lord say to him? "Leave it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Mt. 3:15). Serve the Word as a human voice; labor as a servant for the Lord, as a soldier for the king, as clay for the potter. Do not be afraid, but boldly baptize Me, for I shall save the world. I give Myself over to death in order to revive the dead nature of man. You, despite My command, still hesitate to stretch forth your hand; but the Jews will soon not be ashamed to stretch forth their impious hands against Me, so as to deliver Me to death. "Leave it now, for thus it is fitting." Out of My love for mankind, I resolved before all ages to save the human race. For the sake of men I became

man. What can be more wondrous than that I, as a simple man, come to be baptized? I do this because I do not despise the creation of My hands, and am not ashamed of the earthly nature. I remained what I was from eternity, and yet I took on a new nature, while My being remained unchanged. "I will leave you now." For the enemy of the human race, cast down from heaven and driven out of the earth, nests in the watery nature. I have come there too to drive him out, as the Prophet foretold of Me: "Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters" (Ps. 73:13). "Leave it now." For this enemy wishes to tempt Me as a man, and I endure this in order to show his powerlessness, for I shall say to him: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Mt. 4:7; Deut. 6:16).

O new miracle! O ineffable grace! Christ performs the struggle, and I receive the honor. He wages war with the devil, and I am the one who proves victorious. He crushes the serpent's head in the water, and I am crowned as a true wrestler.[4] He is baptized, and the defilement is removed from me. The Holy Spirit descends upon Him, and forgiveness of sins is granted to me. The Father bears witness of Him as His beloved Son, and I become a son of God through Him. Heaven is opened to Him, and I enter therein. Before Him, as He is baptized, the heavenly kingdom appears, and I receive it as an inheritance. The voice of the Father speaks to Him, and in Him I too am called. The Father is well pleased with Him, and does not reject me either. For my part, I glorify the Father, who from heaven gave forth His voice; the Son, who was baptized on earth; and the Spirit, who descended like a dove: God, One in the Trinity, whom I shall worship always. Amen.

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A Sermon on the Theophany of the Lord

Слово на Богоявление Господне

As we celebrate the Theophany of the Lord at the waters of the Jordan, let us recall that our Lord God also appeared over the

4. The expression is taken from the ancient custom of crowning the victors of wrestling contests at public games with laurel wreaths.

waters before, in order to work various wondrous deeds. Thus, when He appeared over the waters of the Red Sea, "the depths laid bare the bottom,"[5] and He led His people across on dry ground. When He crossed the Jordan in the Ark, He turned back the waters of that river: "Jordan was driven back" (Ps. 113:3). Finally, in the beginning, when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (Gen. 1:1), God created heaven, earth, birds, beasts, man, and in general the whole visible world.

And now over the waters of the Jordan God appears, One in the Trinity: the Father in the voice, the Son in the flesh, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. What does He accomplish by this manifestation of His? He creates a new world and renews all things, as the pre-feast troparion puts it, a world different from the first. "Old things are passed away," says Scripture, "behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). The first world, by its nature, was heavy; it could not rise to heaven and needed dry land on which to stand, as if set upon it. But the new world, brought up out of the waters of the Jordan, is so light that it needs no solid ground, is not built upon the earth, has no "barriers" but seeks height, and hastens swiftly up out of the water toward the heavenly doors opened above the Jordan: "Jesus, straightway coming up out of the water, lo, the heavens were opened unto him" (Mt. 3:16). For the first world, burdened with earthly cares, if it had desired to reach heaven, a ladder fixed on the earth would have been needed, whose top reached to heaven. Yet even that ladder was only beheld by Jacob, and he himself did not ascend by it. For the new world, however, ascent to heaven is possible even without a ladder. How so? Behold, in place of a ladder, the Spirit of God flies over the waters in the form of a dove. And this signifies the following. The human race, no longer like a reptile or a crawling beast that creeps upon the earth, but like a feathered bird, comes up out of the water of baptism. Therefore the Holy Spirit also appeared over the waters of baptism as a bird, so that, without a ladder, He might lift up to heaven His young, whom He has begotten by the bath of baptism. Thus are fulfilled the words of the

5. 1st Irmos for the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord.

Song of Moses: "as an eagle that fluttereth over her young" (Deut. 32:11), or, as Jerome renders it, causing His young to fly. Such is the new world that God creates by His manifestation at the waters of the Jordan: a world that does not cling to the earth, but like a feathered bird strives on its wings toward the opened heaven.

Let us recall here the expression of Scripture: "And God said: Let the waters bring forth, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven" (Gen. 1:20). And let us see how one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, who today appeared above the waters of the Jordan at the renewal of the world, brings forth from the water of baptism His spiritual nestlings and calls them to fly, so that on the wings of virtue they may soar to the heavens that have opened above the Jordan. But before we consider this, let us establish, on the basis of the teachers of the Church, that every man born of water and of the Spirit becomes a heavenly nestling. St. John Chrysostom says: Formerly it was said that the waters should bring forth "creeping things having life"; but since Christ entered the streams of the Jordan, the water brings forth no longer "creeping things having life," but rational and spiritual beings, souls, which do not crawl upon the earth but, like birds, soar toward heaven. Therefore David also said: "Our soul is escaped as a bird" (Ps. 123:7). This bird is not earthly but heavenly, for our dwelling, which is prepared for us from the beginning of baptism, is, according to the word of Scripture, in heaven. And St. Gregory of Nyssa, rebuking those who, after receiving baptism, return to their former evil deeds, says: "Shameless men, having received baptism, led, one knows not by what, into a kind of frenzy, lose the salvation received through the waters of baptism, although, having been buried together with the body of Christ, they have put on the wings of an eagle and through this are able to fly up to those heavenly birds which are the fearless spirits." Let us note these words: "Having been buried together with the body of Christ (through baptism), they have put on the wings of an eagle, so that they are able to fly." Thereby this holy teacher convincingly shows that the men who come up from the waters of baptism become birds soaring toward heaven. But we shall see this also from history.

The Venerable Nonnus, Bishop of Heliopolis, when he was to convert the manifest sinner Pelagia to God in Antioch, saw in a dream the following vision[6]: it seemed to him that he was standing in a church during the Divine Liturgy, and there a certain black dove, soiled with mire, flew about him; he took it, washed it in the font, and after that the dove at once became pure as snow and beautiful, and from there flew straight up to heaven. This vision signified that this blessed father would convert the sinner to the Lord and enlighten her with holy baptism. Thus the waters of holy baptism are so mighty that they can make a man a heavenly bird. This the waters of the Jordan also accomplish, giving man wings on which he may fly into the heavens that open before him.

But not only the renewal of human nature in the waters of the Jordan is depicted in this manifestation; the three adorable Persons of the Godhead also take upon themselves the likenesses of different birds. Thus we know that Holy Scripture likens God the Father to an eagle: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest" (Deut. 32:11). We read also that God the Son is like a hen[7]: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings" (Mt. 23:37). We know, finally, that the Holy Spirit also appeared over the Jordan in the likeness of a dove. Why, then, are the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity likened to these three kinds of birds? Truly because They likewise bring forth from the waters of baptism flocks of such nestlings spiritually, making men spiritual nestlings: some after the likeness of an eagle, some after the likeness of a hen, and some as it were a dove.

The Church triumphant in heaven divides the faithful servants of God, who come from the Church militant, into three distinct choirs in the heavenly dwelling: the choir of teachers, the choir of martyrs, and the choir of virgins. We shall not err if we say that these three choirs are three flocks of nestlings born and brought forth from the waters of baptism. The choir of teachers is a flock of eagles, which soar in the sky and, not closing their eyes, gaze upon the radiance of the sun; for

6. Cf. the Life of St. Pelagia under October 8.
7. *Kokosh* – a brooding hen; a mother bird that protects its chicks.

the holy teachers, contemplating God, rise high as if having wings, and with the bright mind, as with an eye, beholding the light of the Triune Divinity, enlighten themselves and others with wisdom. The choir of martyrs is a flock of hens with many chicks, for through the shedding of their blood for Christ they have begotten many other children for Christ: the blood of the martyrs indeed begot many children for the early Church, who became more numerous than the stars of heaven and the sand that lies on the seashore. The choir of virgins is a flock of pure doves, for they wholly offer themselves as a living sacrifice to God and take care to please not the flesh but the One Lord. These three flocks of spiritual birds, we have said, are born in the waters of baptism. Let us consider how this comes to pass.

In the Song of Songs it is said: "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me" (Song 6:4). This means: look upon me, O Lord, with Thy merciful eyes, and turn them not away from me, for by Thy mercy I am made a bird soaring to the heavens. And in His manifestation at the Jordan, God looked upon human nature: God the Father looked, opening the heavens above the Son; God the Son looked, coming from Nazareth of Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan — looked, I say, for He gathered all the filth of Adam's sin, all the infirmities of our nature, and brought them here, that He might wash them away and cleanse us from our sins; and God the Spirit also looked, descending upon the Divine Man who received baptism. Having looked upon us, the One God in the Trinity, did He not lift up human nature on wings? Truly He did, for through this divine regard there at once appeared flocks of eagles, hens and doves, that is, the choirs of teachers, martyrs and virgins. Let us explain this on the basis of Holy Scripture.

The Theologian saw in the revelation granted to him, before the throne of God, a sea of glass, as it were of crystal (Rev. 4:6); this sea signified the mystery of holy baptism, for between the throne of God and man who intends to draw near to the throne of God there lies the water of baptism, and no one can draw near to God seated on the heavenly throne except by first crossing the sea of baptism, according to the words of Scripture: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:19). But why is this

sea, which signifies the mystery of baptism, of glass and crystal? We know that the interpreters of Divine Scripture say that it is of glass because it possesses a purity that cleanses the soul of the man who receives baptism, and of crystal because it gives firmness to the heart of man. It is also of glass and crystal because, just as a sunbeam passes through glass and crystal, so the grace of God penetrates through the mystery of baptism, and through it comes to man and enlightens the temple of his soul. Finally, the sea standing before the Throne of God and signifying the mystery of baptism is of glass and crystal so that the Most Holy Trinity seated upon the throne might be reflected and seen in it, as in a mirror of glass and crystal, for in holy baptism the image of the Trinity appears. "Go ye therefore," said Jesus Christ, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt. 28:19). Reasoning humanly: if God the Father sat upon His throne as an eagle, then in the sea standing before the Throne, as in a mirror of glass and crystal, the image of an eagle should have been reflected. If God the Son sat upon the throne as a hen —for so He calls Himself in the Gospel—then in that sea before the Throne the image of a hen should likewise have appeared, as in a mirror. If the Holy Spirit sat upon that throne as a dove, then the image of a dove should also have shown in that sea. But let us explain the spiritual meaning of these images.

We have said that the sea seen before the throne of God signifies the mystery of holy baptism, in which our nature that is being baptized is cleansed, like glass, "from every defilement of flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. 7:1), while our soul is strengthened and made bright, like crystal. When God in the Trinity looks upon this mystical glass and crystal during our baptism, then truly the image of the Trinity appears in it. Whether God the Father looks upon it as a spiritual eagle, or God the Son as a spiritual hen, or God the Holy Spirit as a spiritual dove, the mystical glass and crystal, that is, our nature being baptized, always displays in itself the likeness of these spiritual birds and becomes the nestling of an eagle, or of a hen, or of a dove, that is, a child of God, who is One in the Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, as it is said: "to those believing in His name, He gave the authority to

become children of God" (Jn. 1:12). The Most Holy Trinity looked upon human nature receiving baptism in the waters of the Jordan, and was reflected in it, endowing it, as a nestling, with the spiritual wings of the eagle, the hen, and the dove; that is, it multiplied in the Church militant teachers, martyrs, and virgins. Thus it is clear that each Person of the Most Holy Trinity brought forth from the waters of the Jordan its own particular spiritual nestlings. God the Father, as an eagle, brought forth from the Jordan spiritual eagles, that is, Church teachers. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem says: "The beginning of the world is water; the beginning of the Gospel is the Jordan. From water the light of day shone forth, for the Spirit of God, which at first moved over the water, commanded light to shine out of darkness. From the Jordan the light of the Holy Gospel shone forth. The First Teacher of the whole world, Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, from where did He begin His teaching? Was it not from the waters of the Jordan? 'From that time,' says the Gospel, 'Jesus began to preach and to say: Repent' (Mt. 4:17). And at once many teachers appeared after Him: these are the holy Apostles, whom He sent to preach. Thus the waters gave life both to the natural birds (Gen. 1:21) and to the spiritual birds. For from where were Peter and Andrew, James and John called to the apostolic and teaching service (Mt. 4:18, 21)? Was it not from the water? The Lord chose the Apostles from among fishermen. From where did the Samaritan woman appear as a preacher about the true Messiah in her city? Was it not from the water of Jacob's well (Jn. 4:6–7)? From where also did the blind man who regained his sight come forward as a witness of Christ's wondrous power? Was it not from the water of the pool of Siloam (Jn. 9:7)? All this was a foreshadowing of holy baptism, in which spiritual blindness is healed, sinful defilements are washed away, and Church teachers receive divine wisdom. For by baptism there is bestowed upon man that grace by whose help he can acquire great understanding; and from there, in the teachers of the faith, spiritual wings grow, according to the word of Scripture: 'they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary' (Is. 40:31)."

God the Son, as a hen gathering His scattered children under His wings, brings forth from the water of baptism His nestlings, the holy martyrs, Himself first of all giving His flesh, baptized in water, to wounds, Himself first of all laying down His life for us on the cross, so that we too might be ready to die for Him. Let us recall here the words of the Apostle: "we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death" (Rom. 6:3). This means almost the same as if the Apostle had said: everyone who was baptized into Christ must die for Him, must "be united with Him in the likeness of His death" (Rom. 6:5). And who was baptized into His death, if not the holy martyrs, who say: "for Thy sake we are killed all the day long" (Ps. 43:23)? Who else was "united with Him in the likeness of His death" (Rom. 6:5), to which He, "as a sheep, was led to the slaughter" (Is. 53:7), if not the holy martyrs, who say: "we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Ps. 43:23)? For this reason they are sung: "Having preached the Lamb of God, be ye doomed to slaughter like lambs" [8]. Into His death were baptized the holy forty-nine martyrs, who, cast with Saint Callistratus into the lake, "were made conformable to the likeness of His death" (*Their memory is 27 September*); and also the ten thousand martyrs who, together with Saint Romylus, were crucified on the same day in the Armenian wilderness (*Their memory is 6 September*). And all the holy passion-bearers who shed their blood for Christ also drew near "to the likeness of His death," as those baptized into His death. Already in the water of their baptism they were predestined to the crown of martyrdom. The ordinary hen has the habit of choosing the best grains for food, and, having found such, she calls her nestlings to herself. Accepting as certain that all virtues are spiritual food, everyone must acknowledge that there is no better grain, or no higher virtue, than love: "but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13), and specifically that love which lays down its soul for the beloved: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). This grain of love was found and pointed out to His nestlings by the spiritual hen, Christ the Lord, who laid

8. From the service for the departed.

down His soul for His friends: "you," He said to the Apostles, "are My friends" (Jn. 15:14). To this grain the called nestlings, the holy martyrs, flocked, and, moved by love, they began to lay down their souls for the Lord, as one martyr speaks to the Lord: "I love Thee, my Bridegroom, and for Thee I shall accept sufferings" [9]. From where, then, were these spiritual nestlings called to the grain of love? Was it not from the water of baptism, in which they were baptized into His death? Let us hear Saint Anastasius of Sinai [10], who, speaking of the good thief, for whom the water that flowed from the side of Christ became the water of baptism, says: "To these birds (that is, to the heavenly spirits) there flew up, from the life-giving water that flowed from the side of the Lord, the first of all birds, the holy robber, soaring through the air in a flock of birds together with the King of birds, Christ, soaring through the air into Paradise."

God the Holy Spirit, as a dove, brings forth from the water of baptism His nestlings, doves pure in body and soul, that is, virgins. For until the time when human nature in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the condescension and action of the Holy Spirit, was united with the Divinity and washed in the waters of the Jordan, until then marriage was higher than virginity; until then little was known anywhere of virginal purity kept for the glory of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" [11]. Then the flesh alone bore children, while the spirit remained barren, which is why God once said: "My Spirit shall not always be despised by men, because they are flesh" (Gen. 6:3). But when human nature descended into the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended upon it, then suddenly from the Spirit there was born into life a virginity higher than marriage, one that strives not toward the fleshly but toward the spiritual, according to the words of John the Theologian: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6). And since the spirit has greater honor than the flesh, virginity also, being united in one spirit with the Lord, became more honorable than the

9. From the troparion to the women Martyrs.
10. St. Anastasius the Sinaite – one of the outstanding theologians of the Greek Eastern Church of the seventh century. His memory is April 23.
11. (Jn. 3:6).

fleshly marital union. Our nature, having entered into a spiritual marital union with Christ in the Jordan, became fruitful and brought forth whole virginal choirs. And such a spiritual marriage cannot produce anything other than virginity, to which the prophet Zechariah pointed when he said: "wine is for maidens" (Zech. 9:17). By "maidens" the prophet means the virginal choirs. The Holy Spirit, according to the word of the prophet, is poured out like wine and produces virgins, for where the Holy Spirit pours forth His grace, virginity cannot fail to be born. Blessed Jerome, in his translation of Holy Scripture, aptly renders the sense of this passage with the words: "wine producing virgins." Indeed, that wine of the grace of the Holy Spirit was once poured out upon the Apostles and made them drunk, so that some considered them intoxicated with wine, and it made them such virgins that no defect remained in them, and they became pure and whole as doves. On the feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit the Church also sings: "The Spirit of salvation creates pure apostolic hearts" [12]. Thus now that same wine is poured upon the waters of the Jordan, and who doubts that the waters of baptism, mingled with the wine of the Holy Spirit, produce virginity, in accordance with the words of prophecy: "wine producing virgins," and such virgins to whom the Apostle says: "I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2)? From the spiritual marriage of our nature with God, virginity is born of the Spirit, which the Holy Spirit, having brought it forth from the water of baptism, leads into the heavenly mansions.

Thus each Person of the Most Holy Trinity, appearing at the Jordan, brings forth from the waters of baptism its own particular spiritual nestlings, and, having brought them forth, calls them to fly on the wings of virtues given to them into the opened heavens.

First, God the Father, as a spiritual eagle, calls His nestlings, His spiritual eagles, that is, the teachers, to fly, since they have special wings, of which the Church sings: "God has given to the nestlings who have flown forth, and they have ascended to the heavens."[13] What are the wings of those nestlings? Undoubtedly, besides the other virtues

12. From the canon for Pentecost, Ode 5.
13. From the church service.

common to all, there are two: deed and word. He is a church teacher, a high-soaring eagle, who himself carries out in deed what he teaches others in word. That the wings of the spiritual eagles are indeed word and deed is clearly shown in the book of the Prophet Ezekiel, who once saw four living creatures, each with four wings, drawing the chariot of God. Those creatures made a sound with their wings: "And when they went, I heard," says the prophet, "the sound of their wings, like the sound of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty (or, in the translation of Symmachus, like the thunder of the mighty God), a loud noise, like the noise of a host" (Ezek. 1:24). Truly it was a great voice, an extraordinary song! Yet what is remarkable is not so much the voice itself as the place from which it came. This voice did not issue from the throat, the word did not come from the tongue, the song did not come from the mouth, but from the wings of those creatures. The prophet says: "I heard the sound of their wings." They sang, but not with the throat; they glorified God, but not with eloquent and wordy lips and tongue, but with the very wings on which they flew: "I heard the sound of their wings."

What mystery is hidden here? The mystery is this: the creatures drawing God's chariot signified the church teachers, who are vessels chosen to spread the name of God throughout the whole universe, and who by their teaching lead the Church of Christ onto the straight road that leads to heaven, as though it were God's chariot, in which are found many tens of thousands of believing souls. The wings of those creatures, which give forth a voice and sing, signify the deed and word of the teacher. The wings that make flight possible show that the church teacher must first himself set forth an example of virtue, must first himself, before the eyes of all, by his God-pleasing life, rise toward heaven like a feathered creature. The voice that issued from the wings of those creatures signifies the teaching word; the teacher must give forth such a voice as would be commensurate with the strength of his flight, that is, he must teach the flock and at the same time himself live as he teaches. For the voice of a teacher brings no benefit when no wings of God-pleasing life are visible in him. Only that teacher rises straight to the heaven opened above the Jordan who flies not on the one

wing of word, but also on the other wing, of virtuous life, who teaches at one and the same time by word and by deed. Neither a cleverly composed speech, nor sweet-sounding lips, nor a loud throat lift teacher and disciple to heaven as readily as the wings of good works.

God the Son, as a spiritual hen, calls His nestlings, the holy martyrs, to fly. The wings of virtue that belong to them alone, besides the other common virtues, are these two: faith and confession. Of these martyr's wings the Apostle says: "For with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). Unwavering faith in the heart is one wing; bold confession of the name of Christ with the mouth before kings and tormentors is the other wing. The first spiritual bird to fly into Paradise, the good thief who suffered with Christ on the cross, rose on precisely such wings of faith and confession. For at the time when our Lord, who suffered voluntarily for us, was abandoned by all, and when even Peter, who had promised to die with Him, denied Him, one thief believed in Him with his heart and confessed with his lips, naming Him King and Lord: "Remember me, Lord," he said, "when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." How great was this faith of the thief, when among all the disciples of Christ it had failed (Mt. 26:56)! When all who believed were scandalized concerning Christ, he alone was not scandalized, but prayed to Him with faith, and therefore heard from Him such words: "Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise" (Lk. 23:42–48). St. Ambrose speaks of this thus: "At the hour when Paradise received Christ, it received also the thief, but this glory was granted to the thief by faith alone." Thus it is clear that this bird, that is, the martyr crucified with Christ on the cross, flew into Paradise on no other wings than faith confessed with the mouth. "This glory," says St. Ambrose, "was granted to the thief by faith alone."

Finally, God the Holy Spirit, who appeared in the form of a dove, calls His nestlings, the virgins, to fly as well, for it is characteristic of Him to make a man a winged bird, able to penetrate the highest regions. St. John of Damascus sings: “Every all-saving grace belongs to the Holy Spirit; if He breathe upon anyone according to his worth, He swiftly lifts him from earthly things, gives him wings, nurtures him,

and raises him on high." He also raises the spiritual doves, the holy virgins, on high, calling them to fly.[14] The special wings of virtue of those doves are the mortification of the flesh and of the spirit. That the mortification of the flesh is one of the wings that lifts a man to heaven, St. Ambrose of Milan says, interpreting the words of the Gospel, "Ye are of more value than many birds" (Mt. 10:31): "The flesh, disposed to fulfil the Law of God and cast off from sin, by purity of feelings is likened to the nature of the soul and rises to heaven on spiritual wings." Here the holy teacher of the Church speaks of likeness to the nature of the soul, having in view mortification, in which the actual nature of the flesh, as it were, passes into the nature of the soul, when the lower is subjected to the higher and the flesh is brought into bondage to the spirit, when a man is freed from sin and purifies his feelings, which is impossible without mortification. Having mortified his flesh, a man becomes light and feathered like a bird, and rises to heaven on spiritual wings. Thus the mortification of the body is the first wing for virginity soaring to heaven, for one who wishes to keep purity must above all mortify his flesh, as the Holy Spirit indicates through the words of the Prophet David, when He addresses Christ with these words: "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia" (Ps. 44:9). Here the interpreters of Divine Scripture understand by myrrh the mortification of the passions, by stacte humility, and by cassia faith.[15] These fragrances issue from the garments of Christ, that is, from His Holy Church, from the believers, with whom He has clothed Himself as with a garment, having taken on flesh and dwelling in those who live purely and holily. Thus the Holy Spirit, as it were, says: the mortification of the passions, humility and faith, like precious aromas, are fragrant before Thy Father from Thy Church, from the pure and virgin people, who keep these virtues in their hearts, as in vessels for preserving fragrances. But let

14. Resurrectional antiphon of the 6th Tone.

15. Myrrh – a fragrant resin of the balsam-bearing myrrh tree, which grows in Arabia and Ethiopia. This resin was used for sacred anointing, for fragrance and fumigation, for rubbing and anointing the body, and especially for embalming and anointing the bodies of the dead. Stacte – also an aromatic ointment, used for the healing of diseases. Cassia – a thin, fragrant bark that encloses the branches of trees. It was used for preparing fragrant ointments and perfumes, and also for medicinal purposes.

us ask: why does the Holy Spirit, while praising the Church of Christ for various virtues, first of all praise her for the mortification of the passions of the faithful, placing myrrh first? Truly, in order to show that after the suppression of lawless desires, after the cessation of carnal sensuality, after the mortification of the body, all the other virtues follow, as after their leader. Thus the spiritual nestlings of the Holy Spirit, that is, the virgins who desire to have heaven as their nest, must above all possess this wing, that is, the mortification of the flesh.

Their second wing is the mortification of the spirit, which consists in not only refraining from sin in deed, but also not desiring it in the spirit and not dwelling on it in the mind. One may be pure in body and yet have various unseemly desires, taking delight in thoughts of impurity. It is not in vain that the Apostle admonishes: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. 7:1). These words clearly testify that there is a twofold defilement: impurity of the flesh and impurity of the spirit. For the flesh is accustomed to manifest itself in deeds, and the spirit in thoughts and dispositions of the heart. In vain does that virginity boast of its purity and hope to attain heavenly glory which keeps only the body incorrupt, but does not strive to cleanse the soul, which is defiled by thoughts and desires. For as a bird cannot fly on one wing, so a virgin with only bodily purity, without spiritual purity, will not enter the heavenly bridal chamber. But whoever carefully keeps both purities, like a dove, will fly after Him who appeared "in the form of a dove."

Thus we have heard what the One God in Three Persons, who appeared on the waters of the Jordan at the renewal of the world, has done: how He brought the spiritual nestlings of the Church, the teachers, martyrs and virgins, out of the waters of baptism and called them "into the opened heavens." Let there be, then, from the teachers, the martyrs and the virgins, and from us sinners as well, honor, glory, worship and thanksgiving to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, God who appeared on the Jordan, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness unto Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the certainty of the word. O Christ God, who didst appear and enlighten the world, glory to Thee.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou hast appeared today unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Lord, is signed upon us who sing unto Thee with understanding: Thou hast come and hast appeared, O Light unapproachable.

* * *



THE SEVENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 7

7 января

New Calendar January 7 · Old Calendar January 20 (civil dates)

Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord

Собор святого Иоанна, Предтечи и Крестителя Господня

On the day after the feast of St. Epiphany, the Church from the earliest times has celebrated the synaxis of the honorable and glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John. And it was entirely fitting to honor with a special celebration him who served the mystery of the Divine Baptism, laying his hand upon the head of the Lord. Thus, immediately after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the Baptist is honored and glorified in common by hymns. The word "synaxis" itself means that the people gather in the church to celebrate the divine service in honor and praise of the great Forerunner and Baptist John, who is now glorified. Such a synaxis, though it was and is celebrated in all the churches of the universe, is celebrated with especial solemnity in the churches dedicated to the name of the Baptist: as formerly in his church at the Jordan, where he baptized Christ, and in Sebaste[1], where he was buried after being put to death by Herod[302], and in Antioch, whither his right hand was first brought by the holy Evangelist Luke, and in Constantinople, whither the same holy hand was afterward transferred from Antioch. There the synaxis of the Baptist was especially solemnly kept, since his hand was brought thither on the eve of the holy Epiphany, when the water is blessed: it seemed then that the Baptist himself had invisibly come to the blessing

1. Sebaste is the principal city of Samaria. It received this name after it was given by Augustus to Herod the Great, who completely restored and adorned it, and, in gratitude to Augustus, named it Sebasta, or Sebaste, meaning the city of Augustus.

of the water, and great joy came to the emperors and to all the people. Therefore, on that account, the synaxis of the Baptist was celebrated with great solemnity on the day after the Epiphany of the Lord, and continued to be celebrated also in the later time. And we, with spiritual joy, celebrate the synaxis of this great Forerunner and Baptist John, beseeching him to pray to the Lord Christ that He would gather us into the church of the triumphant in the eternal, not-made-with-hands temple in heaven, where we might hear the voice of those who keep the feast and celebrate the festival in honor of the eternal manifestation of God. There we may be satisfied with Christ by the vision of the face of God, who plainly shows Himself to His saints, and glorify with all the heavenly hosts the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever, amen!

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Narrative concerning the Right Hand of St. John the Forerunner, which Baptized the Lord

Сказание о десной руке святого Иоанна Предтечи, крестившей Господа

After the beheading of St. John the Forerunner, Baptist of the Lord, by the lawless king Herod, his honorable body was buried by his disciples near the tomb of the prophet Elisha in the famous Samaritan city of Sebaste. When the holy Evangelist Luke, preaching Christ and traversing many lands and cities, came to Sebaste, intending to depart from there to his native city, Antioch, it came into the mind of this apostle to take with him and carry to Antioch the body of the holy Forerunner, John the Baptist. It was incorrupt and whole, but could not be taken, because the inhabitants of Sebaste greatly honored the relics of the Baptist and carefully guarded them. Therefore the holy Evangelist Luke could separate from the holy body of the Forerunner only the right hand, which had baptized our Lord Jesus Christ; this he carried with him to his city of Antioch as a precious treasure, which he wished to offer in thanksgiving to Antioch for his upbringing received in that city. From that time the holy hand of the Baptist was kept with great reverence by the Antiochian Christians, for many miracles were

wrought by it. After a long time, Julian the Apostate[2] sat upon the imperial throne; he openly renounced Christ and bowed to idols. He began to persecute the Church of God as the pagan emperors who had persecuted Christians before him had done, and not only pursued and put to death living Christians, but also raged against the dead: he took the remains of saints who had suffered for the holy faith out of their tombs and burned them, and turned the temples of God and all holy things to ashes. Once he came also to Antioch, partly in order to offer there abominable sacrifices to his loathsome god Apollo[3], whose idol stood near the city in the locality called Daphne, and partly in order to persecute the Christians and burn those of their holy things which he might find. The Antiochian Christians, hearing of his arrival, hastened to hide the holy hand of the Baptist in a city tower called Gonia, lest the persecutor should dishonor it or burn it. Julian, having come to Antioch and done much evil to the Christians, sought the hand of the Baptist; and when his search proved fruitless, he sent an order to the Palestinian city of Sebaste that the whole body of the Baptist, which was there except for the head and hand, as well as the tomb and the church of the Baptist, should be given over to destruction and fire; and this was carried out, as the historians Nicephorus and Cedrenus[4] report. Yet the blessed Symeon Metaphrastes[5] reports that it was not the body of the Baptist that was burned, but someone else's, for the Patriarch of Jerusalem, learning beforehand of Julian's order, secretly took the relics of the Baptist from the tomb and sent them to Alexandria for safekeeping; in their place he laid the bones of a dead man, and these last were burned, ac-

2. Julian the Apostate was the nephew of Constantine the Great's son Constantius. He was co-ruler with him, governing the western provinces of the Roman Empire. Having become emperor in 361, he apostatized from the Christian faith and made the restoration of paganism the aim of his life; for this he is called the Apostate. He reigned until 363, when he perished in the war with the Persians.

3. Apollo was one of the most venerated Greco-Roman pagan gods. He was regarded as the god of the sun, of intellectual enlightenment, of poetry and music, and also of public well-being and order. In addition, he was the deity of prophecy about the future and of the healing art.

4. Nicephorus Callistus was a church historian, a monk of the Monastery of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople; he died around 1350. Cedrenus was also a well-known church historian, who lived at the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century.

5. Symeon Metaphrastes was a well-known compiler of the lives of the saints, who lived in Constantinople in the tenth century (he died around 940).

cording to Metaphrastes, in place of the relics of the Baptist, together with his tomb and church.

When that lawless king perished and the true faith again shone forth in the world, the hand of the holy Forerunner was taken out of the tower where it had been hidden, as a lamp from under a bushel. Again the Christians began to render it veneration, and again miracles were wrought from it as before. Of these miracles we shall relate the following.

Within the bounds of Antioch there nested a great and terrible serpent, which the pagans deified and to which, as to a god, they offered sacrifices every year. For this sacrifice a specially chosen pure maiden was usually appointed, who was delivered to be devoured by the serpent, in the presence of the whole people, who viewed this spectacle from special places built not far from the cave where the serpent lived. The serpent crept out of the cave and struck everyone with terror by his frightful appearance, his hissing and his widely opened jaws; then he seized the victim presented to him and, tearing her with his lips, devoured her. For such a sacrifice the daughters of the citizens of Antioch were appointed by lot. In one year the lot fell upon the daughter of an Antiochian Christian. This Christian with tears besought Christ God and His holy Baptist to deliver his daughter from a cruel death. When the day of that abominable festival had already come, the father with cries and weeping called upon God and invoked the help of St. John the Baptist. At this time he came to the church of John the Baptist, where the hand of the Baptist was kept, and earnestly asked the sacristan to open the church for him and let him in to worship that honorable and holy hand. He did this with a secret purpose, for the attainment of which he had put several gold coins into his bosom. When he began to make prostrations before the reliquary in which that holy hand was kept, he seemingly by accident let the gold coins fall from his bosom. The sacristan, who loved money, rushed to gather up the coins, and at this very moment that Christian kissed the holy hand of the Baptist, secretly bit off with his teeth one joint of the little finger, hid it, and, having prayed, went out, carrying with him the joint of the finger. When the day came on which the maiden was to suffer death without

guilt, and when the people had gathered at the place of spectacle at midnight, the father also came there, leading his daughter to be devoured by the serpent, and in his soul offering prayers to God for deliverance. And behold, the terrible serpent crept out of his cave, hissing, with open jaws, and began to crawl toward the prepared victim, the maiden, to devour her. But the father did not withdraw from his daughter, calling upon the All-seeing Savior Christ God and His Baptist for help. When the serpent crawled very near and opened his jaws still wider, the father of the maiden threw the joint of the holy finger of the Baptist straight into the middle of the serpent's throat, and the serpent immediately died. The maiden was thus saved from a cruel death, and her father, with tears of joy, loudly offered thanksgiving to the Savior God and His holy Baptist, explaining to all the people what great miracle the Lord God had wrought. The people present at the spectacle, seeing the serpent dead and the maiden alive and glorifying God together with her father, first were greatly astonished and filled with awe at the sight of so glorious a miracle, and then, rejoicing, began to glorify with one voice the One True God, living in heaven and regarding the humble. And there began a great feast and rejoicing in Antioch, for a multitude of pagans joined the Christians, believing in Christ God. On the very spot where that great miracle took place a church was built, great and beautiful, in the name of St. John the Baptist. It is related that in this church, on the day of the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross of the Lord, the hierarch raised also the honorable hand of the Baptist, and it sometimes held itself upright, sometimes bent: the first foreshadowed a great harvest of grain and of all fruits and vegetables, and the latter served as a presage of scarcity and famine.

When, by God's permission, the Arabs seized Antioch and all its territories, the great treasure, the most honorable hand of St. John the Baptist, was as it were taken captive. The pious Christian emperors made many efforts to take the most honorable hand of the Forerunner from under Arab power and to keep it in their imperial city, but for a long time they did not succeed in this aim, and they could accomplish nothing either with gold or by any other means. But in the reign of the porphyrogenite brothers Constantine and Romanus [6], this gift, more precious than all earthly treasures, was obtained in the following manner.

A deacon of Antioch named Job was inspired by God Himself to carry the holy hand of the Baptist out from under Arab dominion into a land where the Christian faith shone brightly. The holy hand lay in a most beautiful church in Antioch, dedicated to the name of the holy Apostle Peter, so Job entered the service of that church and became friends with the keeper of the sacred vessels, so that it would be easier for him to carry out what he had planned. He made many attempts to persuade the keeper of the vessels to join him in his intention, but the man would by no means agree. Then Job once gave a great feast and invited the keeper of the vessels. He entertained him diligently, and when the man, having drunk much wine, fell asleep at once, Job went secretly into the church, opened the reliquary, took the hand of the Baptist, and hid it on his person. The keeper of the vessels awoke in the morning and did not notice the loss. Meanwhile Job, without the least delay, left Antioch with the honorable hand and hastened toward the borders of the Christian realm, fearing that the Antiochene Christians and the barbarian government might learn of the theft of the holy hand and that a pursuit might be sent after him. Yet under the protection of God, and shielded by the prayers of the holy Baptist, he soon reached the Christian lands. Arriving at Chalcedon [7], he revealed what he had with him and showed this treasure, brought from Antioch, to the Chris-

6. The Byzantine emperor Constantine VIII Porphyrogenitus reigned from 912 to 959; his brother Romanus reigned from 919 to 944. Thus, from 919 to 944 the brothers ruled jointly.
7. Chalcedon was a city in the northwestern part of Bithynia, on the shore of the Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople.

tians. Word of this was at once carried to the pious emperors, and they, hearing such tidings, which exceeded their hopes, were filled with ineffable joy and immediately sent their imperial ship to Chalcedon. On this ship were the most holy patriarch and some of the most honored senators, who were to receive the hand of the Baptist that had been brought and to carry it with honor to the capital city. When the ship returned from Chalcedon with the holy hand, which the patriarch himself held, the emperors and the entire people came out to the shore, meeting as it were the holy Baptist himself, who was invisibly coming down from heaven, and paid him honor with worship, psalms and hymns, the lighting of candles, and incense. Approaching the honorable hand with reverence, the emperors placed it in their palace church [8]. This transfer of the holy hand of the Baptist took place on the eve of the holy Theophany, before the blessing of the water. This feast was celebrated, and after it a gathering in honor of the Baptist, with great rejoicing, in honor of St. John the Baptist, the highest among the prophets, and to the glory of the Triune God Himself, who is praised and worshipped by all forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

The memory of the righteous is with praises, but thou hast the witness of the Lord, O Forerunner: for thou wast shown to be truly the most honorable of the prophets, in that thou wast counted worthy to baptize in the streams Him whom thou didst proclaim. Wherefore, having suffered for the truth, thou didst rejoice and preach to those who were in Hades also God appearing in the flesh, who taketh away the sin of the world and granteth us great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Jordan, fearing Thy fleshly coming, was turned back in fear; and John, fulfilling the prophetic ministry, shrank back in trembling;

the angelic orders were amazed, beholding Thee baptized in the streams in the flesh; and all who were in darkness were enlightened, singing unto Thee, who didst appear and enlighten all.

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NOTES

302. This refers to Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled Galilee and Perea with the title of tetrarch, that is, "ruler of a fourth part," lord over a fourth part of Palestine. He had a lawful wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, but he rejected her and took the wife of his brother Philip, Herodias. St. John the Forerunner of the Lord rebuked Herod for this unlawful marriage. For this, Herod imprisoned him in the fortress of Machaerus, which lay near the Dead Sea on the border with Arabia. There the malicious Herodias, taking advantage of a suitable opportunity that arose during a feast, through her daughter Salome asked Herod for the head of John the Baptist, and the lawless king, in the midst of the feast, commanded that the head of the Forerunner be cut off, which was done. This head was brought to Herodias, who in malicious joy pierced the tongue of the Forerunner. The body was thrown outside the walls of the fortress, where it was found by the disciples of the Baptist, who honorably carried it to Sebaste and buried it there.

8. This honorable hand of the Forerunner was seen by Russian pilgrims in Constantinople in the fourteenth and at the beginning of the fifteenth century. It remained there until 1484, when it was transferred to the Knights of Rhodes, who, having established themselves on the island of Malta in the Mediterranean, carried the treasure they had received there. In 1799 this relic was brought by the Maltese Knights to Gatchina as a gift to Emperor Paul I, and from there it was transferred to St. Petersburg, to the Church of the Icon of the Savior Not Made by Hands in the Winter Palace. In memory of this event a feast was established on October 12.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 8

8 января

New Calendar January 8 · Old Calendar January 21 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyrs Julian and Basilissa, and of Others with Them

Житие и страдание святых мучеников Иулиана и Василиссы и других с ними

Saint Julian was born in the Egyptian city of Antinoë,[1] of noble and wealthy parents. From his youth he loved the purity of virginity and desired to preserve it to the very end of his life. Setting this purity as the foundation of all the other virtues, he dwelt in the fear of God, diligently reading and studying the Divine Books. Julian studied both Hellenic wisdom and Christian teaching; he went through secular philosophy, and at the same time he thoroughly learned all of Holy Scripture. When he reached eighteen years of age, his parents began to urge him to marry, since he was their only son and they wished their line to continue. But Julian refused marriage in every way. When his parents and relatives began to trouble him greatly with their counsels and entreaties, forcing him toward marriage, the chaste youth asked for one week to consider. All that week he spent in fasting, prayer and tears, day and night beseeching God that He would keep inviolate the virginity which he, Julian, had promised to Him. On the seventh day, when night came, Julian, his body exhausted by fasting and prayer, lay down and fell asleep; and behold, in a dream the Lord appeared to him, comforting, encouraging and saying:

"Do not fear to fulfill the will and counsel of your parents, for you will take to yourself such a wife as will not violate your virginity nor

estrange you from Me. More than that: for your sake she too will keep her virginity, and afterward I shall receive both you and her as virgins into My heavenly mansions, for by your example many youths and maidens will become virgins and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. I shall be with you always, dwelling in you and overcoming all your bodily desires and the fleshly struggle. As for the maiden who will be joined to you in marriage, I shall make her what I will. I shall cause her also to wish to follow your good purpose, and you both shall see Me in the chamber prepared for you, with Angelic faces and countless virgins of both sexes, whom nature divided and faith in Me has united, and of whom you shall be imitators."

Having said this, the Lord touched Julian and spoke:

"Take courage, and let your heart be strengthened!"

Thus strengthened and comforted by this Divine vision, the noble youth rose from his sleep and said:

"I thank Thee, Lord God, who searchest our hearts, that Thou dost drive far from me the sweetnesses and consolations of this world and promisest to be the keeper of my purity and my helper. I firmly hope that Thou wilt give me that which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man' (1 Cor. 2:9), that which Thou hast prepared for those who love Thee. And since Thou dost make me worthy to walk in Thy way, I beseech Thee to be Thyself a good way for me, and a way for all who love purity. Thou knowest, O Lord, that from the day of my birth until this hour in which Thou hast been pleased to call me, I have loved and desired nothing but Thee alone. Therefore confirm the promises that have come forth from my lips, and bring them to fulfillment."

Coming out of his bedchamber, the youth told his parents that he consented to fulfill their wish and did not refuse marriage. They, filled with joy, at once began to seek a maiden who would match their son in nobility of birth and in wealth. At last they found such a one in Ba-

1. Antinoe was a fairly considerable city on the borders of Middle and Upper Egypt. At the present time only ruins remain of this city. Around these ruins are a multitude of caves hewn in the rocks. On many of their walls is inscribed the sign of the cross, testifying to the existence here of churches and monasteries of monks; the underground galleries, where cells were arranged, extend over a great distance.

silissa, who was the only daughter of her parents and was distinguished by beauty and virtues. And she was married to Julian. When, after the wedding feast, the bridegroom and bride were led into the bedchamber and the door was closed behind them, the bride perceived an extraordinary fragrance, such as is found in a garden of lilies and roses and other fragrant flowers. With astonishment she said to the bridegroom:

"What does this mean, my lord? It is now winter, and yet I smell the fragrance of sweet-smelling flowers as if it were spring, and I so delight in this fragrance that I wish to think of nothing else."

Then her bridegroom, the blessed Julian, said:

"The fragrance you perceive is not ordinary, but comes from Christ, who loves purity and grants eternal life to those who keep their virginity undefiled. So, if you wish to keep Christ's commandments with me and to please Christ, let us love Him with all our soul and keep our virginity undefiled for Him. We shall become His chosen vessels in this present age, that we may reign with Him in the age to come, and we shall never be parted from one another."

To these words the blessed bride Basilissa answered:

"What else is more needful than salvation, which, by keeping virginity, we shall receive together with eternal life? I believe your words, and together with you I desire to remain in virginity until the end of my life, that I may receive a reward from Christ my Lord."

When she had said this, the blessed Julian threw himself upon the ground, worshipping God, and lay prostrate, crying out to Him:

"Confirm, O Lord, that which Thou hast begun to accomplish in us!"

And the maiden Basilissa, seeing her bridegroom at prayer, also began to pray. And suddenly the foundations of the bridal chamber shook, and in it shone such an extraordinary light that the very candles burning in the chamber grew dim before the heavenly rays. And there appeared a great Divine vision: on one side was seen the King of Glory, Christ, with a countless multitude of virgins, and on the other side our Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos, with choirs of maidens; and from both sides were heard heavenly hymns, filled with unspeakable sweetness, such as the ear of man had not yet heard.

At this time two radiant men in golden girdles came to Julian and Basilissa, raised them up, and showed them a large and beautiful-looking book laid upon their couch; and around the couch stood four venerable and comely elders holding golden cups in their hands, and from these cups, filled with aromatics, there rose a wondrous fragrance which filled the room. And one of the elders said:

"These cups signify your perfection, for you are blessed in that, having overcome the temporal delights of this life, you have set your heart on eternal life, which cannot yet be grasped by the human mind. Read, Julian, what is written in this book of life!"

Then Julian looked into the book and saw there the written names of himself and his wife. In golden letters was written the following:

"Julian, who has renounced the world for love of Me, shall be numbered among those who 'were not defiled with women' (Rev. 14:4); and Basilissa, for her purity and undefiled virginity, shall be reckoned in the choir of virgins who accompany the true Virgin Mary, My Most Pure Mother!"

When Julian had read this, the book closed, and the radiant men and maidens standing on both sides cried out with one voice:

"Amen!"

Then the elder again addressed Julian and Basilissa and said:

"In this book which you see are listed people who are pure, sober, truthful in word, merciful, humble, meek, loving without hypocrisy, who have endured every kind of grievous trial, sorrow and calamity—people who so loved Christ that for love of Him they left father and mother, wife and children, estates and wealth, and moreover did not shrink from giving up their very life for Christ; and you are now joined to their choir."

After these words of the venerable elder the Divine vision ceased, and the blessed spouses, filled with extraordinary joy, spent the rest of the night in psalmody. When day came, their parents and relatives, and likewise the other guests invited to the wedding, were still feasting, celebrating the fleshly union of bridegroom and bride, not suspecting their wondrous spiritual union. And thus Julian and Basilissa lived with each other in perfect purity and chastity, preserving the undamaged bloom

of their undefiled virginity. Yet they concealed this mystery from men, so that no one knew of their virginal life, not even their parents and relatives, until the Lord Himself revealed it for the benefit of many.

Some time after the marriage of Julian and Basilissa, their parents died, leaving them a rich inheritance; and they, having received freedom for their spiritual life, resolved to serve the salvation of other people as well, and not only to care for their own. For this purpose they built two monasteries, one for men and one for women, and, separating, took the tonsure—he in the men's monastery, and she in the women's. Gathering around them there choirs of monastics, they took charge over them.

In the monastery of Saint Julian there lived up to ten thousand brethren, zealously serving God; for the Lord gave him such grace that those who desired to save their souls flocked to him from every side. Leaving their houses, wives, parents, relatives, property and all the delights of the world, they committed their souls to him that he might lead them into the Kingdom of Heaven. Likewise Saint Basilissa gathered in her monastery and made brides of Christ up to a thousand pure maidens, and besides these a multitude of women. And in both monasteries, as in two paradise gardens, angelic purity flourished, and virginity triumphed over the lustful demon of impurity.

But it is now time to speak of the repose of the saints, of how they, with their children gathered to God, passed into the heavenly mansions, crying out to Christ God: "Behold, we and the children whom the Lord has given us."[2]

At that time two impious emperors, Diocletian and Maximian,[3] were reigning, and a severe persecution was raised against the Christians.[4] It passed from one land to another, troubling the Church of Christ, and drew near to the borders of the country where Sts. Julian and Basilissa

2. The expression is taken from (Is. 8:18). The Messiah, upon whom the sons of Israel are to hope, according to the assurance of the prophet, will save them from their enemies, temporal and eternal, and, bringing them to God, their heavenly Lord, will say: "Behold I and the children whom the Lord has given me."

3. The Roman emperor Diocletian reigned from 284 to 305 A.D. By Maximian is meant here Diocletian's son-in-law, Maximian Galerius, his co-ruler in the East and after him his successor (from 306 to 311).

lived. Many of the faithful fell into confusion and fear. But the blessed Julian and Basilissa, abiding in fasting and prayer, besought God with tears that He would strengthen the faithful in Him, and that He would preserve all the companies of monastics gathered by them, every one of them, from falling and perdition, so that they might all enter into the Heavenly Fatherland. The Lord heard this prayer and appeared in a special vision to St. Basilissa, and told her that she was soon to depart from this life into eternal rest; but that before her, all the holy virgins who had been under her care would depart from this life, so that none of these virgins, left behind after her, should fall away from the faith out of fear of torment and be excluded from the holy company. For this reason Basilissa would live on earth for six months more, until the holy virgins who lived under her care had passed to God. After Basilissa's death, her spiritual brother Julian, together with many brethren, would accomplish the feat of martyrdom, and, having conquered the enemy by his courage, would depart from this life, in order to receive the double crown of virginity and martyrdom "into the joy of thy lord" (Mt. 25:21). So it came to pass. Within half a year the whole company of virgins gathered by St. Basilissa passed by a common death into the heavenly chamber of their immortal Bridegroom, and of them only Basilissa remained alive. After a short time all those holy virgins appeared to her in a dream, clothed in bright royal garments, and said to her:

"We are waiting for you, our mother, that together with you we may worship the Lord and our King. Come then, and present us to Christ, to Whom you made us brides!"

Rising from sleep, the Venerable Basilissa rejoiced greatly, partly because the whole company of virgins gathered by her had entered "into the joy of thy lord," and partly because, as it turned out, a heavenly dwelling had been prepared for her there. She told all this to her spiritual brother, St. Julian, and then a few days later, during fervent

4. The persecution of Christians under Diocletian began in 303 A.D. The cause of the persecution was Maximian Galerius, who persuaded Diocletian to issue a general law against the Christians. The law prescribed: Christian churches were to be destroyed, books of Holy Scripture burned, and Christians deprived of all civil rights and offices. The persecutions under Diocletian were distinguished, first, by the cruelty of the tortures, and second, by the large number of martyrs put to death at once, from 10 to 100 and more in a single day.

prayer, she gave up her spirit into the hands of her immortal Bridegroom, God. Her holy body the Venerable Julian buried with the honors due to it.

Soon after this, the governor Marcian came to those parts with his wife and son, and began to pursue the Christians with fury, delivering them to torture and death. Learning about Julian, that he was a man of noble birth and believed in Christ, and hearing also of the multitude of brethren who lived with him and confessed the same faith, he sent to him prominent citizens, to persuade Julian to offer sacrifices to the idols, as the emperor required. At that time many priests, deacons and other clergy had gathered in the monastery of the Venerable Julian from the neighboring cities, together with bishops, and all of them, burning with love for their Lord, were ready to accept martyrdom for His sake gladly. When the men sent by the governor came to them, all those gathered answered them that they had one King, the Lord Jesus Christ, who abides in heaven, and that He had commanded them not to worship idols and the demons that dwell in them, but to worship the One True God only; and so they obey Christ and are ready to die for Him at once. The messengers returned to the governor and reported what they had heard, and the governor, enraged, sent a detachment of soldiers to seize Julian alone, and to burn the monastery with everything in it. Thus the blessed Julian was seized, led away bound to prison, and the brethren of his monastery, to the number of ten thousand, together with the bishops and clergy who were there, were burned along with the monastery as a fragrant sacrifice to God. And for a long time afterward at that place there was heard the sweet-sounding singing of a great choir, at precisely those hours when the Divine services were customarily performed: at the first, third, sixth and ninth hours. At the same place many healings from various diseases took place, for those sick persons who were granted to hear that singing.

In the morning St. Julian was brought before the governor for judgment. For a long time the saint was now persuaded with crafty words and flatteries, now frightened with the fear of punishment, but he yielded neither to threats nor to persuasion. Then they began to beat him

without mercy with knotted staves. During this torture one staff broke from the force of the blow, and a piece of it struck the eyes of a relative of the governor and injured them, at which the governor fell into still greater rage. The holy sufferer said to the governor:

"Listen, Marcian! Command all your most skilled priests to assemble, and let them call upon the names of their gods and goddesses, begging them to grant healing to your relative. If they cannot do this, then I, calling upon the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, will not only restore to him the eye he has lost in body, but will make the eyes of his mind such that they will see the truth."

The governor accepted the proposal, and gathering all the priests, ordered them to go to the nearest idol temple, offer sacrifices there, and entreat the gods and goddesses to heal the eye of the wounded man. The priests went and did what they had been commanded, but after offering many sacrifices they heard such words from their gods:

"Depart from us, for we are given over to eternal fire and dwell in darkness. How can we give sight to the blind, when we ourselves see nothing? And the prayer of Julian to the Most High God is so mighty that since the time he was tormented, our torment in Gehenna has become a hundred times heavier."

When these demonic words were heard in the temple, all the idols there, to the number of some fifty, at once fell down and were crushed to dust.

But the governor cried out at St. Julian:

"Sorcerer! Your enchantments are so strong that you have even shattered our gods! But we shall see whether you will grant the blinded man his former sight, as you promised."

And the governor ordered that the naked martyr be doused with filth, so that, as the governor said, his magical miraculous power would withdraw from him. But the stench of that filth suddenly turned into a wondrous fragrance which filled the whole air, so that all were struck with amazement. The holy Julian made the sign of the Cross over the eye of the wounded man and called upon the name of the Lord; and at once the sick man was healed, and his eye began to see as before. The

governor, blinded by malice, ascribed this healing to sorcery, and not to the power of Christ, but the one who was healed cried aloud:

"Truly Jesus Christ is the True God, and Him alone one must honor and worship!"

Then the governor ordered that the healed man's head be cut off, and so he who had received sight in body and spirit, receiving baptism in his own blood, passed on to the spiritual contemplation of the invisible God.

The impious Marcian ordered that St. Julian be bound with heavy chains on his hands and feet, and in this state he was led through the city for public mockery; at the halts in the streets he was tormented with various tortures. During this torture and public mockery a herald cried out:

"Thus are treated those who do not bow down to the gods and despise the commands of the emperor!"

When the torturers came with the saint to the house where the governor's only son, named Celsus, was being taught his studies, the youth, who was also looking at the saint, said to his companions that he saw something wonderful. They began asking him what he saw, and Celsus said:

"I see that a multitude of radiant youths surrounds that condemned Christian, whom the soldiers are leading in chains; some of them render him service and help, and others place upon his head a crown so brilliant that its radiance surpasses the light of the sun. It seems to me good to believe in such a God and to serve Him, Who so protects His servants and adorns them with such glory. Believe me, my friends, that I too wish to become such a servant, if the God of this Christian will be pleased to be my God!"

With these words Celsus threw down his books and fine clothing, leaving to the world what belonged to it, and hastened after the saint. Falling at the feet of the martyr, he cried out:

"I wish to have you as my second father; I utterly renounce my impious father according to the flesh, the enemy of the righteous and their tormentor. I join myself to you; I desire, as you do, to suffer for Christ the Lord and my Savior, Whom until now I have not known!"

The soldiers who had been torturing Julian were astonished, and the whole city ran together to see the unusual sight and marveled, seeing the governor's son embrace the martyr and kiss his wounds. And the youth said to the people:

"Know that I am the son of the governor; together with my impious father I have hitherto persecuted innocent saints. But I did so in ignorance; now, having come to know God and having been known by Him, I renounce the false gods, I forsake father and mother and despise my wealth; I confess Christ and believe in Him, and I declare that I am a follower of the blessed Julian. Why do you delay, servants and soldiers? Go and tell my parents that I have come to know the true God and wish to abide together with His faithful servant."

When this was reported to the father and mother of Celsus, they, hearing this unexpected news, were deeply grieved and at once sent for the boy, to take him from Julian and bring him home. But God, Who guards infants, so ordered it that no one could touch him, for whoever laid a hand on him at once felt a sharp pain in the hand and shoulder; and therefore no one dared to take him and separate him from the martyr. Learning of this, the governor ordered both of them brought before him together, and said to the blessed Julian:

"By your cunning you seek to take from me all my hope, and with evil words you beguile the youthful heart, rooting out in him the love for his parents!"

While the governor was speaking, the mother of Celsus ran in with a crowd of relatives of both sexes. She tore her hair, rent her garments upon her breast, and her cries were so dreadful that the governor himself tore his robes and said to the martyr:

"Cruel Julian! Look upon the sufferings of the father and mother and the weeping of all the kin, and free the innocent boy from the power of your sorcery! Give us back our only son, and restore to our house the heir and master. Then I too will petition the emperors on your behalf, that your guilt may be forgiven, and you shall be released unharmed."

Holy Julian answered:

"I have no need of your help, and I do not seek pardon from your emperors; but this only I beseech of my Lord Jesus Christ: that He would count me, together with the lamb who was born in the belly of the wolf,[5] and with all the faithful, among the company of the burned, when I have finished my martyr's contest. Before you stands he who was born of you according to the flesh, and who now has been born again in spirit, believing together with me in Christ. He is already of mature years; let him himself answer you, let him himself take pity on his mother's tears and have mercy on the breast that nursed him."

To this the noble and prudent boy said:

"From the thorn there grows a thorn-flower, yet it does not lose its fragrance by having sprung from the thorn, nor does the thorn that bears it lose its sharp prickles because of it. So, my parents, you, according to your custom, continue, like thorns, to torment the innocent; but leave me, like the thorn-flower, to give fragrance to the faithful. Let those who stand on the path of perdition obey you, but let those who strive to pass from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light follow me. For the sake of my Lord Jesus Christ I renounce you, my parents; and you, out of reverence for your gods, torment your son, for through temporal death I wish to attain eternal life. I cannot be good to you and evil to myself, nor will I set love for you above the eternal joys. Why do you delay, Father? Deal with me as Abraham dealt with his son! Take the sword and offer me, your son, in sacrifice to Christ. If natural parental love hinders you from doing this, then hand me over to the most cruel tormentors, that I may suffer for my Lord Jesus Christ. Vain are your sobs and tears, for they cannot make me change my confession."

Hearing this, the governor commanded that Julian and Celsius be led away to a foul and dark prison; but when they entered, the darkness of the prison turned to light, and the stench to fragrance. Twenty soldiers who were present believed in Christ; but since the blessed Julian was not a presbyter and could not baptize those who believed, this

5. Celsus, son of the governor Marcian, a cruel persecutor of Christians, is meant.

grieved him. However, God, Who fulfills the desires of those who fear Him, sent them a presbyter.

In that city there was a man of very noble birth, whom the emperors Diocletian and Maximian greatly honored as a kinsman of one of the former emperors, Carinus.[6] This man, together with his whole household, confessed the Christian faith. He and his wife died in faith and piety, leaving behind seven sons, who, though young in years, were mature in mind. Out of respect for their parents, the emperors allowed them to profess their fathers' faith and to glorify their Christ without fear. Therefore they had their own presbyter, named Antony, from whose hands they received the Holy Mysteries. To them God, by a special revelation, commanded that they go with their presbyter into the prison and visit Julian and Celsus who were there. When they went there by night, an Angel went before them, at whose single touch the prison doors opened; and entering the prison, they embraced the holy prisoners and began to pray to God together with them. The presbyter baptized the blessed boy Celsus, the son of the governor, and the twenty soldiers; and the seven brothers were kindled with zeal to share with them in the suffering for Christ, and would not leave the prison. Learning of this, the governor marveled that those to whom the emperors had permitted freely to profess the Christian faith were themselves going into bonds and torments; and calling the brothers before him, he long exhorted them to go home and glorify their Christ as they wished, since they had been granted such permission by the emperors. But they yearned for bonds and prison and did not desire freedom.

"Gold is not fit for the royal crown," they said, "unless it has first been melted and purified in the furnace. So we too shall not be worthy of our Christ unless our faith in Him is tested as gold is. Little is the worth of a tree adorned only with leaves but bearing no fruit. So we too shall not be well-pleasing to our Christ unless we bring Him the fair fruits of our faith."

6. Carinus was a son of the Roman emperor Carus. Together with his brother Numerian, at the accession of Carus he was proclaimed Caesar, and during the campaign undertaken by Carus against the Parthians he governed the western provinces with the rights of an emperor (283–284 A.D.). When Carus perished and the soldiers proclaimed Diocletian emperor, Carinus marched against him, but was defeated and fell by the hand of assassins in 285 A.D.

Then the governor ordered their desire to be fulfilled, and promised himself to report about them to the emperor.

Thus the blessed youths returned from the governor not to their homes but to the prison, to Saints Julian and Celsus and the twenty soldiers; and with them went the presbyter Antony. The governor, for his part, sent a report to the emperors concerning Julian, his son Celsus, the soldiers, and those seven brothers. After a short time there came from the emperors an order to burn all who showed invincible stubbornness; but if they, by their enchantments, preserved themselves from the power of fire, the governor himself was to put them to death as he thought fit. Having received such an order from the emperors, the governor commanded a tribunal to be set up in the midst of the city, and, seating himself before the people, had Saint Julian brought before him with all his company, with Celsus, the seven brothers, the presbyter Antony, and the twenty soldiers. He began to exhort them to worship the idols, pointing out to them the imperial command that required their execution if they did not repent. But they stood boldly in the true faith, affirming that for idol-worshippers the King of Heaven had appointed eternal perdition if they did not repent; and so a long time passed in mutual disputation.

At this time a dead man was being carried past the tribunal for burial; and the governor, seeing this dead man, commanded that he be brought to him and laid before him. The people were in perplexity, not knowing what the governor intended to do with that dead man.

And the governor said to Saint Julian:

"Of your teacher, Christ, it is said that before He was crucified He raised the dead. Raise up this dead man as your Teacher did, and then it will be clear whether He is indeed God."

Saint Julian made answer:

"What good is it to a blind man when he is told that the sun is rising?"

"Leave off your proverbs," said the governor, "and if you and your God have power, raise this dead man, as I have told you."

And Saint Julian answered:

"Although your unbelief is not worthy to see such a miracle from the Lord, yet you shall see it at once, for the time has now come for His divine power to be revealed, and that you may know that God can do this. I trust that the Lord will grant me all that I ask of Him in faith, and will not put me to shame before you."

Having said this, Saint Julian raised his eyes and heart to heaven and prayed aloud, while his face shone all with light.

And he spoke this prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, True Son of God, Who wast begotten of the Father before all ages, and in the fullness of time didst take upon Thee human flesh without seed, of the Most Pure Virgin Mary! Look down now from the heights of heaven, that Thy enemies may be put to shame and those who believe in Thee may be strengthened! Hear me now from Thy heavenly throne and raise this dead man, that the living may not die in spirit, and the dead may come to life in spirit, beholding Thy almighty power."

So he prayed for a while, and then, turning to the dead man, he said:

"I speak to you, dry earth, in the name of Him Who raised Lazarus after four days: rise up and stand on your feet."

No sooner had the saint said this than the dead man at once came to life and stood up, and all the people were struck with terror. The one who had risen cried aloud:

"O how almighty are the prayers of the servant of God and his undefiled virginity! For whither were they carrying me, and whence have I been brought back?"

The governor Marcian watched what was taking place with attention and marveled; but since the demon blinded him, he did not see here the working of the power of Christ, but ascribed all to sorcery. Then, wishing to mock the one who had risen, he asked him:

"Whence have you returned?"

But he began to answer him in detail with such words:

– I was led away by Ethiopians unknown to me, giants in stature, terrible to look upon, with fiery eyes, teeth like a lion's and claws like an eagle's, from whom there could evidently be no hope of mercy. Re-

joicing, they dragged me toward hell; but when I had come to the very edge of the abyss, those Ethiopians began to wait for my body, which had been taken from the earth, to be given back to the earth. Then suddenly the whole of hell was thrown into confusion, and a voice was heard from the throne of God:

– For the sake of My beloved Julian, let this soul return to its body!

And at once two in white robes came and, taking me out of the hands of the unclean ones, returned me to this world, that through him who raised me I might come, after death, to know the true God, whom I had denied in my life.

Hearing this, the governor was troubled and did not know what to do; but then, fearing a tumult among the crowd, he ordered the one who had been raised, together with St. Julian and the other saints, to be led into prison and the doors of the prison to be sealed with his signet ring. There, in the prison, St. Julian commanded the blessed Presbyter Antony to baptize the one who had been raised, and in holy baptism the latter received the name Anastasius, which in Greek means "the one who has risen."

In the morning the governor Marcian ordered thirty-one tubs of pitch to be prepared, one for each of the holy martyrs, and each filled halfway with pitch and sulphur; he also prepared a large supply of firewood and brushwood for burning the saints. When everything was ready, the bound passion-bearers of Christ were led out of the prison, Julian and Celsus being bound together. Many of the people could not restrain their tears, grieving that such young and beautiful youths were going to their death though they were guiltless of anything. But St. Julian said to them:

– Do not hinder gold from passing through the fire, so that it may become even purer!

The governor did not wish to watch the burning of his son, over whom he grieved in his heart, and, leaving his deputy to carry out the imperial order, he withdrew in sorrow. Then each saint was seated in the tub of pitch prepared for him, and then, piling firewood, refuse and brushwood around all the tubs, they set them alight. The flame from these tubs rose to thirty cubits in height, yet the saints stood in the

midst of the fire, singing and praising God. When the tubs and the whole pyre had burned out, it was found that the saints had remained alive, whole and unharmed, and that their faces shone with joy. All the people, seeing this, were struck with amazement, and when this was reported to the governor, he hastened to convince himself with his own eyes, and having done so, he was in complete perplexity. Nevertheless, he again ordered the saints to be led back to the prison, whither his wife, the mother of Celsus, also hurried, having learned that her son had remained alive and unharmed. Seeing her son, she believed in Christ and was baptized in the prison by the Presbyter Antony. Her name was Marionilla. The governor, however, soon learned that his wife had received Christian baptism, and he cast her also into prison.

Then, seating himself on the judgment seat, he ordered twenty soldiers and the seven brother-youths to be beheaded with the sword; Julian and Celsus, as well as the Presbyter Antony, Anastasius and his wife Marionilla, he resolved to judge again, and therefore left them in chains.

When the day of judgment came, the saints pretended that they were as if submitting to the will of the emperor and the counsel of the governor, and were ready to worship the idols. For this reason they were led with joy to the temple of the idols; but when the procession drew near the temple, St. Julian turned in prayer to God, and at once the temple fell and crushed all the priests within it and up to a thousand other people. The very ground on which the temple stood split open, and fire issuing from the clefts consumed the pagans who approached them. After this the saints were led back to the prison, where during their prayer there appeared to them, in radiance, a great multitude of martyrs who had suffered before them; they were clothed in white garments and were singing heavenly hymns. In their midst were the twenty soldiers and the seven brothers, recently beheaded by the sword. There appeared also the holy Basilissa with her whole company of holy virgins, and she announced to St. Julian that he with his company would soon complete the struggle, end his life, and enter with triumph into the heavenly mansions.

– The Kingdom of Heaven is opened to you, – she said, – and our Lord Jesus Christ will take you to Himself, and likewise those who are with you; to meet you with triumph will come the choirs of patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs, and you will abide with them forever.

Having said this, she became invisible, and with her departed also all the saints who had appeared, leaving the prisoners in inexpressible joy and spiritual gladness.

After this the tormentor again took his seat on the judgment seat and, bringing out the saints, subjected them to various torments. First he ordered their fingers on their hands and feet to be wrapped with yarn soaked in oil, and this yarn set alight; but the yarn on the hands and feet of the saints burned without doing them any harm. Then he ordered the skin to be stripped from the heads of St. Julian and Celsus, and the eyes of the blessed Presbyter Antony and of Anastasius to be gouged out. When they wished to torture the holy Marionilla, the executioners' hands grew numb, and they could not touch her. After this the saints were given to wild beasts to be devoured, but even from the beasts they were preserved by the power of God, which closed the mouths of the beasts. At last the governor ordered criminals condemned to death to be gathered from all the prisons, so that together with them the holy martyrs also might be put to death. When this command had been carried out, he ordered all to be led to execution, the martyrs included, sparing neither his own son nor his wife. Thus the saints perished, being beheaded with the sword together with the criminals[7]. Immediately after the execution carried out over them, an earthquake began, which destroyed a full third of the city's buildings, and not one place where any idol stood was spared. At the same time lightning flashed, thunder rolled and hail fell, and from the storm many pagans perished. The governor Marcian at first nearly died of fear, and then soon fell ill and did indeed die: he was eaten by worms that formed in his body.

On the night following the execution of the saints, priests and pious men came to gather the bodies of the martyrs. But since these holy

bodies lay amid many corpses, they could not recognize them, and, kneeling down, they began to pray. And there appeared to them the souls of the saints in the form of maidens, each soul being beside its own body. Thus the holy bodies of the martyrs were recognized by those who had come; they gathered them and buried them in the church, under the sanctuary. And God, who glorifies His saints, commanded a spring of living and healing water to open in the place where the bodies of the holy martyrs had been buried, and every sickness was healed by that water and by the prayers of the saints, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

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Memory of the Venerable Gregory of the Kiev Caves

Память преподобного Григория Печерского

As Neocaesarea glories in St. Gregory the Wonderworker, so the holy Great Lavra of the Kiev Caves glories in the Venerable one who bore the same name. When God showed His greatness in His saints, Antony and Theodosius, who became renowned for various miracles, at the same time He chose for the work of wonder-working the Venerable Gregory also, and called him into His holy Lavra. This blessed man, at the time when the Venerable Antony was living a solitary life in a cave, came to the Venerable Theodosius, who had charge of the monastery, and, receiving from him the monastic habit, was established in non-acquisitiveness, purity, humility, obedience and the other virtues, and above all devoted himself to prayer. Having accomplished many labors in a short time, he was granted the gift of wonder-working, and first of all received from God power over the demons, who, seeing the saint even from afar, cried out:

– O Gregory! You will drive us out by your prayer.

Gregory indeed had the custom of reading exorcistic prayers after every service. The vanquished enemy, being driven out on all sides,

7. This was in 313, when Egypt and Africa were governed by Maximin Daza (311–313 A.D.), who had earlier been co-ruler with Maximian Galerius (from 305). In the West at this time Constantine the Great already reigned.

nevertheless began to plot against the saint, desiring to place an obstacle in the way of his labors in virtue. Not having the power to do this himself, he allowed evil men to rob the saint, who, however, had no possessions except books containing prayers and hymns. So one night thieves came to Gregory's cell and, hiding, waited for the time when the elder would go to Matins in the church, in order to take all his belongings. But the blessed one learned of their coming, for he spent whole nights without sleep, praying in the midst of his cell to God. He began to pray for them also with such words:

– O God! Send sleep upon Thy servants, who have wearied themselves in vain in pleasing the enemy.

God heard the elder's prayer, and the thieves slept for five days and five nights, until the blessed one, in the presence of many brethren, woke them, addressing them with these words:

– How long will you keep watch in vain, desiring to rob me? Go quickly to your homes!

But when they awoke they could not move from the spot, because they had lost their strength, having eaten nothing for so long a time. Then the blessed one offered them food and, having fed them, sent them away. When the governor of the city learned of this, he ordered these men to be punished; but Gregory, grieved that because of him they had been punished, went to the governor, presented him with several of his books, and secured the release of the thieves. The other books he sold, and distributed the money received to the poor, saying:

– Lest some other should also come to harm, tempted by the desire to rob me! Let then the commandment of the Lord be fulfilled, Who said: "Sell your possessions and give alms. Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys" (Lk. 12:33).

The thieves, on account of the miracle that had been wrought upon them, returned to their former works, but they repented, and coming to the same Monastery of the Caves, they began to labor for the brotherhood. But the enemy did not abandon his evil designs. Since the Venerable Gregory had a small garden of his own, where he sowed vegetables and planted fruit trees, the enemy once prompted other thieves to climb

into this garden and fill their sacks with vegetables. But when they had shouldered the sacks and wished to depart, they could not do so, and for two whole days and two nights they stood in one place, weighed down by the burden of the sacks. Then they began to cry out:

– Holy Father Gregory! Let us go; we shall repent of our sin and will no longer do this.

Hearing their cries, the monks came and seized them, but they could not remove them from that place. Then they asked the thieves:

– When did you come here?

The thieves answered:

– For two days and two nights now we have been standing here.

The black-robed monks said to them:

– But we have passed here many times and nevertheless did not notice you.

The thieves in reply declared:

– And if we had seen you walking past us, we would have begged your intercession before the elder with tears; only when we were utterly exhausted did we begin to cry out. Pray for us to the holy wonderworker, that he may let us go.

At that moment Gregory came and said to them:

– Since you have spent your whole lives in idleness, stealing the goods of others, and would not labor yourselves, from now on you shall stand in this very place for the remaining days of your lives.

They, with tears, implored the elder to release them and promised that they would steal no more.

The elder took pity on them and said:

– I will release you, if you promise to labor and to feed others by the work of your hands.

When the thieves swore that they would not disobey him, Gregory said to them:

– Blessed be God, Who strengthens you! From now on you will work for the holy brotherhood and by your labors supply them with what they need.

After these words he released them. The thieves, in atonement for the wrong they had done in that small garden, began to labor diligently

in the vegetable gardens of the Monastery of the Caves, and ended their days in that labor.

The crafty tempter, however, made a third attempt to harm the saint by such a cunning stratagem. Once three petitioners came to Gregory, who assumed the appearance of men in need of help, wishing to test the Venerable. Two of them, pointing to the third, spoke this lie:

– Father! This friend of ours has been condemned to death. We ask you to give him something, so that he may pay a ransom for himself and be delivered from death.

The blessed one, foreseeing that this invention would prove to be the truth, wept for sorrow and said:

– Woe to this man, for the day of his destruction has come!

They said:

– If you, Father, give him something, he will not die.

They said this, wishing to extract something from him and divide it among themselves. The wonderworker, being clairvoyant, said:

– Even if I give, he will die all the same! However, tell me: by what death must he die?

– He will be hanged on a tree, – the deceivers answered.

– You have spoken the truth, – the seer remarked to this, – tomorrow it will indeed come to pass.

With these words he went down into the cave, where he hid from curious eyes and worldly bustle and where he customarily performed his prayers. Bringing out the books that remained to him, he gave them to those who had come and said:

– Take these, and if you have no need of them, return them to me.

They, taking the books, departed and began to laugh, saying:

– We will sell these and divide what we receive.

Seeing the fruit trees belonging to the saint, they said:

– This very night we will come here again and pluck these fruits.

When night came, the three thieves came again; at that time Gregory was praying in his cave, and they barred the door of the cave from the outside, where the elder was praying. One of them, the one who had been spoken of as condemned to hanging, climbed the tree and began to pick apples. At that moment the bough to which he was hold-

ing broke off, and he fell; the other two thieves who were keeping watch over him fled in fear. The fallen man, however, was left hanging on another bough, in such a way that he soon suffocated, since there was no one to free him.

Gregory, being shut in, could not be with the brotherhood in the church for Matins; therefore the brethren, coming out of the church, went to see why the saint, contrary to his custom, had not come to Matins. Then they saw a dead man hanging on the tree and were struck with horror. Immediately they also found Gregory, shut in the cave, who, coming out of the cave, commanded that the hanging man be taken down. Then, seeing his accomplices, who had come together with the others and were looking at the dead man, he said to them:

– Look how your vile lie has become the truth, for "God is not mocked" (Gal. 6:7). If you had not shut me in, I would have come and helped him, but since the enemy taught you to keep "vain and false things," therefore you have "forsaken your own Merciful One."[8]

The bold scoffers, seeing that the words of the blessed one had come true, fell at his feet, begging forgiveness. Gregory sentenced them to labor for the Monastery of the Caves, so that from that time they would eat their bread, toiling in the sweat of their face, and would be able to feed other people by the labor of their hands. Thus they ended their lives, laboring with their children in the Monastery of the Caves for the servants of the Most Holy Theotokos and the disciples of our Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius.

But it is now time to speak of the martyric end of the Venerable.

Once an unclean animal fell into a monastery vessel, and the Venerable, to cleanse it of the defilement, went down to the Dnieper to draw water. At that time Prince Rostislav Vsevolodovich[9] also came there, to pray in the monastery and receive a blessing for the battle against the Polovtsy[10], to which he was setting out together with his brother Vladimir Monomakh[11]. The servants of Rostislav, prompted by the an-

8. The irmoi for Great Saturday, ode 6; cf. (Jon. 2:9).

9. Rostislav Vsevolodovich, son of Vsevolod Yaroslavich and grandson of Yaroslav the Wise, ruled in Pereiaslavl, a city lying south of Kiev, on the rivers Alta and Trubezh. At the present time Pereiaslavl is a district town of the Poltava province.

cient enemy, began to mock the elder and to vex him with improper speech. The elder, foreseeing with his prophetic spirit that death threatened them, said:

– O children! You ought rather to ask all for prayers for yourselves with compunction in your hearts, and instead you do evil, which is contrary to God. Weep, then, over your destruction and repent of your sins, that you may have some consolation on the dreadful day of the last judgment. For it has already been decided in the judgment of God concerning you that you will drown together with your prince.

Prince Rostislav, hearing these words of the Venerable, did not believe them, and supposing that he was only threatening and not prophesying, said to him in anger:

– Do you foretell to me a death by water, when I know well how to swim? No, – you yourself shall die such a death!

And at once, forgetting the fear of God, he commanded that the elder's hands and feet be bound, that a stone be hung about his neck, and that he be cast into the water.

Thus the holy elder was drowned!

The brethren searched for him for two days but could not find him. When, however, on the third day they came to his cell, wishing to take certain things left after the saint, they unexpectedly found him dead in the cell, with his hands and feet bound and a stone on his neck. His garments were still wet, his face was bright, and his whole body was as though alive. The brethren marveled at who and how the elder could have been brought here, since the cell had been locked; but then, giving praise to God, they carried out with honor those wonderworking relics

10. The Polovtsy were a nomadic people of Turkic origin who, from the second half of the ninth century until the Tatar invasion, dwelt in the southern Russian steppes and made constant, devastating raids upon Rus'. Their attacks were swift and sudden. To contend with the Polovtsy, the Russian princes built frontier fortifications and undertook campaigns deep into Polovtsian territory. One such campaign, the one mentioned here, was undertaken by the Grand Prince of Kiev, Sviatopolk Izyaslavich (1093–1113), in the first year of his grand princely reign.

11. Vladimir Monomakh was one of the most remarkable Russian princes of the pre-Mongol period. When his father, Vsevolod, died, he did not take the grand princely throne of Kiev, despite the love the Kievans bore him, but summoned his cousin Sviatopolk Izyaslavich, to whom he yielded the grand principality as the senior of the clan. At that time he was reigning in Chernigov and, in addition, held the Principality of Smolensk. After Sviatopolk's death he occupied the grand princely throne of Kiev, where he reigned until his own death (1113–1125).

of the saint and laid them in the cave, where they remain incorrupt to this day.

Rostislav, however, not regarding what he had done as a sin, inflamed with rage, did not wish even to enter the monastery, contrary to his promise, in order to receive a blessing – and God's blessing departed from him. Only Vladimir Monomakh visited the monastery to obtain prayers and a blessing for himself. When the Russian princes were at Tripolye[12] and had crossed the river Stugna[13], they directed their regiments against the Polovtsy. Their regiments did not hold firm and fled; Prince Vladimir also fled and crossed the river Stugna again safely, through the prayers and blessing of the saints of the Kiev Caves; but Rostislav with all his army drowned in the river, and thus the prophecy of the saint was fulfilled: "with what measure the wicked murderer measured, with that measure shall it be measured to him."[14] Gregory the Wonderworker, guileless, attained the fountain of life, and, drinking from the stream of eternal sweetness at the waters "which are above the heavens" (Ps. 148:4), praises the name of the Lord, to Whom belong glory and honor, now and ever and unto endless ages. Amen.

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Memory of the Venerable Domnica

Память преподобной Домники

St. Domnica, with four other maidens, came to Constantinople from Carthage during the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Great, while she was still a pagan[15]. She burned with a fervent desire to embrace Christianity and live according to the rules of the pure heavenly faith. St. Nectarius, Archbishop of Constantinople[16], received a

12. At present a small town in the Kiev Governorate.
13. The Stugna is a right-bank tributary of the Dnieper, flowing through the Vasilkov District of the Kiev Governorate. In former times this tributary was a fairly considerable river.
14. (Mt. 7:2) — In that place the passage reads thus: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you."
15. Theodosius the Great was Roman emperor from 379 to 395. In his reign the Christian faith was finally established in the Roman Empire.
16. St. Patriarch Nectarius governed the Church of Constantinople from 381 to 397. His memory is celebrated on the Saturday of Cheesefare.

special revelation concerning her. Therefore, having received her, he not only deemed her worthy of holy Baptism, but also appointed her a deaconess[326]. Emperor Leo gave her land beyond the city walls. On this land St. Domnica founded a monastery in honor of St. Zacharias, gathered virgins around her, and lived with them, laboring in fasting. She wrought many miracles: for example, she saved sailors who were perishing in a storm at sea by pouring oil into the sea with a blessing, whereupon the raging waves subsided. She also possessed the gift of prophecy, for she foresaw and foretold the death of the emperor. Once she saw an Angel descend from heaven and sanctify the element of water, and she also received other revelations of divine mysteries. The saint reposed in peace at a great age, having lived into the reign of Leo and Zeno[17], and foretold the time of her departure to the Lord.

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Commemoration of Venerable George of Choziba

Память преподобного Георгия Хозевита

The Venerable George of Choziba[18] was born on the island of Cyprus[19] to a pious family. His elder brother, Heraclides, left for the holy city of Jerusalem while their parents were still alive. Having venerated there the places sanctified by the footsteps and blood of the Lord Jesus, he then withdrew to the Jordan valley[20] and settled in the Lavra called that of Coloman[21], embracing the monastic life. St.

17. Here is meant the emperor Leo II, who reigned for less than a year (in 474); the emperor Zeno reigned from 474 to 491. St. Domnica died in the first years of Zeno's reign, about 474. Since she came to Constantinople at the latest before 385, and since at that time she was undoubtedly no less than twenty years old (for Patriarch Nectarius found it fitting to make her a deaconess shortly afterwards), St. Domnica died when she was more than one hundred years old.
18. The Khozevites were the monks of the Khozeva, or Khuziv, monastery.
19. The island of Cyprus lies in the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean, not far from the Syrian coast.
20. The Jordan Valley lies along the course of the Jordan River. Being a sparsely populated region, it had from ancient times been a favored place of hermits. Thus St. John the Forerunner withdrew here and preached repentance. In Christian times there were many monasteries of every kind in this valley.
21. The Lavra of Coloman was situated near the Dead Sea and the Jordan.

George alone remained with his parents, being brought up in piety and the fear of God.

When George's parents died, the orphaned youth, together with all the property left to him by his parents, was placed in the care of one of his relatives. The latter loved him so dearly that he wished to marry his only daughter to him. But the saint, burdened by worldly vanity and unwilling to live with a wife, fled to another relative, who was the abbot of a monastery. The relative he had left learned where George was, for he wished to have the gentle youth as his spiritual son; he came to the abbot with whom George was hiding and demanded that he return the youth to him. When George learned of this, he secretly left that monastery and, boarding a ship about to sail, departed from Cyprus for the holy city of Jerusalem. Having venerated the holy places, he descended into the Jordan valley and came to his brother in the Lavra of Coloman. But his brother, seeing that he was still young and beardless, did not wish, in accordance with the commandments of the holy fathers, to keep him in the Lavra until his beard had grown; instead, he brought him to the monastery of our Most Holy Lady, called Choziba[22], and entrusted him to its abbot. There St. George was clothed in the monastic habit and entered upon the path of ascetic struggle. Laboring for the glory of God and the salvation of his soul, he especially practiced humility and obedience. God glorified His servant and bestowed upon him the gift of wonderworking. All the brethren greatly marveled to see such perfection and such boldness before God in a young boy, who was moreover but a novice. The saint, however, fearing the temptations of this world's empty glory, secretly left the monastery and returned to his brother in the Lavra.

22. The Khuziv monastery was situated in the desert of Khuziv or Khozeva, between Jerusalem and Jericho, to the right of the main road by which pilgrims ordinarily passed from the Holy City to the Jordan, and not far from the descent into the low-lying Jordan Valley. This monastery was set in a wild region. Its churches and monks' cells, hanging over a ravine at a height of fifty sazhens, seemed to be fastened to the rocky crags. The monastery of Khuziv arose in the fifth century. The name of its first founder is unknown. Afterwards the monastery was called a Lavra, and in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, when it was especially renowned for the strictness of life of its ascetics, it attained particular prosperity. In the twelfth century this monastery still existed, but nothing is known of its further fate. Only in very recent times was this monastery restored.

Having settled there, he and his brother took up residence in the so-called Old Church, where they remained in prayer, contemplation of God, and the labors of the wilderness. The brothers prepared no hot food for themselves, except when someone came to visit them.

One day Abba Heraclides said to his brother:

"Take an axe, and let us go cut wood!"

When George took up the axe, his elder brother ordered him to cut down a barren palm that grew near their cell. Having bowed to his brother, George began to entreat him:

"No, father, let us not cut it down; perhaps it will give us palm branches."

But the other said sternly:

"Cut it down; it has borne no fruit for several years—why should it take up space?"

Then George bowed humbly once more and said:

"I pledge that it will soon bear fruit."

At these words Heraclides relented, and from then on the palm bore many fine fruits.

At that time there lived in Jericho a landowner beloved by the holy ascetic brothers. His only young son died. Placing the dead child in a basket and covering him with the first fruits of his harvest, the father hurriedly brought him to the Lavra. Entering the cell of Heraclides and George, he set the basket before the elder brother, asking him to bless the fruits of his labor, and immediately went out. Taking the fruit from the basket and finding the dead infant within, Heraclides said to his younger brother:

"Call that man, for he wishes to test us sinners."

But George answered him:

"Do not grieve or be angry, father, but let us call upon the compassionate and merciful God with faith; and if He hears us sinners and raises the child from the dead, the father will take him from us alive, as a reward for his faith. But if God does not will to do this, we shall tell the father that, being sinners, we have not attained such boldness before God as to help him in his distress."

The elder heeded his brother, and both of them began to pray with tears and contrition of heart. And the most merciful Lord, who fulfills the will of those who fear Him, heard them and raised the child from the dead. Then the brothers called the father and gave the child back to him alive, charging him to tell no one of this miracle.

Thus the holy Heraclides and George lived together in peace and in a manner pleasing to God, with all humility and meekness. No one heard any dispute or disagreement between them, nor saw the least sign of contempt by either toward the other or toward anyone else.

After some time Heraclides reposed, having reached the age of seventy years. Abba George, left alone in the cell, wept and grieved over the death of his brother, while at the same time bravely imitating his life and labors. And who can tell of his ascetic struggles in the wilderness, his unceasing prayer, and his contemplation of God? Who can recount his temperance and fasting? For his ascetic life, the elder was deemed worthy of the rank of deacon, and in his diaconal office he often served the holy fathers during the divine services. Meanwhile, the abbot of the Lavra reposed, and great division and discord arose over the choice of a new superior. Then St. George, unable to endure the turmoil, withdrew sorrowfully from Coloman and again settled in the monastery of Choziba, in a separate cell given to him by the monastery's abbot.

Laboring in the place where he had formerly lived as a hermit, the Venerable George acquired neither wine, nor oil, nor bread, nor clothing; instead, he went about the refuse heaps, gathered rags, and sewed them together to make himself clothing. His bed, too, was made from these rags. He asked the monks living in the monastery to save for him throughout the week the leftovers from the tables of the fathers and visitors, whether vegetables, fruit, or even bones. Then he pounded it all in a stone mortar, made little balls, and dried them in the sun; he ate these balls with water every two or three days. Moreover, the elder asked the brethren not to bake bread without him, for he believed that those who labored at this task in those holy places would receive a great reward in heaven, since in Palestine it was customary to use the surplus bread for the strangers who came to venerate the great holy

places there. Among the various tasks, the Venerable George preferred to heat the oven in the bakery. This work is especially arduous in those places during summer, when the intense heat melts even the candles on the church candlesticks. But the Venerable George, regardless of the heat, labored tirelessly in the bakery two or three times a day, heating the oven and preparing loaves. The other brethren could not endure such work and took turns constantly. All therefore marveled at George's unceasing labors and called him iron.

Thus this earthly Angel and heavenly man labored in ascetic struggle, edifying others by his struggles as well.

When the Persians invaded the Holy Land[23], he left the Lavra of Choziba for a time and hid in Coloman; when the danger had passed, the elder returned to Choziba. There he again devoted himself to ascetic labors, while instructing all who came to hear his God-inspired words. He left no one without an edifying discourse, but taught all in the word of God and in piety.

Having lived piously and pleased God, the Venerable George was summoned to the heavenly dwellings at a great age. His disciple, the Venerable Anthony, tells of the elder's blessed end as follows.

"After many labors, our holy father George fell ill with the sickness from which he died. On the evening of his death, by God's ordering, many visitors happened to arrive, and I was very busy with my obedience. Some of the brethren who were sitting with the elder came to me often, saying:

'The elder is asking for you, saying: "Where is Anthony? Call him to me, for I am already dying."'

I was already torn between two desires, wishing both to fulfill my obedience and to go to the elder. And the elder, knowing this in spirit, sent word to me through those he had dispatched:

'Do not grieve or be troubled, child, but fulfill your obedience; I shall wait until you come.'"

While the visitors rose from the table and others came in, the time stretched on until it was almost midnight, and the elder was still alive.

23. The Persian invasion took place in 614, under the leadership of Khosrow, king of Persia (reigned 580–628).

Having finished my obedience and dismissed the visitors, I came to him. When he saw me, he embraced me and kissed me, and, giving his blessing, he turned toward the east and said:

"Depart, my soul, now in the Lord; depart."

Having said this three times, he gave up his spirit to the Lord; thus he fell asleep, peacefully and quietly, plainly delivering his spirit into the hands of God, as it is written: "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them" (Wis. 3:1), and again: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."[24] When I learned that he had given up his spirit to the Lord, I fell upon his breast and wept and sobbed over the loss of our venerable father. And, having laid out his body with psalms and chants and spiritual songs, we placed him in the tomb of the venerable fathers; and now he dwells with the choirs of the saints, interceding with God for us and for the whole world." Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst appear as a most radiant luminary, O George,
illumining with divine dawns those who faithfully call upon thee:
pray to the Lord Christ, who appeared in the streams and
enlightened the earthborn.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Carterius

Память святого священномученика Картерия

St. Carterius lived in the reign of the emperor Diocletian[25], and was a priest and teacher of the Christian faith in Caesarea in Cappadocia, under the procurator[26] Urban. He built a church of God, and gathered about him a numerous flock, which he taught to honor Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit as the one true God. A denunci-

24. Ps. 115:6.
25. Diocletian reigned from 284 to 305.
26. The *procurator* properly administered judicial proceedings in the provinces of the Roman Empire. Later, procurators were sent into imperial provinces to collect revenues for the emperor's treasury. Minor provinces were governed by procurators.

ation of this zealous servant of Christ was lodged with the procurator; then the blessed priest hid himself from the persecution. But the Lord appeared to him and said:

"Go, Carterius, and present thyself before the procurator. I will be with thee; thou must suffer much for My name, and many through thee shall believe and be saved."

The saint, filled with great joy, gave thanks to the Lord and informed the procurator of his whereabouts, after which he was cast into prison. When St. Carterius was brought before the procurator, the latter ordered him to offer sacrifice to Serapis[27]. By the saint's prayer the idol of this false god fell to the ground; then, by the procurator's command, sixteen soldiers began to beat the confessor of Christ with staves, while four servants stretched him out on the ground. Afterward the torturers hanged St. Carterius on a tree, cut off his fingernails and toenails with a razor, and tore his body with iron hooks.

Then an Angel of the Lord appeared to the holy passion-bearer and lightened his sufferings, and the soldier of Christ remained unharmed under such grievous torments.

By the tyrant's order he was taken down from the tree, his feet were pierced with iron rods, a red-hot ploughshare was laid upon his breast, he was seated on a red-hot iron chair, and his legs were drawn out with red-hot iron rods. After this the blessed sufferer was again thrown into prison.

In the evening our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to His valiant passion-bearer, loosed him from his fetters, and led him out of the prison. Then many, seeing the holy martyr healed of the wounds inflicted by his persecutors, began to receive holy baptism, while at the same time receiving healing from the diseases from which they suffered.

Seized again by the torturers, St. Carterius was subjected to new tortures: heavy stones were hung from his hands and feet, the executioners beat him with staves on the belly, burned him with fire, poured sulphur and pitch upon his gaping wounds, poured molten tin into his

27. Serapis was an Egyptian deity, venerated in the Roman Empire also in the last years of paganism. He was honored as the god of departed souls and invoked as a savior from sickness and death.

mouth, placed on his head a helmet heated white-hot, and at last cast the holy passion-bearer into the fire. Singing thanksgiving songs to the Lord, St. Carterius came out of the flames unharmed.

Then a Jew who was present at the torture, in a fury, seized a spear and dealt a mortal blow to the ribs of the holy martyr; from the wound there flowed such a quantity of water that it quenched the fire; then blood flowed, and the passion-bearer of Christ gave up his holy soul to God[28].

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Elias the Hermit

Память преподобного Ильи Пустынника

The Venerable Elias entered the monastic life in early youth and spent seventy-five years in complete solitude in a remote and harsh desert near Antinoe in Thebaid[29]. It is impossible to express in words the great ascetic labors to which he devoted himself on the summit of a wild desert mountain, from which he never once went down to inhabited places, and to which a narrow path, laid among sharp stones, led, on which one could barely set a foot.

Zealous visitors found the elder sitting under the stone overhang of a cave, whose darkness scarcely allowed the hermit to be made out; from decrepitude he trembled all over, for his life had been more than one hundred and ten years. Other hermit fathers said of the Venerable Elias that no one remembered when he had settled on the mountain.

In old age he ate only three small pieces of bread in the morning and as many in the evening, and three salted olives; in his youth, however, he took food only once a week. To those who came to him for edification he taught thus: "Do not give yourselves into the power of Satan. There are three manifestations of the devilish power, which are provoked by the falls of monks. The first is forgetfulness, the second is slothfulness, the third is lust. When forgetfulness assails a monk, slothfulness is

28. In 304.

29. The Thebaid region was so called from Thebes, the principal city of Upper Egypt. Near the city of Antinoë there were many hermits' cells and cenobitic communities.

born, and from it lusts arise, and from lust a man falls. But if a monk is attentive and has the fear of God, he has neither slothfulness nor evil desire; therefore Satan is powerless against such a one, he is not strong enough to cast such a man into sin, and such a man is saved by the grace of God."

Setting a good example of the truly monastic life, the Venerable Elias departed to the Lord in deep old age.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Theophilus and Helladius

Память святых мучеников Феофила и Елладия

The holy martyrs, the deacon Theophilus and the layman Helladius, suffered in Libya[30]. Fearlessly confessing our Lord Jesus Christ as true God, they reviled the pagan false gods and reproached the idolaters, for which they were seized by the procurator and delivered to torments. The holy confessors of Christ were first cruelly scourged, then their bodies were scraped with sharp potsherds; binding their hands and feet, the executioners singed their loins with fire. After each such torture the tormentors compelled the passion-bearers to renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to the idols; but the holy Theophilus and Helladius remained unshaken in their love for Christ. As stubborn ones, the tormentors dragged them over the ground with dishonor and broke their bones with stones; after that the valiant martyrs received the crown from Christ, for whom they had suffered[31].

* * *

30. Libya is a region of North Africa, to the west of Egypt.
31. This took place at the beginning of the fourth century.

Commemoration of the Venerable Emilian the Confessor

Память преподобного Емилиана Исповедника

Emilian, Bishop of Cyzicus[32], suffered for the veneration of the icons in 815, under the emperor Leo the Armenian[33]. His second commemoration is August 8.

* * *

NOTES

326. Deaconess (from the Greek: a female servant). This was a particular class of persons in the Church, whose institution goes back to apostolic times (Rom. 16:1; cf. 1 Tim. 5:3–10). Those chosen for the office of deaconess were for the most part elderly virgins or widows (not younger than forty years). Their duties were to instruct women and girls who were being received, in how they should conduct themselves at baptism; to assist the bishop at their baptism and, in his place, to anoint the parts of the body other than the forehead; to oversee order and decorum among the women during divine services; to visit the sick and those imprisoned in dungeons; to minister to confessors and martyrs held under guard; to help the needy, and the like. Concerning deaconesses there are several canonical rules, namely: Rule 15 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, Rule 14 of the Fourth Council, and Rule 44 of St. Basil the Great.

32. Cyzicus is a city in the northwestern part of Asia Minor, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara.

33. Leo V the Armenian, Byzantine emperor, reigned from 813 to 820.

THE NINTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 9

9 января

New Calendar January 9 · Old Calendar January 22 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Polyeuctus

Страдание святого мученика Полиевкта

In the days of the Roman emperors Decius and Valerian[1], in the city of Melitene, in the land of Armenia[2], there lived two honored soldiers, Nearchus and Polyeuctus, who had such mutual love for one another as is rarely found even between brothers of the same mother: each loved his friend as his own life and breath. Nearchus was a Christian, firm in the faith and a faithful keeper of the law of the Lord, while Polyeuctus was a pagan, not yet enlightened by the light of the true faith. Yet this latter lived according to Christian customs and labored in various virtues, so that he might be called a fruitful olive tree, and he lacked only to be joined to the Church of God. Nearchus strove to convert him to the Christian faith, often read to him the Divine Scriptures and spoke of the one true God, while at the same time showing the vanity and abomination of idolatry. But the hour of Polyeuctus's conversion and salvation, appointed to him by God, had not yet come. Before long, in the marketplaces and streets there began to be read the godless decree of the impious emperors, which summoned all to worship their abominable gods and threatened with various torments and executions those who should prove disobedient to this decree. Nearchus, as a faithful servant of Christ, began to prepare himself for death; but at the same time he began to grieve for his friend Polyeuctus, reasoning that

1. The Roman emperor Decius reigned 249–251, Valerian reigned 253–259.
2. The city of Melitene was built by the Roman emperor Trajan (98–117). It is the chief city of the country of the same name, which lay in the Asia Minor region of Cappadocia and once formed the northern part of Lesser Armenia.

the one whom he had hoped to see a Christian for fear of the emperor's threats would remain an unbeliever and through this would be deprived of eternal salvation. Constantly grieving over this and weeping over the perdition awaiting his friend, Nearchus changed even in his countenance, and his whole appearance betrayed his inner disquiet. Polyeuctus, seeing his friend so troubled, asked him the cause of his sorrow, and since the other said nothing, Polyeuctus too grew sad, sympathizing with his friend's heavy grief. At last Polyeuctus began to ask Nearchus with especial insistence:

"Have I offended you in some way? What is my fault? What dreadful thing have I done that you will not forgive your friend?"

Then Nearchus, weeping and sighing from the depths of his heart, said:

"When I think, friend, that our love and friendship must come to an end, I despair and grieve in my soul."

Hearing this, Polyeuctus was greatly distressed and said:

"How can this come to pass, friend? Why do you speak of such impossible things? Why must our love be broken, when even death itself has no power to sever it?"

"Most beloved friend," answered Nearchus, "this so oppresses me to the depths of my soul, that our separation will be worse than natural death."

Polyeuctus, not understanding what Nearchus was saying, embraced his friend tightly and begged him yet more insistently:

"Tell me, Nearchus, and explain what this separation of ours will consist of. I can no longer endure your silence, and if you continue to be silent and say nothing to me, you will at once see me dead before you."

Then Nearchus said to him:

"Most beloved Polyeuctus! The separation between us will be caused by that imperial decree which is read everywhere; for I belong to the Christian faith, and you to the pagan. And so, when I am taken to death, you will renounce me and forsake me."

Hearing this, the prudent Polyeuctus at once understood what Nearchus meant, and, enlightened by the grace of God, he began to

think of divine things. He recalled a vision he had seen a few days before, and said:

"Do not fear, my beloved friend Nearchus! We shall not be parted from you, for I saw in a dream Christ, whom you serve, who drew near to me, took off the garment I was wearing and clothed me in another, new, beautiful and precious one, with golden clasps, and besides this gave me a winged horse."

Nearchus, hearing this, rejoiced and interpreted the vision to mean that the removal of the old garment and the putting on of a new one signified a change of life for the better:

"You are destined," he said, "to leave pagan impiety and be clothed in Christ by the true faith; the winged horse signifies a swift passage to heaven."

Then he said:

"Behold, you already know Christ, the true God!"

Polyeuctus answered:

"When did I not know Him? Did not my heart burn when you told me of Him? Did I not marvel at His words when you read me the Holy Gospel? I lacked only the Christian name, and in my disposition I was already a Christian, for I always thought only of how, forsaking the vain idols, I might become a servant of Christ the Lord. So why should we delay, Nearchus? Let us prove our devotion to Christ by deeds!"

Nearchus delighted in his words and rejoiced; but, fearing that his friend might regret his property, his wife and children, and also his life, he began to speak with him of the vanity of this world and to portray the invisible blessings and the heavenly glory.

"For me, Polyeuctus," he said, "neither wealth, nor glory, nor military honor, nothing worldly is so dear and so desirable as life in Christ Jesus: only this do I desire, and all else seems to me worthless."

Polyeuctus, as if testing him, said:

"Do you not prize the honors of your military rank?"

Nearchus answered:

"It seems to me, Polyeuctus, that you do not yet imagine the true honor and glory and the unceasing blessedness which the Lord Christ has prepared for His servants."

To this Polyeuctus said:

"Do you think I have no understanding of the glory, honor and blessedness that are prepared for us with Christ in heaven? I think that in this respect I have gone further than you, for I have already received, as I told you, the imperial robe in the vision. But this I will ask you: can one, without having received the Christian Mysteries, approach Christ and be His warrior?"

"Do not doubt it, faithful friend," answered Nearchus, "'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham' (Mt. 3:9), for He does not shut the doors of His mercy before anyone who turns to Him, and to those who come into His vineyard late He pays the same as those who labored all day[3]. Thus He opened Paradise to the thief crucified on the cross, and for a brief confession of faith granted such a reward as others gained only by much labor."

Hearing this, Polyeuctus said:

"Glory be to Christ, the true God! From this hour I leave the vanity of the world and confess myself a servant of Christ, whom I will serve as He commands me. And now I will go and read the imperial decree issued against Christians and against the Lord and my God, Jesus Christ."

With these words Polyeuctus went out into the square, and having read the imperial decree, spat upon it and tore it into pieces before the people. After this, seeing that idols were being carried into the temple, before which people bowed down, he first laughed at this pagan folly, and then, pretending that he wished to worship them, began to seize these idols one after another and dash them against the ground like clay vessels; in this way he shattered twelve pagan gods. At that very moment there came there the father-in-law of Polyeuctus, Felix, to whom the emperors had entrusted the persecution of Christians. Seeing the destruction of his gods wrought by Polyeuctus, he was greatly grieved and said with a groan:

"Woe is me! Now I have suddenly lost my children, for neither gods nor men will show mercy to Polyeuctus, who has done such a deed."

3. Cf. the parable of the Lord about the labourers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1–16).

Polyeuctus, rejoicing at the destruction of the lifeless idols, said to his father-in-law:

"Why are you troubled, father? Now I have clearly shown how powerless your gods are; if you have any others, let them be brought here, and you will see how the servants of Christ mock them."

"Our all-powerful emperors," answered Felix, "have commanded that such men be put to death at once, and you are already near to death; a punishment awaits you, for it cannot be otherwise, since an imperial command cannot be revoked. But I grant you some indulgence: you may go home and take leave of your wife and children."

"Can I grieve for wife and children," the saint replied, "when I have scorned the earthly and seek the heavenly, and think of eternity? If your daughter wishes to follow me, she will be blessed; if not, she will perish with your gods."

Hearing this, Felix began to weep over his son-in-law and said to him:

"Woe is me, beloved son Polyeuctus! You too have been seduced by the magical power of Christ."

The holy Polyeuctus answered him:

"I do not hide that Christ has called me to the knowledge of the truth. By His Divine, all-powerful right hand He has led me out of shadow into light, from death into life, turned me from error to the right way, and deigned to number me among His host."

When the saint said this, his tormentors seized him and began to strike him on the mouth, but he paid no heed to it. Then his wife came too and began to weep over him together with her father Felix. The saint, however, spoke thus to his father-in-law:

"O most lawless servant of foul idols! Why do you, with your tears and the tears of your daughter, seek to entice me to fall away from the faith of Christ? Why do you weep over Polyeuctus, when you ought far rather to weep over yourself, namely over the fact that, serving earthly emperors, you condemn yourself to eternal fire?"

The saint's wife, whose name was Paulina, said to him with sobs:

"What has happened to you, my beloved husband Polyeuctus? What has led you to shatter our twelve gods?"

The saint said to her with a smile:

"If I alone have conquered and shattered your twelve gods, then you have no one left to turn to for help: you have no gods remaining. Listen to me, Paulina, and come to know the One true God, who dwells in the heavens; worship Him, and exchange this life for the life everlasting."

As the saint spoke with his wife, many of the pagans standing about them took delight in his words; coming to know the truth, they were moved in their souls and turned to Christ. The city judges and all the councillors gathered together and summoned St. Polyeuctus to judgment, and by turns with flattery and with threats they sought to turn him back to the service of idols. When these attempts ended in failure, they pronounced upon the saint a sentence of death, condemning him to be beheaded by the sword.

The saint went to his death with inexpressible joy, and he told the people who accompanied him that he was conversing with a radiant youth who strengthened him and bade him forget all worldly things; yet no one but the martyr saw that youth. Seeing also among the crowd the Blessed Nearchus, his friend and father in the faith in the true God, he cried out to him:

"Farewell, beloved friend of mine, and remember the bond of love sealed between us!"

Having spoken these words, he bowed his holy head beneath the sword, and he was baptized in his own blood, being put to death for Christ Jesus.[4]

St. Polyeuctus was the first martyr in the Armenian city of Melitene, and his death contributed to the multiplication of the Church militant and the filling up of the Church triumphant, to the honor and glory of Christ God, who is the Head of both, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit belongs all honor and glory unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

4. This was in 295.

Memory of St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow

Память святого Филиппа, митрополита Московского

St. Metropolitan Philip was born[5] in the royal city of Moscow to pious and noble parents, of the illustrious family of the boyars Kolychev. His father, named Stephen, belonged to the number of the near boyars of Grand Prince Basil Ivanovich; his devout mother, named Varvara, ended her days as a nun under the name Varsonophia. For the sake of their pious life, and as a testimony to their virtues, God blessed them with a good fruit: from them was born the Blessed Philip, who in holy baptism was named Theodore. His parents raised him in every piety. When he had grown a little, he was given over to study of the books, in which he progressed with especial zeal, while at the same time shunning the games and amusements proper to childhood. Thus Theodore in a short time mastered all the wisdom of books and acquired a habit of reading that profits the soul. His parents, seeing such good conduct in him, rejoiced over it. After some time, "youths"[6] were assigned to Theodore to teach him horsemanship; but he did not apply himself to it at all, preferring reading books to riding horses, in which he found the lives of saints and of wondrous men and through them was instructed to grow in the virtues. Afterward they began to train him in the military arts as well; but this did not alter the pious disposition of his soul; he avoided his peers and their dissipated life, so that many marveled at such piety in him.

After the death of Grand Prince Basil Ivanovich,[7] the scepter of the realm was taken up by his son, Grand Prince of all Russia John Basilievich.[8] At this time Theodore, having already reached full age, was taken into court to serve the Tsar, and he succeeded in winning the love and favor of the young Prince John Basilievich. But Theodore did not serve at court for long. When he reached the age of thirty, it happened,

5. February 11, 1507.

6. "Otroki" (youths) in ancient Rus' were the junior members of a prince's retinue, later trusted servants of the prince, generally experienced in the art of war and entrusted with various commissions by their lord. Boyars also had their own otroki.

7. Basil IV Ioannovich, Grand Prince of Moscow 1505–1533.

8. Ivan IV Vasilyevich the Terrible, Grand Prince of Moscow from 1533; in 1547 he took the title of Tsar and reigned until 1584.

by a special providence of God, who had regarded him, that he entered a church during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. There he heard the words of the Gospel: "No one can serve two masters" (Mt. 6:24). Struck by these words, he reflected within himself that they applied to him as well, and he resolved to leave worldly life. Recalling the Solovetsky monastery,[9] where monks labor well, he determined to withdraw there. Having offered prayer before the holy shrines, weeping and falling before the wonderworking reliquaries of the saints and kissing the holy relics, Theodore set out on his way in prayer, secretly leaving the royal court, his fatherland and his kin without the knowledge of anyone, taking with him only the most necessary clothing.[10] At first he came to the borders of Great Novgorod, to Lake Onega,[11] and there he settled in the village of Khizhi with a peasant. The master, seeing his good disposition and humility, entrusted him with tending his sheep: so God ordained concerning him, that before the rational sheep he might well shepherd the unreasoning ones. Meanwhile his parents searched for him everywhere in the cities, and, finding him nowhere, wept much over him. The pious youth, having lived many days in the aforementioned village, withdrew from there to the island of Solovki and was received by the abbot of the Solovetsky monastery, who commanded him to labor at the monastery's services. He, guarding himself with the fear of God, with diligence and humility, in simplicity of heart, performed all that he was bidden to do. He chopped wood, dug the earth in the kitchen garden, carried stones, at times bore slops on his shoulders, and performed other, still heavier labors. Many times some of the monks offered him insults and even blows, but he never grew angry and bore everything with joy and humility of mind, and no one knew who he was or whence he came.

Having thus been tested in patience, Theodore asked the abbot to tonsure him into the monastic life. He was tonsured into the monastic

9. The Solovetsky first-class stavropegic monastery is located in the far north, on Solovetsky Island in the White Sea, 306 versts from Arkhangelsk; it has existed since the fifteenth century and from its very beginning was renowned for the strict ascetic life of its monks.

10. This was in the middle of 1537.

11. Lake Onega is located in the north of Russia, in Olonets Province; after Lake Ladoga, it is the second-largest lake in Europe.

life with the name Philip. He was given in obedience to an experienced monk named Ion, by whom he was instructed in every virtue.

Afterward the abbot sent him to the kitchen, and there he labored humbly for the brotherhood, kindling the fire and chopping wood. Having spent a considerable time in that service, Philip passed from there to the monastery smithy, where he labored without sloth, carrying wood and water.

Because he was praised for his labors by all who worked at the forge, he withdrew from the monastery into the wilderness, fleeing glory; and there, fixing his mind upon God, he constantly occupied himself with prayer alone. For a long time Saint Philip labored in the wilderness, in the forests of Solovki, and afterward he returned again to the monastery to his labors. Abbot Alexis, seeing him so zealous in the monastic struggles and adorned with deep humility, was greatly consoled by him and kept him at his side as his assistant, entrusting to him the oversight of the junior novices. Philip performed all this with zeal, and in these labors he spent nine years, sustained by the prayers and blessing of his abbot. Then Abbot Alexis, having laid down the governance of the monastery because of his old age, by the counsel of the brethren set Saint Philip over the monastery as abbot[12]. But although the saint accepted the leadership, he did not in the least change his former manner of life. On the contrary, he increased his ascetic struggles still more and gave himself to still greater bodily labors; and when he saw himself praised and honored for this, he regarded it as vain, for from his youth he had been adorned with humility. Therefore he laid down the abbacy and again withdrew into the wilderness, coming to the monastery only to partake of the precious Body and Blood of Christ our God. The monastery was governed again by the former abbot, Alexis, who died a year and a half later. Then, at the request of the brethren, Saint Philip again accepted the abbacy. He gave himself to still greater struggles and attained still higher perfection in the virtues. The Solovki monastery, during his governance, flourished and was adorned[356]. Meanwhile the fame of Saint Philip reached the right-believ-

12. This was in 1548.

ing Tsar and Grand Prince John Vasilyevich. At that time Athanasius, Metropolitan of all Russia, had left the see[13]. The Tsar desired that Saint Philip be raised to the see of the Russian Metropolitanate, and so he summoned the saint to Moscow for a "spiritual counsel"[14]. The Orthodox people at that time at first lived in peace and love; but the enemy (the devil), seeing this and hating the truth from the beginning, stirred up a tempest of great unrest, arousing hatred among Orthodox Christians toward one another in place of love. At court, among the boyars, quarrels, bitter enmity, and every kind of plotting against one another began. By their treachery and internal strife they roused the strongest anger and fury in the Tsar himself. Because of those evil boyar slanders he began to fear even his faithful servants, close kinsmen, and friends, and he was in unrestrained wrath against the boyars, seeing in them his enemies and rebels. And so he divided the state into two parts, establishing for himself special bodyguards under the name of *oprichniki*, who attended upon the Tsar and formed a separate administration[15]. The *oprichniki* abused the power given to them, oppressed the people, seized property, and accompanied their robberies with murders and tortures. The Tsar, however, trusted in their fidelity and devotion, and therefore no redress against them could be found. It was at this time that the Tsar summoned Philip from the Solovki monastery. Receiving him with honor, the Tsar declared to him his desire to see him on the metropolitan throne. Philip, out of humility, refused this high dignity; but afterward he had to yield to the Tsar's insistent wish and was installed on the metropolitan see[360]. At first all was quiet; the Tsar respected the hierarch and showed him favor. But later, when the atrocities of the *oprichniki* reached their extreme, the blessed Philip began to beseech the Tsar to put an end to the *oprichniki*'s outrages

13. Athanasius, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia, occupied the metropolitan see from 1564 to 1566.

14. This meant that Philip would be invested with the dignity of the primatial office, that such was the desire and will of the Tsar.

15. The oprichniki were chosen from princes, nobles and sons of boyars. They had their own estates in special volosts assigned to the oprichnina; special towns were even designated for their maintenance; the oprichniki had their own rights and privileges. The other part of Russia was called the "zemshchina" and was entrusted to zemsky boyars for the administration of the common affairs of the state and people.

and to rebuke the Tsar himself for his executions. Then the Tsar fell into great wrath against the saint and threatened him with torments and exile. He, remaining unshaken as adamant, disregarded the Tsar's threats and did not cease to declare the truth[16]. To our grief, there were also found among the clergy traitors who sought only to please the Tsar. Pimen, Archbishop of Novgorod, and some others with him[17], together with the Tsar's counselors Malyuta Skuratov[18] and Basil Gryazny[19] and their like-minded men, devising various plots against the saint, sought to cast him down from the see and urged the Tsar not to abandon his intention. The Tsar, however, did not wish simply to depose Philip from the metropolitan see. Shortly afterward, on the denunciation of false witnesses, he sent to Solovki the Bishop of Suzdal, Paphnutius, and Prince Basil Temkin to investigate Philip's former life. Arriving at the Solovki monastery, the envoys set about acting so as to please the Tsar. Some of the monks they persuaded by flattery and bribery, others by the promise of higher ecclesiastical honors, and still others by threats, to accuse the saint. To the honorable elders who spoke the truth about Philip they inflicted severe beatings, commanding them to say shameful things about the hierarch. But they, filled with piety, accepted all these insults with joy and with one voice continued to speak the truth about Philip: that his life in the monastery had been blameless before God. But the Tsar's envoys would not listen to this; having done what they wanted, they returned to Moscow. They took with them the Solovki abbot Paisius, to whom they had promised the

16. The enmity against St. Philip was stirred up in the Tsar with especial zeal by the oprichniki, who slandered the hierarch and kept the Tsar convinced that the metropolitan sided with the boyars he hated and served as their instrument. When the frenzy of the oprichniki began to increase, and the Tsar did not in the least amend himself but continued to commit crimes and cruel executions, the hierarch, having found secret admonitions of the Tsar insufficient, came out with open, public denunciations against him and the oprichniki.

17. Such were Pafnutius, Bishop of Suzdal, Philotheus, Bishop of Ryazan, and especially the archpriest of the Annunciation Cathedral, Eustathius, the Tsar's confessor, whom Philip had placed under prohibition for certain transgressions, and who incessantly reported to the Tsar, secretly and openly, blasphemous speeches against the metropolitan.

18. Malyuta Skuratov-Belsky: a *duma* noble, the favorite oprichnik of Tsar John IV the Terrible, distinguished by his cruelty and taking part in almost all the crimes of John the Terrible. The memory of Malyuta Skuratov and his misdeeds has been preserved in folk songs, and his very name became a common appellation for a villain.

19. Vasily Gryazny: a favorite and trusted oprichnik of Tsar John IV the Terrible.

episcopal rank, and other slanderers who had borne false witness against Saint Philip. Immediately a council was convened to try the hierarch. The slanderers who had come from Solovki presented the Tsar with papers on which their false testimonies had been written. The Tsar, having heard of the written testimonies against Philip that pleased him, ordered them to be read aloud before all, after which the false witnesses began to slander the hierarch verbally. The hierarch did not defend himself and began to remove all the insignia of his rank[20], but the Tsar commanded that the judicial sentence be awaited. On the following day, while Saint Metropolitan Philip was celebrating in the Dormition Cathedral[21], the Tsar sent there his boyar Alexis Basmanov with a large number of *oprichniki*. Entering the cathedral, Basmanov ordered that the sentence of deposition of the metropolitan be read aloud in the hearing of all the people. Then the *oprichniki* fell upon the saint like wild beasts, stripped him of his hierarchal vestments, clothed him in plain, torn monastic garments, drove him out of the church in disgrace and, seating him on a sledge, carried him to the Epiphany monastery, heaping abuse and blows upon him[22]. Afterward, by the Tsar's will, Philip was exiled to the Otroch monastery in Tver[23], where the saint endured much evil at the hands of his guards. About a year passed while the saint was in confinement, afflicted by various sorrows at the hands of his guards. At this time the Tsar, traveling to Novgorod[24] and approaching Tver, remembered Saint Philip and sent to him the aforementioned Malyuta Skuratov. The latter suddenly

20. To Paisius's shameless slanders the primate only meekly remarked: "Child, as you sow, so shall you reap." Then, turning to the Tsar and the whole council, he declared that he was in no way afraid of death, and preferred to die as an innocent martyr rather than, in the rank of metropolitan, silently endure the horrors and lawlessness of the present time; after which he began to take off his white klobuk and mantle.

21. This was on 8 November 1568.

22. Here St. Metropolitan Philip sat for a whole week in a foul-smelling dungeon, weighed down with heavy fetters and tormented by hunger. Afterward he was transferred to the monastery of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, called the Old Monastery. Not content with what St. Philip endured, the Tsar subjected the boyar sons who served him to torture and execution; of his Kolychev relatives, ten men were put to death one after another. The head of one of them, Ivan Kolychev, especially beloved by the hierarch, the Tsar sent to him in the dungeon. The hierarch bowed down to it to the ground, blessed it, kissed it with love, and gave it back to the one who had brought it.

entered the saint's cell. Meanwhile, three days before this, the hierarch had said to those present with him:

"Behold, the end of my struggle draws near," and he partook of the precious and life-giving Mysteries of Christ our God. Entering the cell of Saint Philip, Malyuta Skuratov, with feigned reverence, fell at the saint's feet and said:

"Holy vladyka, give the Tsar your blessing to go to Great Novgorod."

But the saint answered Malyuta:

"Do what you will, but the gift of God is not obtained by deceit." Then the heartless villain strangled the Righteous man with a pillow[25].

Meanwhile the punishment of God soon overtook the enemies of Saint Philip who had risen against him. The Tsar, recognizing his injustice against the holy man and the cunning of his enemies, commanded that they be sent into exile in various monasteries, and some he put to death[26].

After the death of Tsar John Vasilyevich, his son, the pious Tsar and Grand Prince Theodore Ioannovich, occupied the throne of the

23. The Otrochy Dormition Monastery, a second-class monastery, is located in Tver and was founded before the thirteenth century. The place of the hierarch's imprisonment and martyr's death is a damp, gloomy cellar, where dampness, darkness and mustiness always reign. When in the seventeenth century they wished to set up a Holy Table in memory of the passion-bearing hierarch, they established it on the second floor, and only in 1833–34 did they find it possible to construct below also a side-chapel in the name of St. Great Martyr Barbara; the sanctuary of this side-chapel is located where, beneath the floor, was the place of the hierarch's confinement. Near the cathedral church, in the northwest corner, on the site of St. Philip's grave, a chapel has been built. In the cathedral church is the reliquary of Hierarch Philip, with his image and a particle of his holy relics.

24. This was rather a devastating raid by John the Terrible upon Novgorod, whose inhabitants had been reported to the Tsar as ready to surrender to the Polish king. Over the course of six weeks the Tsar carried out terrible executions in Novgorod, by which several thousand Novgorodians and peasants of the surrounding villages perished; not only the dwellings of the citizens, especially the wealthy, were plundered, but also all the monasteries and churches.

25. This was on 23 December 1569.

26. Archbishop Pimen of Novgorod was removed from his see only two weeks after the repose of St. Philip, and was subjected to extreme outrage, after which he was confined in the Venev monastery, where he soon died. The Tsar's favorite Malyuta Skuratov, shortly after his crime, was killed near the town of Torzhok by captured Crimeans, and the Tsar himself barely escaped death. Abbot Paisius was confined on Valaam island and died there; the monk Zosimas and ten other monks, who had likewise slandered St. Philip, were dispersed to various monasteries. A similar chastisement of God overtook some other enemies of the hierarch.

Russian realm[27]. In the seventh year of his reign, in the twenty-first year after the repose of Saint Philip, the abbot of the Solovki monastery, James, and the brethren petitioned the pious Tsar to command that the body of the saint be translated from the Otroch monastery to Solovki. The Tsar granted them permission, and they found the saint's body whole and incorrupt, so that corruption had not touched even his garments; myrrh flowed from the saint's relics and filled the air with fragrance. The monks honorably carried the body of Saint Philip to their monastery and buried it in the very place he had himself prepared for this[28]. In the reign of the most pious Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich[29], the incorrupt relics of St. Metropolitan Philip were honorably transferred by Nikon, Metropolitan of Novgorod[30], from the Solovki monastery to Moscow, the first throne city, and laid in a new reliquary in the Dormition Cathedral, where they repose openly to this day[31].

Glory to our God, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Eustratius

Память преподобного Евстратия

The Venerable Eustratius was born in the region of Tarsus[32] to wealthy and pious parents, George and Megephe. Raised by them in good morals, when he reached his twentieth year he was kindled with the desire to serve God, and, leaving his parents, he fled to

27. Theodore Ivanovich reigned from 1584 to 1598.

28. This was in 1591. The body of St. Philip was first placed beneath the porch of the church he had built, where, during his time as abbot of Solovki, he himself dug his grave beside the grave of his mentor, the elder Jonah; and in 1646 it was transferred into the church itself.

29. Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich reigned from 1645 to 1676.

30. Afterward the famous Patriarch of All Rus', the corrector of liturgical books and rites.

31. The translation of the relics of St. Metropolitan Philip was carried out in 1652. The memory of the translation was established to be celebrated on 3 July. In addition, the memory of St. Philip is also celebrated on 5 October, together with the memory of the Moscow hierarchs: Peter, Alexis and Jonah.

32. By the Tarsian region is meant here Cilicia, the southeastern province of Asia Minor. It was named Tarsian after its principal city, Tarsus, which lay in the southern part of the region, on a fertile plain by the river Cydnus, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea not far from the city. It was a large and populous trading city, which has retained its commercial importance down to the present time.

Mount Olympus[33], to the monastery of Augarus, where two uncles of his mother, Gregory and Basil, had already become renowned for their virtuous life in the monastic habit; of these, the first was abbot of that monastery. Received by them and having had his hair cut, Eustratius began to pursue the arduous monastic life, and was beloved by all for his humility and gentleness. He took no thought at all for worldly things: he had nothing but a hair shirt and a sheepskin on which he slept. He did not even have a cell of his own or any particular place that he could call his own, and so he would ordinarily sleep wherever he happened to be, and that only a little. The Fathers said of him that during sleep, from the day of his tonsure, he never stretched out his body at full length, and that also, throughout the full seventy-five years of his ascetic life, he never lay down on his left side. While he was thus labouring in the monastery, the aforementioned Venerable Fathers Gregory and Basil died, and the Blessed Eustratius, at the special and urgent request of the brethren, had to take upon himself the government of the monastery. But then the royal sceptre was lawlessly seized by a man bearing the name of a beast, Leo the Armenian[34], who rose up against Emperor Michael and drove him from the kingdom. Since he sought to restore the iconoclasm that had already been extinguished, all the Orthodox left their homes and monasteries, hiding from the emperor's persecution. On the advice of the Venerable Joannicius the Great, the Blessed Eustratius also left his monastery and wandered in the mountains and deserts until the impious emperor was killed. When, after his destruction, the holy Church was again adorned with icons and began to venerate them, then the Blessed Eustratius returned to the Augarus monastery together with the other Fathers who returned to their monasteries, and he again began to labour diligently in ascetic struggle and in the monastery's works together with the brethren. Prayer never left his lips, and even during the services, standing in the sanctuary, he unceasingly repeated to himself: "Lord, have mercy!"

33. Olympus was in Bithynia, the northwestern province of Asia Minor. A good many different monasteries were located on this mountain.
34. Byzantine Emperor Leo V the Armenian, an iconoclast, reigned from 813 to 820.

He also performed many miracles, which clearly bore witness to the God-pleasing character of his life. And when the time came for him to depart from this world, he gathered the brethren and said to them:

"The time of my departure has come; therefore I beg you, my beloved children, to keep the traditions which you have received, knowing that all the good things of this life are fleeting; they are temporal, whereas the good things of the life to come are eternal. Strive also to be numbered among those who are saved."

Having said this, he prayed, and, making the sign of the Cross over them and lifting his eyes to heaven, he said:

"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!"

With these words he fell asleep in peace in the Lord. Having lived only ninety-five years, he passed into eternal life and was numbered among the Venerables.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Shemaiah

Память святого пророка Самея

The holy Prophet of God Shemaiah was born in Shiloh[35] in the reign of Solomon[36]. In the time of Solomon's son and successor, Rehoboam[37], the Jewish kingdom was divided, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remaining faithful to Rehoboam, while the other ten tribes acknowledged Jeroboam, son of Nebat, as king. Then Rehoboam gathered a numerous army, intending to bring back by force the tribes of Israel that had been torn away by Jeroboam. And there came a revelation from the Lord to Shemaiah, the man of God:

"Say to Rehoboam, son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to the whole house of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people: Thus says the Lord: Do not go up nor begin war against your brethren, the children of Israel; return every man to his house, for this thing is from Me."

35. Shiloh: a city in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim, in Palestine; here stood the Tabernacle of the Testimony, established by Moses.
36. From 1020 to 980 B.C.
37. From 980 to 963 B.C.

The king and the people obeyed the command of the Lord, and fratricidal war was averted (3 Kgdms. 12:21–24; 2 Chron. 11:1–4).

In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, because he had turned away from the Lord, the kingdom of Judah was invaded by Shishak[38], king of Egypt; the numerous army of Pharaoh took all the fortified cities of Judah and drew near to Jerusalem. Then the prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah, who had taken refuge from the enemy within the walls of the capital, and declared to them:

"Thus says the Lord: You have forsaken Me, therefore I also leave you in the hand of Shishak."

Hearing this, the king and the leaders of the Jewish people humbled themselves and said:

"The Lord is righteous!"

After that, there came a new revelation to Shemaiah, the man of God, for the Lord said to him:

"They have humbled themselves; I will not destroy them, and shortly I will grant them deliverance, and My wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak; nevertheless they shall be his servants, that they may know what it is to serve Me and to serve earthly kingdoms."

The prophetic word was fulfilled. Shishak plundered Jerusalem and withdrew to Egypt, and Rehoboam reigned yet twelve years, and the wrath of the Lord was turned away from him (2 Chron. 12). The holy Prophet Shemaiah also recorded the acts of Rehoboam's reign.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Peter, Bishop of Sebaste

Память святого Петра, епископа Севастийского

The holy Peter was the brother of Basil the Great, the tenth and last son of their parents. In the upbringing of the holy Peter his elder sister Macrina took a great part. She gave him the most exalted education, from infancy exercising his mind in the study of the

38. Susakim, according to the Egyptian chronicles Shoshenq, was the first pharaoh of the XXII Dynasty, of the Bubastites.

word of God. Thanks to Macrina's care, the youth attained such a height of virtue that, in the words of his brother Gregory of Nyssa, "in his later life he was, it seems, not less than Basil the Great in the excellence of his virtues." When Peter came of age, Basil, having become Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, ordained him presbyter. Afterwards the holy Peter was made Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia[39]. In the episcopal rank he attended the second Ecumenical Council against Macedonius[40], held at Constantinople in 381. He died at the end of the fourth century.

* * *

NOTES

356. During his eighteen years of governing the Solovetsky monastery, Abbot Philip completely renewed it: he built in it two stone churches, of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos and of the Transfiguration of the Lord; he introduced bells in place of the *bila* and *klepala* (metal boards used to summon the brethren to services); he erected two- and three-storey cells and a hospital for the brethren; he increased and improved the salt-works, the main source of the monastery's maintenance; he built water mills, established a cattle yard and introduced deer, linked the lakes with canals and drained the marshes, cut clearings in the forests and laid out roads. In the rank of abbot, Philip again became known to Grand Prince Ivan Vasilyevich and earned his favour. The Tsar granted him charters for various volosts, villages and other properties, gave him rich vestments embroidered with pearls and two coverings for the reliquaries of the Solovetsky Wonderworkers Zosimas and Sabbatius, and afterwards sent a thousand roubles for the building of the Church of the Transfiguration, two bells, two golden crosses set with precious stones and pearls, and new charters confirming various privileges of the monastery.

360. Refusing to accept the high hierarchical dignity, Philip said: "I cannot take upon myself a task that exceeds my strength; release me, for the Lord's sake. Why should a small boat be entrusted with a great burden?" When the Tsar continued to insist, Philip

39. Sebastia of Armenia was located in the northeast of Asia Minor.

40. Macedonius was Patriarch of Constantinople from 341 to 360, with interruptions. He was the founder of a heresy that wrongly taught about the Holy Spirit. He did not acknowledge the Holy Spirit as God, but considered Him a created being, having no share in the Divinity and glory of the Father and the Son. The Second Ecumenical Council in 381 condemned this heresy and confirmed the Orthodox teaching on the Holy Spirit as the True God. Moreover, at this council the Nicene Creed was revised. By adding five new articles (8–12), in which the teaching on the Holy Spirit, on the Church and the mysteries, on faith in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come, is set forth, the council gave it the form in which it has been preserved to the present day.

declared that he would fulfill the Tsar's will, but on the condition that the oprichnina, by which the Russian land was suffering, be abolished. John answered that the oprichnina was necessary for the Tsar and the realm, since plots were being hatched against him. St. Philip was persuaded not to interfere in the affairs of the court and the oprichnina, and not to withdraw from the metropolitan see on account of the Tsar's failure to abolish the oprichnina, but to take counsel with the Tsar as the earlier metropolitans had done. Thus St. Philip left to his conscience the freedom and the duty to grieve for the innocent who were persecuted, and to speak of the truth of the Gospel, which had long been the prerogative of the Russian hierarchs.



THE TENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 10

10 января

New Calendar January 10 · Old Calendar January 23 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa

Житие святого отца нашего Григория, епископа Нисского

St. Gregory of Nyssa was the brother according to the flesh of St. Basil the Great, and was considerably younger than he. This is evident already from the fact that St. Gregory of Nyssa calls Basil the Great his teacher and father. As to the year of St. Gregory's birth, it is unknown. His childhood upbringing was entrusted to the same pious grandmother of his, Macrina, who also taught St. Basil,[1] and his first instruction in grammar and rhetoric he received from his father. He continued his lessons in rhetoric, from the age of twelve, when his father died, under the teachers of eloquence at Caesarea. The knowledge Gregory acquired in the pagan school of Caesarea was afterward supplemented by his own scholarly labors and by the lessons of St. Basil the Great, to whom Gregory, by his own account, owed very much. Given his natural gifts and his diligence in the study of the sciences, St. Gregory successfully mastered rhetoric[2] and philosophy,[3] and was preparing himself for the calling of a secular orator. But God judged otherwise, and a change soon took place in Gregory's soul, which at that time was more inclined to worldly pursuits and to the study of secular learning. Once, at his mother's estate, it was decided to

1. See concerning this, as also concerning the parents of St. Gregory of Nyssa, in the Life of St. Basil the Great under January 1.
2. Rhetoric is the science containing the rules of eloquence.
3. Philosophy (in the Greek translation, "love of wisdom") is the science of wisdom; it deals, on the basis of the investigations of human reason, with the highest, abstract questions of being: about the essence of being, about God, about the beginning and laws of the world and of man, about the destiny of man and the final aims of the existence of the world, etc.

hold a festival in honor of the translation of the relics of the Forty Martyrs. Gregory, who was then studying at Caesarea, was invited to this family celebration. Dissatisfied that he had been torn from his studies and that the festival had not been postponed to a more favorable time, Gregory listened indifferently and without attention to the chanting of the service, which took place in the garden and lasted the whole night, and at last, withdrawing to one of his arbors, lay down to sleep. And behold, in a dream he sees that he wishes to enter the garden, but certain radiant warriors do not let him pass, and only through the intercession of one of them does he succeed in escaping punishment. This terrifying dream made a strong impression on Gregory, and he, leaving worldly pursuits and learning, turned to the reading of sacred and soul-profiting books; soon afterward he accepted the duties of anagnost, which consisted of reading Holy Scripture at the liturgical assemblies. Yet this disposition at first took root in Gregory's soul only for a short time. After the death of Julian the Apostate,[4] who forbade Christians to be teachers of rhetoric and grammar, Gregory again turned to his beloved occupation, choosing for himself the vocation of teacher of rhetoric, which provoked the displeasure of his friends and stern rebukes from St. Gregory the Theologian.[5] However, Gregory did not long strive for the glory of a rhetorician. Soon, under the influence of the members of his ascetically minded family and of his friends, he turned wholeheartedly to the study of the monuments of the faith, forsook the world, and withdrew into the wilderness, settling in the monastery founded by Basil the Great on the banks of the river Iris. Soon afterward St. Basil, desiring to have in Gregory a faithful helper in the struggle against the Arian heresy, ordained him bishop of the city of Nyssa.[6] St. Gregory acted as a true shepherd of Christ, valiantly governing the Church and guarding its peace against the schemes of its en-

4. Julian the Apostate was a Roman emperor who reigned from 361 to 363. Without raising an open persecution against the Christians, he nevertheless strove to destroy Christianity and restore paganism, for which purpose he took all manner of measures.

5. St. Gregory the Theologian (of Nazianzus) was a great ecumenical teacher, friend and companion of St. Basil the Great. His memory is celebrated on January 25.

6. This was at the beginning of the year 372. Nyssa was a city in the north-western part of Cappadocia (the vast eastern region of Asia Minor).

emies. His pious sister Theosebeia was with him as deaconess and greatly assisted her brother in church affairs, so that her death afterward was a great loss to him.

In the reign of Valens,[7] St. Gregory of Nyssa suffered unjust persecution at the hands of the Arian rulers.[8] The governor of Pontus,[9] Demosthenes, assembled at Ancyra[10] a council of bishops submissive to the government, at which Gregory was falsely accused of misusing church property and deprived of his see. By Demosthenes' order the saint was seized and sent under guard to Ancyra, and on the way he suffered much from the brutality of the soldiers. Afterward he resolved to flee, and, escaping from the guard, hid himself in a safe place. The following year a new council of bishops of Pontus and Galatia was convened in Nyssa itself; St. Gregory did not appear for trial and was again deposed in his absence. But, deprived of his see, Gregory did not remain idle: he moved from one place to another in order to confirm Orthodoxy and comfort the Orthodox. After the death of Valens, St. Gregory was restored to his see and joyfully received by his flock. Soon afterward he was grieved by the death of St. Basil the Great,[11] whom he deeply loved and revered as his teacher. He honored him with a funeral oration on the anniversary of his death, and out of grateful reverence for him as his teacher, he completed Basil's account of the six days of creation, where the description of man was lacking and where others wished to see some perplexing questions resolved. In the same year St. Gregory of Nyssa took part in the Council of Antioch.[12] At this council

7. Valens was emperor of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, reigning from 364 to 378.
8. The Arian heresy received its name from Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, who taught that the Son of God is not eternally begotten of God the Father, but was created by Him out of nothing in time, is not consubstantial and not co-equal with Him. This heresy tended to the overthrow of the whole of Christianity.
9. Pontus was a north-eastern region of Asia Minor on the shore of the Black Sea, from which it received its name (Pontus, in the Greek translation, properly means "sea," and the Black Sea in antiquity was called the Pontus Euxinus).
10. Ancyra was a very ancient flourishing city of Galatia (a small province of Asia Minor lying between Phrygia, Bithynia, Pontus and Cappadocia, in the central part of Asia Minor), now Ankara, and to this day remains one of the most important commercial cities of Asia Minor. The council at Ancyra against St. Gregory and his deposition took place in 375.
11. In 379.
12. The Council of Antioch was in 379.

it was decided to send a man experienced in matters of the faith to survey the churches in Arabia and Palestine, where the heresies of the Antidicomarians, who did not honor the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God, and the Collyridians, who honored the Mother of God as a goddess, were offending the faith. St. Gregory was chosen to establish peace and faith. Before setting out on this journey he visited his eldest sister, the blessed Macrina.[13] After her burial he successfully completed in Arabia the commission entrusted to him at the Council of Antioch; but in Jerusalem, where with reverent joy he visited the holy places, he could not accomplish all that had been entrusted to him, and he wrote with sorrow that sins and errors find strong defense in the hearts of people even there. Meanwhile, during St. Gregory's absence, Arianism had again been introduced into his diocese, which he succeeded with difficulty in overcoming upon his return home. At the same time he took part in the election of bishops for Ibora and Sebastia,[14] at the request of the inhabitants, who feared that the successors of the deceased bishops would be heretics. When, in the reign of Theodosius the Great,[15] the Second Ecumenical Council against the Pneumatomachian Macedonius[16] was convened in Constantinople, St. Gregory of Nyssa was there, together with other holy fathers, a champion of piety, refuting and putting to shame the opponents by the power of truth on the basis of Divine Scripture. At this council, through the efforts of St. Gregory, the Nicene Creed was supplemented with an article concerning the Holy Spirit, and to the Creed were added yet a ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth article. In general, Gregory of Nyssa was one of the principal figures of the council.

Together with the other bishops he also took part in confirming St. Gregory the Theologian, and he read to him and to the blessed Jerome his work against Eunomius.[17] When a bitter struggle arose against St. Gregory the Theologian on the part of a certain portion of the clergy,

13. The fruit of the saint's conversation with his dying righteous sister was later the work of Gregory on the "soul" and the "resurrection."
14. Ivora and Sebasteia are cities of Cappadocia.
15. Theodosius the Great was a Roman emperor who reigned from 379 to 395; he was a zealous patron of Christianity and a champion of Orthodoxy against the heretics.
16. The Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople was in 381.

infected by heretical false teachings or inclined toward the heretics, as a result of which he had to leave the Constantinopolitan see, St. Gregory of Nyssa, together with many others, earnestly tried to dissolve this enmity, but, being unable to do so, he gave counsel on the faith and on the new calling to Gregory the Theologian's successor, Nectarius,[18] who was elected from among the catechumens. During his stay in Constantinople St. Gregory of Nyssa delivered two sermons: one on the occasion of the election of St. Gregory the Theologian as bishop of the capital, and the other a funeral oration at the burial of Meletius.

Soon after the Second Ecumenical Council, Gregory was obliged to move from one church to another in order to set in order the disorders of the Church and to confirm Orthodoxy, since at the Second Ecumenical Council he had been named among the three chief pastors as guardian of Orthodoxy for Pontus. In 383 St. Gregory of Nyssa was at a council in Constantinople, where he delivered a discourse on the Divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In 386 he was again in Constantinople, and here, as a famous orator, he was entrusted with delivering a discourse over the grave of the Empress Placilla,[19] beloved by all. In 394 he was again present in Constantinople at a council convened to resolve questions concerning church affairs in Arabia.[20]

St. Gregory, as a faithful and true shepherd, zealously confirmed his flock in faith and piety; it happened that he gave them instruction for several days in succession. At the same time he was an intercessor and defender of the unfortunate before judges, and he was distinguished by compassion toward the poor, patience, peacefulness, and uprightness.

17. Eunomius was a heresiarch of the second half of the fourth century, the extreme representative of Arianism.

18. St. Nectarius governed the Patriarchal See of Constantinople from 428 to 431. His memory is observed on the Saturday of Cheesefare.

19. Placilla was the wife of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, known as a pious Christian who was distinguished by her Christian charity. In the Greek Church her memory is celebrated on September 14.

20. The Local Council of Constantinople of 394, under Patriarch Nectarius, was convened to resolve a dispute between two bishops (Agapius and Bagadius), who laid claim to the same see (in Bostra of Arabia).

Having reached deep old age, St. Gregory reposed in the Lord,[21] leaving behind many useful and precious writings for the Holy Church.[407]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O divine hierarch of the Church and honorable mystagogue of wisdom, Gregory, vigilant mind of Nyssa, rejoicing with the Angels and delighting in the divine Light, thou prayest unceasingly for us all.

Another Kontakion, Tone 1:

Watching with the eye of the soul, O hierarch, thou didst appear to the world a vigilant shepherd, and with the staff of thy wisdom and thy fervent intercession thou didst drive away all the heretics as wolves, preserving the flock unharmed, O all-wise Gregory.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Domitian, Bishop of Melitene

Память святого Дометиана, епископа Мелитинского

St. Domitian was born during the reign of Justin the Younger[22], to pious and wealthy parents, Theodore and Eudocia. Having completed his education, he entered into marriage; but when his wife soon departed this life, he at once, through his inclination toward spiritual wisdom and for the love of God, renounced the world and passed his life in asceticism. Then, by the will of God, in the thirtieth year of his life, he was appointed bishop of the Church of Melitene[23]. And he was not only a good shepherd to his flock, but also a lamp and helper to other peoples, bringing great benefit to the whole Greek Empire as one zealous for the common good. The saint was sent many times by Emperor Maurice[24] to Persia[25] on affairs of state; he acted as mediator before Chosroes, the Persian king, and helped bring about a peace treaty between the Greeks and the Persians. He also deprived a certain prince,

21. St. Gregory of Nyssa reposed at the end of the fourth century, shortly after the Council of Constantinople of 394.
22. Justin II, or the Younger, was a Byzantine emperor who reigned from 565 to 578.
23. Melitina, otherwise Melitene or Melita, was the capital of Lesser Armenia.
24. Maurice was a Byzantine emperor who reigned from 582 to 602.

Varam, of power, after he had risen up against Chosroes[26] and audaciously attempted to seize the royal dignity in Persia, making him a tributary of the Greeks. Through this, Domitian became a beloved friend of Emperor Maurice. The emperor bestowed upon him a great quantity of gold and estates, but he gave it all to holy churches and guesthouses, to provide for the poor. Upon arriving in the imperial city of Constantinople, he soon departed in peace to the King of Heaven[27]. His precious body was buried with great honor in the presence of the emperor and his senate, and a numerous assembly of clergy, and was translated to his native city of Melitene. St. Domitian performed many miracles both during his life and after his repose, to the glory of Christ our God.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Marcian

Житие преподобного Маркиана

During the reign of Marcian and Pulcheria, the wondrous man, Blessed Marcian, born in Ancient Rome[28], became renowned for his virtues. His parents were pious, noble, and wealthy. When they moved from ancient Rome to the New Rome, they brought their son Marcian with them. He applied himself diligently to the study of books and was brought up in good morals. Since he loved "to be a doorkeeper in the house of God"[29] (Ps. 83:11), never failing to attend the church services, the patriarch of that time came to love him and made him a member of his clergy[30]. A little later, seeing that although young in years he was old in understanding and purity of life—for "wisdom is

25. This country is located in Asia, near the Persian Gulf. Originally this country was in dependence on various neighboring peoples in turn, but with the accession of the Sassanid dynasty (from 226 A.D. until the seventh century) the Persians became a politically independent people and often waged wars with the Greco-Roman Empire. The activity of St. Domitian belongs to this period.

26. Here is meant Khosrow II, King of Persia, who reigned from 590 to 628.

27. St. Domitian reposed in 601.

28. Here is meant the capital of the Greco-Roman Empire and of the present-day Kingdom of Italy. This Rome is called "ancient" in distinction from Constantinople, which St. Constantine the Great made his capital, for which reason that city was later called the "New" Rome.

29. That is, he loved to visit the house of God and to remain in it.

the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age" (Wis. 4:9)[31]—the patriarch deemed him worthy of the rank of presbyter, and afterwards appointed him steward[32] of the Great Church[33]. When his parents departed this world, they left Blessed Marcian many estates, for he was their only child, and so all their wealth came into his hands alone by inheritance. He spent this wealth not on the needs of this life, but devoted it all to God: relieving the poor, restoring the Lord's ancient churches, and building and adorning new ones. At great expense he built a splendid new church in the name of the holy Martyr Anastasia. When one of his friends expressed surprise at such an expenditure of gold on the building and adornment of this church, the saint said to him:

"If you had a daughter and wished to betroth her as a bride to some most noble man, would you not spend a great deal of gold to adorn her with precious garments? So now, having resolved to build a church for the fairest Bride of Christ, who was betrothed to Him Who is "fairer than the sons of men" (Ps. 44:3)[34] and shed her blood for Him, shall I begrudge my possessions and not take all the greater care to adorn her?"

Blessed Marcian was thus a generous and willing giver for the beauty of the holy churches; but toward himself he was sparing and unmerciful—not only did he wholly reject fine clothing and cover himself

30. *Cleric* comes from the word *kleros* (*clergy*), which in Greek means "inheritance" (of God). From ancient times this name was given to the church hierarchy together with those who held various lower offices in the service of the Church (singers, readers, and the like), for all of these are persons who have dedicated themselves to a special and direct service of God.

31. The meaning of this expression is that a person's true (spiritual) age is determined not by the number of years lived but by the degree of wisdom attained and the moral purity of his life. A high degree of perfection in both respects can be reached even in young years; conversely, the gray hairs of old age may be joined in a person with childish unreasonableness and extreme moral underdevelopment.

32. The office of *oikonomos* (steward) appeared in the Church in the fourth century, with the increase of church property. The Fourth Ecumenical Council, in its twenty-sixth canon, speaks of it as already long existing. The duties of the steward included the management of church property, especially immovable property, and of church economy, under the supervision of the bishop. Both presbyters and deacons, and even clerics who did not hold a hierarchical rank, were elected to this office, provided they were known for their honesty and skill.

33. That is, the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Constantinople.

34. That is, to Christ, the Most Beautiful (more beautiful) of the sons of men.

with a poor garment, but at times he even took off that very poor and necessary garment and gave it to those who asked, as may be seen from what follows. When the church of St. Anastasia had been built and adorned with every beauty, its consecration took place on the very feast day of this martyr, December 22, on which she had once suffered death for Christ. The most holy Patriarch Gennadius, with all the clergy, and the emperor, with his entire senate and the people, made a solemn procession to this church, translating the relics of the holy Martyr Anastasia from a small, old church to the new, larger one built by Marcian. During this procession, as the Venerable Marcian walked with the other presbyters, clad in a phelonion[35] and going before the carriage in which the relics of the saint were borne, a certain poor man came up and asked him for alms. Having nothing with him but the one garment —for throughout his life he had never even acquired two changes of clothes—and unwilling to send the poor man away empty-handed, he quietly withdrew from the others and went to a secluded place. There he took off his garment and gave it to the poor man, remaining clad only in his phelonion over his naked body, and fulfilling the Lord's word: "Give to him that asketh thee" (Mt. 5:42). Returning to his place in the procession, he walked as before among the presbyters, while no one knew what he had done. When all had entered the church, consecrated it, and honorably laid the relics of the holy Martyr Anastasia to rest, the most holy patriarch directed Blessed Marcian to serve the Divine Liturgy with him. When the time came for the washing of hands, Marcian kept himself covered with his phelonion, looking about lest anyone should see that he was naked. The presbyters and deacons present looked upon him and saw beneath his phelonion a wondrous garment, gleaming with gold like the precious purple robe of a king. Some marvelled, while others were displeased, saying to themselves that a presbyter ought not to serve the Liturgy wearing such a gar-

35. In antiquity the *phelonion* was the name of an upper, long, sleeveless garment covering the body on all sides, like the one worn by Christ and the Apostles (2 Tim. 4:13), which is why the Church also took it into the number of sacred vestments. In Russia, for convenience in the performance of the services, its front side is cut open; in Greece, however, it still preserves its ancient form to this day, and St. Marcian could thus completely cover the nakedness of his body with it, until it became necessary to act with his hands during the service.

ment. All saw this wondrous garment, with which God had covered the nakedness of His servant, especially when Marcian came forward to receive the Most Pure and Life-Giving Mysteries. Some of the presbyters told the most holy Patriarch Gennadius of this.

The patriarch said:

"I too saw what you are speaking of."

At the end of the service he summoned the Venerable Marcian to the sacristy[36] and began to rebuke him, saying:

"What are you doing, brother, adorning yourself with garments beyond custom? Is it right for you to serve the Liturgy in such clothing, more suited to a king than to a presbyter?"

The Venerable One humbly fell at his feet, saying:

"Forgive me, Master; I have not done what you say. From my youth I have not been accustomed to wear beautiful and precious garments. Should I begin to dress in them now?"

"We all saw you in royal attire. Why do you deny it?" the patriarch said to him, and ordered him to stand up.

They opened his phelonion and saw his naked body, and marvelled. At the patriarch's questions, the blessed man was compelled, against his will, to relate all that had happened openly: how, for Christ's sake, he had given his last garment to a poor man. All who heard this and had seen the royal garment beneath his phelonion glorified God, Who grants such hidden grace to those who love Him. From that time on, his life, full of mercy, became known to many.

The Venerable One endured voluntary poverty and despised possessions to such a degree that once, after walking somewhere in the rain and getting his garment wet, he returned to his room, locked the door behind him, kindled some coals, and began to dry the wet garment, for he had no other for his ordinary use. At that time the patriarch happened to require the steward for certain matters. When the men sent to summon Marcian went and found his room locked, they stood outside and called for him to come quickly to the patriarch. He promised to come, but did not, because his garment had not yet dried. One of

36. In the room where the spare sacred vessels and sacred vestments were kept.

them looked through a crack and saw him drying his garment over the coals, and told those who were with him. They returned and reported this to the patriarch.

"Do not marvel at this," said the patriarch. "From his youth Marcian has learned voluntary poverty and humility, devoting himself wholly to the One God; in deed he fulfills the Apostle's word: having food and raiment, let us be content with these" (1 Tim. 6:8).

Those who heard this glorified God, Who has such servants. For this virtuous life, God granted him the gift of working miracles—to cast out demons and heal the sick. Once, while the feast was being celebrated in the church of St. Anastasia and a great multitude of people had gathered, a certain pregnant woman, because of the crowd inside the church, climbed onto the church roof, but accidentally fell from it to the ground and died. St. Marcian could not bear to see the feast darkened by lamentation, and lifted his hands on high and fervently prayed to God. Suddenly the woman came to life and stood upon her feet, whole and well; the child she carried in her womb was alive as well. The people marvelled at this most glorious miracle.

Once a great fire broke out in Constantinople, and when the flames had already surrounded the church of St. Anastasia, the Venerable Marcian climbed onto the roof of the church and, raising his hands to heaven, prayed. At once the fire turned back and restrained its ungovernable flames; through the saint's prayers, as though by mighty waters, it was completely extinguished without damaging the church building in the least.

Venerable Marcian built a church also to the other martyr, St. Irene, on the spot by the sea where there had stood an old church in her honor, already falling into ruin; and he renewed the other churches nearby that had been there, those of St. Theodore and St. Isidore, providing them with all that was needed. Having reached a great old age, before his blessed repose, he would walk through the streets at night, and wherever he found someone lying dead, he would wash and clothe him. As he did so, he would say to the dead man:

"Arise, brother, let us kiss!"

The dead man, rising at the word of the saint, would kiss him on the lips and lie down again. The saint saved many harlots, sometimes by exhortation and sometimes by generous help, persuading them to take themselves husbands and live according to the law; and those who had given themselves to such a way of life under the pressure of poverty he turned to a chaste life, secretly providing for them and supporting them from the aforementioned inheritance of his parents. This blessed man God acquired for Himself; the Angels praised him, the hierarchs honored him, the emperors stood in awe of him, the peoples marveled at him and glorified God on his account; but the demons feared him and fled from him. St. Marcian reposed before the completion and consecration of the church in honor of St. Irene. At his death he said:

"Lord! Into Thy hands I commend these two: the soul, which Thou Thyself hast created, and the church, which I have built according to Thy will."

The body of St. Marcian was buried with honor in the monastery of St. John the Forerunner, which is also called the Monastery of Daniel, near the church of the holy martyr Mocius. The completion of the building of the church of St. Irene was undertaken after the Venerable's death by the pious Empress Verina, wife of the Emperor Leo the Great[37], who reigned after Marcian and Pulcheria; she finished it, adorned its roof with gold, and decorated the church within with every splendor, in memory of the Venerable Marcian and to the honor of Christ God Himself, to Whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever, amen.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Paul of Komel

Память преподобного Павла Комельского

Venerable Paul was born and brought up in the glorious royal city of Moscow[38]. His parents wished to marry him, but St. Paul did

37. Leo I the Great died in 474. Since, according to the Life, Verina completed the construction of the church during her husband's lifetime, and since the aforementioned cessation of the fire through St. Marcian's prayer is dated to 471, the saint's death must be placed between 471 and 474.

not desire this, and secretly leaving his parental home, taking nothing with him, he went to the place called Priluk, which belonged to the monastery of the Life-Originating Trinity[39], founded by Venerable Sergius, Wonderworker of Radonezh. Here, in the monastery in honor of the Nativity of the Lord God and of our Savior Jesus Christ[40], the blessed youth received the monastic tonsure. Having lived here briefly, St. Paul moved to the monastery of Venerable Sergius, where he remained for fifteen years under the spiritual guidance of the great elder, living in a hermit's cell[41]. After that, St. Paul asked Venerable Sergius for a blessing to withdraw into the wilderness and live there in complete solitude, moving from one place to another.

Then the blessed ascetic went to the White Lake, to Venerable Cyril, to the monastery of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos which he had founded[42]; with Venerable Cyril St. Paul lived for some time in a secluded cell, and then again withdrew into the wilderness, to the river Odrol. After a brief solitude here, Venerable Paul came to the region of Galich, to the great hermitage of the Most Holy Theotokos[43], and settled in a hermit's cell, but was expelled from there by the abbot of the hermitage and went to Gorodets on the Volga, where he dwelt in the Theodore Monastery[44]; then he devoted himself in solitude to mon-

38. Around 1367.

39. Today it is the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra.

40. The Monastery of the Nativity of Christ, in the Uglich district, on the Priluka, was listed as subordinate to the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Lavra even at a later time.

41. Venerable Paul performed obediences in the kitchen and refectory of the Holy Trinity–St. Sergius Monastery. In blessing Venerable Paul to live in the hermitage, Venerable Sergius gave him a life-giving cross, which is preserved to this day in the Monastery of St. Paul of Obnora.

42. The Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery, founded by Venerable Cyril (his memory is celebrated on June 9), is located in the district town of Kirillov, Novgorod Province, 602 versts from Novgorod. In the time of Venerable Cyril and Venerable Paul, the nearest town in that region, Belozersk, was 37 versts from the monastery.

43. The Chukhloma Monastery of Venerable Abraham (the Great Hermitages) of the Placing of the Belt of the Most Holy Theotokos was located in the Galich district, Kostroma Province. It was founded by Venerable Abraham of Galich. Soon after its founding, Venerable Abraham left this monastery and, 13 versts from it, established the Vochsk Monastery, where he reposed in 1375. His memory is celebrated on July 20.

44. Now a monastery not on the official establishment list, in the Balakhna district, Nizhny Novgorod Province, at the village (formerly town) of Gorodets, on the left bank of the Volga; it was founded in 1164 by Grand Prince George Vsevolodovich. In the monastery is preserved the cell in which, on November 4, 1263, Alexander Nevsky died while returning from the Horde.

astic labors in various desert places, until he came to the Komel forest[45].

Here, on the bank of the little river Gryazovitsa, the Venerable settled in the hollow of a large linden tree; for three years the holy hermit lived in this hollow, spending day and night in prayer and fasting, laboring for God with tears. Afterwards St. Paul moved to the place where his honorable monastery now stands[46]; there the Venerable remained until the end of his life, keeping a strict fast. His food was bread and water, and even in the smallest quantity; he partook of this food on Saturday and on Sunday. On the other days St. Paul took no food at all, spending all the time in his secluded cell in prayerful praise. The blessed hermit endured great deprivations for Christ's sake and many sufferings from the demons, and bore it all, strengthened by the grace of God.

Once the demons made an assault on the Venerable's cell and intended to destroy it, but the blessed Paul was not frightened by the snares of the demons and put the devil to shame by the power of the Cross of Christ. On another occasion robbers attacked the saint, inflicted cruel beatings on him, and after plundering the cell left the hermit bound hand and foot. For several days the Venerable lay in the cell, until good people came into the wilderness, at God's prompting, and untied the blessed elder. All this the Venerable bore without murmuring for the sake of the name of Christ. To the hermit's cell of the Venerable came forest birds in great numbers; here also came wild, bloodthirsty beasts, which became gentle through the prayers of the saint and did all that the blessed father commanded them.

Many times St. Paul heard the sound of church bells in the place where he had settled, and saw a light in one spot, where afterwards a church was built in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. Accompanied by his disciple Alexis, the Venerable went to Moscow and related this heavenly revelation to the holy Metropolitan Photius. The hierarch

45. The Komel forest in the Obnora volost extended over the whole southern strip of the Vologda region, crossed by the rivers Obnora, Nurma, and Komela with their numerous tributaries.

46. Fifteen versts from the district town of Gryazovets, Vologda Province, on the bank of the river Nurma, a tributary of the Obnora, which flows through the Vologda and Yaroslavl provinces and empties into the river Kostroma.

blessed the Venerable to build a church in his hermitage, ordained Alexis to the rank of priest, and, giving a rich alms for the construction of the church, dismissed the saint in peace. Returning to the Komel Hermitage, the Venerable built a church in the name of the Life-Originating Trinity[47], gathered the brethren and established a monastery, over which he set as abbot the aforementioned hieromonk Alexis. The blessed father Paul himself lived as before in his secluded cell, coming to the monastery only on Saturday and on the Lord's day, and then he instructed his disciples; he lived according to the commandments of the Lord and the rules of the holy fathers[48].

At that time the Tatars attacked the city of Kostroma, burned it and laid waste the surrounding settlements; a multitude of Orthodox Christians were then slain by the unbelievers, and others were taken captive and led into slavery together with their wives and children[49]. Soon after this the Venerable Paul departed to the Lord from the labors of this temporal life into the eternal, ineffable rest, leaving in his disciples a bright memory of himself. The Venerable reposed on January 10, 1429; he lived for 112 years[50].

47. Having built the church, St. Paul wrote to St. Metropolitan Photius asking for an antimension for the consecration of the church and a blessing to establish the monastery and gather the brotherhood. The hierarch sent him an antimension with a letter in which he blessed the founding of the monastery and gave instruction to the venerable father and the brotherhood. "When you were with me," the hierarch writes, "you will remember, my son, that you yourself spoke much of what a spiritual superior ought to be. He ought to be an example for all: on the day of the great judgment he will give an account for the souls entrusted to him. I write the same to you." In his instructions to the brotherhood, the hierarch exhorts them to fulfill the vows of monastic life firmly and unwaveringly.

48. Venerable Paul bequeathed to the brotherhood that they keep the cenobitic rules of Venerable Pachomius the Great and Venerable Theodosius the Cenobiarch; he did not permit the monks to consider anything their own, but everything was to be held in common; in the cells there was to be nothing except an icon and books, not even kvass; the monks were to quench their thirst in the refectory; in the church, in the refectory, and at work, Venerable Paul enjoined that silence be kept; their sustenance was to be acquired by the labor of their hands, and they were not to forget the poor.

49. The Tatars laid waste to Kostroma on January 6, 1429. On that very day, when the disciples came to the venerable father, he sighed and wept; when those who had come asked him the reason for this, St. Paul said: "On this day and at this hour the impious Tatars, having taken the city of Kostroma, have given it to fire and sword and have led many into captivity – and all this for our sins, because we walk in the wills of our hearts."

50. Venerable Paul was numbered among the saints by the Moscow Council of February 26, 1547; his holy relics rest beneath the floor in the cathedral church of the Obnora Monastery.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Inflamed with divine love from thy youth, O Venerable Paul, thou didst hate all the beauties of the world and didst love Christ alone; therefore thou didst dwell in the inner wilderness, living all thy life with the beasts for Christ. Wherefore the All-seeing Eye, beholding thy labors, enriched thee with the gift of miracles even after thy repose. Therefore we cry to thee: pray unceasingly for us all, who ever honor thy honorable memory in hymns.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having fixed all thy intellectual desire upon God, and having irrevocably followed Him in soul, thou didst dwell in the wilderness, and there living angelically, thou wert a way of salvation to many; therefore Christ glorified thee and enriched thee with the gift of miracles. Therefore we all cry to thee: Rejoice, Venerable Paul, dweller of the wilderness.

* * *

NOTES

407. St. Gregory of Nyssa left behind a great many writings, in which he appears now as a spiritual orator, now as a dogmatist denouncing heresies, now as an interpreter of Holy Scripture, and now as a teacher of morality. His oratorical talent is seen in his funeral orations for Meletius of Antioch, Basil the Great, St. Macrina, and the Martyr Theodore Tiro; in his homilies on Baptism, on Pascha (five homilies), on the Ascension of Christ, on Pentecost, and on the Meeting of the Lord. Among the dogmatic writings of St. Gregory, the best are the twelve homilies against Eunomius and the Catechetical Oration, which sets out instruction on how one ought to act in converting pagans and Jews, and how in refuting heretics. In his work against Eunomius, refuting his teaching, Gregory proves the Divinity of the Son of God, and in part explains the whole Christian teaching on the Holy Trinity. This teaching on the Holy Trinity, and especially on the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, St. Gregory defended against the errors of his own time by many other writings, such as: the homily on the Holy Spirit against the Macedonians, the homily on the Divinity of the Son and the Spirit, *To Simplicius on Faith*, *To Ablabius*, *That There Are Not Three Gods*, *To the Hellenes*, and the homily against Arius and Sabellius. Next, among the dogmatic writings of St. Gregory belongs the *Hexaemeron*, in which he resolves the lofty questions about the world that St. Basil the Great left unanswered in his *Hexaemeron*; *Against the Manichaeans*; *On the Creation of Man*; an inquiry *On Children Who Died Unbaptized*; and the work *On the Soul and the Resurrec-*

tion. In explanation of Holy Scripture, St. Gregory wrote several works in the form of reflections: eight homilies on the three chapters of Ecclesiastes, fifteen homilies on the Song of Songs, two reflections on the inscriptions of the Psalms and a homily on the sixth Psalm, five homilies on the Lord's Prayer, and eight homilies on the eight Beatitudes. To the morally ascetical writings belong: three treatises on Christian perfection, on the aim of life in God, on true ascetic labor, on virginity, on love for the poor, and others. Besides these, some twenty-eight letters of St. Gregory have survived.



THE ELEVENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 11

11 января

New Calendar January 11 · Old Calendar January 24 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Theodosius the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Феодосия Великого

The Venerable Theodosius was born in the village of Mogarion, in Cappadocia[1], to pious parents—his father Proeresius and his mother Eulogia—and was brought up in good conduct and the study of books. When the boy had come to full understanding and had learned Holy Scripture well, he was appointed to read in church the passages from the service books assigned for reading, and he was a sweet-voiced and skilled reader, as no other. As he read instructive words for the benefit of those who listened, he himself drew even greater benefit from them. He heeded the Lord, who commanded Abraham to go out from his land and from his kindred (Gen. 12:1), and who, in the Gospel, urged that for the sake of eternal life one leave father, mother, and brothers (Mt. 19:29). His heart burned and his spirit was aflame with desire to leave all and follow Christ along the narrow and sorrowful way. As he pondered this, he prayed to God: "Guide me, O Lord, in Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth" (Ps. 85:11).

Then, placing his hope in God, he set out for Jerusalem. This was during the reign of Marcian[2], toward the end of his life, when the Fourth Ecumenical Council[3] was convened at Chalcedon[4] against Dioscorus and Eutyches[5]. Passing through Antioch[6], the blessed Theodosi-

1. Cappadocia – a region in the east of Asia Minor. In A.D. 11 it was made a Roman province under the emperor Tiberius.
2. Marcian – Byzantine emperor, who reigned from 450 to 457.
3. In 451.
4. The chief city of the Roman province of Bithynia; it stood on the Asian shore of the Bosporus, opposite Byzantium.

us desired to see the Venerable Symeon and to receive his blessing and prayers. He went to him, and when he was near the pillar, he heard the voice of the Venerable:

"You have come well, man of God, Theodosius!"

Hearing himself called by name by one who had never seen him or known him, Theodosius marvelled; and falling to his knees, he bowed before the clairvoyant father. Then, at his invitation, he climbed up the pillar to the saint and fell at his venerable feet. The latter embraced and kissed the God-inspired youth and foretold that he would be a shepherd of rational sheep and save many from the noetic wolf[7]. He foretold much else to him, and, blessing him, sent him on his way. Strengthened by the Venerable's blessing, and having his holy prayers in place of a companion, guide, and guardian, Theodosius continued along the road before him and reached Jerusalem; this was during the patriarchate of Juvenal. Having visited the holy places there and prayed at the Lord's Tomb in the Church of the Resurrection, he considered what manner of life to begin: that of a hermit, or a common life with others who sought salvation? He came to the conviction that to live in solitude, without yet having learned how to contend with evil spirits, was unsafe. "If among the soldiers of the world there is no one so senseless as to rush into the midst of those fighting at the very beginning of his military service, while still unskilled and untrained in the art of war, then how shall I," the saint said to himself, "before my hands have been accustomed to bearing arms and my fingers to warfare, and without having been girded with strength from on high, dare alone in the life of a hermit to rise up against principalities, powers, and the world-rulers of the dark-

5. Eutyches, condemned by the IV Ecumenical Council, taught that Jesus Christ had one nature – the Divine – whereas the holy Church has always acknowledged and still acknowledges in Jesus Christ two natures, unmingled and undivided – the Divine and the human. Dioscorus – Patriarch of Alexandria (in Egypt), a follower of the teaching of Eutyches, which he tried to establish at the council of 449.

6. Here is meant Syrian Antioch, called Great, a city on the river Orontes, founded by Seleucus Nicator and named by him after his father Antiochus. In it the kings of the Seleucid line lived continually, and in the times of the Roman emperors it was even the capital of the East. In Antioch the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called by the name of Christians.

7. By the figurative wolf are meant here the devil and each of his servants who seduce into heresy and impiety. The form of speech in this whole expression is borrowed from (Jn 10:12).

ness of this age, against the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12)? First I must join the holy ascetics and learn from experienced fathers how to contend with invisible foes; then, in time, the fruits that grow from solitude and stillness will be gathered." Having reasoned thus wisely—for among his other virtues he possessed perfect discernment, able to judge well concerning all things—he immediately began to seek a guide for himself.

At that time, the most renowned of all the fathers living in Jerusalem and its environs was a certain elder named Longinus[8], who had his cell by a pillar that from ancient times had been called David's[9]. Shut away there, he diligently cultivated the sweet honey of virtue. When the blessed Theodosius came to him, he made a beginning of monastic labors and, having attached himself to the elder with all his soul, learned every virtue from him, for that Venerable was great in word and in life. After a fairly long time, the elder transferred him, though against his will, to a place called the "Old Seat"[10]. This came about for the following reason: a certain pious woman, an honorable widow and servant of Christ, named Glyceria, had built a church of our Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos, at that place, and she importuned the Venerable Longinus with many earnest requests to let Theodosius live by the newly built church. Though the disciple did not wish to part from his father, at his command he moved there. While he remained there, word of his virtue spread everywhere. Virtue makes the one who possesses it known, just as a lighted candle reveals the person carrying it at night. Those seeking spiritual benefit began to come to the saint, and those wishing to imitate his life began to gather around him.

After living there for some time, the blessed one began to be troubled by the lack of quiet, for he could not bear the esteem and renown of men. He left that place for a mountain where there was a cave. According to an ancient tradition, the three Magi who had come to Bethlehem with gifts for Christ and were returning to their own

8. The memory of the Venerable Longinus (in the Greek Church) is celebrated on November 17 and on the Saturday of Cheesefare.

9. An ancient tower in the Jerusalem citadel, by the Jaffa Gate.

10. In Greek: kathisma, or the Church of the Kathisma; it stood halfway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

country by another way rested from their journey and spent the night in that cave (Mt. 2:1–12). The Venerable Theodosius moved from the "Old Seat" to the cave. His move there came about through a special providence of God, so that a most glorious Lavra[11] might be established in that place and companies of spiritual warriors gathered to Christ God.

Having changed his dwelling place, the blessed one also changed his life, beginning to walk an even narrower way. His desire was always to fulfill all the commandments of the Lord. He was so consumed by divine love that he directed all the powers of his soul not toward anything of this present life, but wholly toward God alone, his Creator, that he might love Him with all his soul, with all his heart, and with all his mind, and manifest this love in deeds through bodily labors and ascetic struggles, which cannot be recounted in detail. His prayer was unceasing, his vigil lasted through the night, and tears ever flowed from his eyes like streams from springs. His fast was immeasurable: for thirty years he tasted no bread at all, but lived only on dates, a gruel[12], or the grasses and roots of the wilderness, and even of these he partook so sparingly as barely to keep from dying of hunger. When, because of the scarcity of the wilderness, he had none of this food, he lived on date stones soaked in water. Meanwhile, he continually nourished his soul with the word of God, filling it with inward contemplation of God. Living thus, he shone like a bright star and became known to all the inhabitants of Palestine, for a city set on a mountain cannot be hid (Mt. 5:14). Some lovers of virtue came to him and preferred life in the wilderness with him in the cave to the joys of civic life.

At first the Venerable had seven disciples. Knowing that nothing is more useful for those beginning to live according to God than remembrance of death—which is called and considered true wisdom—the saint commanded his disciples to dig a grave, so that, looking upon it, they might learn to remember death, as though they had it before their

11. Lavra – (from Greek: a part of a city, a lane) a row of cells arranged within an enclosure around the dwelling of the superior, in the form of lanes in a city. From ancient times the name lavra has been applied to large and important monasteries. It first appeared in Egypt, and then in Palestine.

12. A broth of grain, or of peas, beans, or vegetables.

eyes. When the grave was ready, the Venerable came to look at it and, standing over the grave, spoke to his disciples as if joking, though with the eyes of his soul foreseeing what was to come:

"Behold, children, the grave is ready; is there any among you prepared for death, to renew this grave by his own burial?"

When the saint said this, one of his disciples standing there, named Basil, who was a priest by rank, immediately forestalled the others, fell on his knees before the elder, and, prostrating himself with his face to the ground, asked the blessing to die and be buried in that grave.

"Bless me, father," he said, "to renew the grave, so that I may be the first among the brethren, who are being taught about death, to become a dead man."

The elder consented to his request and ordered that the commemoration of Basil be held while he was still alive, as though he were already dead, according to the custom of commemorating the departed on the third, ninth, and fortieth days. When all the commemorations had been completed, the blessed Basil also died, without any illness. As though falling asleep in a sweet sleep and taking his rest, he departed to the Lord. Forty days after his burial, the elder saw Basil appear among the brethren during the appointed service, singing with them. He prayed to God that the eyes of the others might also be opened, so that they too might see the one who had appeared. When one of the brethren, named Aetius, saw him, he joyfully rushed to embrace him, but the apparition vanished at once and became invisible. As he departed, he said aloud for all to hear:

"Be saved, fathers and brethren, be saved; you shall see me here no more!"

This was the first testimony to the virtue of the Venerable Theodosius: he had such a disciple, ready at his instruction to die, who after bodily death was shown to be alive in soul, according to the Lord's word in the Gospel: "He who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live" (Jn. 11:25). Other manifestations of the miraculous grace given to the elder by God will become evident from what follows.

The feast of Christ's Resurrection was drawing near. The disciples of the Saint, who by then numbered twelve, grieved that they had noth-

ing to eat for the feast: no bread, no oil, nothing edible at all. Above all they grieved that on so bright a festival there could be no Divine Liturgy, since they had neither prosphora nor wine for the service, and so they would be deprived even of Communion in the Holy Mysteries. Among themselves they murmured secretly against the Venerable Father. But he, having an unwavering hope in God, bade the brethren adorn the Divine sanctuary and not grieve.

"He who in ancient times fed Israel in the wilderness[13] and afterwards satisfied many thousands of people with a few loaves[14]," he said, "will provide for us also. For He has not grown weaker in strength than He was before, nor has His zeal for the providence of the world diminished; He is the same God, One and the same for ever."

Thus he spoke with hope, and his words were fulfilled at once. As in ancient times a ram appeared to Abraham caught in a thicket, ready for sacrifice (Gen. 22:13), so by God's providence everything needful was found for this blessed elder. At sunset a certain lover of God came to their cave, bringing from his house on two mules a variety of food for the desert ascetics, and besides this prosphora and wine for the celebration of the Divine Mysteries. At the sight of this the disciples of the blessed one rejoiced and recognized what grace the elder had obtained from God. They celebrated Pascha in gladness, and the food brought to them sufficed them for the whole of Pentecost. Afterwards the food ran out again, and the brethren, tormented by hunger, grieved once more. At that time a rich man was giving much alms to all the monasteries of Palestine, except that he gave no help to the Monastery of Theodosius in the cave, for he did not know of it. And the brethren pressed the Father to make known to this benefactor himself and themselves, so that, like the other monasteries, they might receive alms from him for their sustenance. The Venerable Theodosius, by no means wishing to be known to anyone in the world, and placing his hope not in men but in God, who opens His hand and satisfies every living thing with favour

13. Meant here chiefly is the manna, the miraculous food with which the Lord fed the Hebrew people during their wandering through the wilderness on the way to the promised land (Ex. 16).
14. Meant is the miraculous feeding by Jesus Christ of more than five thousand people with five loaves (Mt. 14:15–21), and of more than four thousand people with seven loaves (Mt. 15:32–38).

(Ps. 144:16), comforted his disciples and taught them to wait patiently for the mercy of God, trusting in Him who satisfies every hungry soul: if He gives food to the dumb beasts and to the young ravens that call upon Him (Ps. 146:9), how much more will He not deprive of needful food the rational and speaking creature. While the Saint was thus comforting the faint-hearted brethren, a man came to them leading a mule laden with a great quantity of provisions. He was not heading to the cave of Theodosius, but was transporting the supplies to deliver them somewhere else. When he came near the cave and wished to pass by it, the mule stopped and would go no further; even after many blows from its master it remained in its place, motionless as a stone. The man, perceiving that his mule was held back and kept motionless by the will of God and by an invisible power, loosened the reins and let it go where it wished. As though led by some hand, the mule went straight to the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius in the cave, and that man, recognizing the blessing of the Lord and His providence for His servants, gave all the provisions to the venerable elder and his disciples. And from that time the disciples of the Saint ceased to be faint-hearted, and strove to be zealous followers of the firm faith and hope of their Venerable Father in God.

The number of brethren increased daily, for the springs of grace with which the holy father was filled drew to themselves many souls who loved virtue, whom one might call rational hinds longing for spiritual waters (Ps. 41:2); and not a few men of rank and wealth came to live with the Venerable Father. The cave became too narrow to hold so great a multitude of people. The brethren came to the Venerable Father and pressed him with requests that he found a monastery near the cave and build a wide enclosure for the rational sheep.

"Do not trouble yourself, Father," they said, "about the means for building the monastery; only give the command, and our hands will be sufficient to accomplish this work."

The Saint, seeing that he was being called to be shepherd of a very numerous flock, and that his stillness was being disturbed, was troubled by various thoughts: sometimes he was unwilling to leave stillness, as an unfeigned mother, and sometimes he regarded the care of the

brethren as no small matter, for man must live not for himself alone but much more for his neighbour, of which Christ the Lord Himself was the pattern, who gathered disciples, appeared as the Shepherd of the rational sheep, and laid down His soul for them. Pondering this, the Venerable Theodosius was at a loss which to hold to, stillness or the care for the salvation of the brethren, and his mind inclined now to one, now to the other. What did the blessed one do? He committed everything to God, who is able to unite both for one benefit, so that neither the fruit of stillness should be lost nor the reward for leading and caring for the brethren be forfeited; for the life of a monk is strengthened not by bodily solitude but through firmness in good and peace of heart. The Venerable Father also kept in mind the prophecy of St. Simeon the Stylite, who foretold to him the shepherding of the rational sheep. Yet he committed the matter he was undertaking to God's good pleasure, and prayed to Him that He would make known, if it was His will that a monastery be founded, and point out by a wondrous sign the place on which the foundation of the monastery should be laid. Taking a censer and filling it with cold charcoal, he put incense on it without fire and went through the wilderness, praying thus:

"O God, who assured Israel by many great wonders and persuaded Thy servant Moses by various signs to take up the burden of leading Thy people, who changed the rod into a serpent and the healthy hand into one whitened with leprosy and then made it healthy again (Ex. 3:3, 6:7); who turned water into blood and easily turns blood back into water (Ex. 7:20); who gave Gideon a sign of victory on the fleece (Judg. 6:37–38), Creator of all and Almighty; who wrote for Hezekiah the prolonging of his life by a shadow turned back along the steps (4 Kgdms. 20:1–11; Is. 38:7–8); who heard the prayers of Elijah and sent fire from heaven to turn the impious, and it consumed the wood and the sacrifices, and the stones and the water (3 Kgdms. 18:38): Thou art the same God now; hear me, Thy servant, and show me the place where it shall please Thee that I should raise a holy church to Thy Dominion and establish a monastery for Thy servants, my disciples. Show me, I beseech Thee, such a place, where Thou shalt com-

mand these coals to kindle of themselves, for Thy glory, for the knowledge and proclamation of the truth to many."

Speaking this and similar things in prayer, he went round the places which seemed more suitable for building a monastery. He went far through the wilderness, and with the same unkindled and cold coals in the censer he reached a place called Kutilla, and the shores of the Lake of Smolyany[15]. And when he saw that the coals did not catch fire and his desire was not fulfilled, he resolved to return to the cave. As he was returning, and the cave was already not far off (O, who shall worthily praise Thy power, Immortal King!), a fragrant smoke suddenly issued from the censer, for the coals had blazed up strongly. The Saint knew that this was the place on which, by the good pleasure of God, a monastery was to be founded, miraculously marked not by a tongue but by fire. The disciples of the Saint at once set to work: laying the foundations, they built a church, cells and an enclosure, and soon, with the help of the Most High, they established a spacious monastery.

The Lavra of the Venerable Theodosius became famous and renowned, and in it the common life was established. The Lord granted this Lavra every abundance, so that those who dwelt in it could not only enrich themselves with the spiritual riches of good deeds, but also not be deprived of what the body needed. There found rest not only monks but also laymen, travellers and strangers, beggars and the poor, the sick and the infirm. For the Venerable Theodosius was merciful, loving to mankind and compassionate, being for all a tender-hearted father, for all a dear friend, for all a zealous servant and minister, cleansing the sores and wounds of the sick, washing away their blood, feeding them from his own hands and rendering them every kind of service. He showed great love also to those who came from everywhere, entertaining them, comforting them and supplying them with all that was necessary. The Venerable Father was a common refuge, a common infirmary, a common home, a common feast, a common treasure for the ailing, the hungry, the naked and the wandering; all were comforted by his love, mercy and generosity, and he despised no one. Those serving

15. So was called a part of the wilderness on the western shore of the Dead Sea, which here is called the Pitch or Asphalt Sea.

in the monastery at table noticed that sometimes as many as a hundred meals had to be served in one day to those who came, to travellers and beggars: so loving to mankind and loving to strangers was the Venerable Father. God, who Himself is Love (1 Jn. 4:8), seeing such love of His servant towards his neighbours, blessed his monastery, so that even a small quantity of food was invisibly multiplied in it and satisfied an innumerable multitude of people.

Once in Palestine there was a famine, and a multitude of beggars and poor people gathered from everywhere at the gates of the monastery on Palm Sunday, to receive the customary alms. The disciples were saddened that they did not have enough food to give to so many petitioners, and told this to the blessed one. But he, looking at them with anger, reproached them for their unbelief and said:

"Quickly open the gates, that all may enter!"

The beggars and the poor, having entered, sat down in rows.

The Venerable Father bade the disciples give them bread. The disciples went to the bakehouse in sorrow, expecting to find nothing; but on opening the bakehouse they saw that it was full of loaves, for the hand of the Provider of all, God, had filled it for the sake of the faith of His servant. The brethren praised God for such a miracle, and marvelled at the great trust their Abba had placed in God.

When on another occasion, at the feast of the Dormition of the Most Pure Theotokos, a great crowd of people came to the monastery while there was too little food to set before so great a multitude, Venerable Theodosius looked up to heaven, blessed a few small loaves, and bade them be served; and the people were satisfied, for God multiplied these loaves as once He multiplied five loaves (Mt. 14:21; Lk. 9:14). So much so that each took away with him for the road as much as he needed. The brethren gathered the remaining crumbs, filled many baskets with them, dried them in the sun, and lived on them for a considerable time. And many times a countless multitude of people gathered at the monastery, so that the wells seemed insufficient to give drink to so great a number of people; yet the never-failing hands of the Nourisher of all, God, fully satisfied them all.

The Venerable Father established many guest-houses and various hospitals, a special one for those who held office and for those who had grown old in labors. Moreover, he visited those who dwelt in the mountains and in caves, cared for them and grieved in his heart over them as a father over his children. He supplied them with everything needful both for body and for soul, teaching and admonishing them, and delivering many from the seduction of Satan.

Since the brethren of the Venerable Father's monastery were not of one people and one tongue, but of various kinds, he therefore established other churches as well, in which each people might glorify God in its own language. Thus in the great church of the Most Pure Theotokos the Greeks[16], in another the Iberians[17], and in a third the Armenians[18], sang the ecclesiastical rule in their own tongues, seven times a day, according to the rule of David: *Seven times a day,* he said, *do I praise Thee* (Ps. 118:164). For the sick there was a special church. At the time of the reception of the Most Holy Mysteries, all the brethren gathered from all the churches into one great church, in which the Greeks sang, and all communed together. The number of brethren, the children of the Venerable Father, whom he had spiritually begotten, nurtured in fatherly instruction, and directed toward virtue, was six hundred and ninety-three. Many of them became shepherds in other monasteries, having learned good governance from St. Theodosius, who was filled with spiritual wisdom and understanding. He tended his flock, not chastising with a staff but nurturing with the word, a word seasoned with salt[19], touching the soul and penetrating to the very depths of the inner movements. Together with the word he taught also by deed, showing himself as an example to his flock. Therefore, even when he gently exhorted someone, he was nevertheless fearsome to

16. The Greeks – a people who from time immemorial occupied a large part of the present Balkan Peninsula and the neighboring islands; in Christian times they have always lived, and still live, in considerable numbers in the Holy Land.
17. Iberians, i.e., natives of Iberia, the present-day Georgia.
18. The Armenians lived in the neighborhood of the Holy Land. Armenia proper bordered on the north on Colchis, Iberia and Albania, on the west on Asia Minor, on the south on Mesopotamia, and on the southeast and east on Media and Syria.
19. That is, with speech that is reasonable and full of edification (Col. 4:6).

many, and when he rebuked someone, he was amiable and affable. What was remarkable in him was that, though he had not been schooled in worldly learning and was not versed in Greek books, he delivered his teachings with such thoroughness that none could compare with him, not even those who had grown old over books and had perfectly mastered the art of oratory. For he taught not from human wisdom but from the grace of the Spirit of God, who spoke secretly to him as to another Jeremiah: *I have put My words in thy mouth* (Jer. 1:9). And the blessed one spoke much that was profitable to the soul, some from himself and some from apostolic sayings, paternal testaments, and the ascetical words of Basil the Great, whose life he imitated and whose God-inspired writings he especially loved. Of his many great instructions it is well to recall the following short one:

"I beseech you, brethren, for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself up for our sins, let us at last take care of our souls, let us grieve over the vanity of our past life, and let us zealously strive for the future, to the glory of God and His Son. Let us not remain in idleness and present weakness, spending this day in despondency and putting off the beginning of good works until tomorrow, lest we appear before the Judge of our souls without good works, be cast out from the chamber of joy, and lament idly and hopelessly over the ill-spent time of our life, weeping when repentance will be of no benefit. Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. The present age is for repentance, and the age to come for recompense; this for labor, that for the receiving of reward; this for patience, that for consolation. Now God is a Helper to those who turn from the evil way; but then He will be the terrible Judge of human deeds, words and thoughts, from whom nothing can be hidden. Now we enjoy His long-suffering, but then we shall know His justice, when we rise, some to eternal torment and others to eternal life, and each receive according to his works. How long shall we delay in obedience to Christ, who calls us to His Heavenly Kingdom? Is it not time for us to come to our senses? Is it not time to turn from vain living to the perfection of the Gospel? How shall we face the terrible and dreadful day of the Lord, when the Kingdom of Heaven will receive those who stand at the right hand[20] of God and are near Him through good works, while the fire of Gehenna, eternal darkness and the gnashing of teeth will hide those who stand at the left[21], rejected for lack of good works? We say that we desire the Kingdom of Heaven, but we take no care how to obtain it. Having labored not at all to fulfil the commandment of the Lord, we hope, through the vanity of our mind, for honor equal to that of those who struggled against sin unto death."

Thus instructing his disciples, the Venerable Father urged them to the utmost zeal for salvation. Although he was in all things meek of disposition, yet wherever violence was done to piety he was like a consuming fire, or a hewing axe, or an invincible weapon of war.

At that time reigned Anastasius[22], who inherited the empire after Leo the Great[23] and Zeno[24]. At first his reign seemed like a sweet para-

dise, but afterward it proved to be as it were a field of destruction. He became like those shepherds who scatter and destroy their flock and give the sheep muddy water to drink; for he fell away into the heresy of Eutyches and of the headless Severus[25], and by it troubled the Church of God, rejecting the Fourth Ecumenical Council of the holy Fathers at Chalcedon, expelling the orthodox bishops from their sees and setting heretics in their places, and inducing many of the orthodox to agree with him, some by threats, others by honors and gifts. He even dared to direct his deceitful flattery against that pillar unshaken in the faith, our Venerable Father Theodosius. The attempt at seduction consisted in his sending to the Venerable Father thirty litras[26] of gold, ostensibly for the sustenance and clothing of the poor and for the needs of the sick, but in reality seeking to win the favor of the Venerable Father, whom all Palestine heard and whose wisdom and counsel it followed. The great Father, perceiving the craftiness of the emperor, was like an eagle soaring among the clouds, inaccessible and unreachable, who could more easily catch his hunter. He did not refuse the gold sent to him, lest he appear to despise the faith of the emperor foolishly and give cause for his wrath, and also in order to obtain for him from God, through the almsgiving to be performed with that gold, mercy, for his instruction on the true path. But the almsgiving had no success, because the gold had been sent not in righteousness but with guile. The emperor received hope of having in Theodosius a fellow-believer, since he had accepted the gold; but his hope was in vain.

The time came when the emperor, through his envoys, demanded of the Venerable Father a confession of faith, on which he was counting, namely one agreeing with the teaching of Eutyches and Severus. The Venerable Father, gathering all the hermits, firmly rose up, as a strong

22. Anastasius I, Dicorus, or the Thracian, reigned from 491 to 518.
20. That is, on the right side (Mt. 25:34).
21. That is, on the left side (Mt. 25:41).
25. Acephali (in Greek, *akephaloi*, "headless") – heretics of the sixth century, followers of Severus of Alexandria. They admitted neither bishops nor priests nor sacraments, and represented the extreme faction of the Monophysites.
26. Litra – a pound, a unit of weight equal to 72 zolotniks; in silver it was worth up to 42 rubles, in gold up to 506 rubles.

man and leader of the spiritual host, against the heretical error, and answered the emperor with the following epistle:

"Emperor! When we are faced with one of two things, either to live impiously, having lost, by following the headless one, our freedom, or to die honorably, following the true dogmas of the holy Fathers, then know that we prefer death, for we do not accept new dogmas, but follow the laws of the Fathers who lived before. And those who assert anything else beyond this, we piously reject and deliver to anathema, and we will not accept anyone ordained by the headless ones under compulsion. May this not be with us, O Christ our King! If anything of the kind should happen, then, calling upon God as witness of the truth, Whom they now blaspheme, we will resist even unto death. As for the fatherland, so also for Orthodoxy we will gladly lay down our souls, even should we see these holy places perishing in fire. For what need is there of the mere name of holy places, if in truth this holiness suffers reviling from the heretics? We shall in no way dare to say, nor even to think, anything at variance with the holy Ecumenical Councils. The first of them is adorned by three hundred and eighteen Fathers, who gathered against Arius[27] and, having anathematized the wretched man, cut him off from the body of the Church; for he estranged the Son from the essence of the Father by nature, and introduced dogmas of false faith. The second Council, by the inspiration of God, gathered in Constantinople against Macedonius, who blasphemed the Holy Spirit. The third solemnly assembled at Ephesus[28] against the foul-tongued and impious Nestorius, who blasphemed the flesh of Christ, received from the Most Pure Virgin[29]. After this there was a Council of six hundred

27. The First (Nicene) Ecumenical Council took place in 325.

28. Ephesus – the famous city of Lydia (in the western part of Asia Minor), which was regarded as the metropolitan city of all Asia Minor. For a long time it was the residence of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist. The Third Ecumenical Council was held here in 431.

29. Nestorius, who was Archbishop of Constantinople (from 428 to 431), following Diodore, Bishop of Tarsus, and Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, distorted the Orthodox teaching on the manner of the union of the two natures in Jesus Christ. He taught that from the Most Holy Virgin Mary was born not the God-man but a man. He was supposedly born in a natural way, and moreover was not free from passions and defects. According to this teaching, the Divinity was united with the man Jesus supposedly only later, when he had become firmly established in goodness.

and thirty God-bearing Fathers at Chalcedon, who pronounced what agreed with the first Councils and explained what they had said. They cut off from the holy body of the Church the wretched and evil-minded Eutyches, together with Dioscorus, and established the apostolic faith, and all who thought contrary to it they excluded from the Church of Christ. For resisting these Councils, let fire blaze upon us, let the sword be sharpened against us, let the most grievous death overtake us, and even, if it were possible, instead of one time, let death overtake us a countless number of times. We, however, will in no case depart from true piety, nor dishonor by rejection what the Fathers valiantly received. Let their sweats and their many labors, which they endured for the faith, be witnesses of this; and this will be kept firmly and unchangeably both by us and by those who think it good to follow God and us. And may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7), be the keeper and guide of thy dominion."

By this message the Venerable one clearly showed his great zeal for piety. Having read it, the emperor was ashamed and somewhat humbled, and for a time ceased within his realm the persecutions of the Orthodox. He wrote back to the Venerable one with humility, blaming others for the disturbance in the Church.

"Man of God," he wrote, "in this innovation we are not to blame. We boldly call upon the all-seeing eye of God as witness: this disturbance comes from those who ought far more than others to honor in silence the dogmas of the faith and the Councils. They, however, each wish to appear superior to the others in word and in dignity, they attack one another and draw us to their side. It is not unknown to your Reverence that some of the monks and clergy, considering themselves right-thinking, have provoked these scandals, striving, as we have said, to show their own preeminence."

However, the emperor was humbled only for a short while, and after some time rose again against Orthodoxy. And again, everywhere, even in the holy city of Jerusalem, the emperor's decrees rejecting the holy Councils, especially the Council of Chalcedon, were proclaimed. Once more the spiritual warrior, the Venerable Theodosius, although already advanced in years, showed a youthful exploit. When all were silent

from fear, and very many expressed their assent, the Venerable one came to Jerusalem from his monastery, and standing in the great Church of Jerusalem on the elevated place from which the priests usually read to the people, and making a sign of silence with his hand, he cried out loudly:

"Whoever does not honor the four Ecumenical Councils, as the four Gospels, let him be anathema!"

Having said this, he struck the people like an Angel, and none of the opponents dared to object anything. Then, calling from among his disciples those most zealous for the faith, he went about with them through the surrounding towns and villages, uprooting false belief and establishing piety. The emperor, hearing of this, condemned him to exile—the wretch did not know that death already stood at his door. The Venerable one was sent into confinement, and Emperor Anastasius soon lost this temporal life; after which the Confessor of Christ Theodosius, together with the others who had suffered exile for Orthodoxy, immediately returned to his monastery. Felix, bishop of Old Rome[30], also wrote to him, and Ephraim, bishop of Antioch[31], praising the blessed one with many commendations for having shown such zeal —having suffered exile for the true faith and being ready to accept death. But now it is time for us to turn to the account of the saint's miracles.

At the time when the impious decree of Emperor Anastasius was being proclaimed in the holy city of Jerusalem, all the Fathers from the Palestinian monasteries were gathered for this purpose, and the Venerable Theodosius, as we have said, came there with his disciples. And this whole assembly was at the place called Hierapion[32]. This place was a seat erected by Constantine the Great, on which the Exaltation of the Precious Cross of the Lord was celebrated annually.

30. The Roman bishop Felix governed the Roman Church from 526 to 530.

31. St. Ephraim occupied the Antiochene see from 528 to 545.

32. This name was given to a special chapel in the so-called Martyrium, built by Constantine the Great. The Life-giving Cross was kept there even at the end of the fourth century, and it was raised every year, properly in Holy Week, chiefly on Great Friday. This chapel was kept permanently locked, and its key was kept by a special presbyter called the staurophylax (keeper of the Cross).

At this time a certain woman, who had a disease on her breast which the physicians call "cancrum"[33], suffering for a long time and receiving no relief from the doctors, came there and stood, exhausted, near the gathering of the holy Fathers. Approaching one of them (it was the Venerable Isidore, who later became abbot of the Sukkiya monastery[34]), she told him with tears of her illness and asked whether the Venerable Theodosius was in that assembly, and what he looked like. Isidore pointed out the saint with his finger. She, approaching and standing behind him, like the woman with an issue of blood who touched the hem of the Lord's garment (Mt. 9:20–22), secretly touched the monastic garment that was upon the Venerable one, and immediately received healing. This did not escape the notice of the Venerable one, who, turning to the woman, said:

"Take courage, daughter, for my Master has said: 'Thy faith has saved thee' (Mt. 9:22)."

The blessed Isidore hastened to the woman, desiring to see the miracle that had taken place, and found that no trace remained in the place where the incurable sore had been.

After the death of Emperor Anastasius and the return of the Venerable Father from confinement, it was Theodosius's custom to go to Bethlehem for prayer. Once, wishing to rest from his labor, he turned aside from the road to the monastery of the Venerable Marcian. Marcian, receiving his dear guest with love, had nothing to entertain him with, for at that time he had neither bread nor wheat. When they had spent a rather long while in spiritual conversation with one another, and the time for the meal came, Marcian ordered his disciples to cook a pottage and serve it to them. Theodosius, seeing such poverty, bade his disciples take out and offer some of his own loaves, which he had brought from home for the road. As they were eating, the Venerable Marcian said to the Venerable Theodosius:

33. Here one should understand an incurable disease, now called cancer, that is, a cancerous growth.

34. One of the best-known Palestinian lavras, founded by the Venerable Chariton (his memory is commemorated on September 28), to the south of Bethlehem.

"Forgive us, Father, that we have prepared a meager meal, and do not reproach us that we have offered no bread, for we have become very poor and have no wheat at all."

When he had said this, the marvelous Theodosius, looking at Marcian's beard, saw a grain of wheat that had got into it from nowhere. Carefully and quietly taking it off with his right hand, he said with a joyful smile on his face:

"Here is wheat—how then do you say that you have no wheat?"

The blessed Marcian, taking joyfully from Theodosius's hands the grain removed from his beard, as a certain fruitful seed, commanded that it be carried to the granary, believing that, by the blessing of St. Theodosius, it would without labor bring forth a fruit greater than in a cultivated field; and so it came to pass. After Theodosius had departed, when the disciples wished to open the doors of the granary in the morning, they saw that it was full of wheat, so that the doors would not even open. Marcian sent to the Venerable Theodosius with news of the miracle that had taken place and with thanks for the increase of the wheat.

The Venerable one answered:

"Not I, but you, Father, multiplied the wheat, for the grain was taken from your beard."

A certain renowned woman from Alexandria[35] came to the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius with her little son, who, seeing the holy Father from afar and pointing his finger at him, cried out to his mother:

"This is the one who saved me from drowning in the well, holding me by the hand so that I did not sink in the water."

The mother, falling at the feet of the Venerable one, related the following:

"This child," she said, "playing with his companions, fell through carelessness into a very deep well, and we thought he had been dashed to pieces there and drowned. Weeping over him as one already dead, we

35. Several cities of this name were known in antiquity. Here one should understand Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, on the Mediterranean Sea. This city was renowned for its learning and wealth; it was founded in 332 B.C. by Alexander the Great.

lowered a man into the well to bring up the child's body from the water, but found the child alive on the surface of the water. When we marveled and asked how he had not drowned in the water, he told us: 'Some elderly monk, appearing, took me by the hand and held me up on the water.'"

From that time, taking the child, I have been going through towns and villages, mountains and deserts, until I should find this Father. And now I have found your Reverence, and my child recognized you, the one who saved him from drowning."

Another woman suffered greatly in childbirth: she bore dead children, and each time with very grievous pains. She was both a mother of many and a childless woman: a mother of many, because she bore often; childless, because the children were born dead. With tears she asked the Venerable Theodosius to pray for her, that she should bear no more dead children and that her cruel sufferings might be eased. She also asked that, when she bore a son, he might allow him to be given his own name, Theodosius.

"If you allow," she said, "that the child I am to bear be given your name, I hope that the child will live."

The Venerable agreed to her request and prayed fervently for her to God. When the time came for the woman to give birth, she no longer had her former sufferings; she bore the child more easily, and the child was alive, a male, and was named after the Venerable. When his nursing had ended and he had grown somewhat, he was brought to the monastery to our Venerable Father and dedicated to the monastic service of God. Likewise another woman from Bethlehem, who had grieved over her children who kept dying, when she named her newborn after the Venerable, preserved his life by this means; he grew up healthy and became a skilled man, for he became an excellent architect.

Once caterpillars and locusts were causing devastation in Palestine. The Venerable was by then very old and could not walk. Nevertheless he ordered his disciples to carry him into the field where the fruits of the earth were threatened with destruction, and there he halted the locusts and caterpillars, saying:

"The Lord who is common to us all commands you not to destroy the labors of men, nor to devour the food of the poor."

And at once the locusts scattered like a cloud, and the caterpillars perished.

Once the brethren were in great need of clothing and had nothing with which to cover their nakedness. Coming to the Venerable, they pressed him with their requests. He, having no means to buy garments, could only sympathize with them; yet, in the words of the Lord's promise, he said to them:

"Take no thought for the morrow: seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you; for your Father knows what you have need of before you ask Him" (Mt. 6:34, 33, 8).

While the saint was thus comforting the brethren, there came a man who was known to no one and did not say who he was or whence he came. He gave the Venerable one hundred gold coins for the needs of the monastery, and went away. The Venerable, giving thanks to God for this providence of His, gave the gold for the brethren's clothing, and all were provided for with garments for a long time.

Julian, pastor of the church at Bostra,[36] who in his early youth had learned to read books under the Venerable, related the following about him:

"Once," he said, "we came with the Venerable Father to Bostra, and a woman known for her particular malice met us, looked at the Venerable Father with anger, and called him a flatterer and a liar; and at once God's punishment overtook her: she suddenly fell down and died."

"It happened to us," he says again, "to pass by a monastery in which were black-robed monks who held to the heresy of Severus. Seeing us, they began to strike the church semantron[37] to gather the brethren before the usual time of singing. The Venerable, understanding that they

36. Vostra, or Bostra – a city in the Holy Land; in antiquity one of the Levitical cities in the half-tribe of Manasseh, beyond the Jordan.

37. The *bilo*, from the word "to strike" – a wooden or metal board which was struck to summon the faithful to public worship. Among us bells have replaced the bila, but in Greece they are still used to this day.

were plotting some treachery against us, was kindled with righteous anger and prophetically spoke the word of the Lord:

"There shall not be left here one stone upon another; all shall be thrown down" (Mt. 24:2).

These words were not slow to be fulfilled: a little time later the Agarenes[38] fell upon that monastery by night; having plundered everything in it and taken all the monks captive, they set the monastery on fire and laid that place waste, according to the saint's prediction.

The commander of the Greek army, called the eastern comes, Cyriacus by name, bold in battle yet reverent before God, setting out on campaign against the Persians,[39] first came to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places and to obtain God's help against his enemies. He came also to the monastery of Theodosius, for the fame of the holiness of the Venerable Father had spread everywhere and drew all to him. Conversing with the saint, he received great benefit from him: he heard from him that one must rely not upon one's bow, nor hope in a multitude of armies, but know one Helper, God, and trust in His invincible power, for it is easy for Him to make one man chase a thousand and two put many thousands of enemies to flight. Through this teaching and conversation this comes felt a great love for the saint, and he asked him for the hair shirt which the saint wore, that it might be a shield to him in battle. When the Greek army met the Persians and entered into fierce battle, the comes, clothed in the hair shirt of the Venerable Theodosius as in armor, remained unharmed by arrows, spears, and swords, and showed great courage. Returning at the end of the war, he came again to the Venerable and declared:

"I saw in battle," he said, "you yourself, Father, helping me and making me terrible to the enemies, until we conquered the Persian force."

The Venerable Theodosius the Great appeared not only to this comes when he was far away, but he appeared also to many others in

38. That is, the Arabs, descended from Ishmael, son of Abraham and Hagar.

39. Their land bordered on Susiana to the west, on Media and Parthia to the north, on Carmelia to the east, and to the south adjoined the Persian Gulf. Previously the Persians were dependent on the Medes, the Greeks, and the Parthians, but from 226 A.D. they became independent and often waged wars with the Roman Empire.

many places, bringing swift help: he appeared, delivering from misfortune, now to those perishing on ships amid the tempest and storm, now to those wandering in the desert, now to those fallen into the jaws of wild beasts; to some in a dream, to others in waking vision.

He was a swift helper not only to men but also to dumb animals. A wayfarer was walking, leading an ass. A lion met him on the way; paying no heed to the man, it sprang upon the ass to tear and devour it. In terror the man loudly called upon the name of the Venerable, saying:

"Man of God Theodosius, help me!"

And at once the lion, hearing the name of the saint, turned back and fled into the desert.

Let us recall something also concerning the Venerable's foresight. Once, already not long before his death, he ordered the semantron to be struck so that the brethren would gather. When all had come, he sighed, shed tears, and said:

"We must pray, fathers and brethren, we must pray, for I see the wrath of God, which is already advancing upon the eastern land."

After this, after six or seven days had passed, they heard that a great earthquake had destroyed Antioch, at the very time when the Venerable, seeing the wrath of the Lord, was commanding the brethren to pray.

After this our Venerable Father Theodosius, drawing near to his blessed end, lay on a sickbed for a whole year. Prayer was unceasing on his lips, so that even when he fell asleep his lips moved and pronounced those psalms and prayers to which he was accustomed. And when the saint awoke, there was a psalm on his lips, so that on him was fulfilled the saying of David: "In the night His song is with me" (Ps. 41:9). Often he taught the brethren virtue as well. And three days before his death he summoned three bishops whom he loved, and, having announced to them his departure to God, he gave the last kiss to those weeping and sobbing at their parting from him. On the third day after this, in the midst of prayer to God, he gave up his spirit to Him, having lived one hundred and five years in all. God honored his repose with the following miracle: a man named Stephen, a native of Alexandria, had long been possessed by a demon. After the Venerable's repose, he,

touching his bier, was freed from his tormentor and recovered. At once the news of the saint's death spread everywhere, and from all the cities a multitude of people gathered, and monks from the monasteries; there came also the first hierarch of Jerusalem, Peter, with bishops, and they buried with honor the holy body of our Father Theodosius in the cave in which he had first lived, to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Planted in the courts of thy Lord, thou didst flourish beautifully by thy virtues, O thou who didst multiply thy children in the desert, being watered by the clouds of thy tears, O God-given shepherd of the divine courts. Wherefore we cry to thee: Rejoice, Father Theodosius.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Theodosius of Antioch

Память преподобного Феодосия Антиохийского

The Venerable Theodosius the Faster was from Antioch;[40] his parents were pious people, and from them he received good instruction in the law of the Lord. Heeding the supreme commandment of our Savior (Lk. 14:26, 27), the blessed Theodosius, leaving his native home, his kinsfolk, his wealth, and the other goods of this life, withdrew to a wooded place on the seashore, and there built himself a small cell in which he settled. Here the Venerable led his lofty monastic life, clothed in a hair shirt and bearing heavy fetters, some on his neck, others on his loins, and others on both hands. All his time the holy Theodosius spent in prayer and labor, thereby enslaving the desires of the flesh, pride, and the other human passions. The hair of his head grew so long that it covered his feet. The Venerable labored now at plaiting ropes, now in a kitchen garden, digging the beds himself, sow-

40. Several cities of this name are known in Asia Minor and Syria. Here is meant Syrian Antioch.

ing seeds and gathering vegetables, which then went to food both for the ascetic himself and for the visitors who came to him.

The fame of the ascetic deeds of Venerable Theodosius spread more and more, and many visitors began to express the wish to settle near the blessed ascetic in order to imitate his life. Receiving them, St. Theodosius made his wilderness into a likeness of the heavenly abode. Once the Agarenes[41] made an incursion into the region where the venerable one's monastery stood; having laid waste the surroundings, the enemies caused harm to the monastery, but at the same time they felt the presence of Divine power in it and soon withdrew. As a consequence of this incursion, the venerable one left the wilderness and returned to his homeland; there he built a small cell and continued to work out his salvation, surrounded by some of his disciples. Having lived for a little while in his new place of ascetic labor, St. Theodosius reposed in peace in the Lord[42].

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Memory of Venerable Michael of Klops

Память преподобного Михаила Клопского

Fifteen versts from Great Novgorod, on the bank of the river Veryazha, there was a monastery called Klops, and in it a church in the name of the Life-Originating Trinity[43]. In earlier years this monastery was little known to anyone, but afterwards it received wide renown, thanks to the miracles of St. Michael. In this monastery the abbot was Theodosius, a virtuous man; in his time the blessed Michael came to the Klops monastery[44].

It has remained unknown until now whence St. Michael came to the monastery and who his parents were. This event took place in summer, at a time when the whole brotherhood was at Matins; at the ninth ode

41. That is, the Arabs (later this name was adopted for the Muslim Arabs. – *Editor's note, A.V.*)
42. The Venerable Theodosius of Antioch died around 412.
43. The time of the founding of this monastery is not known precisely; it is located to the south of Novgorod, three versts from Lake Ilmen.
44. This was on June 23, 1408, during the reign of Grand Prince Basil Dmitrievich (1389–1425) and St. Metropolitan Photius.

of the canon the hieromonk who was conducting the Divine service censed the church and went to cense in his own cell, which stood near the church; finding the cell open, although he had locked it when he went to the church, the hieromonk entered it and saw a man sitting there in monastic dress; before him a candle was burning, and he was copying the Book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles. Returning to the church, the hieromonk told the abbot and the brethren what he had seen. When the service was over, they went to the cell and found it locked from the inside. The abbot offered a prayer, but no answering voice came from the cell. They began knocking on the door, but it remained shut. Then the abbot ordered the roof over the vestibule to be taken apart; entering the vestibule, they found the inner door also locked. When, at the abbot's command, it was broken open and they all went into the cell, they found there an elder who was sitting and writing. The superior asked him: "Tell me, are you a man or a spirit?" The elder repeated the abbot's words. The abbot offered a prayer, and the elder pronounced the same prayer words as the abbot. Then the superior began to make the sign of the cross over the newcomer and to cense him with incense; but the elder avoided the censing and behaved like a fool-for-Christ.

Together with the brotherhood, St. Michael entered the church for the Divine Liturgy, during which he sang on the kliros with the monastery singers. The abbot entrusted him with reading the Apostle, and all were consoled to the depths of their souls by the beauty and inspiration of his reading. After leaving the refectory, where the saint had performed the appointed reading, the abbot led the venerable Michael into the cell assigned to him for residence, and from that time the blessed one remained in the monastery of the Life-Originating Trinity, bearing the obedience of reader in the church and in the refectory, and all who heard his reading experienced great compunction of heart.

Neither the abbot nor the brethren, however, could learn the name of the newly arrived brother, whence he had come, or what his origin was. Once Prince Constantine Dmitrievich[45] visited the Klops monas-

tery; hearing St. Michael's reading during the meal, the prince approached him closely, recognized him, and said:

"This is Michael, son of Maximus."

The venerable one answered this:

"Only the One who created me knows who I am."

Then the abbot remarked:

"My son, why will you not tell your name?"

And the saint confirmed that his name was Michael[46].

During his life in the Klops monastery, the venerable Michael ate only bread and water, and that once a week and in small quantity. When after his great prayerful labors the saint felt weariness, he rested lying directly on the ground; in his cell he had no possessions, no clothing except that which covered his body. There is no way to recount the great labors which the venerable one undertook for Christ's sake; from his ascetic feats and abstinence his body had become like a shadow.

At that time in Great Novgorod and its surroundings there was a drought that lasted three years: not only the brooks but even the rivers dried up. Then, by the prayers of the venerable Michael, an earthquake occurred near the monastery and a spring began to flow abundantly with water, which to this day serves for the needs both of the brethren and of strangers[47]. After the drought a famine came upon that region, during which crowds of the poor came to the monastery for morsels of bread. The abbot, fearing the depletion of supplies, did not know what to do; but the venerable Michael, pointing out that the Lord had fed four thousand men with seven loaves, persuaded the abbot to feed all the hungry. When the brothers murmured at this, the venerable one led

45. The youngest son of Grand Prince Demetrius Ivanovich Donskoy was born in 1389, four days before his father's death. His brother, Grand Prince Basil Dmitrievich, gave him the appanage of Toshnia and Ustyuzhna, but in 1419, when Constantine Dmitrievich disobeyed his brother, the latter took this appanage away, and Constantine fled to Novgorod, where earlier, in 1408, he had been the governor of the Grand Prince. He spent two years in exile; he built in the Klops monastery a stone church in the name of the Life-originating Trinity.

46. The Venerable Michael of Klops came from a boyar family.

47. To this day, the Klops monastery shows a well, which, according to tradition, was made from the spring that Blessed Michael caused to flow through prayer during a drought. On June 23, the day of St. Michael's arrival at the monastery, a cross procession from the surrounding villages comes here.

them with the abbot to the granary, and they saw with amazement that the stores of bread, by the saint's prayers, did not diminish. The venerable Michael prophesied much about the capture of Great Novgorod[48], and having performed many miracles in the name of Christ, he peacefully reposed in the Lord[49]. His honorable and much-suffering body was committed by the abbot and the brethren to burial in the monastery of the Life-Originating Trinity[50], where the venerable Michael had labored, and was laid on the right side of the cathedral church; here it rests even to our days, pouring forth manifold healings upon those who come to it with faith, to the glory of Christ our God.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Thou who on earth, for Christ's sake, of thine own will didst become a fool, didst utterly hate the beauty of this world; and having withered the delights of the flesh by fasting and thirst, and by lying on the ground, and never didst thou turn aside from heat or cold, from rain and snow, and from other burdens of the air; and thou didst purify thy soul with virtues as gold in the furnace, O Venerable Michael, God-bearing Father; and now thou standest before the Throne of the All-Holy Trinity in Heaven. But since thou hast great boldness, pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

By the power of the Holy Spirit thou didst become like the God-speaking prophets of old, declaring things unknown and hidden, and what was to come to pass according to the judgments of God; and having wrought many other wonders through Christ, and

48. Once Blessed Michael was at the Vyazhishchi monastery. Suddenly he unexpectedly found himself in the belfry and began to ring all the bells. When the people asked what this meant, the blessed one, acting as a Fool-for-Christ, replied: "Now there is joy in Moscow," and added that a son, Ivan, had been born to the Grand Prince, who would be a scourge to his neighbors, would seize Novgorod, would change its customs, would take its gold away, and would bring it wholly under his power. Indeed, on January 22, 1440, Prince Ivan Vasilievich was born, who subjugated Novgorod in 1471. Novgorod was finally annexed to the Muscovite state in 1480.

49. The Venerable Michael lived 44 years in the Klops monastery and reposed in 1452.

50. The memory of the Venerable Michael was ordered to be celebrated everywhere by the council of 1547.

having astonished the people, thou didst cause them to rejoice, crying out: Glory to God, who glorifies His saints.

* * *



THE TWELFTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 12

12 января

New Calendar January 12 · Old Calendar January 25 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Tatiana

Страдание святой мученицы Татианы

The holy martyr Tatiana was born in ancient Rome to noble parents. Her father, who had been consul three times, was a secret Christian and was distinguished by the fear of God. He raised his daughter, St. Tatiana, in piety and the fear of God, and taught her the Divine Scriptures. When St. Tatiana reached the age of majority, she desired to pass her life in virginity and chastity; she was a bride to Christ. Burning with love for Him, she served Him alone day and night, mortifying her flesh through prayer and fasting and bringing it into subjection to the spirit. For her virtuous life she was counted worthy to serve the Church: she was appointed a deaconess, and, like the bodiless Angels, she served God in the flesh. And Christ our God crowned His bride with the crown of martyrdom. She suffered in the following manner. When the impious emperor Antoninus Heliogabalus[1] was killed by his own Romans, and his body, dragged through the city in dishonor, was cast into the river Tiber[2], Alexander[3], a youth of sixteen, was raised to the imperial throne. His mother was a Christian named Mammaea; from her he learned to honor Christ, but not in agreement with the Christian faith, for at the same time he continued to serve the idols and worship them as the ancient gods of Rome. In his palace there were

1. Antoninus Heliogabalus, Roman emperor, reigned 218–222. He was an extremely depraved man, and therefore soon incurred the contempt of the soldiers. He adopted his cousin, the noble Alexander Severus, but when he repented of this and attempted to take the life of the latter, he was put to death by the soldiers.
2. The Tiber is a river flowing from the Apennines, on which the city of Rome is situated.
3. Alexander Severus reigned 222–235.

images of Christ and of Apollo[4], honored by the pagans, of Abraham of the Old Testament and of the pagan Orpheus[5], and of many others. Alexander himself, as the son of a Christian woman, did not persecute the Christians, but his governors, the rulers of provinces and the consuls, oppressed the Christians severely. Since Alexander himself was too young, the management of the state was entrusted to some of the members of the council; the chief among them was the city prefect[6] Ulpian, harsh of temper and a great enemy of the Christians. These counselors governed everything in the emperor's name. It was they who sent out a decree everywhere that the Galileans (so they called the Christians) were to be compelled everywhere to worship the Roman gods, under threat, in case of disobedience, of cruel torments and even death. To watch whether the Christians carried out this decree, the following fiercest enemies of the Christians and faithful servants of the devil were appointed: the comes[7] Vitalius, the cubicularius[8] Vassus, and the domesticus[9] Caius. Then, both in Rome and in all the provinces of the Roman state, the blood of Christians flowed like water. They were not spared, but were subjected to torments and put to death.

At that time the holy maiden Tatiana also was seized by the pagans and brought into the temple of Apollo. They wished to compel her to bow down to this idol. She prayed to the true God, and suddenly an earthquake occurred: the idol of Apollo fell and broke into pieces, and part of the temple collapsed and crushed many pagans and priests. The devil who dwelt in the idol fled from that place with a loud cry and wailing, and all heard his howl and saw a shadow sweeping through the air.

4. Apollo was one of the most venerated Greco-Roman pagan gods; he was revered as the god of the sun and of intellectual enlightenment, as well as of public well-being and order, the guardian of law, and the deity of the prediction of the future.
5. Orpheus was the singer-hero of Greek myths, whose power of song, according to Greek belief, was so great that he set trees and rocks in motion and tamed wild beasts.
6. *Eparch*: a regional governor; sometimes this name also denoted the commander of a fortress. Ulpian was one of the most intimate courtiers of the emperor.
7. *Comites* were originally the attendants of the highest official in a province, and later the attendants of the emperors, who formed their most intimate retinue.
8. *Cubicularius*: the imperial chamberlain, a bedchamber attendant.
9. *Domestici*: the guard of the Roman emperors.

Then the impious led the holy maiden to judgment and torment. First they began to strike her on the face and to tear out her eyes with iron hooks. After a long torment the torturers themselves grew weary, for the body of Christ's sufferer was hard for those who inflicted wounds on her, like an anvil, and the torturers themselves bore more suffering than the holy martyr. And Angels stood invisibly around the saint and struck those who tormented St. Tatiana, so that the torturers cried out to the lawless judge and begged him to order the torments to cease; they said that they themselves suffered more than this holy and innocent maiden. Tatiana, bearing the sufferings manfully, prayed for her tormentors and asked the Lord to open to them the light of truth. And her prayer was heard. A heavenly light illumined the torturers, and their spiritual eyes were opened. They saw four Angels surrounding the saint, heard a voice from heaven addressed to the holy maiden, and fell to the ground before her and began to beseech her:

"Forgive us, servant of the true God, forgive us, for it was not of our own will that we inflicted torments upon you."

All of them (they numbered eight persons) believed in Christ and received baptism in their own blood, for they were cruelly tortured for confessing Christ and at last had their heads cut off.

On the next day the unrighteous judge, seated on the tribunal, again ordered St. Tatiana to be brought to torment. She stood before her tormentor in perfect health. Her face was calm and joyful. The judge tried to persuade the holy maiden to offer sacrifice to the idols, but his efforts were in vain. Then he ordered the saint to be stripped and her body cut with razors. Her virginal body was white as snow, and when they began to cut it, milk flowed from the wounds instead of blood, and a great fragrance spread, as from a vessel of perfumes. The saint, gazing toward heaven, prayed amid these torments. Then she was stretched out on the ground in the form of a cross and beaten with rods for a long time, so that the torturers grew weary and were often replaced. For, as before, the Angels of God stood invisibly around the saint and inflicted wounds on those who struck the holy martyr. The servants of the torturer grew exhausted, declaring that someone was striking them with iron rods. At last nine of them died, struck down by

the hand of an Angel, and the rest fell to the ground barely alive. The saint rebuked the judge and his servants and said that their gods were lifeless idols. As evening was already approaching, the saint was cast into prison. There she spent the whole night, praying to the Lord and singing praises to Him. A heavenly light illumined her, and the Angels of God glorified God together with her. In the morning she was again brought to judgment. Seeing the holy martyr in perfect health, with a face even more beautiful than before, everyone was astonished and amazed. At first they tried to persuade her gently and flatteringly to offer sacrifice to their great goddess Diana[10]. The holy maiden pretended to agree to follow their advice. She was led to the temple of Diana. The demon dwelling in the idol of Diana, sensing the approach of the holy maiden, began to cry out loudly:

"Woe to me, woe to me! Where shall I flee from Thy Spirit, O Heavenly One, for the fire that is kindled from every corner of this temple drives me out?"

The saint, approaching the temple, signed herself with the sign of the Cross and, raising her eyes to heaven, began to pray. Suddenly a terrible peal of thunder sounded and lightning flashed: fire fell from heaven and burned the temple with the idol, the sacrifices, and the priests; many of the unbelievers, scorched by the lightning, fell to the ground dead. Then St. Tatiana was led to the praetorium[11], hung up there, and torn with iron hooks, and her breasts were even torn off. After this the saint was shut up in prison, and again the radiant heavenly Angels appeared to the holy Passion-bearer, completely healed her wounds, and praised her manly endurance. In the morning St. Tatiana was brought to the circus[12] and a fierce lion was released upon her to tear the saint to pieces. But the savage beast did not touch the saint. The lion fawned upon her and meekly licked her feet. When they wished to lead the lion back from the arena to its cage, it suddenly rushed upon a distinguished dignitary named Eumenius and tore him

10. Diana, otherwise Artemis, was the Greek goddess of the moon and of the hunt.
11. *Praetor*: the judicial seat where the Roman magistrate, or judge, presided.
12. *Circus* was the name of a square enclosed by a row of benches or by a wall. There contests of fighters with one another and with beasts took place. Christians were thrown into this square or arena, and then wild beasts, which were kept in special cages at the circus, were released.

apart. St. Tatiana was hung up again and again her body was scraped, but again the Angels invisibly struck her tormentors and they fell dead. Then the saint was thrown into the fire, but the fire did no harm to her: the force of the flames subsided, as if honoring the servant of Christ. The impious, however, attributed all these wondrous signs not to the power of Christ but to sorcery; they cut off the saint's hair, hoping that her spells would thereby become less effective. They thought that the saint had some magical power in her hair, so that she could not be harmed in any way. Therefore they cut off her hair and shut her up in the temple of Zeus[13]. The godless thought that the saint could no longer do any harm to their deity, because with the loss of her hair she had also lost her power of sorcery. The saint remained shut up in that temple for two days. The heavenly light that had always illumined her spread also in the temple, and the Angels encouraged and comforted her. On the third day the priests came with the people to offer sacrifice to their god Zeus. Opening the temple, they saw that their idol had fallen and broken, while St. Tatiana remained in joy over the name of the Lord God. Then she was brought to the tribunal. The judge, not knowing what else to do with her, pronounced the sentence of death upon her, and St. Tatiana was beheaded by the sword.[14] Together with her her father was also executed, for it was learned that he too was a Christian. First the torturers stripped him of his honorable rank and took away all his property. Condemned to death, he died by the sword together with his daughter for the name of Christ. Both of them were counted worthy by the Lord to receive the crowns of martyrdom from Christ God, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Brightly in thy suffering thou didst shine forth, passion-bearer,
empurpled with thy blood, and like a crimson dove thou didst fly

13. Zeus, or Jupiter, was the Greco-Roman god, revered by the pagans as the ruler of heaven and earth, the father of all gods and men.
14. St. Martyr Tatiana suffered during the persecution raised against Christians in the fourth year of the reign of Alexander Severus, in the year 226.

up to heaven, O Tatiana; wherefore pray unceasingly for those who honor thee.

* * *

Life of St. Sava, Archbishop of Serbia[15]

Житие святого Саввы, архиепископа Сербского

St. Sava was the son of the famous founder of the independent Serbian state, the Great Serbian Zhupan Stefan Nemanja, in monasticism Simeon, who is glorified by the Church as the holy patron of Serbia. Stefan Nemanja lived in the twelfth century. He united the greater part of the Serbian lands and secured for them political independence. His son Sava became the founder of the independent Serbian Church.

Sava was the youngest of the children of Stefan Nemanja and his wife Anna. The parents, having already several children, turned to the Lord in prayer, asking that He would grant them yet another son, who would be a planter of piety in their fatherland and would glorify it. They vowed that after this they would remain in chastity until death. Their prayer was heard: a son was born to them, whom in holy Baptism they named Rastko, or Rostislav, as if foreseeing that he would grow in spiritual glory, both he himself and, together with him, their beloved fatherland.

Rejoicing in the mercy of God, the parents bestowed every care upon the good upbringing of their son. When the years of infancy had passed, they placed him in separate chambers, appointed tutors for him, and saw to his timely instruction in letters. The grace of God did not forsake the youth, who had been granted to his parents through their special prayer: he grew in body and advanced in spirit, bringing ineffable comfort to his parents, and passed his life in piety and purity.

15. The Life of St. Sava was written by his disciple, the monk Domentian of Hilandar. It was taken as the basis of the present account. It was published by Daničić in the book *Život svetoga Simeuna i svetoga Save. U Beogradu. 1865*. There is another Life, by an unknown author, written, however, soon after Domentian's Life and containing some additional information. It was published by the same Daničić in 1860, and was also taken into account, as was Domentian's Life of St. Simeon.

Upon the completion of his upbringing, the parents gave him a separate domain in which he might live independently with his servants, and amuse himself with hunting and other pastimes befitting young men of noble birth.

The youth departed from his parental home. But worldly pastimes did not attract him. His thoughts and heart were occupied with quite different things. The words of the Psalm, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord," and the words of the Savior, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me" (Ps. 111:1; Mt. 10:37–38), came most often to his mind. The "way of the Lord," the renunciation of the world, the seeking above all of the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, drew him on. Instead of giving himself to empty diversions, Rastko gave himself to reflection upon the ascetic life and prayed to the Lord that He would show him the proper path of His own. Rastko had heard of the ascetic life on the Holy Mountain of Athos and ardently desired to meet a man who would tell him all that he wished to know. And God sent him a monk who knew the Holy Mountain well. This was a Russian monk from the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon on Athos. He satisfied all the desires of the noble youth, and told him of all the holy monasteries of Athos and of all the forms of asceticism on the Holy Mountain.

The accounts of the passing monk fully corresponded to the intentions and aspirations of the pious youth: he then and there irrevocably resolved, and vowed to God, to leave the world and labor on Athos. The youth was but seventeen years old when he resolved to leave worldly life.

Fervently praying to the Lord God, he persuaded several God-fearing men to assist him in carrying out his intention and to be his companions, and he set out at once upon the journey, first of all to the house of his parents. His father and mother were inexpressibly gladdened by the arrival of their beloved son; they arranged a feast on this occasion and strove in every way to show him their tenderness.

After a few days spent as a guest with his parents, Rastko asked them for leave to go hunting in a distant wild region rich in all kinds of

game. The parents gladly gave their consent. Having received his parents' blessing, Rastko, accompanied by his faithful men, set out on the journey, not for the hunting of beasts in the wilderness, but for the Holy Mountain of Athos, for the sake of ascetic labors for the salvation of his soul.

Having safely reached Athos, Rastko settled in the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon, whose monk had earlier related to him in detail about the asceticism of the Holy Mountain.

His parents soon missed their son. Surmising that their son had been drawn away by none other than the Russian monk, and to no other place than Athos, Stefan Nemanja immediately dispatched one of his senior voivodes with a great detachment. Having received from the Greek emperor Isaac Angelos[16] a strict directive to the protos (superior) of the Holy Mountain and to all the Athonites, and a military detachment from the voivode of Thessalonica, the envoy of Nemanja came to Athos and found the sought-for noble fugitive in the monastery of St. Panteleimon. The faithful servant of Nemanja was greatly gladdened that he had so quickly found the one he sought, and he hoped soon to return the youth to his parents, who had grieved so for him, and to receive a worthy reward for this. Not expecting that the fugitive would voluntarily and gladly return to his homeland, abandoning his intention, the men sent did not take their eyes off the youth and kept watch lest he again hide from them. But Rastko had long since resolved, despite any obstacles, to accept monastic tonsure on Athos and to remain there. This intention was known to the abbot of the monastery of St. Panteleimon, who resolved to give assistance to the bold youth.

One Saturday Rastko arranged for a lavish feast to be given to the soldiers sent after him by his father, together with the local inhabitants. When, after the feast, they lay down to sleep, by the abbot's order the semantron was struck, calling all, according to custom, to the nocturnal vigil in the church of God. Not only the monks but also the soldiers were obliged to go to the church. Weighed down by the feast

16. Isaac Angelus reigned from 1185 to 1195.

and by the long vigil, the guards fell asleep in their places in their seats during the reading of the kathismata. Taking advantage of this circumstance, Rastko ordered one of his servants to put on his garments and to stand in his place until the end of the service, while he himself went into the sanctuary, pronounced the monastic vows there, and, disguised, left the church unrecognized. Together with an elder monk he went up into the pyrgos, or tower, and shut himself up there. Without losing time, he received there the monastic tonsure under the name of Sava, and clothed himself in monastic garments.

The nocturnal vigil was drawing to its close; toward morning the guards awoke and, to their horror, ascertained that the youth they had sought had again vanished. With great indignation they approached the monks of the monastery and, threatening violence, demanded that they surrender the youth or indicate where he had gone. Hearing from above the tower the great commotion, and grieved for the monks who might suffer much on his account, the recluse leaned out of the window of the tower and, showing his tonsured head and monastic garb, cried out:

"I am here, but no longer Rastko; I am the monk Sava. Here are the hairs of my head and my princely garments; carry them to my parents as proof of what has befallen me."

A terrible grief struck the old voivode and his companions: all their labors were lost in vain; now it was impossible to return the youth to his parents as he had been when they parted from him, and there was no point in trying: he had renounced this world.

In sorrow, the envoys of Stefan Nemanja set out on the return journey to their fatherland.

Remaining in the monastery of St. Panteleimon, the newly tonsured monk Sava laid the foundation of his monastic labors, and gave much gold toward the building of the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon that had received him.

Some time later the feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos drew near, solemnly celebrated in the Vatopedi monastery on Athos. All the ascetics of Athos were invited to this feast. The royal monk Sava also received an invitation. With great joy and eagerness he set out for the glorious celebration, to which all the Athonite ascetics

had gathered, headed by the protos of the Athonite inhabitants. Received with the attention of all the Athonite authorities, Sava had the opportunity to see the fully ecclesiastical celebration on Athos, this place beloved by the Most Holy Theotokos. He was so struck by all that he saw and heard that he at once resolved to remain in the monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos, and began earnestly to ask the abbot of the Vatopedi monastery, Theostiriktos, to admit him among the brethren of the monastery. Sava's sincere request was accepted and granted: he entered the ranks of the common brethren and began zealously to fulfill all the monastic duties and obediences. At the very moment of his entrance into the Vatopedi monastery, Sava hastened to make a rich donation to the monastery, which had so struck him and fulfilled his long-held pious desires.

Meanwhile, the news brought to Serbia by the men sent by Stefan Nemanja to search for his son profoundly shook not only his parents but the whole land: the royal youth had renounced his family and all worldly things and become a monk! At first the parents grieved at parting from their son, but soon they recognized that all is in the will of God, and being pious Christians, they exchanged their sorrow for joy, seeing in their son a servant of God and expecting from him benefit both to themselves and to the fatherland.

Having gathered their thoughts and feelings, the parents sent Sava a tearful letter in which, expressing regret at the separation but at the same time giving glory to the Lord God, who orders all by His wisdom for good, they persuade and beseech their son to visit his parents, to come to his native Serbia and bring consolation to all, promising that after the meeting they would freely let him return to the Holy Mountain.

Together with the letter, the parents sent their son a large sum of gold, both for his personal needs and for distribution to the Athonite churches and to the poor.

St. Sava was comforted by this parental letter, but did not wish to set out for his homeland: he burned with desire to labor on Athos, whither he had so longed and where he had happily settled.

Having his lodging in the Vatopedi monastery, Sava often undertook journeys about the holy Mount Athos, desiring to see the holy monasteries, to pray in them, to see the great ascetics, to converse with them and to receive spiritual edification. Barefoot and in plain clothing he walked over all of Athos; he climbed the steepest and highest rocks, went along precipices and chasms, seeking out the solitary ascetics who dwelt, like birds, on the cliffs of the mountains, scarcely accessible to man. In making such journeys Sava had the aim not only of satisfying his desire to see and to learn the ascetic life of Athos; at the same time he wished to help materially those poor people who were, for the most part, the solitary ascetics of Athos. In helping them he spared none of the means which he had in abundance.

On such wanderings about Athos he more than once met with great dangers, but the Lord helped him. In those times the Holy Mountain suffered much from sea pirates, who, landing on the shore, plundered whole monasteries, and lay in wait for passers-by and travelers, both at sea near the shores and on land. Sava had the custom from time to time of preparing warm loaves and personally carrying them to the hermitages to distribute to the solitary ascetics, who had no warm or cooked food and who fed on various plants. Sava liked to do this on Saturdays during the holy Great Lent. On one such Saturday, early in the morning, having loaded his mules with warm loaves, he set out in haste, going on ahead barefoot, burning with the desire to bring comfort to the ascetics of Christ. The road ran near the sea, and Sava was passing near a place called Milopotam. Here robbers attacked him and seized both him and those who were with him. Sava was greatly distressed that his journey had been so suddenly delayed. From the depths of his soul he turned in prayer to the Lord God for his deliverance, and the Lord saved him. The robbers came up and began to question him:

"Who are you, and where are you going?"

Sava answered:

"I am a disciple of Father Macarius; he sent me yesterday to Esphigmenou on a spiritual errand, but the brethren kept me until this morning, to send with me loaves as a blessing for the elders, for the large monasteries have the custom of sending bread for the comfort of the

hermits who suffer for Christ's sake and have no other consolation than the alms which the Lord God sends them."

This speech of St. Sava softened the cruel hearts of the robbers; they were moved in faith and let Sava go, so that he reached the elder in time. No sooner had they stood up for prayer than the robbers also appeared at the monastery: repenting of their deeds, they had followed Sava, and, seeing the elder, they asked his blessing and told him everything that had happened to them on the road. The elder instructed them with the words of God, and they were moved and put their trust in the elder. These corsairs, or sea robbers, belonged to the number of well-known men of rank. They asked the elder:

"Tell us, for Christ's sake, whether this monk (that is, Sava) is really your disciple. We see upon him a certain wondrous sign."

The elder answered:

"For Christ's sake I will tell you, my children: this monk is a disciple of God, and one of our brethren; he is the son of the right-believing Serbian Tsar; the All-good God has sent him to us to visit His servants. As you see, he has left his kingdom and goes about this desert, visiting and comforting, feeding and clothing those who suffer for Christ's sake in the deserts and mountains, in caves and earthly chasms, shining upon all like the sun and showing mercy, hoping for mercy and consolation in the life everlasting." The robbers, hearing this, fell at Sava's feet and asked for his blessing. Having received the blessing both from him and from the elder, they promised to engage no more in robbery and went to their homes.

Another similar incident occurred during one of St. Sava's visits to the Lavra of St. Athanasius of Athos. Sava was traveling by boat over the sea to the Lavra, accompanied by several of the brethren. As they were approaching the Lavra, robbers attacked and seized them. One of Sava's companions somehow escaped the robbers' hands and hastened to the Lavra of St. Athanasius and reported to the abbot the misfortune that had befallen them. The abbot and brethren, hearing of this, were greatly alarmed and quickly sent one of their brethren, who was distinguished by his wit. Meanwhile St. Sava, being in the hands of the rob-

bers, called upon the Lord for deliverance by inner prayer. Soon the brother sent from the Lavra appeared and greeted the robbers:

"A happy arrival! Welcome to the monastery; there you can rest and receive everything that you need!"

Then, looking at the young monk Sava, the crafty monk said to him as though in great anger:

"And where have you come to? Has not the abbot sent you to such a place, and are you acting by your own will?"

And he wanted, as though to strike Sava. Sava, as though in fear, sprang away from him, leapt out of the boat and ran. The astonished robbers were as though stupefied by all that had happened and said nothing. Only later, in the monastery where Sava had taken refuge, did they see him, learn who he was, and greatly regret among themselves what a treasure they had let slip from their hands.

Having spent some time in the Lavra, receiving spiritual and bodily comfort together with the abbot and brethren, St. Sava returned safely to the Vatopedi monastery.

Using the means received from his pious parents, St. Sava undertook the building and adorning of churches in the Vatopedi monastery. First of all he built a church in honor of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, within the monastery fortress, to the east of the great church. Then there, in the same fortress, adjoining the aforementioned church, he began to erect a church in honor of St. John Chrysostom, having in his heart the hope that in time his aging sovereign father, Stefan Nemanja, would also settle here.

Having completed and adorned these two new churches, Sava did not neglect the main church of Vatopedi in honor of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos: this church was roofed with tile; finding such a roof unsound, Sava replaced it with one of tin, which required considerable means.

Then Sava built yet another church, in the monastery tower, or *pyrgos*, in honor of the Transfiguration of the Savior.

Besides these principal buildings, St. Sava spared no means for the interior decoration and the furnishings of the main Vatopedi church of the Annunciation; all these treasures remained here as a memorial to

posterity of the great benefactor of the holy mountain who came from the land of Serbia.

The thought of bringing his pious father, Stefan Nemanja, to Athos did not leave St. Sava. He at last resolved to write to his parents an eloquent letter, in which he urged his father to leave the earthly kingdom and seek the way to the Kingdom of Heaven, taking the angelic habit and coming to him on the holy mountain.

Stefan Nemanja had long been pondering this; long had he desired to renounce worldly power and all worldly things and to take the monastic life. Now, after his son's eloquent persuasion, he resolved to carry out his intention. Having consulted with his wife Anna, who shared his mind and was pious, Stefan Nemanja summoned his son Stefan and, in the presence of the nobles and authorities of the whole realm, handed him the power over Serbia, appointing him Grand *Zhupan*, while he himself announced his intention to renounce the world. Taking leave of his nobles and servants, he richly rewarded and bestowed gifts upon them all, gave freedom to the unfree, and provided for the needy. Having thus broken all worldly ties, he took the monastic vows and, under the name of Simeon, received the tonsure from the hands of his bishop, Callinicus, in his own foundation, the monastery of Studenica, which he had built himself.

His wife Anna followed his example and likewise received the tonsure from the same bishop and settled in one of the women's monasteries.

For some time after his tonsure, the new royal monk Simeon remained in the monastery of Studenica, learning the monastic rule and performing the first monastic obediences. Many of the nobles, emulating the piety of their sovereign, would not remain in the world; they received the tonsure and resolved to accompany their former sovereign on the new path. When Simeon resolved to set out for Athos, they followed him.

Setting out for the holy mountain, Simeon took with him much gold, garments, horses, all manner of harness and other things; and when he arrived at the Vatopedi monastery, he brought all this as a gift to the

monastery in which he was to settle and where his son Sava awaited him.

Touching and wondrous was the picture of the meeting of the two royal monks: the young Sava and his aged father, now bearing the name of Simeon. Such an extraordinary event stirred the whole Mount Athos. All desired to see these wondrous monks, from the *protos* of the holy mountain down to the simplest ascetics: even ascetics and silent ones who had never come out of their refuges emerged from the most remote and inaccessible cliffs and caves and hastened to Vatopedi, desiring to behold the wondrous and extraordinary spectacle of these two royal monks coming to their mountain to ascetic struggle together with them.

And it was not only the Athonite ascetics who heard of such servants of God and gazed upon them with astonishment: the report of them reached, of course, the imperial city as well, and not only did everyone marvel at this event, but many of the nobles and men of rank followed their example.

The new arrival on Athos, the royal monk Symeon, could at once see all those ascetics of whom he had long known. And he left none of them without his mercy and benefaction. Having distributed much alms to the poor, he sent his offerings of gold and church objects throughout all the Athonite monasteries as a memorial of himself. He bestowed especially generous gifts upon the Vatopedi monastery, which had received him into its brotherhood: he handed the abbot a large sum of gold, a multitude of vestments and other church objects for the church, as well as horses, mules and harness for the monastery's needs.

The elder Symeon, weakened by illness, yet desiring to hear the church services, had a cell built beside the sanctuary of the main church of the Annunciation, with a window opening into the sanctuary; through this window he saw and heard the daily divine services.

Meanwhile St. Sava, caring for his father and not neglecting his customary daily monastic labors, widely developed his charitable and building activity across the Holy Mountain. Noticing the church of St. Stephen, ruined by brigands and standing empty, he restored it, provided it with everything necessary so that monks could live at it,

and handed this monastic refuge over to the authority of the Vatopedi monastery. In arranging this little monastery he took care to erect a fortress and a watch-tower (*pyrgos*) to protect it from brigand attacks.

Many pilgrims came to the Vatopedi monastery from near and far lands; many people worked for the monastery out of zeal. All these people often had nothing and could subsist only on the monastery's alms. The humane Sava took the needs of these people to heart: he made a substantial contribution to the Vatopedi treasury so that all these people should not suffer want, should always have food and drink, without burdening the monastery.

There were also many who came to the monastery only because they had heard of the unusual, famous ascetics and wished to see them. Sava supplied all such visitors from his own means; there were many petitioners, and not one was left without satisfaction.

St. Sava built in the Vatopedi monastery chambers, one bearing the name of his father Symeon, the other his own name; these chambers remained forever as a memorial to them.

Everything at the monastery that was old and neglected he renewed and restored.

St. Sava, surveying on Athos and within its bounds many metochia, that is, monastery lands, desolate and untilled, resolved to acquire them for the Vatopedi monastery: having obtained permission from the Byzantine emperor, he built upon them, settled them and secured them for the monastery that had received him and his father.

Meanwhile the elder Symeon, having lived for some time at Vatopedi, resolved to fulfil his long-held desire: to survey the whole Holy Mountain, to venerate the holy churches, to visit the ascetics and to converse with them.

Together with St. Sava he first set out for the monastery of Karyes, where the protos of the Holy Mountain resided. Having received his blessing and venerated the holy things, Symeon and Sava richly endowed the monastery, both with money and especially with precious objects: church vessels and other furnishings, vestments and coverings. For such offerings both were inscribed forever in the synodikon as second founders of the monastery, for the first founder had been the

Greek emperor Michael, who built the church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos in thanksgiving for healing from an illness.

In like manner Symeon and Sava visited the Lavra of the Iveron Most Holy Theotokos, called Portaitissa, and the great Lavra of St. Athanasius of Athos. These monasteries too were enriched by their gifts, and in them both Serbian benefactors were inscribed as second founders.

Visiting monasteries and hermitages, making rich offerings, Symeon and Sava everywhere bestowed gifts upon the monks and generously distributed alms to all in need.

During this journey the Serbian monks looked out for a place where they might establish their own monastery. But for this they needed the permission of the Greek emperor. An opportunity to obtain such permission soon presented itself.

The abbot of Vatopedi had an urgent need to travel to Constantinople to the emperor on monastery business. At a council with the monks the abbot asked Sava to go to Constantinople in his place. Sava readily agreed.

In Constantinople he was graciously received by the emperor Alexis[17], to whom Stephen Nemanja was a relative by marriage. The emperor, of course, had long known of Nemanja's tonsure and of his sojourn on Athos, and therefore questioned Sava at length about their life.

Having shown Sava great honor, the emperor sent rich gifts to Symeon as well.

The emperor graciously granted all the petitions of the Vatopedi monastery. On this occasion Sava also made a personal request to the emperor: to cede to him and his father on Athos a small, desolate monastery called Chilandar. The emperor readily gave his consent, bestowed the monastery together with all its metochia, and confirmed this by a charter.

17. Alexius Angelus reigned from 1195 to 1203.

Returning to Athos, Sava joyfully told his father of his success. Having received Chilandar into their possession, they joined it to the Vatopedi monastery in which they lived, and set about restoring it.

This acquisition satisfied Symeon and Sava personally, but it did not satisfy their Serbian compatriots, who came to Athos in great numbers to venerate the holy place. One such pious pilgrim approached St. Sava with the counsel to establish on Athos a monastery which would be a permanent and independent refuge for their homeland, and in which those desiring to take tonsure and to labor from Serbia could be received. Such counsel was welcome to St. Sava, who loved his homeland ardently and cared for its benefit. He communicated this also to his father, the elder Symeon, who likewise approved the intention.

Sava approached the abbot of the Vatopedi monastery with a request to cede them a desolate place for building cells for the Serbs and for establishing for them a separate monastery. But the abbot, fearing the departure from Vatopedi of such benefactors, did not agree to this request. Then Sava and Symeon presented their request to the protos of the Holy Mountain and the general council of the Athonite monasteries. The council, headed by the protos, readily agreed to satisfy the request and offered them to choose any unoccupied place for establishing the monastery for the Serbs.

And so the aged Symeon, together with Sava, again set out to travel about Athos. Being unable, by reason of his years, to ride a horse, Symeon travelled in a litter fixed between two horses. They saw many beautiful places, yet found nothing better than the Chilandar they had come to love. When they returned from their journey and communicated their thought to the abbot of Vatopedi, he now agreed, fearing lest the royal monks should be angered and leave the Vatopedi monastery altogether.

Then St. Sava set about the final establishment of the monastery. First of all he renewed and enlarged the ancient main church of Chilandar, in the name of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos. Around the monastery he built a fortress wall with a high *pyrgos*, or tower. Within the walls he erected spacious chambers for the dwelling of the monks. Desiring to extend the monastery's possessions, he ob-

tained from the protos and all the Athonites permission to join to Chilandar the place of Maleia.

Having magnificently adorned all the buildings, St. Sava, together with his father Symeon, moved from Vatopedi to permanent residence in Chilandar, and here both began to labor as ascetics.

Desiring to secure more firmly, both for himself and for Serbia, the restored monastery, Sava, after counsel with his father, again set out for Constantinople to the emperor Alexis. Received graciously by the emperor, he told him of everything they had established on Athos, and asked him to confirm again to them and to their fatherland Serbia their foundation, and at the same time asked for the emperor's personal participation in this undertaking. The emperor responded sympathetically, confirmed all their acquisitions, and of his own accord bestowed into their possession his imperial monastery on Athos called Zygos, and confirmed this by a charter. Chilandar, together with all the acquisitions and grants joined to it, was reckoned among the imperial stavropegic monasteries, and was thus placed in a special privileged position on Athos.

Great was the joy of St. Sava and of his father, the elder Symeon, when Sava returned with such success from the emperor and handed the imperial charters to the protos and the council of the Athonites, who now, in accordance with the emperor's will, transferred the monastery of Zygos into the possession of Chilandar. Soon new acquisitions were also made: the monastery of the Holy Confessors was bought from the council of elders. For the benefit of Chilandar, the founders also granted many metochia, or income-producing estates, in their native Serbia.

Thus, under the common name of Chilandar, up to fourteen separate monasteries and possessions on Athos were united, which, together with monetary offerings, fully secured an unstraitened life for two hundred monks of the Serbian people. In order to secure the Chilandar monastery for Serbia also in the future, it was handed over by the founders to the authority of the Grand Serbian *zhupan* Stephen, the elder son of Symeon and brother of St. Sava, as a hereditary possession of the Serbian sovereigns.

Thus were the cherished desires of Sts. Symeon and Sava for the establishment of a monastery for the Serbs on Athos happily fulfilled. Provided for materially and made glorious by the labors of Symeon and Sava, Hilandar for a long time became a center of Christian enlightenment not only for the Serbs but also for the other Orthodox Slavs.

St. Sava ordered the monastic life at Hilandar according to the rules of the coenobitic monasteries, and wrote his own Typikon, which he left as a guide also for the generations of ascetics that followed.

On the Holy Mountain there existed not only coenobitic monasteries but also various other forms of ascetic life. Many monks chose for themselves the eremitic life of the skete: gathering in twos and threes, the monks devoted themselves to the labors of silence and contemplation of God.

St. Sava, diligently studying the various forms of monastic asceticism and seeking to test himself in all of them, desired to labor in a skete. The skete life was especially widespread near the monastery called Karyes. Here St. Sava bought a small plot of land and established on it a *hesychasterion*, or "place of silence," and built beside it a church in the name of St. Sava the Sanctified of Jerusalem, for the dwelling there of two or three ascetics. In this hesychasterion he himself lived for some time in the labors of silence and contemplation of God, and he wrote a rule for the ascetic life there; this rule served as a guide for the ascetics also in later times.

Meanwhile his aged father Symeon was drawing near the end of this life. The Venerable Sava, who constantly had unceasing care for his parent, did not leave him at his death. One night Sava kept vigil the whole night in prayer, foreseeing the old man's end. Leaving one of the brethren at his father's bedside, he himself went off to the morning service. Soon he was called to his father and saw that he was preparing for death. Sava lifted his father from the bed and, as a sign of great humility, laid him on the floor on a mat, and on it carried him to the church vestibule, or narthex. Here the elder Symeon, awakening as if from sleep, began to bless his son and the brethren of the Hilandar monastery gathered around him. At this moment some sound was heard, and the elder Symeon began to sing the psalm, "Let every

breath praise the Lord," from beginning to end. All heard the singing of the Angels, and the old man sang together with the Angels – and then breathed his last. Weeping arose over the death of the ever-blessed one, and Sava shed tears of both joy and sorrow together: joy, because he was granted to see the blessed death of the old man; sorrow, because he had lost his father and fellow-laborer.

After the solemn funeral service, the body of the departed was placed in a marble tomb in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos of Hilandar.

Before his death the elder bequeathed to his son Sava that in time his remains should be transferred to his homeland of Serbia, which was afterward accomplished.

Now the Venerable Sava remained alone again on Athos and gave himself to spiritual labors, unceasingly remembering his late father in his prayers. More than once the departed appeared to Sava in nighttime visions, comforted him, revealed to him his dwelling in the heavenly mansions, and foretold that it would fall to Sava to establish the affairs of faith and piety in their fatherland.

As before, and with even greater zeal, Sava gave himself to works of charity. Unceasingly he distributed alms to the destitute and the beggars, helped the poor, sought out needy ascetics and supported them; he could refuse no request for help in building, restoring, or maintaining churches and monasteries, not only on Athos but also in other, often distant, places. At times his ordinary means, which came to him in various ways from his homeland, ran short. But then help from on high would appear to him. Here is the miracle that took place for St. Sava through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos.

St. Sava was more than once in Constantinople, and in accordance with custom he bestowed benefactions on monasteries and churches. He especially cherished the church of the Most Holy Theotokos Evergetis, or the Benefactress. Already in his father's lifetime he had made a large donation for the commemoration of their family; afterward, together with his father, he began to make an annual contribution in favor of this church; finally, St. Sava at his own expense built an addition to the monastery, so as to have a place to stay during his visits to Con-

stantinople. During one of these visits a certain pious and comely woman came to him and said that by Divine will she had been commanded to reveal to Sava that on the Holy Mountain, within the boundaries of the lands of the Hilandar monastery, in two places treasures lay hidden in the earth, which he might use for his needs. The biographer of St. Sava expresses the opinion that this revelation was received by Sava from the Most Holy Theotokos Herself, but that, out of his humility, he did not make this known. On returning to the Holy Mountain, the Venerable Sava made use of the indication he had received and indeed uncovered the treasures in the two places; but he took them not for his own gain, but for the alms to the destitute and the beggars and for the support of the churches and ascetics of the Holy Mountain.

The Athonite monasteries, especially those on the seacoast, were often troubled and ravaged by sea-robbers, or corsairs. Once they seized the monastery of Karakallou, plundered its treasures, and took the monks captive, together with the abbot, to be sold at least into slavery. The corsairs brought their captives to the Lavra of St. Athanasius of Athos, expecting a ransom. The Lavriotes did ransom them from the robbers, but on the condition that the monastery of Karakallou should lose its independence and be subjected to the Lavra as a *metochion*. After this, the ransomed abbot and brotherhood were pitilessly driven out of Karakallou. Then they appealed to the constant benefactor Sava, who, taking to heart the calamities of the monks, again bought back from the Lavra the monastery of Karakallou with all its rights, returned the exiles there, and, having restored the monastery after its destruction by the robbers, provided it with everything necessary for the resumption of divine services and the peaceful monastic life.

In a similar way he restored the monastery of the Holy Forty Martyrs, called Xeropotamou, which had been laid waste by the depredations of robbers; he richly adorned it with paintings and supplied it with all that was necessary. St. Sava thus became a new founder of the monastery, and established here forever the commemoration of his sovereign family.

From year to year St. Sava arranged at Hilandar a solemn commemoration of his father on the day of his death. Then, at his invita-

tion, monks from all the Athonite monasteries gathered, with the Protos at their head. By revelation from on high, the pious Sava knew that his father, after death, had been received into the choir of the saints, and he prayed to the Lord for his glorification also before men on earth, hoping and believing that his pious desire would not remain in vain.

On the eve of one of the annual memorial feasts for the elder Symeon, St. Sava, after the evening service, asked the Protos to pray the next morning to the Lord at the tomb of Symeon for his glorification, and handed him the keys to the church; he himself, with his Serbian companions, withdrew for the morning service to another church in the pyrgos, or tower. During the Great Doxology at Matins, a wondrous fragrance suddenly spread through the church, bringing all who were in the church into sweet spiritual joy; and then it was seen that the dried bones of the elder Symeon were exuding fragrant myrrh from the marble tomb. This was reported to the Protos who was serving Matins, and he hastened to inform St. Sava. With great joy Sava hurried with his brethren to the tomb of the elder Symeon and beheld with his own eyes the great mercy of God, which did not put to shame his fervent faith. With tears of tenderness he kissed the reliquary that had miraculously exuded the grace-giving myrrh. Many of the sick and those possessed by unclean spirits received healing by being anointed with the fragrant myrrh and by touching the reliquary of the relics. As a result of these miracles, the council of the Athonite monks numbered the new wonderworker among the company of the earlier saints, and resolved to celebrate him together with St. Symeon the God-receiver. The council entrusted to St. Sava the composition of stichera and a canon and the description of the miracles, which he soon accomplished.

For three days they celebrated at Hilandar in honor of the glorification of St. Symeon. St. Sava prepared an abundant meal for all who had gathered for the festival, and dismissed them, generously gifting them all.

St. Sava had labored for a considerable number of years, but still remained a simple monk. The Protos of the Holy Mountain, Dometius, who especially honored and loved Sava, had long urged him to accept the holy priesthood, but Sava, considering himself unworthy, refused

for a long time. At last, moved by Dometius' arguments, he resolved to receive ordination first as a deacon and then as a priest, which was performed by the bishop of the nearby city of Ierissos, Nicholas, who had the right to ordain to the priesthood on Athos, having been invited to Hilandar for this purpose.

Some time later St. Sava set out on monastery business for the city of Thessalonica, where he stopped at the monastery of Philokalia, of which he was a benefactor and was considered a founder. Metropolitan Constantine of Thessalonica, who had heard much about Sava from Bishop Nicholas of Ierissos, after several conversations summoned Sava to serve in the cathedral church together with himself and the bishops Nicholas of Ierissos, Michael of Kassandra and Demetrius of Adramyttion. These conciliar hierarchs blessed him to wear the *nabedrennik* and raised him to the rank of archimandrite. With this new honor he returned to Hilandar.

Of everything that took place on Athos the Saint reported in detail to his sovereign brother, the Grand Zhupan Stephen, in Serbia. He also sent the myrrh from the tomb of the newly manifested wonderworker, their father, together with an account of the miracles and the service.

Sovereign Stephen received these letters with great joy, and all Serbia rejoiced with him. Stephen earnestly desired that the relics of Simeon be translated to Serbia, in accordance with the will of the blessed departed himself.

During the calamities caused by the civil war raised against him by his brother Vukan, Stephen wrote a lengthy letter to St. Sava, earnestly urging him to come to Serbia and translate the holy myrrh-streaming relics of Simeon. He did so in the deep faith that their gracious power would, through their prayers, help to bring peace to the fatherland.

St. Sava did not delay in fulfilling his brother's request, and at the same time his father's last wish. Lifting the holy relics, he carried them to Serbia, accompanied by many ascetics of Athos. Before reaching the borders of Serbia, he notified his brother of the approach of the holy relics. Stephen went out to meet them, accompanied by the spiritual clergy, the nobles, and the people. Great was the general joy at this

meeting, as they beheld the return to the fatherland of the glorified relics of the former Grand Zhupan, the father, and of his son, Archimandrite Sava, flourishing in virtue. Stephen fervently kissed the relics and embraced his brother after so long a separation.

The holy relics of Simeon were placed in the Studenica monastery, which he had built and in which he had received the monastic tonsure, and they abundantly streamed myrrh, which miraculously healed infirmities and filled with spiritual joy all who came to them in faith.

St. Sava, together with the Athonite monks who accompanied him, also settled in the Studenica monastery, to the general joy of his compatriots.

Staying here, and also visiting monasteries, towns, and villages, Sava constantly taught everyone faith and piety. All saw with consolation how peace and tranquility were being established in the fatherland, how faith and good morals were strengthened. The enmity between the brothers subsided, and Vukan submitted to his brother.

In accordance with custom, St. Sava distributed alms, gave benefactions to churches, restored old ones and built new ones, as he had done on Athos, whither he still earnestly longed to return, despite the good, visible to all, that he had brought to the fatherland. He repeatedly addressed his sovereign brother Stephen with the request to be released to the holy mountain; but Stephen earnestly persuaded his brother to remain with him and serve for the benefit of the Church and the faith. He offered St. Sava the office of abbot of the Studenica monastery, to which he had full right as one already ordained to the rank of archimandrite. After some hesitation Sava agreed to govern the monastery, dear to both brothers and to all Serbs, devoting himself tirelessly to building churches and planting faith and piety everywhere.

Together with his brother Stephen, St. Sava resolved to found a new monastery of the Savior, Žiča (in honor of the Ascension of the Lord), which later became the cathedral monastery of the Serbian archiepiscopate. In establishing this and other monasteries, St. Sava introduced into them those forms of ascetic life that he had seen on Athos: cenobitic monasteries, lavras, and hesychasteries. Desiring that the name of God be glorified everywhere in his fatherland, St. Sava

strove to build as many churches as possible; and where this could not be achieved, he at least set up the holy cross, gazing upon which all would remember the Crucified One.

Even during his lifetime St. Sava was granted the gift of working miracles. Thus once, at the Studenica monastery, he saw a paralytic who, in his helpless state, was begging alms by the road, chanting the Psalms of David. Sava wept over human infirmity, carried the paralytic into the church before the icon of the Savior, offered fervent prayer for the sick man, anointed him with myrrh from the shrine of St. Simeon, and absolved him of his sins.

The paralytic rose up healthy. The news of this miraculous healing spread everywhere, and the sick from various places hastened to the Studenica monastery and came to St. Sava's prayers for healing. Sava prayed, anointed the sick with myrrh from the shrine of his father, and the sick received healing.

The activity of Sava and the fame of the new myrrh-streaming wonderworker Simeon drew attention to Serbia and the neighboring lands. In those difficult times many sought refuge with the Serbian Grand Zhupan Stephen and found protection. The wonder-working prayer of St. Sava extended also to such people.

To the Serbian Grand Zhupan Stephen there fled, seeking protection, the Bulgarian boyar Strez, a kinsman of the Bulgarian emperor Kaloyan, who had perished on the campaign against Thessalonica during the seizure of Constantinople by the Latins. The new Bulgarian emperor Boris (or Boril) demanded the surrender of Strez as a kinsman of the former emperor. Stephen not only did not surrender the fugitive who sought his protection, but extended every patronage to him and even gave him as a possession the town of Prosek, on the river Vardar, with its district. Strez proved, however, ungrateful and cruel. He tormented his subjects and at last raised a rebellion against Stephen. A bloody battle was about to take place. St. Sava was deeply grieved and took measures to prevent the bloodshed. He boldly went into Strez's camp, and, remarkably, he was kindly received by this cruel lord, who had met him and knew him at Stephen's court. Sava earnestly urged him not to shed vain blood, to abandon his intention, to remember the

benefactions of Stephen, and the alliance of brotherhood concluded with him before the holy Gospel in the church. Strez remained obstinate. Then Sava said that God would judge between him and Stephen, and withdrew. During the night Sava offered a fervent prayer to the Lord that He would turn the weapon of the ungrateful Strez against himself. And that same night an unknown, terrible youth appeared to Strez, seized his weapon, and, striking him, disappeared. Strez cried out and implored that Sava be called to him, believing that the one who had struck him was Sava's messenger. But Sava had withdrawn from the camp, and he could not be found. Strez died, and his retinue quickly dispersed; the bloodshed was averted.

St. Sava accomplished much useful and beneficial work in his fatherland, which he loved deeply. But his love for the holy mountain was strong, and he yearned for it and unceasingly longed to return there. He many times declared this desire to his brother Stephen, who listened to these declarations with sorrow and tried in every way to keep Sava with him. Sava remained, but then again made requests for release, and at last resolved definitively. Sovereign Stephen accompanied him with grief as far as the Greek borders, not losing hope, however, that this departure would again be only temporary; all his compatriots also grieved as they saw Sava off.

As sad as Sava's departure from Serbia had been, so joyful was his reception on Athos, not only by the monks of the Hilandar monastery but by all the Athonites.

With renewed zeal Sava again began to labor on the holy mountain, devoting himself to solitude, silence, and contemplation of God. At the same time he continued his works of charity, without which he could never live anywhere: once again he cared for the poor, gave alms to the beggars, benefited churches, and helped ascetics.

Thus several years passed. In Serbia they lamented Sava's departure and desired his return. His brother Stephen wrote to him about this more than once. Sava, however, remained unyielding. But then an event occurred that made everyone especially desire Sava's return to the fatherland: suddenly the flow of myrrh from the shrine of St. Simeon ceased. Everyone saw in this the wrath of God and fervently

desired the prayers of Sava at the tomb of Simeon. Stephen, struck with dread, wrote a persuasive letter to Sava, beseeching him to come to Serbia and, together with him and the whole people, to pray at the tomb of the myrrh-streaming elder Simeon for the return of the grace of myrrh-streaming. St. Sava heeded this entreaty, but again did not go to Serbia in person; he sent a certain monk, Hilary, entrusting him with a fervent prayerful letter to his holy departed father Simeon, which was to be read at the tomb of the saint in the presence of Sovereign Stephen and the people, after the divine service and the moleben. In his letter the son by nature addressed Simeon as a father addresses a spiritual son, for during his lifetime the elder Simeon had acknowledged Sava as his spiritual father, the one who had induced him to leave the world and choose the monastic path to salvation. The monk Hilary did everything as Sava had directed. After the reading of Sava's letter at the shrine of Simeon, suddenly a fragrance spread through the church, and the gracious myrrh again began to flow from the shrine, bringing healing to the sick on the spot. All fervently thanked the Lord God for His great mercy and marveled at the spiritual power of His ascetic Sava. This miracle brought consolation and encouragement to all Serbia.

In those days great events took place in the Orthodox East, which suffered grievously at the hands of the Latins. The imperial city of Constantinople was taken by the Latins in 1204. The Greek emperor and the patriarch were obliged to seek another place in which to labor for the restoration of the ravaged empire and the strengthening of Orthodoxy, which had suffered so much. In the neighboring Orthodox states of Bulgaria and Serbia there were their own calamities and needs, and the Serbian and Bulgarian rulers diligently strove in these hard times to defend both their independence and pure Orthodoxy. St. Sava knew the condition of affairs, the calamities and the needs of the Orthodox East better than any of his Slavic contemporaries. As in the prosperous days of the Greek empire he had often been in Constantinople and had maintained relations with the emperors, so now, in the times of disaster, he did not cease his relations with the Greek emperor and patriarch. Emperor Theodore Lascaris and the patriarch were then residing in Asia Minor, in the city of Nicaea, renowned for

the holy Ecumenical Councils held there, the First and the Seventh. St. Sava had many reasons to appear before the emperor and the patriarch, both on the affairs of the Hilandar Monastery on Athos and on the needs of his homeland, Serbia. He resolved to set out for Nicaea.

Emperor Theodore Lascaris was closely related to the Serbian grand zhupan: the son of Stephen, that is, St. Sava's own nephew, was married to the daughter of Emperor Theodore Lascaris. The Serbian ruling house, beginning with Stephen Nemanja, by then the now-glorified St. Simeon, and with the earlier rulers, had been related to and held in esteem by the Greek emperors. Now the bonds between the Serbian and Greek rulers became especially close, both through family ties and through the common need to defend freedom and Orthodoxy against the Latins. It is therefore not surprising that St. Sava was received at Nicaea by the emperor and the patriarch not merely graciously but very cordially. All of Sava's requests concerning the affairs of the Hilandar Monastery were fully granted.

But the thoughts and cares of St. Sava were not confined to the Hilandar Monastery alone: they were no less directed toward the needs and welfare of his homeland, toward its independence and self-rule, both civil and ecclesiastical.

The wise Sava found that the present moment offered a favorable opportunity to secure ecclesiastical independence for Serbia.

Having concluded the business concerning the Hilandar Monastery, St. Sava turned to Emperor Theodore with an important request regarding the Serbian Church. He eloquently and at length set forth the state of the faith in his homeland; he pointed to the cares and successes in preserving and maintaining the purity of Orthodoxy in those difficult times, when the godless Bogomil heresy spread in the Orthodox East among the South Slavs and the Greeks, and when the Latins had advanced from the west against both the Orthodox Greeks and the Orthodox Slavs. But so that these cares and successes in the cause of the faith might be lasting, it was necessary, Sava argued, for Serbia to have not one bishop ordained by the patriarch of Constantinople, as had been the case until then, but an archbishop, autocephalous, who himself would establish dioceses and ordain bishops for them together with the

Serbian church council. Such an important request at first threw the emperor and the patriarch into confusion. But after reflection and deliberation, both the emperor and the patriarch concluded that by granting such a request they would bring great benefit both to Serbia and to themselves: Serbia, receiving an autocephalous archbishop and establishing new dioceses, would more easily defend and uphold Orthodoxy and would not yield to the seductions of Latinism, and at the same time would rise among the neighboring states; Greece, in gratitude for this benefaction, would gain in the person of the Serbian ruler a friend and ally in the struggle against the enemies of the empire.

When this important question had thus been favorably resolved for Serbia in principle, St. Sava asked that one of the elder hieromonks who had accompanied him be raised to the rank of Serbian archbishop. But neither the emperor nor the patriarch found it possible to act according to Sava's proposal: they said that they desired to raise to this high rank no one but the petitioner and intercessor himself. Such a turn of events was entirely unexpected for the humble Sava: he had not even contemplated it. But the will of the emperor and the patriarch was unyielding. Having, as is customary, prayed to the Lord God and heeded the persuasion both of the emperor and the patriarch and of his companions, Sava perceived in this the will of God and consented. The emperor ordered that everything necessary for the elevation of an autocephalous archbishop be provided from his treasury. And so on the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos in 1222, the Ecumenical Patriarch Germanus ordained Sava Archbishop of Serbia, in the presence of the emperor and the nobles.

Received with kindness, honored with the high rank, and richly endowed by the emperor and the patriarch, Sava set out on his return journey. He reached the holy Mountain of Athos by sea. The news of Sava's elevation to archbishop had preceded his return. All the Athonite ascetics, from the protos to the last hermit, strove and hastened to receive the blessing of the newly ordained archbishop and to greet him. The joy was especially great in the Hilandar Monastery, but there was also sorrow there: it was likely that they would have to part forever from the great founder of the monastery and the irreplaceable guide of

its monks. The protos and the abbots of all the most important Athonite monasteries one after another asked Sava to visit their monasteries, to perform the archpastoral service, and to ordain some of their monks as deacons and priests. St. Sava fulfilled these petitions with care: his soul was gladdened to visit again the monasteries which he so honored and loved and to pray in them.

Having once more admonished the brethren of his Hilandar Monastery to live according to its rules and his counsels, St. Sava set out for his homeland, accompanied by a considerable number of monks from among his disciples and fellow-workers, whom he intended afterward to install in important spiritual offices in Serbia. Sava grieved at parting from the holy mountain he loved so much, but he was consoled by the awareness of the height of the service to which he was going in his homeland.

Sava directed his journey from Athos to the famous city of Thessalonica. Here he first venerated the relics of the Great Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-gusher, and then went to the Thessalonian hierarch, Metropolitan Constantine, with whom he had long shared affection and close friendship. With this metropolitan Sava conversed at length about the difficult matters of church governance and sought his counsel and direction. St. Sava spent a considerable time in Thessalonica, living in his monastery of Philokalia, to which he now brought new and rich gifts.

The enlightened Sava devoted the time spent here to the work of books: to govern an independent church he needed ecclesiastical and civil laws. He occupied himself with acquiring such books in Greek, a language he knew to perfection, and translating them into Slavonic. The fruit of his labors was the appearance, in the Slavonic language, of the Kormchaya (the Book of the Pilot), which was afterward used for church governance not only by the Serbs but by the Bulgarians and the Russians.

Having thus prepared himself for his high service, Sava went to his homeland, having first sent a letter to his brother, the Serbian grand zhupan Stephen, informing him of everything that had happened to him and of his return.

Stephen and all Serbia rejoiced at Sava's return in the rank of archbishop. A solemn reception was arranged for him at the border of Serbia, in which, however, Stephen could not personally take part, as he was ill and lying in bed. Welcomed with great joy by the nobles and the people, Sava came to his brother and, by his prayer, raised him from his sickbed, blessed him, and kissed him in brotherly fashion.

At once the two brothers began to be concerned with the organization of the Church. They resolved to complete as quickly as possible the monastery of Žiča, begun earlier, and to establish the archiepiscopal see in it.

Having seen his brother and taken the necessary first measures concerning church affairs, St. Sava went to the Studenica Monastery, to the tomb of his father and the brethren over whom he had presided as archimandrite before his journey to the East.

Having kissed the tomb of St. Simeon, which abundantly exuded healing myrrh, Sava occupied himself with instructing the monks and organizing church affairs.

Now, clothed with archiepiscopal authority, he more resolutely continued the work of planting monastic asceticism in Serbia according to the models of the Athonite ascetic life. He introduced order and rules concerning both the common church services and the private rule of prayer and the whole conduct of the monks.

Earlier, St. Sava together with his brother Stephen had laid the foundation of a new monastery at Žiča, with the great church of the Ascension of the Lord. Here it was decided to establish the Serbian archiepiscopal see. Sava went there and set about the rapid completion of the building and adornment of the monastery.

The first and chief concern of St. Sava, now become archbishop, was the organization of the Serbian Church. Sava divided the whole extent of the Serbian domains into twelve dioceses and appointed bishops for them, choosing worthy persons mainly from among his disciples and fellow-workers. He instructed the newly ordained bishops in how they should govern their flocks, and handed them the books of laws for church administration.

Some time later Sava convened a general Serbian church council of bishops, clergy both black and white, and laymen, for the strengthening of the true Orthodox faith. At that time there were many disorders in matters of faith in Serbia: there was the impious Bogomil heresy, there were remnants of paganism, and there were many other disorders and vices among Christians in general. At the council St. Sava delivered a broad and eloquent discourse on the establishment of Orthodoxy. The Orthodox confession of faith was once again set forth, the heresies were examined, and measures were adopted for the eradication of various superstitions, disorders, and vices.

Among other things it became clear that many people were living in marital cohabitation without a church wedding; many had lived so for a long time and already had children, even grown ones. St. Sava chose worthy men from among his disciples, appointed them as protopopes, and sent them throughout the land to marry those husbands and wives who remained unwed, and it was ordered that their grown children be married together with their parents. These same protopopes were also charged with eradicating other shortcomings in the spiritual life of the land.

The Serbian sovereign had hitherto borne the title of Grand Zhupan, while neighboring rulers held the titles of tsar or king. Sava's brother Stefan, in keeping with the power and significance of his state, wished to be crowned with the royal crown. This was now entirely possible, since Serbia had its own hierarch who could perform the rite of coronation. St. Sava accomplished this in the cathedral church of the monastery of Žiča. Since the kings of neighboring states received their crowns from the Roman pope, in order that the Serbian ruler be recognized as king by his neighbors it was found necessary to seek the consent of the Roman pope; this consent was given and was expressed by the sending of a crown. But this circumstance did not lead to submission to the pope and did no harm to Orthodoxy.

The rise of Serbia was unpleasant to the neighboring King of Hungary, Vladislav, who was ready to go to war against the first-crowned King of Serbia, Stefan. Wishing to avoid bloodshed, Stefan asked his brother, Archbishop Sava, to go to the Hungarian king so that the mat-

ter might be settled peaceably. Sava went and was received graciously; but the king did not wish to make any concessions. Sava's miracle-working prayer, however, contributed to a good outcome. The following miracle took place. The negotiations with the king were held on a hot day. Exhausted by the heat and thirst, Sava asked that ice be brought. But the ice was found to have melted in the cellars. Then St. Sava turned to the Lord in prayer, and suddenly a cloud came, lightning flashed, thunder struck, and abundant hail fell and covered the ground. Sava ordered hail to be gathered into a vessel, blessed it, tasted it himself, and offered it to the king, saying:

"Since your ice has melted, I have prayed to the Lord God, and He has sent us this cooling gift!"

All were astonished at this miracle and began to regard St. Sava with reverence. The king changed his attitude toward Serbia; the thought of war was abandoned. Moreover, the king conceived such respect and esteem for Sava that he wished to confess his sins to him and receive absolution from him. Sava carefully fulfilled this and urged the king, not without success, to renounce the Latin faith and return to Orthodoxy.

Returning to Serbia, St. Sava related everything to his brother, and both of them gave thanks to God for these blessings.

King Stefan the First-Crowned reached old age and often fell ill. He had a fervent desire to receive the angelic habit before death, to be tonsured by his brother Sava. But the archbishop deflected this request, saying that the time had not yet come. Once Stefan fell gravely ill, while St. Sava was away on a distant journey. Messengers were sent for him at once. Sava hastened immediately to his sick brother; but on the road he was met by a new messenger, who reported that the king had already died and there was no need to hurry greatly, for he was no longer living. But St. Sava, on the contrary, quickened his pace all the more, grieving that he had not clothed his brother in the angelic habit in time, and praying to the Lord to preserve his brother among the living. And what happened? When Sava, with fervent prayer, drew near the bed of his brother, he found signs of life in him, and Stefan immediately revived. St. Sava rejoiced, clothed Stefan in the great angelic

habit with the name Symeon, and gave him the farewell kiss before death. King Stefan, in monastic life Symeon, quietly reposed in the arms of his brother, St. Sava. His remains were laid in the monastery of Studenica beside the tomb of his father, St. Symeon Nemanja.

The Serbian throne was occupied by the eldest son of Stefan the First-Crowned, Radoslav, whom St. Sava solemnly crowned with the royal crown.

For a long time St. Sava had burned with the desire to visit the Holy Land, to venerate the Tomb of the Lord, and to walk through those places glorified by the life and death of our Savior. He also wished to visit the famous Palestinian monasteries and to see the life of the Palestinian ascetics. Now Sava communicated his thought and decision to his nephew, King Radoslav. It was hard for the king to part with his uncle, who could have been his wise counselor and guide, but he did not dare to refuse him his request, and dismissed him, equipping him for the journey with a large sum of gold.

St. Sava set out through the Adriatic coast belonging to Serbia, boarded a ship of his own, and directed his course to the Holy Land. Having completed the voyage safely, he soon reached the holy city of Jerusalem, where he was received with love by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and he began to survey the holy places and venerate them in Jerusalem and its environs. Together with the patriarch he served in the great church of the Resurrection, as well as, with the patriarch's blessing, in other famous churches on Zion, in Bethlehem, Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, and in Bethany. In all these churches, as in the other holy places he visited, Sava generously distributed alms and made offerings for the support, construction, and adornment of the holy churches.

St. Sava went to the Jordan to see the place of the Baptism of the Lord and to the cave church of John the Baptist, and from there back to Jerusalem through the monastery of St. Gerasimus. After some rest he went to the famous lavra of his namesake, St. Sabbas the Sanctified, where he was received with honor by the brotherhood. From there he traveled to the Dead Sea, visited the caves of the silent ascetics and conversed with them. He also visited the monastery of St. Euthymius

the Great and of Theodosius the Coenobiarch. Returning to Jerusalem, he again traveled from there to various places: to Nazareth and to Mount Tabor.

Living in Jerusalem, visiting the monasteries and other remarkable places, St. Sava strove to acquire what was useful both for himself and for his fatherland. He studied the church statutes and canons, acquired books, and conversed with enlightened hierarchs and ascetics about matters of church administration and the salvation of the soul. In addition, for his fatherland he acquired many holy relics and church vessels.

Having surveyed the Holy Land and venerated its shrines, Sava directed his course to the Greek emperor John Vatatzes, who still had his residence in Nicaea, where Sava had earlier visited the former emperor Theodore Laskaris, Vatatzes' father-in-law. St. Sava was warmly received by the emperor, especially by the empress, who had already seen St. Sava during her father's reign and had felt great love and reverence for him. The emperor and empress generously presented the Serbian archbishop with treasure and costly vessels for the holy churches. Sava was honorably dismissed on an imperial ship with a military escort. He set out for the holy Mount Athos, where he visited Vatopedi, in which he had received the tonsure, and Iviron and other monasteries, but he chiefly remained at his own Serbian monastery of Chilandar. All the Athonites were glad to see their former companion and brother. As was customary, St. Sava bestowed generous benefactions upon churches, monks, and the poor, both from his own means and from those given by the Greek emperor and empress.

From the holy Mount Athos Sava directed his course to the city of Thessalonica, where, independently of the emperor of Nicaea, power was also held by a ruler named Theodore of the Angelos family, who styled himself emperor. It was important both for this ruler and for Serbia to maintain peace in troubled times, and therefore St. Sava was warmly received by Theodore, and this visit of Sava to Thessalonica brought no small benefit to Serbia.

From there Sava set out for his fatherland. The news of this prompted the Serbian king Radoslav to go out to meet Sava, accompanied by

clergy, nobles, and the people. This meeting was joyful both for St. Sava and for the Serbian people, led by their sovereign.

Having rested from his long wanderings in the monastery of Studenica at the tomb of his father, St. Symeon the Myrrh-Gusher, Archbishop Sava zealously took up the affairs of faith and Church.

First of all he convened a spiritual council in the Studenica lavra in memory of the death of his brother, Stefan the First-Crowned, in monastic life Symeon. After the divine service and a special supplication service, St. Sava ordered the reliquary of the departed to be opened, and in it incorrupt relics were found, which filled the church with fragrance. The general joy at this new mercy of God was great. At that same time it was resolved to solemnly translate the holy relics to the common memorial foundation of Stefan the First-Crowned and St. Sava, the newly built cathedral monastery of Žiča.

After this, St. Sava set out to visit the dioceses throughout his Serbian archdiocese, administering episcopal justice, correcting abuses, instructing in the faith and piety, generously distributing alms to the needy and poor, and bestowing benefactions upon churches and monasteries. None was left without instruction and admonition from Sava on this journey: nobles, warriors, and common folk alike heard from him wise lessons in the Christian life.

But St. Sava was also to experience grievous sorrows. A civil strife arose between King Radoslav and his younger brother Vladislav, who unlawfully rose up against the elder brother. King Radoslav at first enjoyed the people's love, but afterwards, by certain ill deeds, especially in his family life, he incurred their disfavor: many nobles fell away from him and took the side of the younger brother who had rebelled. Radoslav was overthrown from the throne, banished, and fled to Durrës on the Adriatic Sea, whence, having suffered violence at the hands of a Frankish Latin ruler, he was forced to flee again. He found refuge and protection with his uncle, Archbishop Sava, who persuaded him, after a turbulent worldly life, to seek repose in the monastic life: Radoslav was tonsured by Sava into monasticism under the name John and, after living in ascetic labor for a brief time, he died.

After Radoslav's death, St. Sava crowned with the Serbian royal crown his younger nephew Vladislav, who was now acknowledged by all the Serbs. Vladislav regarded his uncle with reverence, heeded his instructions, and strove in matters of piety to imitate his father and grandfather. With the blessing of St. Sava he built for himself a memorial foundation, the magnificent church of the Ascension of the Lord at Mileševa.

St. Sava labored much and with love for the good of the Serbian Church; as a ruling archbishop he did much good and brought much benefit; yet his soul still yearned for the holy distant places and for ascetic labors in hermit solitude. And so, yielding to this inner attraction, he resolved to lay down the burden of the archiepiscopate and again set out on a pilgrimage to the East. He communicated his intention directly to Vladislav, the bishops and the nobles. All urgently entreated him not to forsake his flock, but St. Sava remained unyielding: he said that he must visit holy places where he had not yet been, and that afterwards, having returned, he would remain with them to the end of his days in silent ascetic labor.

Having convened a church council, he chose the most worthy of his disciples, the hieromonk Arsenius, and ordained him Serbian archbishop in his own place; and he himself, having instructed his flock, again set out on a distant journey.

And this time too he took his course by sea from Dalmatia. At that time there were everywhere many pirates on the seas. A rumor spread that Sava was carrying with him great riches. The pirates lay in wait for Sava's ship and were ready to attack, but through Sava's fervent prayer his sailors successfully escaped the lurking pirates and arrived safely at the harbor of Brindisi in Italy. The pirates repented, and, coming to the same harbor, asked forgiveness of St. Sava. Setting out on the further voyage, the holy pilgrim faced a new danger. A terrible storm arose. The sailors refused to manage the ship and awaited only help from on high. All with one accord turned to Sava, asking his prayers and intercession. Sava fervently prayed to the Lord God, raising his hands to heaven against the wind, supported by the sailors. And the Lord heard his prayer: suddenly the storm began to subside, and all

gave thanks to the Lord God and to St. Sava. When they arrived at the seaport of Acre in Palestine, St. Sava stopped here at the metochion of the Lavra of St. Sabbas the Sanctified, which he had previously redeemed from the Franks. The fame of the miracle, the taming of the storm at sea through Sava's prayer, spread among the people from the sailors, and many sought to see the wondrous elder and to receive his blessing.

From Acre, St. Sava proceeded to Jerusalem by sea, on another ship, by way of Great Caesarea and Joppa, or Jaffa.

In Jerusalem he stopped at the monastery of St. John the Theologian, which he had earlier also redeemed and handed over for the administration of the monks of the Lavra of St. Sabbas the Sanctified. With the monks of that Lavra, who joyfully greeted him, he went to the Church of the Resurrection of Christ to venerate the holy shrine. There he met the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Athanasius, who questioned him at length about his journey, about St. Sava's homeland, and about war and peace in the lands he had passed through. St. Sava took part in the services together with the Patriarch, who on this occasion spoke prophetically to those present about the merits, benefactions and miracles of Sava.

In Jerusalem Sava was already known, and his new appearance here drew many people who sought his prayers and benefactions.

Having established his residence in the monastery of St. John the Theologian, St. Sava visited the holy places and conversed with ascetics, many of whom had long been known to him, especially at the Lavra of St. Sabbas. But Sava did not confine himself to venerating the Jerusalem shrines. From Jerusalem he undertook several distant journeys. Thus he desired to visit Egyptian Alexandria.

Here he was received graciously and with honor by the Patriarch of Alexandria, who already had some information about the famous Serbian archbishop, and who now, in personal meeting, questioned him at length about his fatherland. In Alexandria St. Sava visited the holy churches, venerated the shrines and made offerings everywhere, and in the patriarchal cathedral church he inscribed his lineage in the church

synodikon, making a rich donation. With the Patriarch they exchanged costly gifts.

Having received from the Patriarch trustworthy and knowledgeable guides from among the monks, St. Sava set out to travel through the deserts adjoining Alexandria, to see the hermit ascetic life and to converse with the desert dwellers; he visited Mareotis and the Libyan deserts. With love and humility he sought and received instruction from the silent ones, whose ascetic life was glorified by all as the most perfect path to salvation. From there he went on to the Thebaid and to the Black Mountain, renowned for its skete asceticism; he visited certain places in Syria and even in Persia, and at last returned to Jerusalem.

After some rest he set out on a new journey, to Sinai. Passing through the Jordan valley, he reached Babylon, where he venerated the tombs of the three youths: Ananias, Azarias and Misael. The local sultan received him graciously and provided guides to the Egyptian sultan, who also showed St. Sava attention and escorted him to Mount Sinai.

On Sinai St. Sava was received warmly by the Bishop of Sinai and settled at the monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos. On Sinai St. Sava spent the entire holy Lent in ascetic labors, venerating the shrines, studying the local ascetic life, and praying in this holy place for his fatherland.

From Sinai St. Sava again returned to Jerusalem. After some rest he once more viewed all the holy places and venerated them, and then began to prepare for a new journey. Having bidden farewell warmly to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and to the abbot of the Lavra of St. Sabbas the Sanctified, Nicholas, as well as to all the patriarchal clergy and the brethren of the monasteries, St. Sava set out for the city of Antioch, where he was received warmly by the Patriarch of Antioch. Having visited the holy churches in Antioch itself, St. Sava made a pilgrimage to venerate the tomb of St. Symeon on the Wondrous Mountain.

From Antioch Sava made his way to Constantinople through Armenia and Anatolia. The overland journey he accomplished safely, but at sea he was struck by a grievous illness. His companions trembled for his life and urged him to take food, for he had eaten nothing for several

days; but Sava could take no food except something fresh. The shore was far off, however, and the ship's pilot rudely refused to stop for this purpose. Sava's companions told him of this, but he reassured them, saying that all is in the will of God and one should not lament. Suddenly at that moment a large live fish was washed by a wave onto the ship, to the very place where the sick Sava lay. Sava, pointing to it, said:

"Behold, the Lord God has sent us what we need!"

The fish was prepared, and all on board were fed with it. St. Sava, having been strengthened by the fresh food, rose completely healthy, and the pilot, shamed by what had happened, asked forgiveness of the hierarch.

Arriving at Constantinople, St. Sava first went to the monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos Evergetis, where he had his lodging for his stay. Then from here he went to the center of the city, to the church of the holy Apostle Andrew, where he held negotiations on various matters with the Latin magistrates who then governed Constantinople.

From Constantinople the usual route for St. Sava would seem to have led to Mount Athos, that he might return from there to his homeland. But God willed that his path should be directed otherwise. St. Sava went by sea from Constantinople to the city of Mesembria on the Black Sea, and from there he proceeded to the Bulgarian capital, the city of Tarnovo, to his kinsman by marriage, the Bulgarian emperor John Asen, whose daughter was married to the Serbian King Vladislav, the nephew of St. Sava. The Bulgarian emperor arranged a solemn welcome for Sava and received him with great honor in the capital city of Tarnovo, placing at his disposal his own palaces and servants. On the eve of the feast of the Theophany, St. Sava blessed the Epiphany water in the cathedral church of the Forty Martyrs, and on the following morning he served together with the Bulgarian patriarch.

Soon the Bulgarian Tsar, having received St. Sava's blessing, left the city to go hunting; in the meantime St. Sava fell gravely ill and felt the approach of his death.

He gathered around him his disciples and companions and made his final arrangements. During his journey through the East he had collec-

ted a multitude of holy objects and precious things for his homeland: holy relics, vessels, books, vestments and other church furnishings; many of these items he received as gifts, many he acquired by purchase. All these treasures he distributed exactly, determining what should go where, and sent them ahead of himself to his homeland.

Meanwhile the illness grew stronger. One Saturday evening Sava summoned his disciples and bade them rest for a while, because they would have to keep watch more later. At midnight St. Sava was filled with a special spiritual joy, and in fervent prayer to the Lord he awaited his death, which soon followed in the presence of his disciples.

After reverently preparing the body of the departed, the disciples began to make arrangements for the burial. A notice was immediately sent to the Bulgarian emperor, who ordered Patriarch Joachim of Bulgaria to bury St. Sava solemnly in the church of the Forty Martyrs at Tarnovo, which was carried out with glory and honor. On the occasion of the burial of the Serbian archbishop, the emperor ordered a large sum of gold to be distributed from his treasury to the beggars and the poor. St. Sava himself, before his death, likewise bequeathed offerings in goods and money for his burial and commemoration in the church of the Forty Martyrs.

Some years after the repose of St. Sava, his successor, Archbishop Arsenius of Serbia, and King Vladislav resolved to transfer the remains of the departed first Serbian archbishop from Tarnovo to his homeland. The king sent an embassy to his father-in-law with a request for permission to transfer the remains of the departed shepherd. But Emperor John of Bulgaria, the patriarch and the people by no means wished to let go of the coffin, which was precious to them as well. They replied that if the coffin had been left neglected, the Serbs might have a claim to the transfer of the remains; but the tomb was in the main church, richly adorned and surrounded with every care.

Vladislav sent a second embassy, but it too was unsuccessful. Then he resolved to go to his father-in-law in person, accompanied by nobles and bishops. But even Vladislav's personal petition at first could not incline the Bulgarian emperor to release the body of St. Sava. However kindly and respectfully Emperor John received his son-in-law, he still

did not wish to part with the coffin, which was dear to the Bulgarians as well. Only a night vision sent from on high caused Emperor John to cease resisting the request of the Serbian king and people. After the vision, Emperor John understood that here was the will of God, and not of man.

The transfer of the remains of St. Sava was accomplished solemnly. When, in preparation for the lifting and transfer, the coffin was opened, the body was found incorrupt. Having carefully arranged everything for the long journey, and after a moleben, they lifted the holy relics and set out on the way. King Vladislav marvelled how everything had been arranged so quickly and favorably, for the Bulgarian emperor, prompted by the vision, although he had resolved to release the body of Sava, had still not entirely freed himself from his displeasure.

But soon after the relics were carried away, a paralyzed monk named Neophytos lay down upon the wooden boards that had been by the coffin of St. Sava; contact with this wood brought him sudden healing. This miracle brought great joy to the Bulgarian people: the miraculous power of St. Sava remained in the place of his burial even after the carrying away of his holy relics. And afterwards many miracles took place in the place where the coffin of St. Sava had stood in the church of the Forty Martyrs.

When the procession with the holy relics drew near the borders of Serbia, Archbishop Arsenius, with bishops and the rest of the clergy, as well as the boyars and a multitude of people, went out to meet them, singing spiritual hymns with spiritual joy and gladness.

With feelings of profound joy and consolation, all kissed the incorrupt relics of St. Sava and solemnly brought them to the monastery of Mileševa, which had just been built by King Vladislav as his foundation. Here Vladislav had already prepared a worthy coffin for the placing of the relics of St. Sava, and to these relics a multitude of people began to flock from all parts of the Serbian land.

Not long afterwards St. Sava appeared to one of his disciples; St. Sava declared that, from the time the Lord took him from the earthly world, it was not fitting for him to lie in a tomb, but rather to lie in the church for all to see.

Then his relics were again taken out of the earth and placed in a wooden reliquary and set up in the middle of the great church.

St. Sava, during his long holy life, accomplished many good deeds, both for individual people and chiefly for his homeland of Serbia, strengthening in it faith and piety, establishing the church hierarchy and a right church administration, and giving an example and model of ascetic labor. He handed down all his precepts in his not inconsiderable written works.

And people who lived with him in the same time, and in all the ages that followed, not only the Serbs but all the Orthodox, honored and honor this saint, the great benefactor and protector of the Serbian land and of all Orthodoxy.

Troparion, Tone 3:

Thou wast the guide of the way that leadeth unto life, and the first-throned and teacher, for coming first, O hierarch Sava, thou didst enlighten thy homeland, and having begotten it by the Holy Spirit, thou didst plant as olive trees in the spiritual paradise thy children, all hallowed. Wherefore, as we honor thee as co-throned with the Apostles and hierarchs, we pray thee: intercede with Christ God to grant us great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a great first hierarch and fellow-worker of the Apostles, the Church of thy people glorifieth thee, O Venerable one; and as thou hast boldness toward Christ God, by thy prayers deliver us from all calamities, that we may cry unto thee: Rejoice, Father Sava, god-wise.

* * *

Passion of St. Peter Avesalomite the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Петра Авесаламита

Peter, called Avesalomite, a native of the country of Eleutheropolis,[18] was seized at the outbreak of the persecution against the Christians[19] in

the city of Avlon.[20] When he was brought for examination before the governor Severus, the latter asked:

"What is your name?"

Peter answered:

"By my father I am called Avesalomite, but my spiritual name, which I received at baptism, is Peter."

"Of what race are you?" asked the governor.

Peter answered:

"I am a Christian."

"What is your rank?" asked the governor.

"I cannot have a higher and better rank than the rank of Christian," answered Peter.

"Have you parents?" asked the governor.

"No," answered Peter.

"You lie," said the governor, "for I have heard that you have parents."

"The Gospel has given me a commandment," answered Peter, "to renounce all things when I go forth to confess the name of the Lord (Lk. 14:26; Mt. 10:37, 19:29; Mk. 10:29–30; Lk. 18:29–30)."

"Are you acquainted with the imperial decree?" asked the governor.

"I know," answered Peter, "what my true God and eternal King has commanded."

The governor said:

"The most merciful emperors[21] have commanded that all Christians either offer sacrifices to the gods or be destroyed by various tortures."

Peter answered:

"But the true and eternal King has commanded that whoever offers sacrifice to idols, and not to the living God, shall perish forever. Judge in justice: can this commandment of the Heavenly King be violated?"

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18. Eleutheropolis was a Palestinian city lying between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, east of Ascalon. In the 4th century it was a considerable city; today not a trace of it remains.

20. A city in Macedonia with a populous port on the gulf of the same name.

21. Soon after his accession to the throne, Diocletian chose Maximian Herculius as co-emperor, whom he set over the western half of the empire, keeping the eastern half for himself. In 292 he chose two more assistants to govern the empire, with the title of Caesars: Constantius Chlorus and Galerius.

"Listen to me," said the governor, "offer sacrifice to the gods and fulfil the command of our emperors."

Peter answered:

"I will not offer sacrifice to the work of human hands, to wooden and stone gods, to whom you are likened."

"You insult us," replied the governor. "Do you not know that I can put you to death?"

"I do not insult you," answered Peter, "but I speak what is written in the law of the Lord: 'Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands: they have mouths, eyes, nostrils, ears, hands, and feet, but they speak not, see not, smell not, hear not, feel not, nor walk.' The Lord says in Scripture: 'Let those who make them and all who trust in them become like them' (Ps. 113:12–16). [22] If the Holy Spirit from the Lord has said this through the mouths of the prophets, how then do you say that I have insulted you by calling you like the deaf and dumb, stone and wooden idols—and you even advise me to become like you.

The governor said:

"Obey me, pity yourself, and offer sacrifice to the gods."

Peter answered:

"Then indeed I shall pity myself, if I do not offer sacrifice to your gods and do not depart from the truth. But since you are an unbeliever, you believe neither me nor the law of God, which says that whoever offers sacrifice to the gods shall perish. But why do you delay? Do what you have been commanded."

"I am still waiting," the governor replied, "until you think better of it, offer sacrifice to the gods, and so be delivered from your torments."

"You wait in vain," replied Peter. "Do what you have planned to do, and carry out the will of your father, the devil, for I will not carry out your will, and my Lord Jesus Christ, whom I zealously serve, will not permit me to do so."

The governor ordered him to be hanged, and then said to him:

22. The passage cited here is given with the omission and alteration of some words.

"What do you say, Peter? Will you offer sacrifice to the gods or not?"

"Bring iron claws," the Saint replied, "and flay me, for I have told you more than once that I will offer sacrifice to no one but the One God, for whose name I suffer."

The governor Severus ordered that he be cruelly tortured. The valiant Martyr of God did not utter a single groan at this, but only sang:

"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. 26:4) [23].

And he sang again:

"I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (Ps. 115:4) [24].

When he spoke thus, the governor was seized with still greater rage and summoned other executioners. The people standing around, seeing the blood flowing over the ground in great quantity, and feeling pity for the Saint, said:

"Have pity on yourself and offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you may be delivered from these cruel torments."

"These sufferings," replied Saint Peter, "are nothing, and do not cause me any pain. But if I were to renounce my God, then I would indeed fall into the most grievous and endless torments."

The governor said:

"What are you saying, Peter? Offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you do not repent afterwards, when it will be too late."

"I will not repent, and I will not offer sacrifice," replied Peter.

"I will deliver you to death," said the governor.

"This is precisely what I desire: to die for my God," replied Peter.

Then the governor pronounced over him the following sentence of death:

23. That is, the holy martyr always prayed to the Lord with particular fervor that He would not permit him to fall away from the holy Church.

24. The Saint applies the words of the psalm to himself in the sense that he accepts sufferings, seeing in them a means to his salvation and offering praise to God for them.

"Peter, who for the sake of the law of his God has disregarded the commandment of the invincible emperors, I order to be crucified on a cross."

Thus the valiant soldier of Christ, completing his struggle, was granted, through crucifixion on the cross, to become a partaker of the sufferings of the Lord [25]. The Martyr of Christ Peter Avesalamit suffered in the city of Avlona, when Maximian reigned in Rome, while over all reigned our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever, amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Mertius

Память святого мученика Мертия

The holy martyr Mertius was a soldier under Diocletian. During a campaign against the Moors [26], his commander began to compel him to offer sacrifice to the idols. Saint Mertius refused to obey, and for this he was subjected to the most savage tortures, which he endured with such courage that the tormentor, struck with horror and amazement, fell into a frenzy. The torments continued until no whole place remained on the saint's body; all of it was covered with weals from blows and with wounds. Then cast into prison, the Martyr of Christ languished there for eight days from hunger and the cruelty of the jailers. After this, having prayed to the Lord, the holy sufferer cried out, "Into Thy hands, O Son of God, I commit my spirit," and departed to Christ, for whose sake he had suffered valiantly.

* * *

25. That is, he was granted to endure the same execution (crucifixion on the cross) to which Jesus Christ had been subjected.

26. The Moors were a people of Africa, belonging to the Negro race.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 13

13 января

New Calendar January 13 · Old Calendar January 26 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus

Страдание святых мучеников Ермила и Стратоника

In the reign of Licinius[1], an impious and most zealous idolater, all Christians were threatened with a painful death. They were sought out in every land, city and village. Whoever found a Christian and informed on him to the emperor gained his favor and was granted great honors. Therefore everyone, in order to curry favor with the emperor, began to search out and persecute the Christians.

Once, when Licinius was seated on his throne and holding court, a soldier approached him and said:

"There is a Christian here named Hermylus, who holds the rank of deacon among the Christians. Having served Christ for a long time, he mocks our gods and you, O emperor, and does not wish to acknowledge you."

Hearing this, the emperor commanded that Hermylus be sought out and seized. The saint was praying, lifting his hands to the Lord his God, when the emissaries of the emperor came to him. Learning that he was being taken to trial and torment for Christ, he rejoiced and exulted, and followed the soldiers not as one led by force but with eager alac-

1. Licinius was at first co-ruler with the Eastern Emperor Maximian Galerius, with the title of Augustus. After the death of Galerius, having eliminated his rivals, he became Emperor of the East in 312, while Constantine the Great became Emperor of the West. While Constantine the Great favored the Christians, Licinius oppressed his Christian subjects, perhaps suspecting them of sympathy for Constantine. Later war flared between Licinius and Constantine; Licinius was defeated, deprived of power, and finally executed in 324.

rity, as though he were going to receive honors. Full of noble courage, he stood before the emperor. Seeing him, Licinius asked:

"Tell us, are you truly a Christian, as we have heard of you?"

"I," answered Hermylus, "not only freely confess myself a Christian, but declare that I have been consecrated before the invisible God and stand before Him in the rank of deacon."

"Then be a deacon, that is, a servant[2], also of our gods," said the emperor.

To this proposal of the emperor the martyr replied with contempt:

"It seems to me, O emperor, that you are either deaf or out of your mind. I told you that I serve the invisible God, and not those idols of yours which, though visible, see nothing and understand nothing of what it means to be a deacon. In your delusion you regard them as gods, whereas they are soulless, deaf stones and trees, the works of human hands, who deserve to be laughed at rather than worshipped."

The emperor could no longer bear the free speech of the martyr, and at once commanded that he be struck on the cheeks with special bronze instruments, prepared in advance for torment, while saying:

"Do not be bold of tongue, Ermil; honor the emperor, offer sacrifice to the gods, and spare yourself the torment."

But the saint seemed not only to feel no pain during the most severe blows, but even laughed at the impotence of the tormentor. Then, raising his voice, he said loudly to the emperor:

"You yourself will receive many wounds and will know the terrible hand of God upon you, because, forsaking your Creator, you turn to deaf and dumb gods, and especially because you, as though envious of their salvation, wish to drag others by force to the same perdition."

After this the emperor commanded that the holy Hermylus be taken to prison for three days, reckoning that he would come to his senses and repent of his boldness. But the martyr, on the way, sang:

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do to me?" (Ps. 117:6). "In God I trust, I shall not be afraid; what can flesh do to me?" (Ps. 55:5).

2. The word *deacon*, in the Greek, properly means: servant, in the sense of a lower minister of the Church.

On entering the prison he sang:

"Shepherd of Israel, hearken; Thou who leadest Joseph like a flock, who sittest upon the Cherubim, shine forth and come to save us" (Ps. 79:2–3).

And the Lord did not forget His servant, but sent an Angel to comfort and strengthen him, who, appearing, said to him:

"Hermylus! Be steadfast, speak and do not fall silent, and do not fear, for soon you will gain the victory over the designs of the tormentor and receive from on high the most holy crown for your suffering."

Thus God, arming His warrior for the contest, girded him with strength, strengthened his hands for the struggle, and gave his muscles, as it were, a bronze bow and the shield of salvation.

After three days had passed, the emperor again summoned Ermil to trial and said to him:

"Have you repented, and are you willing to offer sacrifice to the gods, that you may be freed from the torments awaiting you? Or are you still possessed by madness and preparing ruin for yourself?"

The warrior of Christ, to the glory of the Lord who strengthened him, answered boldly:

"O emperor! I have already told you once, and you should have been content with my first words and not asked me again. I have the heavenly God; by Him alone do I live, to Him I am ready to offer myself in sacrifice, and from Him I expect to receive great help."

"Let us see whether He who dwells in heaven will help you," said the emperor, and at once commanded six strong and cruel soldiers to stretch him on the ground and beat him without mercy.

The saint endured the torment patiently, as though it were not he who was being beaten, and prayed to God thus:

"O Lord my God! For my sake Thou didst endure wounds and blows before Pontius Pilate[3]; strengthen me Thyself in my sufferings for Thee, send me the strength to bear these torments, that through sharing in Thy sufferings I may become worthy to share also in Thy eternal glory."

3. Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea, under whom our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and was delivered to death.

While the saint was praying thus, suddenly a voice was heard from heaven, which said:

"Amen, amen, Hermylus! In three days you will be delivered from these torments and will receive a great reward for your sufferings."

This voice gave the martyr great courage and strength, while upon the tormentors it brought great fear and trembling; they fell to the ground and could do nothing. The emperor too was seized with trembling, yet he would not acknowledge the power of God. At his command the holy martyr was again led back to prison.

The jailer entrusted with guarding the martyr was Stratonicus. He was a secret Christian and a friend of the holy Hermylus. His heart was grieved at the sight of the martyr's sufferings, yet at the same time he rejoiced in spirit at the courage and steadfastness of the martyr, only he did not dare to undertake such sufferings himself.

Entering the prison, the holy Hermylus sang:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. 26:1)

A heavenly light shone upon him from on high, and again a voice was heard, calling him to endure his sufferings with courage and promising their end after three days.

In the morning of the next day the emperor again summoned the saint to the tribunal. He stood before him with a bright countenance, a cheerful gaze, and joy in his heart. The tormentor, shaking his head and mocking the martyr, said:

"Answer us: what benefit has the gloomy prison brought you? Have the sufferings you endured persuaded you to submit to the imperial law and render the gods the honor due them? Or must we devise still further torments against the obstinacy of your heart?"

"The gloomy prison," answered the martyr, "has enlightened me; my soul is at peace, joyful and bright, which gives me good hope of receiving a future reward; and I am greatly amazed that the darkness in which you are immersed, and which hides the truth from the eyes of your soul, is not in the least dispelled."

When the saint thus rebuked the emperor's error, Licinius cried out:

"You are evidently capable of nothing else than, through the intemperance of your tongue, by your boldness and madness, openly to mock me. Answer then, and speak plainly: will you offer sacrifice to the gods and submit to our command, or will you expose yourself to the torments you deserve?"

"You have already heard, O emperor, what I answered," said Hermylus, the martyr of Christ, "and you will hear nothing more from me; do what you wish, carry out what you have planned."

Enraged, Licinius commanded that the saint be stretched naked on the ground and beaten with rods on his belly. Amid the torture the saint had one joy, in Christ, and prayed, raising the eyes of his soul to Him:

"Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste, O Lord, to help me" (Ps. 69:2).

The saint's endurance drove the tormentor into still greater fury, and he commanded that his belly be torn with eagle's talons:

"Let him see," he said, "his own entrails with his own eyes."

The martyr said:

"My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God" (Ps. 83:3). "As with marrow and fatness my soul is filled, and my mouth praises Thee with joyful lips" (Ps. 62:6).

Stratonicus, seeing such inhuman torments inflicted on his friend, the holy Hermylus, and the tearing open of his belly, began to weep.

Seeing this, some of those standing by at once reported to the emperor, saying:

"The jailer Stratonicus does not conceal his part in the Christian error and his friendship with Hermylus, for he pities him and weeps over him."

The emperor summoned Stratonicus and asked: "Are you a friend of Hermylus?" Stratonicus, not wishing, as a disciple of the truth, to speak falsehood, and seeing that the time had come for him to accomplish his struggle, declared himself the friend of Hermylus and a Christian, exposed the lifelessness of the idols and the madness of those who worship them, and glorified the One God, Creator of heaven and earth. The enraged emperor commanded that Stratonicus be stripped and

beaten with rods over his whole body. Amid the torments the sufferer raised his eyes to his friend, the holy Hermylus, and said:

"Pray for me to Christ, Hermylus, that He may help me to keep the faith firm and unshaken and to rise above my tormentors."

In this he urged Licinius to cease worshipping blind and lifeless idols and to fear the punishment of the true God, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall (Heb. 10:31).

The saint was beaten until he fell silent from exhaustion from his wounds. After this the emperor commanded that both Stratonicus and Hermylus be cast into prison. The holy Stratonicus prayed and said:

"Remember not the sins of my forefathers" (Ps. 78:8).

And both cried out to God:

"Help us, O God our Saviour, for the glory of Thy name" (Ps. 78:9).

In answer to this, a divine voice was heard, which said:

"You have finished the course, you have kept the faith, and the crown of righteousness is prepared for you (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7–8), which you shall receive in the morning."

At the coming of morning Hermylus was brought once more before the tribunal, and Licinius asked him:

"Will you offer sacrifice to the gods?"

"What I said to you before," answered the saint, "that I will repeat now. Burn, cut, and torment me as you will, for I am accustomed not to fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul (cf. Mt. 10:28)."

The tormentor commanded that the saint be hung from a tree and his body cut with knives. Amid the cruel torments the saint prayed without ceasing and said:

"Be my Helper, O Lord, my Savior!"

"Fear not: I am with thee, thy God!" he heard a voice from on high.

After this the emperor condemned St. Hermylus to be drowned in the river Ister[4]. He then exhorted St. Stratonicus also to offer sacrifice to the gods.

"Otherwise you too, wretch," he said, "will suffer like your friend."

The Blessed Stratonicus answered:

4. This was the name of the river Danube.

"Indeed, I would be a wretch if I obeyed your mad command. How can I desire life when my friend is to die for Christ?"

"What then? Do you wish to die with Hermylus?" asked Licinius.

St. Stratonicus answered:

"Most certainly! True friends ought to bear misfortunes together and to enjoy blessings together. And what is more pleasant to us than suffering and death for Christ?"

Having lost all hope of success, Licinius condemned St. Stratonicus also to the same death, that he be drowned in the water together with St. Hermylus. The two holy martyrs were led to the river. Along the way they joyfully sang:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" [5]

When the soldiers brought them to the river Ister, they placed them in nets and cast them into a deep place; and thus the river received the bodies of the holy martyrs, while Heaven received their souls into its mansions [6]. On the third day the faithful found their holy bodies on the shore and honorably buried them at a distance of eighteen stadia from the city of Singidon [7]. They were laid in one tomb, so that they might have everything in common: the common confession of Christ, a common prison, common torments, a common drowning, a common burial of their bodies, and a common glory in Heaven, by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit belong all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Life of St. James, Bishop of Nisibis

Житие святого Иакова, епископа Низибийского

St. James was born in the city of Nisibis [8], which lay within a region that passed at times into the hands of the Romans and at

5. The words of the angelic proclamation at the Nativity of Christ (Lk. 2:14).
6. The repose of the holy martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus took place around the year 315.
7. Singidon is now Belgrade, a city on the right bank of the Danube in its lower course, the capital of Serbia.

times of the Persians, and which at the time of this saint's birth belonged to the Romans. Having come of age, St. James withdrew into the desert and lived on the high mountains. He spent spring, summer, and autumn in the forests under the open sky, and for winter he settled in a certain cave, where he sheltered from the frost. His food was what the earth brought forth of itself, without any cultivation: he gathered fruit from the forest trees and edible roots resembling garden vegetables, and with these he sustained his weak flesh only so far as to remain alive. In mortifying his body in this way, the servant of God continually nourished his soul at the same time with spiritual food; through purification he prepared his mind for the vision of God, making it a mirror of the Holy Spirit, and, as the Holy Apostle says, beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, he was transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). Through this his boldness in prayer before God constantly increased, and whenever he asked God for anything, he at once received it; he foresaw the future prophetically, and he was granted by the Holy Spirit the grace of working miracles. Of these miracles we shall relate some few and reveal to those who do not know the divine grace that shone in him.

At that time foolish people worshipped idols and paid divine honor to lifeless stones. Many not only neglected the true worship of God, but even hated those who, being perfect in virtue, had come to know the truth and, turning away from idol-worship, mocked the nothingness of idols and worshipped the Creator of all. Then St. James, leaving the desert, set out for Persia [9], to look upon the newly planted garden of the holy faith and himself to labor, as far as possible, for the spread of the true faith.

Once, as he was crossing a stream that lay in his path, several maidens who were washing clothes, with their feet bared high, looked upon the hermit, who was dressed in unusual garments, with shameless eyes, not ashamed either of his venerable appearance or of their own naked-

8. Nisibis, or Nisibida, a large and populous city in the Province of Mygdonia, in Mesopotamia.
9. Nazibia was situated not far from the Persian border, which is why the journey to Persia did not present great difficulties.

ness, and they stood before him boldly, with their heads uncovered. Seeing such shamelessness, the saint was angered, wishing to show through punishment the power of God, and also, through the working of a miracle, to put the idolatry of the impious to shame; he cursed the spring from which the stream flowed, and the spring and the stream at once dried up, so that not a drop of water remained in them. He also cursed these maidens and punished their shameless youth with sudden old age. By the miraculous word of the saint, the black hair on their heads at once turned white, and they themselves suddenly grew old, changed like the leaves of young trees when a frost suddenly strikes them. At the sight of the sudden disappearance of the water and the appearance of gray hair on each of them, the maidens were struck with terror, and, coming into the city, they told everyone about it.

Seeing the miracle, the townspeople went to the great wonderworker, St. James, and began earnestly to beg him to take pity on them and restore the water to them. Their pleas moved the saint; he prayed to God, and the spring was again filled with water, and the stream flowed as before. The people asked the saint to have mercy also on the maidens and, instead of premature old age, to restore their youth to them. The saint was ready to do this as well; but when he asked where the maidens were, they were not to be found, for they had not come to the saint in repentance. For this lack of repentance he left them under punishment, so that they might remember the miraculous power of God, and so that others might learn from this to be chaste and decorous.

Such was the miracle of this new Moses, which he worked not by a blow of a staff but by the sign of the holy Cross. And more than the miracle one should marvel at his meekness, namely, that he did not send she-bears, as the great prophet Elisha did (4 Kgdms. 2:24), to tear apart the shameless maidens, but, teaching them good conduct and the fear of God, he limited himself to a minor punishment: the diminishing of their outward beauty. We say this by no means to reproach the anger of the prophet, but only to show that St. James possessed the same wonder-working power as the prophet, yet manifested it in the spirit of Christ's goodness and in accordance with the New Testament.

Once St. James saw that a Persian judge had unjustly condemned an innocent man. He grieved, and, rebuking the judge's lawlessness, commanded a large stone lying nearby to break and crumble into dust. All who saw this were astonished. The unjust judge himself was seized with fear; he repented of his sin and changed his decision to a just one. And here the wonderworker acted in imitation of his Lord. Christ, wishing to show that He went voluntarily to suffering, and that, had He willed it, He could easily have destroyed His murderers, nevertheless did not destroy them, but revealed His power in that, by a single word of His, the fig tree withered (Mt. 21:19). And St. James, imitating the mercy of the Lord, did not hand the unjust judge over to execution, but broke the stone and through this taught the judge righteousness. Such wondrous deeds of the saint won him fame and general esteem, and against his will he was chosen bishop by the inhabitants of his native city of Nisibis; he himself did not seek so high a rank, and even shrank from it, yielding only to the earnest entreaties of the faithful.

Leaving his solitary, desert life and settling among his compatriots, St. James did not change his food or his clothing; in the new place he kept his former manner of life and labored even more than before. To fasting, prostrations, and the wearing of sackcloth there were now added cares for the people: to feed widows and orphans, to defend the oppressed, to help everyone and teach everyone virtue. But why enumerate in detail the labors and cares for people that belong to such a rank? Those who take upon themselves this yoke know them, especially those who love and fear the Heavenly Lord, Who entrusts to them the feeding of the rational flock. The more St. James labored in the episcopal rank, the more good deeds he performed, the more gifts of the Holy Spirit he gathered to himself.

Once, as the saint was going to a certain village, beggars approached him on the road and began asking alms for the burial of a dead man. They pointed to a corpse lying beside the road, which was in fact alive and only pretending to be dead. Having seen the bishop approaching from afar, the beggars had told one of their company to feign death, so that by this deception they might obtain more alms from the

bishop. The Hierarch gave them the alms they requested and prayed for the deceased, that God might forgive his sins and give his soul rest with the righteous, then went on his way. After the saint had departed, the companions of the man who had pretended to be dead told him to rise; but he lay motionless, for he was truly dead and without breath. When the beggars saw that their lie had become the truth, they ran after the saint and, falling at his feet, repented of their sin. Pleading poverty in their defense, they begged him to forgive them and raise the dead man. The Wonderworker, following the example of the merciful Lord, forgave them, and through his prayer the dead man came to life. This, as we see, is like the miracle of the Apostle Peter, who struck Ananias and Sapphira with sudden death because they agreed to lie to the Holy Spirit and kept back part of the price of the property they had sold (Acts 5:1). St. James, too, took the life of a man who had kept back his breath and falsely pretended to be dead. But St. Peter condemned those who had kept back the money to death, enlightened by the Holy Spirit and knowing of their theft; whereas James took the beggar's life by his prayer, unaware of the deception, for the man had falsely pretended to be dead. Peter did not raise Ananias and Sapphira, who had died at his word, for the beginning of the saving preaching required the wicked to be struck with fear, so that others also might fear. James, however, possessing apostolic grace, punished the man with death only for a time, and afterward comforted him by restoring his life.

Soon afterward Arius, that ancient blasphemer of the consubstantiality of the Son of God and the Holy Spirit with the Father, sharpened his tongue against the Creator and troubled all Egypt. Then Constantine, the greatest of Christian sovereigns, who had freed the world from pagan captivity, as a second Zerubbabel (Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, was the leader of the Jewish people; under his leadership the Jews came out of Babylonian captivity and returned to their native land), rebuilt the temples of God that had been cast down and raised them up, and convened the first Ecumenical Council of the holy fathers at Nicaea.[10] Among the holy fathers at the Council was God's Hierarch

James, Bishop of Nisibis, who took part in defending Orthodoxy and excommunicating Arius from the Church.

Nisibis, as we have said, was at that time under the rule of the Roman emperors. After the death of Constantine the Great,[11] the Persian king Shapur[12] came with all his army and, laying siege to the city of Nisibis, pressed it for a long time. But through the prayers of St. Bishop James, his efforts came to nothing, and he could not take the city. Then Shapur dammed the river that flowed through the city, upstream from it, with stones and earth, thus stopping its course. When a great body of water had gathered, he suddenly released it all at once upon the city. The force of the waters brought down the city walls, and part of the city was flooded. The citizens were afraid, while the Persians rejoiced, thinking that the city was now in their hands.

They did not, however, attack the city that day, for the flood prevented them, and they resolved to make a general assault the next morning. But as night fell, all the people of the city, stirred and inspired by their bishop, set about repairing the city walls; and with the help of his prayers the walls were restored so well that neither horseman nor foot soldier could enter the city without a ladder. Nevertheless, the city could easily have been taken had its inhabitants not sought help from on high. All begged St. Bishop James to climb the city walls and curse the enemy army. St. James climbed up and, seeing the countless Persian ranks, prayed God to send mosquitoes and dog-flies[13] upon them, that they might know the power of God and lift the siege of the city. God heard the prayer of His servant and at once sent a whole cloud of mosquitoes and flies upon the Persian camp. Their bites were so severe that the horses and elephants, unable to endure them, broke their reins

10. Nicaea was a city in Bithynia, a northwestern province of Asia Minor. The First Ecumenical Council, convened by the Emperor Constantine, took place in 325 and introduced into ecclesiastical use the Symbol of Faith, which was later supplemented and completed at the Second Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople in 381.

11. The equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine the Great died in 337.

12. Shapur II, known as the Great, Persian king; he reigned from 310 to 381 A.D., known for his successful wars with the Romans; he was a cruel persecutor of Christianity.

13. By "dog-flies" is understood a kind of biting fly or insect, supposedly especially harmful to dogs, or in general especially harmful insects. In the time of Moses, dog-flies were the fourth plague of the Egyptians.

and bridles and rushed to and fro with uncontrollable force. These mosquitoes and flies were unbearable not only to the animals, but also to the Persians themselves—worse than hosts of armed warriors. The impious king himself, seeing that his efforts had been in vain and that his army was being defeated by mosquitoes and flies, was bewildered and greatly dismayed. Moreover, he saw this divine man, Bishop James, upon the city walls and took him for a king, for it seemed to him that he was clothed in royal purple and that a royal crown shone dazzlingly upon his head. He was angered with his spies, who had reported that there was no king in the city, and put them to death. Then, lifting the siege, he fled to his own land, pursued by flies and mosquitoes. Such a miracle did the Lord work through the prayers of His servant, who did not ask that fire fall from heaven upon the enemy and consume them, as the Prophet Elijah once asked fire to fall upon the captains of fifty (4 Kgdms. 1:10–12), nor that the earth open its mouth and swallow them (Num. 16:31–33), but only that mosquitoes and flies be sent upon them, and that they might know the power of God. And indeed, a great miracle was then made manifest, for the enormous Persian army could not withstand insignificant insects, but was defeated by them and fled in shame. So great was the grace St. James had from God, and so great the boldness of his faith!

Having reached a great age, the holy servant of God reposed in the Lord.[14] Some time after his death, the city of Nisibis passed under Persian rule. When the faithful departed from it, they took with them the relics of their defender and leader, St. James. While he lived, the city would never have fallen under the rule of barbarians, for the great servant of God protected it from them by the invincible might of Christ our God, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory forever. Amen.

14. This was around the year 350, on July 11. Saint James of Nisibis is called a Wonderworker for the multitude of miracles he performed, and was called wise for the height of his spiritual wisdom. Eighteen discourses of Saint James are now known in the Armenian language, written by him at the request of Saint Gregory, Enlightener of Armenia. Besides their dogmatic and moral importance, the teachings of Saint James are important as a model of faithful interpretation of Holy Scripture; naturally, without any art or effort, the ancient teacher draws from Holy Scripture both lofty dogmas and edification.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Irinarch, Recluse of the Borisogleb Monastery of Rostov, on the Ustye[15]

Житие преподобного отца нашего Иринарха, затворника Ростовского Борисоглебского монастыря, что на Устье

Venerable Irinarch was born in the Rostov region, in the village of Kondakovo.[16] His parents were peasants: his father was named Akindin, and his mother, Irina. At his holy Baptism the infant was given the name Elijah. His parents rejoiced to see how quickly the child grew: at twenty weeks he was already standing on his feet and beginning to walk. They raised their son in piety and in the purity of the Christian faith. The child did not engage in games, but loved humility and meekness; he was quiet and gentle toward everyone.

When he was only six years old, he once said to his mother:

"When I grow up, I shall be tonsured and become a monk; I shall wear iron upon myself and labor for God, and I shall be a teacher to all people."

His mother was astonished at such words from her little son, yet she rejoiced as well. These prophetic words of the six-year-old child were afterward fulfilled exactly.

About that same time, Elijah's father Akindin invited their village priest, whose name was Basil, to dine with him. During the meal the priest told the Life of Venerable Macarius, the Wonderworker of Kalyazin.[17] As Elijah listened to the priest, he suddenly said:

15. Here is meant the Monastery of Borisoglebsk in the Diocese of Yaroslavl, Rostov district, situated on the river Ustye, 18 versts from Rostov on the road to the town of Uglich. The Life of Irinarchus was written by his disciple Alexander, who lived with him for thirty years. The original Life is known only from manuscripts, and has not been published. The most reverend Amphilochius, who was archimandrite of the Monastery of Borisoglebsk, published in 1863 in Moscow an account of the Life, close to the manuscript texts, with illustrations. In 1872 the Life of Irinarchus (by N. Korsunsky), also compiled from manuscripts, was printed in the Yaroslavl Diocesan Gazette, and was also published separately in Yaroslavl in 1873. The present account is based on the original Life, known to us from several manuscripts.

16. The village of Kondakovo is now in the Uglich district, on the river Ustye upstream from the Monastery of Borisoglebsk, 43 versts from Uglich and as many from Rostov.

17. The Kalyazin Monastery lies about forty versts from Kondakovo. The memory of Macarius of Kalyazin is celebrated on March 17 and May 26.

"I too shall be such a monk."

The priest Basil was astonished to see a child speaking words fitting for an adult, and said sternly:

"How did you dare to say such a thing, child?"

Elijah answered:

"He who does not fear you is the one who says it."

Elijah grew up with his parents. But a famine came upon the whole region. Elijah, now eighteen years old, parted from his father and mother and went to seek work near Nizhny Novgorod.

The son did not return home for two years and sent no word of himself. His parents decided to look for him and sent their two eldest sons, Andrew and David. The brothers found Elijah near Nizhny, in a village, at the home of a peasant for whom he was working; glad to meet their brother, they stayed with him at the same peasant's house for another whole year.

During his stay with the peasant, Elijah once sat in a room with others and began to weep inconsolably. Everyone who saw him was astonished and, unable to comfort him, asked sorrowfully why he was crying and sobbing so bitterly. He answered them:

"I see my father's repose; bright youths are carrying my parent to burial."

All around him marveled that he could see his father's repose from three hundred versts away. When he returned home that same year and asked his mother about his father, he learned that his father had reposed during the Dormition Fast of that year. Then he remembered the vision and said to his mother:

"At that time I saw my parent: bright youths were carrying him to burial."

And his mother was comforted to see her son and hear his extraordinary words.

Now, after his father's death, Elijah and his mother and elder brother Andrew moved to the city of Rostov, bought a house, and began trading, thereby soon increasing their prosperity.

Elijah, the younger brother, who had always kept the fear of God in his heart, became especially diligent in attending church and giving

alms to the poor. Strictly guarding his virgin purity, he desired to renounce worldly life altogether and take upon himself the angelic habit, steadfastly attending the church of God.

There he became acquainted with a man of the merchant class named Agafonik, who loved to read books. He befriended him and began to converse constantly about Holy Scripture, seeking the salvation of his soul.

Having thus prepared himself, Ilya took the holy cross, blessed himself with it, and set out on his way. When his mother asked him what he was undertaking and where he was going, Ilya answered:

"I am going to the monastery of the holy passion-bearers Boris and Gleb at Ustye, to pray."

His mother began to weep, but she remembered how her son, when he was only six years old, had already said that he would become a monk. The son bowed to his mother, kissed her, and set out on his way.

Drawing near to the monastery of Boris and Gleb and seeing it, Ilya rejoiced with all his heart and went to the abbot, bowed, and asked for a blessing. The abbot blessed him and asked:

"Why have you come here, child?"

Ilya answered:

"Father, I desire the angelic image. Tonsure me for God's sake, an ignorant peasant, and number me among the chosen flock of Christ and among your holy brotherhood!"

The abbot saw with his spiritual eyes that the youth had come from God. He received him with joy, tonsured him to the angelic image, and gave him the monastic name Irinarkh.

According to monastic custom, the abbot placed Irinarkh under the direction of an elder, under whom the young monk remained in obedience and submission, in fasting and prayer.

After Irinarkh had successfully completed his first obedience, the abbot, for the sake of testing and humility, sent him to the bakehouse, where he labored for the brotherhood day and night in obedience and humility, caring nothing for bodily things, and never absenting himself from the church of God. He would come to church before all the brethren. Standing in church, he spoke with no one; during the read-

ings he never sat but always stood on his feet like a firm stone, and he never left the church before the dismissal. Agafonik, his friend, learning of Ilya's tonsure, came to the monastery to visit Irinarkh and stayed with him there for many days. Irinarkh accompanied his friend about two versts beyond the monastery and, after kissing him, began to return. On the way he pondered in his heart how he might be saved, and he made a vow to go either to the monastery of Kirill of Belozersk or to the Solovetsky monastery. Then a voice from above seemed to speak to him:

"Do not go either to Kirillov or to Solovki; here you will be saved!"

He doubted this voice, but he heard the same voice a second time:

"Here you will be saved!"

Irinarkh was afraid, began to weep, and pondered what this might mean. And a third time he heard the same voice:

"Here you will be saved!"

Looking around, Irinarkh saw no one, and he was strengthened in the thought that this voice was a revelation to him from above.

Returning to the monastery, he again labored in his former obedience, devoting his nights to prayer and vigil, and lying down to sleep only briefly, and then not on a bed but directly on the ground.

After this obedience, the abbot appointed Irinarkh to the office of sacristan, which he began to perform with joy.

Once Irinarkh saw a wanderer who was barefoot. Taking pity on him, he addressed the Lord with this prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, who didst create heaven and earth and the first man, our forefather Adam, after Thine own image, and didst honor him with warmth in the holy paradise, let Thy holy will be with me, Thy servant: grant, O Lord, warmth to my feet, that I may have mercy on this wanderer and give him my boots for his feet!"

And taking off his boots, Irinarkh gave them to the beggar. From that hour God gave him endurance and warmth: he began to walk barefoot in the frost as though in a warm cell. From that time on he also always wore worn-out clothing.

Such conduct on Irinarkh's part, by diabolical suggestion, was displeasing to the abbot, who began to humble the ascetic in various ways.

Thus he would stand him for about two hours in the frost at prayer opposite the window of the abbot's cell, and afterward would make him ring the bell in the belfry for long periods. Irinarkh bore all this patiently and with meekness, remembering the word of the Lord, "that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). After this the abbot confined Irinarkh for three days and gave him neither food nor drink, all in order to compel him to wear new clothing and to walk in shoes. But this did not help either. Then the abbot sent him back to his former service. Irinarkh continued to walk barefoot in the frost, imitating the patience of Isaac of the Caves, whose feet froze to the stone while he felt no cold.

Irinarkh heard that in Rostov a certain Christ-loving man was being held at the debtors' whipping post by his creditors, and he wished to redeem this man from the whipping post. To this end he set out barefoot for Rostov, though it was then a bitter frost. Having gone about seven versts from the monastery, Irinarkh froze the toes of his feet, and from the cold he returned to the monastery. For three years he suffered with his feet, on which wounds formed and blood flowed, yet even in his illness he did not abandon his rule and continued to labor for God. When the Lord healed Irinarkh of his illness, he again walked without footwear both winter and summer, and again the abbot humbled him for this. The abbot now decided to send Irinarkh to labor outside the monastery. This removal, or banishment, from the house of God deeply grieved the ascetic. He could not endure such persecution and resolved to leave the monastery of Boris and Gleb. Passing through the forests that in those times surrounded the monastery, he was attacked by beasts of prey, wolves and bears, but, protecting himself with the sign of the cross and praying inwardly, he drove them away. Irinarkh went to Rostov and made his way to the Theophany monastery of Abraham. Received with joy by the archimandrite of the monastery, he remained there among the brethren and was soon appointed cellarer of the monastery. Irinarkh began with joy to labor for the brotherhood, without giving up any church service. As cellarer, he saw how the monastery brethren and the other monastic servants took all the monastery's sup-

plies without measure and without restraint, and wasted the monastery's property. Seeing all this, he sighed inwardly and prayed:

"Venerable Abraham, I am no destroyer of your monastery!"

Once, in a dream, Irinarkh saw the Venerable Abraham enter his cell and say:

"Why do you grieve, chosen and righteous seed, and inhabitant of the holy paradise? Why do you grieve over the monastery's disbursements? Give to them without hindrance, for they desired to live here in abundance, while you hunger and go unclothed; and you will live in abundance in the heavenly kingdom and be satisfied with heavenly food, while they will hunger forever. As for this place here, I have entreated and implored the Most High Creator that my house may never lack monastery supplies for the hungry who live here."

Awakening from his sleep, Irinarkh saw no one. From that time he was consoled, and he gave out supplies without hesitation.

Once, standing in church at the Liturgy during the Cherubic Hymn, Irinarkh wept and sobbed so that the whole church could hear. The astonished archimandrite came up to him and said:

"Why do you weep and sob so, honorable elder?"

"My mother has reposed!" answered Irinarkh.

The archimandrite was surprised at his words and himself shed tears. The Liturgy had not yet ended when his brother Andrei came to him and reported that their mother Irene had died. Taking the archimandrite's blessing, the elder went with his brother Andrei to their mother's house and performed an honorable burial.

Having returned to the monastery of Abraham after burying his mother, Irinarkh began to consider another path of salvation: the office of cellarer seemed to him lofty and honorable, while he wished to labor in lowliness and humility.

Leaving the Theophany monastery of Abraham, Irinarkh moved to the Rostov monastery of St. Lazarus[18], settled in a secluded cell, and lived there three years and six months, dwelling in tears and prayer, sorrow and confinement, enduring hunger and taking nothing for sever-

18. The monastery has long since ceased to exist, and in its place stands a parish church of St. Lazarus.

al days in succession. Here the Venerable John the Fool-for-Christ often visited him, and the two ascetics found consolation in spiritual conversation.

The elder Irinarkh never failed to attend the church of God, and often went to the cathedral church of the Most Holy Theotokos and prayed there with tears.

Once, returning from the church service, he sat in his cell and, with tears and sighs, prayed to the passion-bearers of Christ, Boris and Gleb, and cried out:

"Holy passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, and all the brotherhood of the monastery! You have much room in your monastery, and for me, a sinner, there is no room."

As he sat, he dozed off, and in a light sleep he saw the holy passion-bearers coming toward the monastery of Lazarus. He asked them:

"Where are you going, holy passion-bearers Boris and Gleb?"

"We are going for you, elder," they answered. "Go to our monastery!"

He awoke from his sleep and heard someone praying at the window. Opening his little window, he saw an elder of the monastery of Boris and Gleb, named Ephraim, who said:

"Father, the builder Barlaam has sent me to you: come to our monastery in fulfillment of your vow. The builder asks whether you need a cart, or whether you will come to the monastery yourself?"

The elder Irinarkh answered him:

"Peace and blessing to the builder Barlaam. I myself will come to the monastery in due time."

At that time he was already wearing heavy iron chains and fetters on his feet.

Soon he made ready and with great joy set out to fulfill his vow, going to the monastery of Boris and Gleb. On the way, weary from the great weight of his chains, he sat down to rest and fell into a light sleep. In his dream he saw a serpent crawling toward him, wishing to sting him; he struck it in the throat with his staff, and the serpent crawled away. The elder awoke, rose, crossed himself, and went on without any harm.

Catching sight of the monastery, he rejoiced with all his heart, came up to the gates and prayed fervently. Entering the monastery, where the Divine Liturgy was then being celebrated, he went into the church, took his place, prayed, and bowed to the builder. The builder Barlaam was very glad at Irinarch's arrival; he kissed him lovingly and set him beside himself.

Through the envy of the devil, one of the elders named Nicephorus came up and said to the builder:

"Why have you taken in this elder? He does not obey the hegumen, he goes about in old and shabby garments and barefoot, and he wears many iron fetters on himself."

But the builder Barlaam, with his staff, pushed away this elder who was acting at the devil's instigation, and received Irinarch again into the monastery with joy, and gave him a separate cell.

The Venerable Irinarch went to the church without fail, and, standing in fear and trembling, prayed diligently before the holy icons. He gazed especially often at the image of the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His sufferings. Once, standing before this icon, he turned to God in tears with this prayer:

"O Righteous Sun, our most bright Light, Lord Jesus Christ, Lover of Mankind! Thou, O Lord, didst endure such great suffering: the Crucifixion, the mockery, the spitting, the blow upon the cheek, the giving of vinegar and gall to drink; and for our salvation Thou didst bear all this from Thine own creation, from the senseless and lawless assembly of the Jews and from the envy of these men! Now, O Lord, reveal to me, a sinful and unlearned peasant, how I may be saved and please Thee alone, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, crucified and glorified inseparably with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity! Let Thy will be done concerning me, O Master!"

And at that very hour there came to Irinarch a message from the Lord's icon:

"Go into thy cell, be a recluse, and do not go out: so shalt thou be saved!"

Irinarch went to the builder Barlaam and asked his blessing for seclusion, that is, to pray unceasingly in his cell, according to the Gospel

word of the Lord: "Through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). "For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it" (Mk. 8:35). "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied" (Lk. 6:21). The builder Barlaam blessed him to seclusion, to pray without going out of his cell.

"And God has glorified the Russian land and the house of the great Passion-bearers of Christ, Boris and Gleb, and of our Venerable Fathers Theodore and Paul in the present time!" exclaims the compiler of the Life, the disciple of Irinarch, the monk Alexander. "He has glorified it with most wondrous men, sufferers, and teachers and instructors!"

From that time Irinarch boldly undertook a new ascetic labor: he began to pray in his cell without going out, remembering the ancient monks of the first times, how they lived in the wildernesses, on islands, and in caves, did not love the perishable world, and did not wish even to look at its vanity.

Beginning his ascetic labor, Irinarch forged for himself an iron chain three sazhens long and fastened himself with it to a wooden stool. All his movement was limited only by the length of this chain. Besides this chain, he laid upon himself other iron weights and labored in them in the sweat of his brow. He endured much mockery and derision from the brethren, but bore it with meekness and prayed to God for them:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Do not impute this to them as sin; they know not what Thy servants do, O Master!"

At this time there came to Irinarch a certain man named Alexis, who was zealous for his way of life: his many sufferings, fasting and prayer, his strength and humility, and the heavy fetters which he unceasingly wore on his body. He begged Irinarch to accept him and to teach him the commandments of the Lord. The elder, seeing that his desire proceeded from a pure heart, received the newcomer with joy and love, and, summoning a priest and a deacon, ordered him to be tonsured and named him Alexander. This Alexander became the first disciple of Irinarch and lived all the time with him in the cell under his direction, with great obedience and zeal in fasting and prayer day and night.

An old friend of Irinarch, the blessed John, the Rostov and Moscow fool-for-Christ known as Big Cap, came to visit him in his seclusion. In conversation with the ascetic John says:

"Elder Irinarch, make for yourself a hundred copper crosses, each weighing half a grivenka (that is, a quarter of a pound)."

"It is impossible for me, poor man, to make so many," Irinarch replied, "for I am in poverty."

John answered:

"These are not my words but from the Lord God: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of the Lord shall not pass away' (Mt. 24:35). All that has been said will come to pass; God will help you."

And John spoke to the elder of many other things.

"Do not be surprised that it will be so with you; it is impossible to express or write down everything with human lips. God will give you a horse, and no one but you will be able to ride that God-given horse, nor will anyone sit in your place after you."

These allegorical prophetic words of John about the great and heavy labors of Irinarch came to pass. Taking leave of Irinarch, John prophetically related also the following:

"The Lord God has commanded His faithful disciples from east to west to instruct and teach people, to turn the world away from lawless drunkenness. For this drunkenness the Lord will bring foreigners upon our land. And these foreigners will marvel at your great suffering; their sword will not harm you, and they will glorify you more than the faithful. But I am going to Moscow to the tsar to ask for land for myself: there in Moscow there will be so many visible and invisible devils that one can hardly set up hop-poles. But the Holy Trinity will drive them all out by Its power."

Thus spoke the blessed John of his approaching death and of the invasion of Moscow by the Lithuanians.

After this the elder Irinarch, in agreement with the words of the blessed John, labored and prayed even more diligently, and he kept thinking about the copper crosses. Once he dreamed that a friend came to him and gave him a copper cross, and another time he dreamed that another friend gave him an iron mace. And what happened? A few days

later a friend actually came to him, a townsman named Ivan, and brought, according to the prophecy of the blessed John, a venerable cross, from which Irinarch cast a hundred crosses, giving thanks to God and to the blessed John. Another friend, named Basil, also came and gave him an iron mace, which Irinarch took and added to his other "labors," that is, the weights which he bore.

In the Borisoglebsk monastery there was an elder named Leontius, who was zealous for the virtue and labors of the elder Irinarch; like him, he fettered himself with iron and bore on himself thirty-three copper crosses. He handed these crosses over to Irinarch's disciple Alexander, and he himself went to the elder to ask a blessing to go into the wilderness. The elder Irinarch urged him not to go into the wilderness, lest he be killed by robbers. But Leontius did not cease asking for a blessing.

Unable to dissuade him, Irinarch gave his blessing, but, taking leave of him, said to him with tears:

"Dear child Leontius! You will not return here for the honorable crosses."

"If so," answered Leontius, "then let my crosses remain with you!"

Taking leave of Irinarch, Leontius set out for the Pereyaslavl district, to the monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos at Kurbuy, and there he was killed by robbers.

Irinarch added the crosses of Leontius to the crosses of his own "labors," and in all he had one hundred and forty-two crosses. For six years the elder labored in a chain three sazhens long; a certain Christ-loving man from the city of Uglich sent the elder another chain, also three sazhens, and in these two chains Irinarch labored for twelve years. One elder of the Borisoglebsk monastery, named Theodoret, had made for himself an iron chain three sazhens long and labored in it for twenty years and five weeks, but the hegumen Hermogenes ordered him to attend the monastery services and to labor for the brethren. Theodoret gave his chain to Irinarch, whose chain thus became nine sazhens long, and in such a chain he continued to labor. In all he spent twenty-five years in chains.

The severe life of Irinarch and his stern teaching word served as a rebuke to those monks who did not strive to keep their monastic vows and in many things violated them. Such monks of the Borisoglebsk brotherhood, incited by the enemy's suggestion, approached the hegumen Hermogenes, condemning Irinarch's way of life and complaining of him.

"The elder Irinarch," they said, "sits in seclusion and fasts, wears on himself many heavy irons, does not drink intoxicating drink, and eats little, and he also teaches the brethren to do the same: to remain 'in labors' and to fast, and not to take intoxicating drink into their mouths, saying that this is the greatest evil; the monks, he says, should be like Angels, grieving over nothing and sparing not their flesh: 'Through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God' (Acts 14:22); he does not bid the brethren attend the services, that is, the monastery works, but lays upon them great 'labors.'"

At the enemy's suggestion and from his own lack of mercy, the hegumen Hermogenes gave ear to these slanders and exiled the elder Irinarch from the monastery, not fearing God and not respecting the ascetic feats and labors of the elder. The elder Irinarch humbly submitted, remembering the word of the Lord: "If they drive you out of one house, flee to another, and I am with you until the end of the age" (Mt. 10:23, 28:20).

Exiled from the Borisoglebsk monastery, Irinarch again went to Rostov and settled once more in the monastery of St. Lazarus, where he spent a year and two weeks, persisting unceasingly in fasting and prayer and thinking on the hour of death.

Meanwhile the hegumen Hermogenes recognized his unjust treatment of Irinarch, repented before the brethren, and sent one of the monks to call Irinarch back. The messenger said:

"Father, do not remember our offence against you; go and fulfil your promise to our monastery, to the holy Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb."

Elder Irinarch returned to the monastery, praying:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, deprive me not of Thy eternal goods; grant me, a sinful old man, to endure to the fulfilment of my promise."

Laying the whole blame for his departure from the monastery upon himself, he said:

"Lord, I dwell in this prison contrary to the brethren; they are righteous and bring Thee righteous labours, while I, foul as I am, am deprived of virtue."

He entered his cell again, once more put upon himself his iron "labours," and began to strive, praying for the Tsar and for all Orthodox Christians, and loving those who hated him as his own soul.

The Lord granted Irinarch the gift of clairvoyance, the discernment of the secrets of the human soul. People came to him from many cities and asked for, and received, his blessing. Many God-loving people brought him alms; he received them and gladly distributed them to the poor and to wanderers, supplying them with food and clothing.

He taught all who came to him the commandments, turning them away from sins and reproving their secret transgressions; receiving his blessing, they turned to the way of the commandments of the Lord.

In the Boris and Gleb monastery there was an elder named Tikhon. Pondering how he might please God, he made himself "labours," forged an iron chain, and sat in these "labours" for seven years. At that time the Polish and Lithuanian lords were already carrying out their devastations and ravagings in Rus', an invasion that had been foretold to Irinarch by the blessed fool-for-Christ John. Elder Tikhon, fearing an attack by the lords, left the monastery, and gave his iron chain to Irinarch; the chain by then was twenty sazhens long. In this long chain Irinarch continued to labour as before, giving his hands no rest: now he knotted horsehair mats, now klobuks, now prepared clothing for the poor. He constantly gave alms to the destitute, helped the needy, defended the weak against the oppression of the strong, and prayed to God for all. Sometimes he went for long periods without seeing people at all, and from his heavy ascetic labours he would sometimes fall ill, a sickness he always rejoiced in and gave thanks to God for. He slept only at night, and then but an hour, two, or three, and he beat his body with his iron club, while offering prayer.

Even before the Lithuanian invasion, during a light sleep, Irinarch had a vision: the city of Moscow was laid waste by the Lithuanians, the

whole Russian realm was taken captive and burned in places. Waking, he wept inconsolably over the impending captivity and devastation of the holy churches of God. When he had somewhat been comforted in his weeping, suddenly a light shone upon him from above, and from this light a voice was heard:

"Go to Moscow and tell them that all this will come to pass."

He made the sign of the cross over himself and offered a prayer. The same voice was heard a second time:

"So it shall be!"

The elder crossed himself a second time and began to pray:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God! Have mercy on me, a sinner, lest I be tempted: I am the servant of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and I do not desire to see anything in this world."

But the same voice was heard a third time:

"Do not disobey, but act according to this voice: all will be so for this disobedient generation."

The elder feared the vision and the word from on high, and summoned the hegumen and told him everything. The hegumen told him to go to Moscow and announce to Tsar Basil Ivanovich[19] that the Moscow realm and the whole Russian land were destined for captivity by the Lithuanians.

Elder Irinarch set out for Moscow. On the way, at Pereyaslavl, he stopped at a crossroads in the stable-yard of the Nikitsky monastery, and sent for his friend, the Nikitsky deacon Onuphry, while he himself went to pray to St. Nicetas, the wonderworker of Pereyaslavl, and to venerate his relics. Deacon Onuphry was at that time gravely ill with a fever, so that, tormented by chills, he climbed into the oven to warm himself. There was an opinion that this sickness had come from the snares of the devil. Deacon Onuphry, by the blessing of Elder Irinarch, had put an end at Pereyaslavl to the superstitious veneration of a large stone that lay beyond the Boris and Gleb Pereyaslavl monastery. Each year on the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul a multitude of people, men, women and children, gathered at this stone, and honour was paid

19. Here is meant Tsar Basil Ivanovich Shuisky, who reigned from 1606 to 1610.

to the stone. The deacon ordered the stone thrown into a pit, so that the people would no longer gather around it. This exploit of Onuphry was not pleasing to many; the pious deacon endured reproaches, abuse and mockery from many, even from his own kin and from the clergy; he suffered slander and losses in lawsuits, and moreover sickness befell him. But all this Deacon Onuphry bore and endured with steadfastness, did not murmur, trusting in the mercy of God and remembering the hour of death, and did not turn for healing to the enemies of God, the various sorcerers. As soon as Onuphry entered Irinarch's presence, the elder noticed his grievous illness, and, kissing him, gave him a quarter of a loaf, blessed him and said:

"From this food, be well!"

And the deacon at once felt relief and became well. Irinarch came to Moscow together with his disciple, the elder Alexander. They arrived at night, an hour before dawn. In the morning they went to the cathedral church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos and prayed to the Lady and to the wonderworkers Metropolitan Peter and Jonah. One boyar's son, named Simeon, went to the Tsar and announced the elder's arrival. The Tsar rejoiced and ordered that Irinarch come to the Annunciation Cathedral. The elder came into the church, prayed to the Most Holy Theotokos, blessed the Tsar with the honourable cross, and kissed him. The Tsar also kissed the elder lovingly, and marvelled at the great "labours" that he bore upon himself. The elder said to Tsar Basil Ivanovich:

"The Lord God has revealed to me, a sinful old man, that I have seen the city of Moscow taken captive by the Poles, and the whole Russian state. And so, leaving my long sitting in prison, I myself have come to tell you this. And you, stand for the faith of Christ with courage and valour."

Having said this, Irinarch made his way out of the church. Tsar Basil Ivanovich took the elder by one arm, and his disciple Alexander by the other.

The Tsar told the elder to bless the Tsaritsa also. The elder did not disobey, but went with the Tsar into the Tsaritsa's chamber to bless Tsaritsa Maria Petrovna, and then came out of the chamber. The Tsar-

itsa sent two towels after the elder, but he would not take them. Tsar Basil urged him:

"Take them, for God's sake!"

But Irinarch said to the Tsar:

"I have not come for gifts; I have come to tell you the truth!"

The Tsar escorted Irinarch from the Tsaritsa's chamber and ordered a boyar in the palace to feed the elder. Then the Tsar ordered that his own carriage and a groom be given to the elder, and that he be escorted as far as the Boris and Gleb monastery. Having eaten bread at the boyar's, Irinarch set out on the return journey, having spent only twelve hours in Moscow.

Returning to the Boris and Gleb monastery, Irinarch entered his cell and once more gave himself over to his labours and ascetic feats in fasting and prayer, while he sent the Tsar's groom and carriage back to Moscow, having prayed that the Lord would appease His wrath and have mercy on Moscow, as of old He had on Nineveh.

Some time after the journey of the Venerable Irinarch to Moscow and the prophecy of the calamities, the Lithuanians, fierce and savage people and merciless revilers, appeared in the Russian land. In those days all subjects of the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom were called "Lithuanians" among us: Poles, or Lyakhs, Lithuanians proper, and Russians from White and Little Rus'; among these Little Russians there were many Cossacks. In faith almost all our enemies were Catholics or Uniates, who spared no Orthodox churches or other holy things. They began to take captive the Russian land and to slay its inhabitants, and conquered many cities; for example, they burned the city of Dmitrov, defiled the churches of God, overthrew the Holy Tables, stripped them of their vestments, tore the revetments from the icons, threw the icons down, plundered the books, and often set the churches themselves on fire. Many of the Russians, fearing the sword, acknowledged their power, paid tribute and provisions. Many cities submitted to them. In 1609 the city of Rostov the Great was taken and burned; the cathedral church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos was defiled, the reliquaries of the great wonderworkers Leontius and Isaiah, and all the church furnishings and treasury, were plundered. A multi-

tude of people of both sexes and every age were put to the sword. The Orthodox then suffered much from the weight of taxes, and, seeing no relief, many cities began to shut themselves up against the enemy. This was the time when, under Tsar Basil Ivanovich Shuisky, our enemies set up a second False Dmitry and demanded submission to him or to his patron, the Polish king.

Intending to seize Moscow and the Tsar's throne, the enemies gathered around Moscow, and from there made raids and devastations in various directions. The second impostor established a camp at the village of Tushino.

The enemies did not leave in peace even the Boris and Gleb monastery, where Irinarch laboured. A certain enemy voivode, Mikulinsky, having ravaged the city of Rostov, burned the posads near Yaroslavl, and laid waste the city of Uglich, came to the monastery of Boris and Gleb at Ustye. Here he, with many lords, entered the elder's cell and began to test his faith:

"In whom do you believe?"

"I believe in the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," the elder answered.

"And which earthly tsar do you have?"

And the elder declared in a loud voice:

"I have the Russian Tsar Basil Ivanovich: I live in Russia, and I have the Russian Tsar, and I have no other, nor have I anywhere."

One of the lords said to the elder:

"You, elder, are a traitor: you believe neither in our king nor in Dmitry."

The elder answered:

"I am in no way afraid of your mortal sword, and I will not betray my faith or the Russian Tsar. If for this you cut me down, I shall endure it with joy. There is little blood in me for you, but my living God has such a sword as will strike you down invisibly, without flesh and without blood, and will send your souls into eternal torment."

Pan Mikulinsky marvelled: so great was the faith in the elder.

Some time later the Russian forces began to gather against the enemies. Prince Michael Skopin-Shuisky came from Novgorod with Rus-

sian and Swedish troops and took his stand at Kalyazin, against the Lithuanians. From near the Monastery of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius, Pan Sapieha came against him with an army. But by God's help, through the intercession of the great wonderworkers and at the word of the elder, the Muscovite force defeated the Lithuanians, and Pan Sapieha with his army withdrew and halted two nights' march from the Monastery of Boris and Gleb, at Ustye, intending to burn the monastery and slay the brethren. Great grief and sorrow arose in the monastery, and the brethren took leave of one another. The elder Irinarch began to comfort his disciples Alexander and Cornelius:

"Let us not fear burning or slaughter at the hands of the unbelievers. If they burn us or slay us, we shall become new martyrs and receive crowns from Christ our God in heaven."

Then Irinarch turned with fervent prayer to the Lord God, asking deliverance from the threatened calamity and that mercy and compassion for the holy monastery be planted in the hearts of the enemies. At that time Pan Rotmistr Kirbitsky came to the monastery and entered the elder's cell. He received his blessing and marvelled at the elder's labours. Returning to Sapieha, he said:

"In the monastery of Boris and Gleb I found three elders in chains."

Sapieha himself wished to see the elder, and sent a man ahead to announce his coming. The elder said to the messenger:

"If the lord wishes to visit, let him come to us of his own will."

Hearing such an answer, Sapieha came to the monastery, entered the elder's cell, and said to him:

"Bless me, father! How do you endure such great torment?"

The elder answered him:

"For the sake of God I endure this prison and torment in this cell."

Many of the lords began to say to Sapieha:

"This elder does not pray for our king or for Dmitry, but prays to God for Tsar Shuisky."

The elder replied:

"I was born and baptized in Russia, and I pray to God for the Russian Tsar."

Sapieha said:

"Great is the truth in the father: in whatever land one lives, to that tsar one must serve."

"Have you been robbed, elder?" asked the lords.

The elder answered:

"The cruel Pan Sushinsky came and plundered the whole monastery, not only me, a sinful elder."

Sapieha said:

"For that, Pan Sushinsky has been hanged."

After this the elder gave Pan Sapieha such counsel:

"Return, lord, to your own land; enough of waging war in Russia! But if you do not leave Russia, or come again into Russia and do not heed the word of God, you will be killed in Russia."

Pan Sapieha was moved in his soul by these words and said:

"What can I give you in return? Neither here nor in other lands have I seen a monk so steadfast and so fearless."

The elder said:

"I am no opponent of the Holy Spirit; by the Holy Spirit I am nourished. And as the Holy Spirit inspires you, so you will act."

Sapieha said:

"Forgive me, father!" And bowing, he went out in peace.

Afterwards Sapieha sent the elder five rubles as alms and forbade his troops to do any harm to the monastery. Soon Sapieha with his army set out for Pereyaslavl, and in the monastery there was great joy that God had delivered it from ruin; the elder, for his part, unceasingly prayed to God with tears for the deliverance of all the Russian land from captivity.

After the victory at Kalyazin, Prince Michael Shuisky began to pursue the Lithuanians, and from Pereyaslavl sent to the elder Irinarch for a blessing. Irinarch sent him a blessing, a prosphora and a cross, and bade the messenger say:

"Be bold, and God will help you!"

The prince sent a detachment to the Aleksandrovskaya Sloboda, and, with God's help, the Russian warriors defeated the Lithuanians. Soon the prince himself went there and halted in the settlement. The enemies began to gather against him from near the besieged Trinity

Monastery and from near Moscow. The prince learned of this and was greatly troubled. He again sent a messenger to the Venerable Irinarch. The elder again sent him a blessing and a prosphora and bade him say:

"Be bold, Prince Michael, and do not fear: God will help you."

And the prince defeated the Lithuanians. Afterwards the prince sent one of his voivodes with an army to the Trinity, and the voivode passed safely into the monastery. The prince again sent a messenger to Irinarch with gifts, and the elder, sending a blessing and a prosphora, bade him go to the Trinity, which the prince did. Hearing of this, Sapieha made for Dmitrov. The prince came safely to the Trinity, entered the monastery, and prayed to the Holy Trinity and to Venerable Sergius, giving glory to God, to the Most Holy Theotokos and to the Russian wonderworkers. The army sent against Sapieha defeated him at Dmitrov; Sapieha fled to the Monastery of Joseph of Volokolamsk. At the same time the second false Dmitry fled from Tushino to Kaluga, where he was afterwards killed. After these successes Prince Michael came from the Trinity to Moscow, prayed in the cathedral church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, venerated the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Vladimir and the relics of the wonderworkers, and returned joyfully to his house.

The elder Irinarch, who knew of all these events, sent his disciple Alexander to Prince Michael in Moscow for the venerable cross which had been given to him for help and for the driving out of the adversary. The prince gave up the cross and sent the elder a letter of thanks and gifts. Alexander delivered all this to his teacher.

Receiving the holy cross with joy, Venerable Irinarch offered this prayer:

"Glory to Thee, Sovereign Lover of mankind, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, who didst suffer crucifixion and death on this honourable and life-giving Cross for our salvation, and who hast shown to this our race mercy and wonders through this Honourable Cross, and help to Prince Michael against the Lithuanians, for victory and for their expulsion, as of old under Emperor Constantine against the adversaries."

Soon after the cross was sent away, Prince Michael departed to the Lord. The enemy of the human race, put to shame by the elder Irinarch, devised new snares against him.

To the Monastery of Boris and Gleb there was sent by Patriarch Hermogenes a new hegumen named Simeon, who proved to be cruel, merciless, intemperate, and given to drunkenness. He ordered the elder Irinarch to go to church to pray; but the elder, bearing on himself heavy iron "labours," could not move freely even about his cell, wasting his flesh day and night in fasting and prayer. The hard-hearted hegumen Simeon, surpassing in cruelty the unbelievers, came with the brethren to the elder's cell and without mercy took away all that the elder had laid by. There remained untaken four poods of honey, and this the disciple Alexander told the elder. On this occasion the elder recalled a certain hermit-recluse who had been robbed by brigands, who left him one thing; the recluse overtook the brigands and told them that they had not taken everything, and the brigands, moved, returned all to the recluse. But now, when at Irinarch's bidding his disciple Alexander informed the hegumen that not everything had been taken, the hegumen proved no more merciful than the brigands of old and took what remained.

That same evening the elder Irinarch saw a youth in white vestments, who stood near him and, looking at him, spoke of the merciless act of the hegumen, and then suddenly vanished. The elder spent the whole night in prayer. In the morning the hegumen came again to the elder's cell and ordered the elder to be brought out of the cell: four men took him under the arms and dragged him, while the hegumen with five other men carried his iron chain. As they dragged the elder, they dislocated his left arm and threw him three sazhens from the church. The elder remained in that position for nine hours, praying to the Lord God that He would not count this sin against his persecutors, for they rage in vain, not knowing what they do.

The elder's disciples, Alexander and Cornelius, were separated from Irinarch and sent to other cells.

When Irinarch lay alone, abandoned by all, a youth in shining vestments appeared to him and said:

"God has heard your prayer and your patience: if you ask for anything, it shall be given to you."

After these words the youth became invisible.

Meanwhile Irinarch's disciple Alexander came at night to the former cell and offered prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God! How long, Lord, must we be in this sorrow with our teacher, and endure these beastlike men and drunkards? But let Thy holy will be done!"

And from the honourable crosses there came to him a voice:

"Go to the hegumen and say to him: why do you resist the judgments of God?"

The elder Alexander came to the church to the hegumen and began to say to him:

“Release the elder Irinarch to his cell, on his word, together with his disciples, so that you do not destroy your soul by struggling against the judgments of God.”

The hegumen blessed the elder and both of his disciples. The elder came to his cell, gave thanks to God for deliverance from persecution, and prayed for the gift of patience. And from above there came to him a voice:

"Be bold, My sufferer; I am always with you. I awaited your ascetic labour, and the Angels marvelled at your patience. Now there will no longer be persecutions against you, but a place prepared for you awaits you in the Kingdom of Heaven."

The elder Irinarch heard the voice but saw no one, and in trembling he only made the prayer with tears:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner, and deliver me from temptation," and he signed himself with the sign of the Cross.

After that, not long afterwards, the hegumen Simeon was removed from the monastery.

Meanwhile, after the repose of Prince Michael Skopin-Shuisky, the Lithuanians took heart again, and the enemies gathered once more about Moscow. The Muscovites themselves, under the influence of the enemies' flattery, deposed Tsar Basil and admitted the Poles into the

city of Moscow, and they sent the former Tsar Basil Shuisky into exile in Poland. Moscow was subjected to captivity and devastation.

The Lithuanians again began to lay waste the regions around Moscow over a wide expanse. In 1612 the Lithuanians came to Rostov. From fear of them, the hegumen of the Monastery of Sts. Boris and Gleb fled with all the brethren to the White Lake, but the elder Irinarchus remained with his disciples in his cell, praying unceasingly to God. The Lithuanians occupied the monastery and remained in it for ten weeks. One lord once came to Irinarchus's cell and said:

"Bless me, father! Sapieha has been killed near Moscow, by your word!"

The elder answered:

"Go you also back to your own land, and you will live; but if you do not leave our land, you too shall be slain!"

The lord departed and related the words of Irinarchus to all the other lords. And the lords began to come to the elder, and the elder said to them:

"Go to your own land; if you do not go, you will be killed."

There came to the elder the son of a voivode, named Voin, and asked the elder's blessing to go to his own land. The elder blessed him; the voivode's son bowed to the ground, went to his father, and told of the blessing. Then the voivode John Kamensky himself came to the elder's cell, bowed to the elder to the ground, and said:

"Bless me too, father, to go to my own land, as you blessed my son."

And the elder blessed him and said:

"Only do not touch the monastery, the brethren, or the city of Rostov."

And Pan Kamensky went away to his land, touching neither the monastery nor the city of Rostov. In the monastery there was again joy at the deliverance from danger.

Meanwhile, both in Moscow itself and throughout the whole land, there was great confusion and sorrow, because the Lithuanians had settled in Moscow. Everywhere, and especially in Nizhny Novgorod, people prayed that the Lord God would show His mercy, cleanse the

city of Moscow from the enemies, and deliver the land from great affliction.

The men of Nizhny Novgorod knew Prince Dmitry Mikhailovich Pozharsky, who lived near Nizhny. The men of Nizhny Novgorod began to beseech him to march to Moscow and cleanse it of the enemies. They began to gather and give him men, money, and provisions for the war. To assist and support him they chose Kozma Minin, a townsman of Nizhny Novgorod. Both the military leader and the elected representative of the land were of one mind and did everything by common counsel and agreement. And God gave them His help. They set out with all the forces they had gathered for the city of Yaroslavl and stopped there. From all the cities Russian people began to gather to them, desiring to stand for the faith and fatherland and to die for the holy churches of God.

Hearing of the arrival of Prince Dmitry Mikhailovich Pozharsky with an army in Yaroslavl, one of the leaders of the Russian militia standing under Moscow, Prince Dmitry Timofeevich Trubetskoy, sent a messenger bidding them come quickly to Moscow. But Prince Pozharsky and Kozma Minin feared to go to Moscow, for among the Russian militia there was no unity, and one of the leaders of the Russian army, Ivan Zarutsky, had killed under Moscow another voivode, Prokofy Petrovich Lyapunov.

The elder Irinarchus, who watched over everything and understood all things, sent to Prince Dmitry Mikhailovich Pozharsky his blessing and a prosphora, and bade him march to Moscow with the whole army, without fearing Ivan Zarutsky.

"You will see the glory of God," the elder instructed that the prince be told.

The prince rejoiced at the elder's words, and without fear went with all his company toward Moscow, making a halt at Rostov. From there Prince Pozharsky and Kozma Minin went purposely to the Monastery of Sts. Boris and Gleb to receive the blessing of the elder Irinarchus in person. The elder blessed them for the march to Moscow and gave them his cross for their aid. Having received the blessing and the cross from the elder, the prince joyfully went with the army from Rostov to

Pereyaslavl, and from Pereyaslavl to the Trinity, where he stopped, bowed to the Holy Trinity and to the Venerable Sergius.

From the Trinity Pozharsky sent the voivode Prince Dmitry Lopatin to Moscow to Prince Trubetskoy. Trubetskoy rejoiced, but Zarutsky fled from under Moscow.

Meanwhile new men with supplies had come up to the Lithuanians who were settled in Moscow. Hearing of this, Prince Trubetskoy sent a messenger to Prince Pozharsky, bidding him come quickly to Moscow with the whole host to help. The Nizhny Novgorod voivode immediately set out from the Trinity for Moscow. And by the help of God and the intercession of the wonderworkers of Moscow, the Russians succeeded in overcoming the Lithuanians. After this Prince Pozharsky took possession of Kitay-gorod, so that the Lithuanians remained only in the Moscow Kremlin. Not long afterward the Kremlin too surrendered, and Prince Dmitry Mikhailovich Pozharsky entered the Kremlin, prayed to the Most Holy Theotokos and to the wonderworkers of Moscow.

And there was great joy in Moscow, that the Lord had cleansed Moscow of the Lithuanian people.

But in the Monastery of Sts. Boris and Gleb on the Ustye River there was then great sorrow: the monastery had been plundered and laid waste several times by the Lithuanian people, nothing remained in the monastery, and meanwhile heavy tribute was demanded from it for the feeding of the military men. The hegumen with the brethren and with the monastery peasants came to the elder Irinarchus, asking him to bless his disciple Alexander to be sent to Moscow. The elder heeded their request, left the whole matter to their will, and sent his disciple to Moscow with a petition. He charged him to receive from Prince Pozharsky the honorable cross given for aid against the adversaries.

When Alexander arrived in Moscow, there was great rejoicing because the King of Poland had departed from the city of Vyazma to his own land.

The elder Alexander came to Prince Dmitry Mikhailovich Pozharsky and delivered to him the blessing and prosphora from the elder Irinarchus. The prince rejoiced at the arrival of the messenger from Irinarchus, and gave him a document ordering that the Monastery of Sts.

Boris and Gleb should not be required to furnish provisions for the military men, on account of the Lithuanian devastation. Alexander received the document and the honorable cross from the prince and returned to the monastery.

The hegumen rejoiced, having obtained relief for the monastery, and the Venerable Irinarchus rejoiced too, when Alexander came to his cell, returned the honorable cross, and conveyed the prince's bow.

By the providence of God and by the decision of the whole land—of princes, boyars, voivodes, the most reverend metropolitans, archimandrites and hegumens, and other people—in 1613 the young Prince Michael Feodorovich Romanov was chosen to the royal throne, and was installed as tsar in Moscow, as sovereign over all the lands belonging to Russia, and was crowned with the royal crown. The whole Russian land rejoiced over the new and desired tsar.

But in many places and cities, in Uglich, Vologda, and other surrounding towns, there was great sorrow over the continuing devastations: chiefly, bands of Cossacks shed much Christian blood and laid waste the cities and villages. To cleanse the land of these plunderers and destroyers, Tsar Michael Feodorovich sent his boyar and voivode, Prince Boris Mikhailovich Lykov, with a considerable army. Prince Lykov directed his course to Yaroslavl.

At this time the Lithuanians and Cossacks came to the village of Danilovskoye (now the town of Danilov, Yaroslavl Province). Prince Lykov sent the elder Joachim to the elder Irinarchus for a blessing, as earlier Russian commanders had done. The elder sent the prince a prosphora and a blessing, and bade him go after the Lithuanians. The prince rejoiced at the elder's blessing and set out on the campaign. For two weeks he pursued the enemies, overtook them beyond Kostroma, not reaching Nizhny, and, with the help of God, defeated them, took many prisoners, and sent them to Moscow to the tsar. From there Lykov returned to Vologda against the Cossacks, who were plundering the Vologda and Belozersk districts. The prince sent pursuit after the Cossacks, who from Belozersk had made their way to Uglich, where they stayed for two weeks. Lykov sent his regiments there, and they drove the Cossacks back toward Moscow. The prince himself, following

the enemies toward Moscow, stopped at the Monastery of Sts. Boris and Gleb, prayed to the passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, and received the blessing in person from the elder Irinarchus. Moving on toward Moscow, Prince Lykov overtook the Cossacks, took them prisoner, and brought them to the tsar.

There was great joy at the destruction of the Cossack plundering band, by the mercy of God and the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos and the wonderworkers of Moscow, and by the prayers and tears of the recluse Irinarchus.

From that time quiet settled upon Rus. The elder Irinarchus, as before, prayed unceasingly and shed tears, fasted, received strangers, and defended the wronged from the oppression of the mighty.

Even during his life God glorified His servant Irinarchus with miracles: through his prayers God healed the sick and the demon-possessed, and his blessing had miraculous power for those who came to him in faith. The compiler of the Life of Irinarchus, his disciple Alexander, recorded nine miracles of God accomplished through the prayers of the recluse and sufferer of Borisoglebsk during his lifetime.

The sick of many kinds of ailment came to Venerable Irinarchus, or were brought to him, especially those possessed by unclean spirits. The elder would pray, making the sick also pray and fast; he laid his honorable cross upon them, often placed a portion of his chain upon the sick, or commanded them to lie upon these chains. Sometimes the sick sent to Irinarchus from afar for his blessing, which he gave, sending with it a prosphora or a cross, with which water was hallowed and given the sick to drink. Thus the Venerable Father healed a demoniac from the village of Davydovo[20] by laying his cross upon him; another demoniac from Voshchadinikovo[21] was healed when his disciple Alexander laid the elder's chain upon the violent man and brought the sick man to the elder and to the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. Upon the voivode, the boyar's son Matthew Tikhmenev, who fell ill with a derangement of

20. The village of Davydovo lies 20 versts from the Monastery of Borisoglebsk along the road to Uglich.

21. The village of Voshchadinikovo lies 10 versts from the Monastery of Borisoglebsk, to the right of the Uglich road.

mind in the Monastery of Borisoglebsk, Venerable Irinarchus laid his cross and bound him to his chain, setting two soldiers to guard him; so the sick man spent a whole night, and in the morning the elder sent the voivode to church to pray; he came from the Divine Liturgy healthy, but the Venerable Father commanded him to fast the entire week, to eat no meat and to drink neither wine nor beer. In a similar way the peasant Nicephorus, who had lost his wits in the monastery, received healing: the elder ordered his cross laid upon him and him bound with a chain to a bedstead; after an hour the elder removed the cross and chain and commanded the sick man to lie upon his chains, where he slept a whole night, and rose completely healthy.

From drinking of, or being sprinkled with, water hallowed by the cross sent by Irinarchus, there received healing a boyar's son named Roman, from a headache; a peasant woman, from an affliction of the eyes; a demoniac woman in Uglich; and the wife of a clerk in Moscow, from some grievous illness.

The time of the repose of Venerable Irinarchus drew near. The righteous and much-suffering man called his disciples and said to them:

"My brethren and fellow-ascetics! I beseech you: behold, now I depart from this life to the Lord my God, Jesus Christ. Pray for me to God and to the Most Pure Theotokos, that after my departure the merciful Angels may take my soul, and that I may escape the snares of the enemies and the aerial toll-houses, through your holy prayers, for I am a sinner. And you, my lords, after my death, abide in fasting and prayer, in labors, in vigil and tears, and likewise in love among yourselves without murmuring, in obedience and submission, for you know Christ's commandment of the Beatitudes."

The Venerable Father spoke all these commandments and gave many other instructions to his disciples.

Seeing their teacher at his last breath, his disciples Alexander and Cornelius were moved to great compunction, and with bitter tears they cried out:

"O our good shepherd and teacher! Behold, now we see you at your last breath: to whom shall we flee, from whom shall we be nourished by instruction, who will care for our sinful souls? But we beseech you: if

you obtain grace before God, after your departure from this life, pray unceasingly for us to God and to the Most Pure Theotokos, as your holiness shall see fit, for all our hidden sufferings are known to you."

The elder Irinarchus said to his disciples:

"I depart from you in body, but in spirit I shall be with you inseparably."

And to this he added:

"If anyone begins to oppress this my monastery, given from above by God and redeemed and obtained from the abbot and the brotherhood, then let God and the Mother of God judge them."

The monastic brotherhood also stood near the one departing. Having given forgiveness in Christ to the brethren and disciples, and the final kiss, the Venerable Father took up prayer, prayed for a long time, and quietly went to the Lord into eternal rest.

The repose of Venerable Irinarchus took place in the year 1616, on the 13th day of January, on the memory of the holy martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus, from Friday to Saturday at the ninth hour of the night. By the blessing and command of the most reverend Metropolitan of Rostov and Yaroslavl, Cyril,[22] the burial of the schemamonk Irinarchus was performed by the abbot of Borisoglebsk, Peter, and his spiritual father, the hieromonk Tikhon; the deacon Titus and his disciples, the elders Alexander and Cornelius, assisted. In accordance with the testament of Venerable Irinarchus, his coffin was placed in the cave prepared by himself.

After the elder Irinarchus there remained his righteous "labors": one hundred and forty-two copper crosses; seven shoulder weights; an iron chain of twenty sazhens, which he wore about his neck; iron fetters for the feet; eighteen copper and iron shackles, which he wore on his arms and chest; bundles which he carried at his belt, weighing one pood; an iron staff, with which he subdued his body and drove away the invisible demons.[23] In these righteous "labors" the elder Irinarchus lived thirty-

22. Cyril IV is mentioned as Metropolitan of Rostov at the death of Tsar Boris Godunov. He was deprived of his see by the False Demetrius. When his successor Philaret, afterwards Patriarch, was taken captive, the people of Rostov recalled Cyril, who held the hierarchal office until his death in 1616.

eight years and four months, and in the world he lived thirty years; in all he lived sixty-eight years and four months.

After the repose of Venerable Irinarchus many miracles took place at his tomb. The compiler of the Life, his disciple Alexander, recorded thirteen miraculous healings from various infirmities, especially from demon-possession. The life-giving cross associated with Irinarchus' labors was usually laid upon the sick, sometimes his chain or other burdens he had borne. They also took earth from his tomb and drank water with it. Not a few miracles took place afterwards as well.

Even at the present time, many sufferers often put on themselves one or other of the burdens left after him during the moleben to Venerable Irinarchus, believing in their healing power.

* * *



23. The greater part of the iron chains and other weights which the ascetic Irinarchus bore upon himself are preserved to this day in the Monastery of Sts. Boris and Gleb: partly in the church side-chapel where the Venerable's shrine stands, and partly in a separate wooden building on the site of the Venerable's former cell. A detailed description and illustration of these objects may be seen in the edition of Bishop Amphilochius mentioned above. In 1878, by the blessing of the Most Reverend Nil, Archbishop of Yaroslavl and Rostov, a portion of the chains and other objects from the "labors" of Irinarchus was transferred, at the request of the villagers, to the church of Irinarchus's native village of Kondakovo. See on this in the book by N. N. Korsunsky mentioned above.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 14

14 января

New Calendar January 14 · Old Calendar January 27 (civil dates)

First Slaughter of the Venerable Fathers at Sinai and Raithou

Первое избиение преподобных отцов в Синае и Раифе

On the 14th day of January we commemorate the twofold slaughter of monks who lived in the monasteries and caves of Mount Sinai[1] and in the desert of Raithou, on the seacoast bordering Sinai. The first slaughter took place in the fourth century. It is described by Ammonius, an Egyptian monk and eyewitness of the event. Ammonius relates it thus:

"Once, when I was sitting in my humble cell in the land of Alexandria, in a place called Kanobos, the thought came to me to go to Palestine. I could not calmly look on while Christians suffered endless torments at the hands of impious persecutors, and our holy father, Patriarch Peter, was compelled to move from place to place and hide, deprived of the possibility of firmly governing his rational flock. At the same time I desired to venerate the holy places in Jerusalem, where our Lord Jesus Christ walked, accomplishing the mystery of His providence for us. When I came there I greatly rejoiced over all the wondrous works of God, and warmly thanked the merciful Lord that He had deemed me worthy to venerate the holy places. Then I set out with some monks into the desert and, with God's help, after eighteen days

1. Mount Sinai is situated in the middle of the Sinai Peninsula; it is properly a group of mountains composed of granite rocks, intersected and surrounded by steep and rugged valleys; among the Arabs it is now called the mountain "Tur" or "Jebel Tur Sina." In the Old Testament, at Mount Sinai the Israelites entered into covenant with God and received from Him the commandments of the Law (Ex. 20). In the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., Mount Sinai was famed for the abundance of Christian desert-dwellers who lived in its gorges and caves.

reached Mount Sinai and venerated the holy places there. While I remained there I enjoyed fellowship and conversation with the angel-like Sinaite fathers, and daily, for the benefit of my soul, I came to the cells of each of them. They had this rule: all the days they sat in silence in their cells; but on Saturday evening, at the approach of the Lord's day, all gathered in the church and together performed the All-night Vigil; having communed in the morning at the Divine Liturgy of the holy and immortal Mysteries of Christ, each of them again returned to his cell. Their appearance was like that of Angels: from strict abstinence and unceasing vigilance their bodies were wasted, and they lived like the incorporeal, not partaking of anything that can stir up and nourish the passions. They did not eat wine, oil, or bread at all, but were content with a small quantity of dates or acorns, and only by these sustained their life. Yet for wayfarers the abbot sometimes had bread as well.

Some days after that, a multitude of barbarians called Blemmyes[2] suddenly fell upon that land. They mercilessly slew all the fathers they found in the vicinity. We who lived near the tower[3] were dismayed and alarmed; we hastily gathered into a fortified place together with our holy father the abbot, named Doulas, for he was truly a servant of Christ, distinguished among all by special patience and meekness, for which some even called him Moses. The said barbarians slew all the fathers who lived in Horeb[4], in Tephrovilla; they put many saints to death in Kidara, and laid waste the other surroundings of Mount Sinai. They approached us too and, meeting no resistance anywhere, almost destroyed us. But the merciful God, who shows His help to those who call upon Him with all their heart, sent down a great flame upon the summit of the mountain, and we saw that the whole mountain was covered with smoke, and fire came out of it, rising to heaven. Seeing

2. The Blemmyes are the present-day Bedouins, a Libyan predatory people who lived to the south and west of Egypt; these barbarians were feared even by the Roman emperors, so that Diocletian sought to secure himself against them with money and the cession of lands.

3. *Pyrgos* — from Greek, a fortress, a tower; this was the name for fortified watchtowers in the monasteries.

4. Horeb — a mountain in the Arabian desert, the western height of the same mountain range of which Sinai forms the eastern part. Here God appeared to Moses in the bush which burned and was not consumed (Ex. 3). Near this mountain were also the Kedar and Tephrouil mentioned here.

this, we trembled and nearly died of fear. Falling prostrate on the ground, we prayed to the Lord that the threatening calamity might pass us by. Terror fell upon the barbarians when they saw the fire, and they at once took to flight, some even throwing away their weapons and leaving their camels, for the sight of that terrible fire was utterly unbearable to them. We gave thanks and glorified God, who does not forsake to the end those who turn to Him. After that we came down from the tower and found in various places thirty-eight fathers slain by the sword, each of whom had been killed where he was seized. Their bodies bore a multitude of various wounds—and who could describe the manner of their martyr's death? Two of them, Isaiah and Sabbas, were still alive, but were badly wounded and barely breathing. We at once buried the slain fathers with great tears and took care of the living. And who could be so cruel and merciless as not to lament bitterly so many and such fathers, righteous and holy men, pitifully stretched out on the ground? One had his head cut off entirely, another had it held on only by the skin on one side; one was cut in two, another had his hands and feet severed, one had his eyes gouged out, another was split in two from head to foot. And who could describe in detail all that we saw as we gathered and buried the bodies of the saints? Two brothers still living lay suffering grievously. One of them, named Isaiah, died at the second hour of the night; the other, Sabbas, remained alive, and there was hope of his recovery, for his wounds were not especially grave. He gave thanks to God for his sufferings, but grieved that he had not been found worthy to die together with the holy fathers, and said with weeping:

"Woe is me, a sinner! Woe is me, who have not entered the number of the holy fathers who suffered and died for Christ! Woe is me, an unprofitable servant, rejected at the eleventh hour (cf. Mt. 20:6), who already stood on the threshold of the saving Kingdom of Christ but did not enter it!"

With tears he prayed to God and said:

"Lord God Almighty, who sent down for the salvation of the human race Thy Only-begotten Son, the one and good Lover of mankind, do not separate me from the holy fathers who died before me, but let their

number of forty be completed through me! Be pleased to grant this, Lord Jesus Christ, for from my birth I have been Thy follower and have loved Thee alone!"

In the midst of such prayer, on the fourth day after the slaughter of the holy fathers, he yielded up his spirit into the hands of the Lord.

While we were still grieving and weeping, a certain Ishmaelite[5] came to us and reported that the barbarians had slain all the ascetics who lived in the inner desert called Raithou[6]. This desert, lying more than two days' journey from us, was in the seaside places along the shore of the Red Sea. There were twelve springs of water there and, as the Book of Numbers says (Num. 33:9), seventy palm trees, whose number afterwards greatly increased. We asked this man under what circumstances and how many fathers had been slain, but he could tell us nothing of this, for he himself had heard from others only that the fathers living in Raithou had all been slain without exception, from the oldest to the youngest. A few hours later another man confirmed this report to us. And some days later one of the monks of that place came to settle on Mount Sinai. Learning of him, the abbot of Sinai, Father Doulas, began carefully to question him, wishing to learn in detail all that had befallen the holy fathers, and also how he himself had managed to escape. Then the monk related the following:

"I lived with them a little, fathers—only about twenty years—but there were some who lived long: some forty years, others sixty, and some even seventy. The locality is very level and very wide; in length it stretches seventy stadia, bounded on the east by a mountain—as it were, by some wall—as far as the Red Sea[7]. Many hermits dwelt there who, according to the word of the Apostle (Heb. 11:38), wandered in deserts and mountains, in caves and clefts of the earth. At the foot of the mountain stood a church, into which these truly heavenly men gathered every week. Living on earth, they were like Angels in soul and manner of life. They so wasted their bodies as though they were

5. The Ishmaelites — descendants of Ishmael, son of the Patriarch Abraham.
6. Raithou — a place near Pharan on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, at a distance of two days' journey from Sinai.
7. The Chermnoe, or so-called Red Sea, is a long narrow strait of the Indian Ocean, separating the Arabian Peninsula from Egypt and Asia from Africa.

not their own but another's; their souls they adorned not with some single virtue but with very many. Wishing to depict their sufferings and death, and in general all the temptation the demons wrought upon them, I cannot, beloved, recount in order all their virtues. But I will tell you of one or two of the fathers, and this will suffice for you to form an idea of the life of all the rest."

There was among them an elder named Moses. Born in the neighboring land of Pharan[8], he had loved the monastic life from his youth. He was the superior of the fathers who had lived there before, having spent seventy-three years in monasticism. Living in a single cave near the monastery, he was truly a second Elijah the Tishbite[9], for the Lord granted him whatever he asked of Him. By wondrous signs and the healing of every kind of sickness, he converted to Christianity all the inhabitants within the bounds of Pharan, as well as the Ishmaelites who lived in that land. Seeing the miracles and the cures wrought by Moses, all were filled with faith in Christ, and, receiving baptism, they entered the Holy Church of Christ. The holy father healed many demoniacs, for by the grace of Christ he had power even over the demons. From the very beginning of his ascetic life he never tasted bread, although he had a small supply of it for travelers; this bread was given to him by Egyptians who visited him. He himself was content with a few dates and plain water; from the same date palm he also made his clothing. He spent his time in a strict silence, as no one else did, breaking it only for those who came to him to confess their thoughts; such he received with attention and gentleness. He slept very little, and that only after the morning service; he spent the whole night without sleep. Throughout the entire Great Fast, until Holy Thursday, he spoke with no one. During all this time his food consisted of about twenty dates and his drink

8. Pharan — a desert and mountainous country between Palestine, Egypt, Idumaea and the Sinai Peninsula. At Mount Pharan God appeared in the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the 70 elders of Israel (Num. 9:10–30); here David also hid.

9. Elijah the Tishbite — the most glorious of the Old Testament prophets, of the city of Tishbe in Galilee, in the tribe of Naphtali, the most zealous adorer of the True God and the stern denouncer of impiety and idolatry in the times of Ahab and Jezebel, famed for many miracles. He was granted to converse with God on Mount Horeb (3 Kgdms. 19); after his miraculous crossing of the Jordan, he was taken alive to heaven in a fiery chariot, transmitting with his mantle the gift of wonderworking to his successor Elisha.

of a single cup of water, and, according to the testimony of his disciple, this often sufficed him right up to the Passion of Christ[10]. Once during the Great Fast they brought to him for healing Vediane, the chieftain of an Ethiopian tribe, who was possessed by an unclean spirit. When they had come within a stadion of the elder's cell, the unclean spirit threw Vediane to the ground and began to cry out:

"Woe is me! To whom are they leading me! Not for a moment could I tempt and beguile this man!"

After these words he came out of Vediane, and the man was at once healed, believing in Christ together with many others, and afterwards was deemed worthy of holy baptism. I should tell you much else about this righteous man, but for lack of time I must pass it over. He died by the hand of the barbarians who attacked us.

This wondrous and blessed father had a disciple of the same name, also called Moses. Being a native of the land of Thebaid[11], he lived with him in silence for forty-six years, never departing from the rules of his father, and was an example to the other young monks. I too lived at first together with him, but later, because of his extreme abstinence, I separated from him. He too was slain together with the holy fathers. It would be very profitable to recall and relate the life and virtues of each of these fathers. But, for lack of time, passing over the others, I will speak of only one more righteous man.

Among them there was a father named Joseph, a native of Analiti. Living two stadia from the sea, he had built himself a dwelling with his own hands; he was a man of holy life and truly a wise and virtuous man. He had remained in that place about thirty years; his disciple did not live with him but nearby, in another cell. To this venerable Joseph one of the brethren came once for instruction. He knocked at the door, but, hearing no answer, he looked through the little window and saw the elder standing in the middle of the cell as if in flame from head to foot. He fell down from fear and lay in a stupor, like a dead man, until

10. That is, until the Matins of Great Friday, when the Passion, that is, the sufferings of Christ, are commemorated.

11. The Thebaid — the region of the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes; by this name, after the principal city, was also called all of Upper (Southern) Egypt.

two o'clock. When he came to himself, he sat down at the door of the cell. The elder, absorbed in contemplation of God, did not know what had happened. At five o'clock the brother knocked again. The elder admitted him and asked:

"When did you come, my son?"

“About four hours or more have passed since I came,” he answered, “but I did not knock until now, so as not to disturb you, Father.”

The holy elder perceived that the brother knew of what had happened to him; he said nothing to him about it, and, giving him profitable instruction, dismissed him in peace. But after this brother had gone, the wondrous elder, fearing human glory, left his cell and went into hiding. Some days later his disciple Gelasius, coming to the elder's cell, no longer found him. However much he searched for him in that wilderness, all his searching was in vain. With bitter tears he returned to the elder's cell and settled in it, so as at least to find consolation for his soul in this.

Six years passed, and then one day, at the ninth hour, someone knocked at the door of the cell. Going out, Gelasius suddenly saw his abba standing near the cell. Astonished at his unexpected appearance, he thought it might be a spirit, but nonetheless he joyfully said to him:

"Make a prayer, Father."

The elder made the prayer, kissed his disciple, and then said to him:

"You did well, my son, to ask first for a prayer, for the snares of the devil are manifold."

The brother said to him:

"Why did you wish to go away from the fathers and leave me, your son? I have been in grief and tears until now."

"My son!" answered the elder, "why I went away, God alone knows. Yet know that in truth, until this very time I have not left either this place or you, and there was not a single week in which I did not partake, in the church together with the fathers, of the holy immortal Mysteries of Christ our God."

The brother was greatly amazed that the elder had lived among them and no one had seen him.

"Why then, Father, have you now come to me, your son?" he asked.

The elder answered:

"The time of my death has come, my son, and I have come so that you may bury me."

Having given the brother much profitable instruction and established him in piety, the elder raised his hands to heaven, prayed for him, and then departed in peace in the Lord. Immediately after the brother told us of this, we gathered with palm branches in our hands and with hymns carried him into the church, and the face of the departed shone as in antiquity, that of the prophet Moses (Ex. 34:29–30, 35). We buried him together with the holy and divine fathers who had died before. I could tell you much else, but I will not, for it is already time to begin the account of the barbarians: I see that you wish to know how they slew the holy fathers.

So virtuous were these blessed fathers, who, living in complete poverty, steadfastly bore for the Lord's sake every sorrow and unceasingly remained in prayer and contemplation of God. There were forty-three of us living there in all. And one day two men came to us and reported that a multitude of barbarians had sailed across the sea on a ship from the land of Ethiopia.

"They seized us when we were sailing in a boat," the newcomers said, "took us captive, and said: show us the way to the city, and we will spare your lives for it. Against our will we had to give the promise, but we ourselves waited to see whether a south wind would blow so that we might sail away from them. With God's help, we managed by night to escape from their hands in the boat. And now we warn you to take care for some time, lest these barbarians discover your refuge and slay you; there are three hundred of them."

Learning of this, we posted watchmen by the sea, so that they might inform us when they saw the ship. We ourselves gathered for the all-night service and prayed that the Lord would send us what serves for the good of our souls.

About the first hour of the night a ship appeared with its sails raised, heading toward us. The laymen living in Pharan prepared for battle, to defend their wives and children. There were two hundred of them, not counting the women and children. We gathered in our

church, enclosed by a fence. The ship with the barbarians, reaching the harbor under the direction of its pilots, remained through the night off the western shore, sheltered by a mountain, near the springs. At the coming of morning the barbarians bound the pilots and sent them away, leaving only one on the ship, and to keep him from sailing away with the ship they left one of their comrades to guard him. Landing at the springs, they engaged in battle with the local inhabitants, and very many arrows were shot from both sides. The barbarians, being more skilled in archery, prevailed and put the inhabitants to flight, slaying a hundred and forty-seven of them; the rest fled wherever they could, and the impious barbarians seized their wives and children for themselves. After this they rushed, like wild beasts, upon our fence mentioned above, expecting to find much gold among us. Surrounding the walls of the enclosure, they began to revile us loudly, intending to terrify us with their fierce cries. In such calamity and grief we did not know what to do; we only wept and called upon God. Some of us bore this sorrow bravely, others wept, others prayed and gave thanks to God; yet all together, consoling one another, cried out:

"Lord, have mercy!"

Our superior, the holy Paul, stood in the midst of the church and said to us:

Fathers and brethren! Hear me, a sinner and the most unworthy of all. You all know well that out of love for our Lord Jesus Christ we withdrew from the vain world, and, dwelling in this harsh desert, we have been made worthy to bear His good yoke in hunger, thirst and extreme poverty. We have despised all earthly vanity, that we might be made worthy to share in His Heavenly Kingdom, and we desire nothing else than that death should overtake us now. Why then should we give ourselves over to sorrow and grieve, if our Master wishes to free us speedily from this vain life and take us to Himself? Ought we not rather to rejoice? We ought to rejoice and to give thanks to the Lord, but by no means to despair! What could be more dear and sweet to us than to contemplate the glory of the Lord and to behold His Holy Divine Face? Fathers and brethren! Remember how we have always extolled and glorified the holy martyrs who lived before us, how, relating to one an-

other their sufferings for the Name of Christ, we burned with desire to follow them. Behold, at last the time has come, and our desire, to dwell together with them in the life to come, is being fulfilled. Therefore do not despair, do not grieve and do not be afraid, but gather all your strength and take courage, accept death with firmness, and God will receive you with love into His Kingdom.

The monks answered with one voice:

– As you have said, honorable father, so we shall do, for what shall we "render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward us? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (Cf. Ps. 115:3–4).

Turning toward the east and lifting up his hands to heaven, our holy father cried out:

– O Lord Jesus Christ, Almighty God, our hope and our help! Forget not us, Thy unworthy servants, but remember our calamity and our sorrow, for our soul is exceedingly sorrowful. Strengthen us in this hour of our calamity, receive with good pleasure, as a well-pleasing sacrifice, our souls, for Thine is the glory and the honor, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

And no sooner had they all said "Amen" than at once a voice was heard from the sanctuary, plainly audible to all:

– "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28).

Fear and terror fell upon us at this voice, and the knees and hearts of all grew weak, for although the spirit is willing, as the Lord said (Mt. 26:41), the flesh is weak; so that we had already despaired of our lives and only turned our faces toward heaven. Meanwhile the barbarians, meeting no resistance, climbed with the help of long beams over the walls of our enclosure. Opening the doors, they burst inside with drawn swords in their hands, like wild wolves and beasts of prey. In the doorway of the church sat one holy man of venerable appearance, an elder named Jeremiah. Seizing him, they demanded:

– Show us your leader!

The elder, not in the least dismayed at the sight of their fierce faces and drawn swords, looked at them and said:

– Why do you frighten me, enemies of Christ? I will tell you nothing of what you ask me.

The superior also stood nearby. The barbarians marveled at the boldness of this man, that he not only did not fear them but even provoked them the more. Their amazement then turned to fury. They bound his hands and feet, set him naked in their midst, and began to shoot arrows at him. The whole body of the righteous man was wounded by arrows. Thus, standing courageously against the devil and crushing the head of the serpent, he was first of all made worthy of the crown of martyrdom and showed an example of suffering to old and young.

After this our holy father Paul came out to the barbarians and, pointing at himself with his finger, cried out:

– Here I am, whom you are seeking!

And the valiant servant of Christ fearlessly gave himself into the hands of his enemies. He did not wish even to think of the wounds and torments which the impious would inflict upon him before they put him to death.

– Tell us, where have you hidden the gold? – they asked.

He answered them quietly and meekly, as he had always been accustomed to speak:

– Believe me, I have acquired nothing earthly in all my life, except these worn garments which you see on my body.

As he said this, he took hold of his garments and showed them.

Then the barbarians wounded his whole body with arrows and struck his head with a stone, saying: "Give up your riches." Having gained nothing, after long torments they split his head in two, so that the halves of his head hung upon his shoulders, one toward one side, the other toward the other. Having received many other wounds, he lay dead at the feet of the father previously slain, the second victor over the devil after him. As for me, unworthy, at the sight of the agonizing death of the saints, their blood and their bodies stretched upon the ground, I was frightened and began to look for a place to hide and afterwards escape by flight. Noticing that on the left side of the church lay branches of a date palm, I ran there and, while the barbarians were

busy tormenting our holy father Paul, I managed to hide beneath it. I thought at the time that one of two things would certainly befall me: either I would conceal myself here and escape death, or I would be found here and killed together with the fathers. The impious barbarians, leaving the two fathers mentioned when they had died, burst into the church; shouting frantically and brandishing their swords, they fell upon the fathers and mercilessly slew them all without exception, from old to young.

Relating this to us, the monk wept bitterly and sobbed; his account, as Ammonius reports, called forth from us also loud weeping and sobbing. All wept much. Tears, like streams, flowed from our eyes and wet our garments.

– O brethren, – the monk continued his account with tears, – how shall I depict or describe all the grievous things that my eyes saw! There was there one great father, named Adam. He had a young disciple, Sergius, about fifteen years old. From childhood he had reared him, instructing him in the monastic life and in the struggle against demons. The barbarians took pity on Sergius' beauty and youth and did not slay him. They led him out by the hand and wished to take him with them. The youth, seeing that he was not to be killed together with the fathers and brethren, but that he must accompany the impious barbarians, wept and sobbed bitterly. Then, kindled in spirit and casting off all fear, he boldly ran up to a barbarian and, snatching his sword, struck one barbarian in the shoulder with it; he wished by this to rouse the barbarians' wrath against himself, so that they would kill him. His desire was fulfilled. Maddened with rage, the barbarians hacked him to pieces. Under the blows of the swords he smiled and said:

– Blessed is the Lord, Who has not delivered us alive into the hands of sinners, – and then he fell asleep in the Lord.

I saw all this and prayed to the all-merciful and loving-mankind God that the impious barbarians might not notice me, so that there would be someone to bury the bodies of the saints.

The bodies of the slain holy fathers filled the whole holy church with blood. They received death without fear or sorrow, rejoicing and thanking God for their lot. Their thoughts were turned to their Master.

Through a righteous life they had made themselves temples of the Holy Spirit. Having despised the allurements and vanity of the world, they followed God alone, and at last they died for His Name amid various kinds of torments.

Meanwhile the barbarians, having slain the fathers, began to search the whole monastery, expecting to find in it many kinds of riches. The impious did not know that the holy fathers had cared nothing for acquiring anything earthly, but, living in the flesh, were like the Angels. While all this was happening, I, though I bore not a single drop of blood upon me, lay as one dead. I feared that the barbarians, seeking treasure, might lift up the branches. Often I peered out from beneath them and waited for them to come at last to me, and, finding me, kill me as the others. Death stood before my eyes, and I prayed God to save me, if it were His will. Indeed the barbarians came up to the branches, but God blinded their hearts and eyes: the thing seemed to them unworthy of attention, and they went away. Then, leaving the dead holy fathers and finding no booty, they returned again to the harbor to set out on their way by sea. But when they came to the place, they found their ship broken, for the helmsman left to guard the ship had cut the ship's rope without the barbarian who was with him knowing. The wind drove the ship to the shore, and it was wrecked upon it; the helmsman, having killed the barbarian, fled and hid himself in the mountains. Having lost their ship, the barbarians did not know what to do or how to return to their land. In despair and fierce rage, they rushed with swords upon their captives and slew them all, not sparing women and children; then they kindled a fire and burned all the date palms.

Meanwhile there came from the city of Faran a multitude of picked warriors, up to six hundred in number, for word had already reached them of the slaughter of the holy fathers at Raithou. Learning of this, the barbarians prepared for battle, and at sunrise they engaged the newcomers in combat on the seashore. Arrows were loosed in great numbers from both sides, and the men of Faran, being the more numerous, began to gain the upper hand and had already slain many of the barbarians. Since the latter had no hope of deliverance, they defended

themselves and held out until the ninth hour. Eighty-four of the men of Faran were killed by them, not counting many wounded. The barbarians, however, all fell to a man, surrendering nothing to the enemy and not giving up their ground. While this was taking place, I, having little by little recovered my courage, crept out of the place where I had hidden. When I felt over the bodies of the slain saints, I found that all had died except only three: Domnus, Andrew and Orion. Of these, Domnus was suffering grievously from a severe wound in the side. Andrew, though he had many wounds, none of them very serious, and so he remained alive. Orion had received no wound at all. A barbarian struck him with a sword on the right side, and the sword, without touching his body at all, came out through his clothing on the left side. The barbarian, thinking Orion was killed, left him and turned to others; Orion lay down among the dead and lay as one dead. Now rising, he went about with me among the bodies of the saints, weeping and sobbing over the calamity that had befallen them.

After this the men of Faran, leaving the bodies of the barbarians on the seashore to be torn by beasts and birds of prey, gathered the bodies of their friends and with weeping buried them beneath the shelter of the mountain where the springs were. Then they returned to us; with them came their prince Vedian, whom, as was said before, the Venerable Moses had healed of demonic possession. Entering the church together with him, we wept, beat our breasts and wept bitterly, seeing the flock of Christ laid low upon the earth, like sheep torn by wild beasts. The venerable elders, adorned with honorable gray hair, appeared young, like Angels, for the virtue of their lives shone upon their faces like the light of the morning dawn. The servants and martyrs of Christ lay covered with terrible and grievous wounds: one had a wound from shoulder to belly, another lay cut in two; one had his head severed, another had his eyes gouged out, a third had his hands and feet cut off, a fourth had a spear thrust into his heart. Thus they all died with various wounds upon their bodies. In life they had always borne in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might also be made manifest in their bodies (2 Cor. 4:10). After lives pleasing to God, they were enlightened at their death by their own

blood, and through this they were numbered among the company of the saints.

We gathered the bodies of the saints into one place. The pious Prince Vedian brought from Faran, together with others, bright vestments, and we buried thirty-nine holy fathers. All who were there at that time took willow branches and date fronds and carried the honorable relics of the saints with the singing of psalms, together, and with bitter tears. They were all buried together, except only Domnus. The aforementioned Domnus, a Roman by origin, was still alive; by evening, however, he too fell asleep in the Lord. He was buried beside the holy fathers. The holy martyrs of Christ died on the fourteenth day of the month of January, at the ninth hour of the day. Fathers Andrew and Orion hesitated, not knowing what to resolve, whether to remain there or to depart. As for me, I could not bear the sorrow and the desolate appearance of that place, I could not overcome my tears for the slain fathers, and so I came to you, although the pious Vedian urged me to stay there, promising to visit me often and to bring us everything needful. I beg you, fathers, in your turn to tell me of everything that has happened here, just as you yourselves have learned everything from me in detail.

"We," says Ammonius, "told him everything that had happened here, and we marveled at the wondrous judgments of God—how on one day and on one date both here and there the holy fathers were slain—and again we all together began to weep and sob. Our venerable father Dula rose and said:

"Beloved ones! The holy martyrs, as chosen servants of Christ, have truly now been granted, since they have sealed their labors with the crown of martyrdom, the blessedness of the Kingdom of Heaven, great glory and honor. As for us, who have survived the recent calamity, let us take care for ourselves and ask their prayers for us before the Lord, that we too may inherit the Kingdom of Heaven together with them; and now let us offer a song of thanksgiving to God, who has saved us from the hand of the barbarians."

With such words he encouraged us all, turned the sorrow of our hearts into joy, and comforted our souls.

I, the sinful Ammonius, by God's help returned to Egypt and wrote this account of all these things. I did not go again to the former place, called Kanovo, but settled in a small cell near Memphis[12]. Living in it, I often recall with reverence the sufferings and labors of the venerable martyrs of Christ. May the Lord grant that we too, together with them, be found worthy to share in His Heavenly Kingdom and to enjoy the ineffable and incorruptible blessings with all who love Him, for to Him belong all glory, honor and worship, together with His Beginningless Father and His All-holy and Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages, amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

O God of our fathers, who dost ever deal with us according to Thy kindness, withdraw not Thy mercy from us, but through their prayers direct our life in peace.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Ye fled from worldly rumor and departed to a quiet haven, crowned with the blood of martyrdom and the labors of fasting. Wherefore ye have been shown to be fellow-dwellers of the martyrs and the Venerable.

* * *

Second Slaughter of the Venerable Fathers in Sinai and Raithou

Второе избиение преподобных отцов в Синае и Раифе

Many years passed after the first slaughter of the Venerable Fathers of Sinai, and again, in the days of the Venerable Nilus the Faster, the barbarians attacked the Mount of Sinai. They roamed in the desert that stretched from the Red Sea, between Arabia and Egypt, to the Jordan, and they dwelt not in cities and houses but in tents. Moving from place to place, they halted their camp for a longer

12. Memphis — the ancient mighty capital of Egypt; it was situated in middle Egypt on the Nile, between the main river and its tributary, which washed the western side of the city.

time wherever they found good water and pasture for their cattle. They obtained the means of life not by any craft, or trade, or agriculture, but by hunting wild beasts and, chiefly, by brigandage. Armed with swords, bows and spears, they occupied themselves only with falling upon the villages of others and carrying on robbery along the roads.

The Venerable Fathers, who had chosen for God a solitary life in the Sinai desert, lived—some in caves and rocky gorges, others in small cells built near springs of water, and others again beside the church. They fed on raw roots and dates, as well as on the vegetables found in that region. Few of them ate bread, for they lived in great abstinence and strict fasting: one ate food every other day, or after two or three days, and there were some who sustained their feeble flesh with food only once a week. The life of all of them was like that of the Angels. As though forgetting their bodies, they cared for their souls and thought only of how to please the Lord. They served Him zealously and fervently, glorifying Him day and night. Praying without ceasing and chanting psalms, they all gathered in the church on Sunday, and, having spent the whole night in prayer, received the Divine Mysteries in the morning, and then, dispersing again to their cells, abode in silence.

Among them was also the Venerable Nilus the Faster. Previously he had held the post of eparch[13] in Constantinople, and living in honorable marriage, he had two children. Then, by agreement with his wife, he left the world: Nilus's spouse with their daughter withdrew to Egypt and there, in one of the women's monasteries, took the monastic habit. And the blessed Nilus with his son Theodulus withdrew to the Mount of Sinai; here he was an eyewitness to the calamity inflicted by the barbarians and afterwards described this slaughter of the holy fathers. Living on the mountain, the Venerable Nilus had the custom of visiting the fathers who dwelt in the surrounding area. Once he went down with his son from the mountain and came to the fathers, whom he found at a common meal. The presbyter there, the blessed Theodulus, said, among other things, during the meal:

13. Eparch — the governor of a city or region.

"Who knows whether we shall again be gathered all together at this table until death?"

So he spoke, foreseeing in spirit the imminent calamity. On the next day, after Matins, the barbarians unexpectedly attacked the holy place. Like frenzied dogs, they surrounded the monastery and, rending the air with wild cries, sought to strike terror into those who were within it. Then they rushed to the storehouses, where a little food had been gathered for the fasters and dried vegetables were kept for the winter, to sustain the monks amid their great labors. First the barbarians plundered this food; then they hurried to the church, in which the fathers had gathered, drove everyone out of it, stripped them of their old garments, and set the aged elders naked in a row, so that they might be more easily slain. To the blessed Theodulus, presbyter of the holy place, who had the day before made the prediction of death, they gave the order to bow his head first beneath the sword; two barbarians of fierce countenance stood with drawn swords on either side of him. Bowing beneath the sword, he showed no fear whatever, but only said quietly:

"Blessed is the Lord!"

Both barbarians, one after the other, struck him; one wound ran from the spine to the jaw, the other from the shoulder to the breast, and the righteous man fell to the ground. After this they seized and killed the other elder, who had lived together with the priest. The priest there had in his service a youth; the barbarians ordered him to gather up the scattered fruit, and they pretended that they meant to spare him, as one fit for service. But when he bent down and began to gather the fruit, one of the barbarians who stood behind him, drawing his sword unseen, dealt the youth a cruel blow and killed him.

When the slaughter of the other fathers was taking place, some of the barbarians, evidently through a special working of God upon them, made a sign with their hands to the other monks that they should flee. Those who were stronger in bodily strength and able to run did indeed run, making their way through the valley toward a mountain that was hard of access for the barbarians. Gathering his strength, the Blessed Nilus ran with them, and in this way escaped death. But his son Theod-

ulus remained in the hands of the barbarians. Since he was very handsome in face, they did not kill him, but bound him and took him with them, intending to offer him in sacrifice to the morning dawn, which they revered in place of God. Not knowing the true God, they did not worship idols or honor any of the pagan gods; they served only the morning dawn, and they always offered her the best of the booty, most often sacrificing to her the most beautiful of the captive youths. For this purpose they had spared the son of the Venerable Nilus as well.

Having plundered the other monasteries nearby and slain many holy fathers in various places, the barbarians departed.

Nilus the Faster, looking down from the summit of the mountain upon the leading away of his son into captivity and upon the cruel death of the venerable fathers, wept inconsolably and spoke with tears:

"O blessed, thrice-blessed fathers! Where now are the labors of your abstinence? Where is the unceasing endurance of sorrows? Have you received the crown for your many struggles? Is this the reward for your long monastic life? Did you walk the path set before you in vain? Is it just to suffer calamity for virtue? For the providence of God has left you without help when they were killing you; righteousness did not defend your innocence against your murderers, but an unclean hand was able to arm itself against your holy bodies, and impiety may boast that it has triumphed. Why did the bush not kindle again its ancient flame and burn up the lawless ones (Ex. 3:2)? Why did the earth not open its mouth and swallow them, as once it swallowed Korah with all his companions (Num. 16:32)? Why did the terrible sounds of trumpets, the lightnings and thunders, which once sounded from Sinai (Ex. 19:16), not thunder forth to terrify the impious? But the retribution of the Almighty has been delayed: He has neither struck the murderers down from on high nor delivered the slain with His all-powerful hand, so that the barbarians might know, at the sight of His wonders, the invincible power of God. Thus helplessly, like dumb sacrifices, the holy fathers have fallen amid the bush,[14] on that very mountain from which the Law was given. Where was that power which drowned the Egyptians in the

14. *Koupina* (the bush) — a thorn bush, from which Mount Sinai, covered with it, received its name.

sea and prepared for them a grave at the bottom of the sea (Ex. 14:28)? That power which struck the enemies of Israel with hailstones and gave victory to its people without blood or toil (Josh. 10:11)? Where has the Most High hidden His help, He who shut the mouths of the lions so that they did no harm to Daniel (Dan. 6:16), and who quenched for the youths of Babylon the power of the fire, so as to make their piety manifest thereby (Dan. 3:24)? How could He hide the virtue of these servants of His, leaving them defenseless, as though they had not deserved His help at all?"

The Blessed One spoke thus from heartfelt pain and great sorrow. A soul struck by grievous sufferings is sometimes inclined to say much without reflection; for the help of God often leaves the righteous, giving them over to the power of tormentors for every kind of torment and innocent death, and this with the aim that their virtue might appear purified, like gold, that their faith might shine like a lamp, and that they might be counted worthy of a greater reward in heaven. Without doubt these venerable ones, together with the fathers chosen earlier, have been numbered in the choir of holy martyrs and are now glorified in the Kingdom of Christ.

At the approach of evening the Venerable Nilus and the others who had escaped with him dared to come down from the mountain, to commit to burial the bodies of the slain saints. They found the Venerable Priest Theodulus still breathing and scarcely able to speak. They sat beside him throughout the whole night and wept. The elder said to them:

"Do not be troubled at the sight of the calamity that has befallen us, for Satan has the habit of asking God to permit him to tempt those who strive to please Him; in this manner he asked permission to afflict Job with calamities, and he destroyed Job's children as well. But the Lord, the Giver of Contests, knows for what purpose He delivers His ascetics into the power of the enemy: He does this in order to give the patient sufferers the greatest reward. If the Lord recompensed Job twofold for what he had lost (Job 42:10), then those who love Him and suffer for His sake await a reward incomparably greater: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man' (1 Cor. 2:9)."

Speaking thus, and having taken leave of those around him, the elder died and was buried, together with the other slain fathers, before sunrise. Meanwhile there appeared at the monastery a youth who had fled from the barbarians. He was the slave of the boyar Magedon, who had happened at that time to be in these parts on business of the civil administration. The barbarians had seized this boyar somewhere on the road together with his son. Having plundered them, they first killed the son before the father's eyes, and then put the father himself to death. The youth, who was among his slaves, escaped by flight and came to the ravaged monastery, trembling with fear, as though he were being pursued and overtaken. Saint Nilus began to question the youth about how he had managed to escape. He told him:

"I was bound together with your son. Yesterday the barbarians began to talk among themselves and to confer, as one of the captives who knows their language secretly told me, about sacrificing us both, me and your son, to the morning dawn when morning came, for which purpose they had already built an altar of stones and laid wood upon it. I told your son of this, and said to him that unless we fled we would not see the rising of the sun again. But he, from fear of being caught, remained, saying:

'If it is so pleasing to God, it is impossible to escape death and hide oneself, even if one should conceal oneself in the most inaccessible and secret places.'

But I, in the deep night, taking advantage of the barbarians being sound asleep after drinking heavily in the evening, freed myself from the cords binding me and crept out, like a serpent, far beyond the limits of their camp; then, rising to my feet, I ran swiftly, and, driven by fear, I sped as though on wings. I was afraid lest they, noticing my escape, should pursue and overtake me; even now I cannot free myself from fear and trembling: the cruel tortures to which the barbarians subjected others in my presence stand vividly in my mind, and I seem to see them with my own eyes."

And the youth told of the slaying of many holy fathers.

"In a certain open place where there was water," he said, "the barbarians stopped to rest. And they saw in the mountain a small cave.

Rushing to it, they dragged out an elder of venerable appearance, whom they hauled down from the mountain and stoned. Then, going a little further, they seized and stoned a young monk, thin and pale of face. After this they came upon a place thickly overgrown with forest, with a small cave in which a hermit lived; he was young in years but mature in the great qualities of his soul. When the barbarians demanded that he come out and give them his clothing, the hermit answered:

'Let the dwelling in which I have spent my life be also my grave; kill me here. But I will not take off my clothing, so as not to see my nakedness, upon which I have not looked until now. Take it off yourselves when you have killed me; then I shall be dead and shall know nothing of myself.'

The barbarians again addressed him and demanded that he point out the hidden monasteries in that wilderness, promising to spare his life in return. But he answered:

'Although I know the places where the holy men live, I will not tell you, for I do not wish to betray the servants of God.'

The courage and boldness of the hermit enraged the impious men, and they, entering the cave, hacked him to pieces with their swords. Going further through the wilderness, they met three fathers, and rushing upon them, killed them with their swords. Then they saw from afar two monasteries standing at a short distance from each other. Dividing into two bands, they made for them, but what they did there, and which of the fathers they killed, I do not know (so said that youth who had escaped by flight); I only saw from afar how one monk was running, and the barbarians, pursuing him, shot him with arrows; then, when he fell, exhausted, they killed him with swords and spears. In the following night I fled, as I have already told you. What has become of your son God knows. I left him alive, but without hope of life, for with the appearance of the morning dawn he was bound to die, having been brought to her as a sacrifice."

Hearing this, the Venerable Nilus wept inconsolably and sobbed over the death of his son. What grieved him most was that his son was to be slain as a sacrifice by impious men. He cried out to God with these words:

"O Lord my God, Lord God of our fathers! For the sake of the Most Pure Mother of God who bore Thee, and for Thy goodness' sake, suffer not my son to perish by the hand of the barbarians!"

And God, by His special providence, preserved the youth Theodulus unharmed. The barbarians slept soundly until the sun had risen. Awaking, and seeing that the morning star had already disappeared and that one of the youths set aside for the sacrifice had fled, they did not perform the customary sacrificial rite, but led the remaining youth away with them. Meanwhile the inhabitants of Pharan sent messengers to the Saracen prince Amanus with a complaint against his brigands: that, in violation of the peace treaty, they had attacked the monks and inflicted such evil upon them. At that time the Blessed Nilus went into the desert with the fathers who remained alive, in order to find the bodies of the slain saints and give them burial. And it turned out that Proclus had been killed at Veframbe, Hypatius at Gephe, Isaac was slain in the monastery called Salail, Macarius and Mark were slain in a neighboring desert, Benjamin beyond Elim, Eusebius at Pholus, and Elias at Aza[15]. They found the last still breathing, and carried him and laid him in his cell, while they themselves returned to bury the others. When they came back, they found him dead beside a vessel of water: tormented by thirst on account of his many wounds, he had no sooner tasted the water than he fell and died. Having buried all whom they could find, they went to Pharan to learn what tidings the messengers sent to the Saracen prince would bring. As they were entering the city, the couriers returned at the same time with the prince's message of peace. In it he promised to punish and put to death at once the brigands who had dared such outrages; and he ordered the people of Pharan to come to him without fear and to take back without ransom any of their captives whom they found alive. The people of Pharan gathered and set out for the Saracen prince, and the Blessed Nilus went with them, to learn about his son: whether he was alive in captivity or had already died by the hand of the barbarians. And he learned that his son was alive. He had been sold into the city of Emesa[16], and the bishop of that city had

15. The places here meant are in the vicinity of the desert of Pharan and the Sinai Peninsula, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea.

ransomed him and made him his cleric. Of all this the Venerable Nilus the Faster himself speaks at length in his discourse. Arriving there, the venerable found his son unharmed and in good health. Greatly comforted by this, he gave thanks to God. The bishop received him with love, persuaded him to accept the rank of presbyter, and then with honor sent both of them, the Venerable Nilus and his son Theodulus, home. They went to Mount Sinai, to their former dwelling place, and lived there many years[17], zealously serving their Master, our Lord Jesus Christ, before Whom they were afterward granted, together with the choirs of the venerable fathers, to stand in the heavens, glorifying God forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Nina, Enlightener of Iberia

Житие святой равноапостольной Нины, просветительницы Иверии

By pious tradition, preserved to this day in the Iberian as well as in the whole Eastern Orthodox Church, Iberia, which is also called Georgia[18], is the portion of the Most Pure Mother of God: by a special will of God, it fell to Her by lot to preach there the Gospel of Her Son and our Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of men.

Saint Stephen of Mount Athos relates that, after the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, His disciples, together with His Mother Mary, remained in the upper room on Mount Zion and awaited the Comforter, in accordance with Christ's command not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Lord (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4). The apostles began to cast lots to learn which of them, in what

16. Emesa — a city in Syria, east of the river Orontes, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea.
17. Venerable Nilus and Theodulus reposed in peace in the fifth century. Their bodies were transferred to Constantinople by the Emperor Justin the Younger and laid in the church of the holy Apostles at the Orphanotropheion (hospice).
18. Iveria, or Georgia — a country in Transcaucasia, which before its annexation to Russia (January 18, 1801) was an independent kingdom and at various times had different boundaries. In the narrow sense the name Georgia at present is most often applied to the Tiflis Governorate, in which Georgians make up the predominant part of the population.

country, was appointed by God to preach the Gospel. The Most Pure One said:

"I also wish to cast My lot together with you, so that I too may not be left without a portion, but may have a country which it shall please God to show Me."

At the word of the Mother of God, they cast the lot with reverence and fear, and by this lot the Iberian land fell to Her.

Receiving this lot with joy, the Most Pure Theotokos wished at once, after the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire, to set out for the land of Iberia. But an Angel of God said to Her:

"Do not depart from Jerusalem now, but remain here until the time appointed; the portion which has fallen to Thee by lot shall be illumined by the light of Christ in the future, and Thy dominion shall abide there."

So relates Stephen of Mount Athos. This predestination of God concerning the enlightenment of Iberia was fulfilled three centuries after the ascension of Christ, and its fulfiller was clearly and unmistakably revealed as the Most Blessed Virgin Mother of God. After the appointed time had passed, She sent, with Her blessing and Her help, the holy maiden Nina to preach in Iberia.

Saint Nina was born in Cappadocia and was the only daughter of noble and pious parents: the Roman voivode Zabulon, a kinsman of the holy Great Martyr George, and Susanna, sister of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. At the age of twelve, Saint Nina came with her parents to the holy city of Jerusalem. Here her father Zabulon, burning with love for God and desiring to serve Him by the ascetic labors of monasticism, received, by agreement with his wife, a blessing from the Blessed Patriarch of Jerusalem; then, after bidding farewell with tears to his young daughter Nina and commending her to God, the Father of orphans and the Defender of widows, he departed and hid himself in the Jordan desert. And the place of this servant of God's labors, as well as the place of his death, remained unknown to all. The mother of Saint Nina, Susanna, was made deaconess by her brother, the Patriarch, at the holy church, to serve poor and sick women; Nina, meanwhile, was entrusted for upbringing to a pious elderly woman, Nianfora. The holy

maiden had such outstanding gifts that after only two years, with the aid of the grace of God, she understood and firmly learned the rules of faith and piety. Every day she read the Divine Scriptures with diligence and prayer, and her heart burned with love for Christ, the Son of God, who endured the sufferings of the Cross and death for the salvation of men. When she read with tears the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion of Christ the Savior and of all that took place at His Cross, her thought dwelt on the fate of the Lord's tunic.

"Where, then, is now this earthly purple of the Son of God?" she asked her teacher. "It cannot be that so great a relic has perished on earth."

Then Nianfora told Saint Nina what she herself knew from tradition, namely: that to the north-east of Jerusalem there is the land of Iberia, and in it the city of Mtskheta[19], and that it was there that the tunic of Christ had been taken by the soldier to whom it fell by lot at the crucifixion of Christ (Jn. 19:24). Nianfora added that the inhabitants of this land, called Kartvelians[20], as well as the neighboring Armenians and many mountain tribes, remained to this day immersed in the darkness of pagan error and impiety.

These accounts of the elderly woman sank deeply into the heart of Saint Nina. Days and nights she spent in fervent prayer to the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God, that She would vouchsafe her to see the land of Iberia, to find and kiss the tunic of Her beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ, woven by Her fingers, and to preach the holy name of Christ to the peoples there who did not know Him. And the Most

19. Mtskheta — the ancient capital of Georgia, now a small village of the Dushet district, Tiflis Governorate, at the confluence of the river Aragvi with the river Kura, 20 versts northwest of Tiflis, a station of the Transcaucasian railway and the Georgian Military Road. Mtskheta existed already at the beginning of the fourth century and remained the residence of the rulers of Georgia until the end of the fifth century, when King Vakhtang Gorgasali moved the capital to Tiflis. In the same century Mtskheta became the residence of the patriarch bearing the title of Catholicos of Mtskheta. Many times Mtskheta was subjected to invasions by enemies, who razed it to its foundations, and as a consequence it fell into complete desolation. Monuments of Mtskheta's former splendor are the ancient cathedral in honor of the Twelve Apostles and the Samtavro church.

20. Kartvelians — properly the Georgians and the related peoples of the Caucasian tribe.

Blessed Virgin Mother of God heard the prayer of Her servant. She appeared to her in a dream vision and said:

"Go to the land of Iberia, preach there the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt find favor before His face; and I will be thy Protectress."

"But how," asked the humble maiden, "shall I, a weak woman, be able to accomplish so great a service?"

In answer to this, the Most Holy Virgin, handing Nina a cross woven of grapevine, said:

"Take this cross. It shall be for thee a shield and a protection against all visible and invisible enemies. By the power of this cross thou shalt raise in that land the saving banner of faith in My beloved Son and Lord, 'Who wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4)."

Awaking and finding in her hands the wondrous cross, Saint Nina began to kiss it with tears of joy and rapture; then she bound it with her hair and went to her uncle the patriarch. When the Blessed Patriarch heard from her of the Mother of God's appearance to her and of the command to go to the land of Iberia to preach there the Gospel of eternal salvation, he, seeing in this a clear expression of the will of God, did not hesitate to give the young maiden his blessing to undertake the labor of preaching. And when the time came that was convenient for setting out on the long journey, the patriarch brought Nina into the Lord's temple to the sanctuary and, laying his hierarchal hand upon her head, prayed in these words:

Lord God, our Savior! As I send forth this orphan maiden to preach Thy Divinity, I commit her into Thy hands. Be pleased, O Christ God, to be her companion and guide wherever she shall proclaim Thee, and grant to her words such power and wisdom that no one shall be able to resist or gainsay them. And Thou, Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, Helper and Intercessor of all Christians, clothe this maiden from on high with Thy strength against visible and invisible enemies, for Thou Thyself hast chosen her to preach the Gospel of Thy Son, Christ our God, among the pagan nations. Be always her covering and her invincible de-

fense, and do not forsake her in Thy mercy until she fulfils Thy holy will!

At that time there set out from the holy city for Armenia fifty-three maidens, companions, together with one princess, Ripsimia, and their teacher Gaiana. They had fled from ancient Rome from the persecution of the impious Emperor Diocletian, who wished to marry the princess Ripsimia, although she had vowed virginity and had betrothed herself to the Heavenly Bridegroom, Christ. St. Nina, together with these holy maidens, reached the borders of Armenia[21] and the capital city of Vagharshapat[22]. The holy maidens settled outside the city, under a shelter built over a wine press, and they earned their sustenance by the labor of their hands.

Before long the cruel Diocletian learned that Ripsimia was hiding in Armenia. He sent a letter to the Armenian king Tiridates, who was still a pagan at that time[23], ordering him to find Ripsimia and send her to Rome, or else, if he wished, to take her for his wife, for, he wrote, she was very beautiful. Tiridates' servants soon found Ripsimia, and when the king saw her, he declared to her that he desired to have her as his wife. The holy maiden, however, said to him boldly:

"I am betrothed to the Heavenly Bridegroom, Christ; how then, impious one, dare you touch the Bride of Christ?"

The impious Tiridates, inflamed by bestial passion, anger and shame, gave orders to subject the saint to torments. After many cruel tortures, Ripsimia's tongue was cut out, her eyes were gouged out, and her whole body was hacked into pieces. The very same fate befell all the holy companions of St. Ripsimia and their teacher Gaiana[24].

Only St. Nina was miraculously saved from death: guided by an unseen hand, she hid herself in the bushes of a wild rose that had not yet

21. Armenia – a mountainous country between the river Kura and the upper courses of the Tigris and Euphrates; it was inhabited by Armenians, so called after King Aram. At present Armenia is divided between Russia, Persia and Turkey.

22. Vagharshapat – formerly the capital of the Armenian kingdom (founded by King Vagharshak), now a village of the Erivan Governorate, Echmiadzin District, 18 versts from the city of Erivan.

bloomed. Shaken with fear at the sight of the fate of her companions, the saint lifted her eyes to heaven in prayer for them, and she saw above her a radiant Angel girded with a bright orarion. With a fragrant censer in his hands and accompanied by a multitude of heavenly beings, he was descending from the heights of heaven; and from the earth, as if to meet him, rose the souls of the holy martyrs, who joined the host of the bright heavenly beings and ascended together with them into the heights of heaven.

Seeing this, St. Nina cried out with sobs:

"Lord, Lord! Why dost Thou leave me alone among these vipers and asps?"

In answer, the Angel said to her:

"Do not grieve, but wait a little, for you too shall be taken into the Kingdom of the Lord of glory. This will come to pass when the thorny and wild rose that surrounds you is covered with fragrant blossoms, like a rose planted and tended in a garden. But now arise and go northward, where the harvest is great but there are no laborers (Lk. 10:2)."

In accordance with this command, St. Nina set out alone on her further way, and after a long journey she came to the bank of a river unknown to her, near the village of Khertvisi. This river was the Kura, which, flowing from west to southeast toward the Caspian Sea, waters all of central Iberia[25]. On the bank of the river she met shepherds of sheep, who gave a little food to the traveler, weary from the length of the road. These people spoke in the Armenian tongue, and Nina understood Armenian, for she had been taught it by the elder Nianfora. She asked one of the shepherds:

"Where is the city of Mtskheta, and is it far from here?"

He answered:

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24. The Church of Orthodoxy celebrates the memory of these holy martyresses, whose death gave occasion for the conversion to Christ of King Tiridates and of all Armenia, on the 30th day of September.

23. Tiridates ascended the throne in 286. At first he was a cruel persecutor of Christians, but he was afterwards converted to Christianity by St. Gregory the Armenian, Hieromartyr (his memory is on September 30), and from that time became a zealous Christian. In 302, during his reign, all of Armenia was also converted to Christianity.

25. The Kura is the greatest river of the Caucasus region; from its source to its confluence with the river Araxes in the Caspian Sea, its length is 1,244 versts.

"Do you see this river? Along its banks, far downstream, stands the great city of Mtskheta, in which our gods hold sway and our kings reign."

Continuing her way from there, the holy pilgrim once sat down, wearied, on a stone and began to reflect: whither is the Lord leading her? What will be the fruit of her labors? And would her long and arduous wandering not be in vain? Amid such thoughts she fell asleep on that spot and saw a dream: there appeared to her a man of majestic appearance; his hair fell upon his shoulders, and in his hands was a book-scroll written in Greek. Unrolling the scroll, he gave it to Nina and bade her read, and then he suddenly became invisible. Awaking from her sleep and seeing in her hand the wondrous scroll, St. Nina read in it the following words of the Gospel: "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that she hath done, be told for a memorial of her" (the woman) (Mt. 26:13). "There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). "Jesus saith unto them (the women): Be not afraid; go tell My brethren" (Mt. 28:10). "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me" (Mt. 10:40). "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Lk. 21:15). "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say" (Lk. 12:11–12). "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Mt. 10:28). "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mt. 28:19–20).

Strengthened by this divine vision and consolation, St. Nina continued her way with enthusiasm and new zeal. Having endured on the road heavy labors, hunger, thirst and fear of wild beasts, she reached the ancient Kartlian city of Urbnisi[26], where she remained about a

26. According to tradition, the city of Urbnisi was built by Uples, son of Mukhetos, great-great-grandson of Japheth, 2,340 years B.C.

month, living in the houses of Jews and studying the customs, mores and language of the people new to her.

Once she learned that all the men of this city, as well as those who had come from the surrounding districts, were gathering to go to the capital city of Mtskheta to worship their false gods, St. Nina went there with them too. As they approached the city, near Pompey's Bridge they met the procession of King Mirian and Queen Nana; accompanied by a large crowd of people, they were heading for a mountain peak facing the city, to perform worship there before the lifeless idol called Armazi.

Until noon the weather was clear. But this day, which was the first day of St. Nina's arrival at the goal of her saving mission for the land of Iberia, was the last day of the dominion there of the aforementioned pagan idol. Carried along by the crowd of people, St. Nina made her way toward the mountain, to the place where the idol's altar stood. Finding a convenient place for herself, she saw from it the chief idol Armazi. In appearance he resembled a man of exceptionally great stature; forged of gilded copper, he was clad in a golden breastplate, with a golden helmet on his head; one of his eyes was of ruby, the other made of emerald, both of extraordinary size and brilliance. On Armazi's right stood another small golden idol, named Kaci, and on the left a silver idol, named Gaim.

The whole crowd of people, together with their king, stood in frenzied reverence and trembling before their gods, while the priests made preparations for offering bloody sacrifices[27]. And when these were completed, when incense was kindled, when the sacrificial blood flowed, when trumpets and tambourines resounded, the king and the people fell face downward on the earth before the lifeless images. Then the heart of the holy maiden burned with the zeal of the Prophet Elijah. Sighing from the depths of her soul, and lifting her tearful eyes to heaven, she began to pray in such words:

"Almighty God! By the multitude of Thy mercy, bring this people to the knowledge of Thee, the one true God. Scatter these idols, as the wind scatters dust and ashes from the face of the earth. Look with

27. There is a tradition that both infants and youths were offered in sacrifice to idols.

mercy upon this people, whom Thou didst create by Thy almighty right hand and honored with Thy Divine Image! Thou, O Lord and Master, who hast so loved Thy creation that Thou didst deliver up even Thine Only-begotten Son for the salvation of fallen mankind, deliver the souls of these Thy people from the all-destroying power of the prince of darkness, who has blinded their rational eyes, so that they do not see the true path to salvation. Be pleased, O Lord, to let my eyes behold the final destruction of the idols standing here in pride. So order that this people and all the ends of the earth may understand the salvation granted by Thee, that both north and south may rejoice together in Thee, and that all nations may worship Thee, the One Eternal God, in Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom belongs glory forever."

She had not yet finished this holy prayer when suddenly storm clouds rose from the West and swiftly hurried along the course of the river Kura. Perceiving the danger, the king and the people took to flight; but Nina took shelter in a cleft of the rock. A cloud with thunder and lightning burst over the place where the idolatrous altar stood. The idols, which had formerly stood proudly, were broken to dust; the walls of the pagan shrine were razed to dust, and the torrents of rain hurled them down into the abyss, while the waters of the river carried them away down its course; thus no trace remained of the idols or of the shrine dedicated to them. But St. Nina, kept by God, stood unharmed in the cleft of the rock and calmly watched as the elements suddenly raged all about her, and then the bright sun shone out again from the sky. All this took place on the day of the glorious Transfiguration of the Lord, when the true Light that shone on Tabor first transfigured the darkness of paganism into the light of Christ upon the mountains of Iberia.

On the following day the king and the people vainly sought their gods. Not finding them, they were struck with terror and said:

"Great is the god Armaz; yet there is some other God, greater than he, who has overcome him. Is this not perhaps the Christian God, who put to shame the ancient gods of Armenia and made King Tiridates a Christian?" However, no one in Iberia had heard anything about Christ,

and no one had preached that He is God above all gods. What, then, had come to pass, and what would follow?

Long afterward St. Nina entered the city of Mtskheta in the guise of a wanderer, calling herself a captive. As she was making her way toward the royal garden, the wife of the gardener, Anastasia, came quickly out to meet her as to an acquaintance long expected. Bowing before the saint, she brought her into her house and then, washing her feet and anointing her head with oil, offered her bread and wine. Anastasia and her husband besought Nina to stay and live in their house as a sister, for they were childless and grieved over their loneliness. Afterward, at St. Nina's desire, Anastasia's husband set up for her a small tent in a corner of the garden, and on that site there still stands a small church in honor of St. Nina, within the enclosure of the Samtavro women's monastery[28]. St. Nina, setting up in this tent the cross entrusted to her by the Mother of God, spent days and nights there in prayer and in the singing of psalms.

From this tent there unfolded a radiant series of St. Nina's labors and of the miracles she wrought for the glory of the Name of Christ. The first gain of the Church of Christ in Iberia was a virtuous married couple, who sheltered the handmaid of Christ. Through St. Nina's prayer, Anastasia was delivered from her barrenness and afterward became the mother of a numerous and happy family; she was also the first woman in Iberia to believe in Christ, before the men.

A woman was carrying her dying child through the streets of the city with loud weeping, calling on everyone for help. Taking the sick child, St. Nina laid him on the bed of leaves she had made for herself; having prayed, she laid upon the infant her cross of grapevine, and then returned him alive and well to the weeping mother.

From this time St. Nina began to preach the Gospel openly and before the whole people, calling the pagan and Jewish inhabitants of Iberia to repentance and to faith in Christ. Her pious, righteous and chaste life was known to all and drew the eyes, ears and hearts of the people toward the saint. Many, and especially Jewish women, began often to

28. The Samtavro Women's Cenobitic Monastery, Tiflis Governorate, 31 versts from the town of Dushet, at the confluence of the river Aragva with the Kura.

come to Nina, to hear from her honeyed lips the new teaching concerning the Kingdom of God and eternal salvation, and they began secretly to receive the faith in Christ. Such were: Sidonia, daughter of the high priest of the Jews of Kartli, Aviaphar, and six other Jewish women. Soon Aviaphar himself also believed in Christ, after he heard St. Nina's interpretations of the ancient prophecies concerning Jesus Christ and how they had been fulfilled in Him as the Messiah. Afterward Aviaphar himself told of this as follows:

"The Law of Moses and the prophets lead to Christ, whom I preach," St. Nina said to me. "He is the end and fulfillment of the Law. Beginning with the creation of the world, as is also told in our books, this wondrous woman related to me all that God has arranged for the salvation of men through the promised Messiah. Jesus is truly the Messiah, the Son of the Virgin, according to the prophetic foretelling. Our fathers, moved by envy, nailed Him to the cross and put Him to death, but He rose again, ascended into heaven, and will come again in glory upon the earth. He is the One whom the nations await, and who is the glory of Israel. In His Name St. Nina before my eyes performed many signs and wonders, which only the power of God can accomplish."

Often conversing with this Aviaphar, St. Nina heard from him the following account of the tunic of the Lord:

"I heard from my parents, who heard it from their fathers and grandfathers, that when Herod was reigning in Jerusalem, the Jews who lived in Mtskheta and in all the land of Kartli[29] received word that Persian kings had come to Jerusalem; that they sought a newborn male Infant, of the offspring of David, born of a Mother without a father, and called Him the King of the Jews. They found Him in David's city of Bethlehem, in a poor cave, and offered Him as gifts royal gold, healing myrrh and fragrant frankincense; having worshipped Him, they returned to their own country" (Mt. 2:11–12).

29. Kartlinia is the name of the country along the valley of the Kura. Kartlinia once formed part of the Iberian kingdom together with Kakheti. – Jews had lived in Iberia from ancient times, having settled there after the Babylonian captivity; faithful to their customs, they visited Jerusalem at the celebration of Pascha. There they heard accounts of the life of Christ, His teaching and His miracles.

Thirty years passed after this, and then my great-grandfather Elioz received from Jerusalem a letter from the high priest Annas of the following content:

"He to whom the Persian kings came to worship with their gifts has reached full age and has begun to preach that He is the Christ, the Messiah and the Son of God.

Come to Jerusalem to see His death, to which He will be delivered according to the Law of Moses."

When Elioz prepared to go to Jerusalem together with many others, his mother, a pious old woman of the line of the high priest Eli, said to him:

"Go, my son, at the royal summons; but I beseech you, do not join with the impious against Him whom they have resolved to put to death. He is the One foretold by the prophets, who presents a riddle to the wise, a mystery hidden from the beginning of the ages, a light for the nations and eternal life."

Elioz together with Longinus of Karenia came to Jerusalem and was present at the crucifixion of Christ. His mother remained in Mtskheta. On the eve of Pascha she suddenly felt in her heart, as it were, the blows of a hammer driving in nails, and she cried out loudly:

"Now the kingdom of Israel has perished, for they have delivered to death its Savior and Redeemer; this people from now on will be guilty of the blood of its Creator and Lord. Woe is me, that I did not die before this: I would not have heard these dreadful blows! I shall no longer see on earth the Glory of Israel!"

Having said this, she died. Elioz, who had been present at the crucifixion of Christ, obtained the tunic of Christ from a Roman soldier[30], to whom it had fallen by lot, and brought it to Mtskheta. Elioz's sister Sidonia, greeting her brother on his safe return, told him of their mother's wondrous and sudden death and her last words. When Elioz, confirming his mother's foreboding concerning the crucifixion of Christ, showed his sister the tunic of the Lord, Sidonia, taking it, began to kiss it with tears, then pressed it to her breast and at once fell dead. No hu-

30. The service for the placing of the Robe of the Lord, that is, the Chiton, in the Georgian language.

man power could tear that holy garment from the hands of the dead woman, not even King Aderkios, who came with his nobles to see the unusual death of the maiden and wished himself to take the garment of Christ from her hands. Some time later Elioz committed his sister's body to the earth, and together with her he buried the tunic of Christ, and did so so secretly that even to this day no one knows the place of Sidonia's burial. Some only supposed that this place is in the middle of the royal garden, where since that time there has grown of its own accord the shady cedar that stands there now; to it believers flock from all sides, venerating it as a certain great power; there, under the roots of the cedar, according to tradition, lies the grave of Sidonia.

Hearing of this tradition, St. Nina began to come at night to pray beneath this cedar; yet she doubted whether the tunic of the Lord was indeed hidden under its roots. But mysterious visions that came to her in that place assured her that the place is holy and will in the future be glorified. Thus, once, after she had completed the midnight prayers, St. Nina saw: from all the surrounding lands flocks of black birds were flying toward the royal garden, and from there they flew to the river Aragvi[31] and bathed in its waters. After a little while they rose up, but now white as snow, and then, alighting on the branches of the cedar, they filled the garden with songs of paradise. This was a clear sign that the surrounding peoples would be enlightened by the waters of holy baptism, and that in place of the cedar there would be a church in honor of the true God, and in that church the Name of the Lord would be glorified forever. St. Nina also saw that the mountains standing opposite one another, Armaz and Zaden, trembled and fell. She also heard the sounds of battle and the cries of the hosts of demons, as if they had invaded the capital city in the form of Persian warriors, and a terrible voice, like the voice of King Khosrov, commanding that everything be given over to destruction. But all this terrible vision vanished as soon as St. Nina, raising her cross, traced with it the sign of the cross in the air and said:

31. The Aragva is a left tributary of the Kura; it flows into it at Mtskheta; its length is 100 versts.

"Be silent, demons! The end of your power has come, for behold the Victor!"

Assured by these signs that the Kingdom of God was near and that the salvation of the Iberian people was at hand, St. Nina preached the Word of God unceasingly to the people. Her disciples labored with her in the proclaiming of the Gospel of Christ, especially Sidonia and her father Aviaphar. The latter disputed so zealously and so persistently with his former co-religionists, the Jews, concerning Jesus Christ, that he suffered persecution from them, and was even condemned to be stoned; only King Mirian saved him from death. The king himself began to ponder in his heart the faith of Christ, for he knew that this faith had spread not only in the neighboring Armenian kingdom, but that also in the Roman Empire the Emperor Constantine had conquered all his enemies by the name of Christ and the power of His Cross, had become a Christian, and a protector of Christians.[32] Iberia was then under Roman rule, and Mirian's son Bakar was at that time a hostage in Rome; therefore Mirian did not hinder St. Nina from preaching Christ in his city also. Only the consort of Mirian, Queen Nana, a cruel woman and an ardent worshipper of lifeless idols, who had set up in Iberia a statue of the goddess Venus, nourished malice against the Christians.[33] Yet the grace of God, "which heals the infirm and supplies that which is lacking,"[34] soon healed this woman sick in spirit also. The queen fell ill; and the more the physicians exerted themselves, the more grievous the sickness became, until the queen was at the point of death. Then the women attending her, seeing the great danger, began to entreat her to summon the wanderer Nina, who by prayer alone to the God she preached could heal every infirmity and disease. The queen ordered that this wanderer be brought to her; St. Nina, testing the faith and humility of the queen, said to those sent:

32. Emperor Constantine the Great reigned from 306 to 337.
33. Venus – the Greco-Roman goddess of beauty and love. The festivals in her honour were accompanied by manifestations of extreme licentiousness and debauchery.
34. From the prayer of consecration in the mystery of priesthood.

"If the queen wishes to be healthy, let her come to me here into this tent, and I believe that she will receive healing here by the power of Christ, my God."

The queen obeyed and ordered that she be carried in a litter into the saint's tent; behind her followed her son Rev and a multitude of people. St. Nina, having arranged that the sick queen be laid upon her couch of branches, knelt and fervently prayed to the Lord, the Physician of souls and bodies. Then, taking her cross, she laid it upon the sick woman's head, upon her feet, and upon both her shoulders, and thus made the sign of the cross over her. No sooner had she done this than the queen rose from her sickbed healthy. Giving thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ, the queen there, before St. Nina and the people, and afterward at home before her spouse King Mirian, openly confessed that Christ is the true God. She made St. Nina her close companion and constant interlocutor, nourishing her soul with the saint's holy teachings. Then the queen drew near the wise elder Aviaphar and his daughter Sidonia, and learned much from them in faith and piety. King Mirian himself (son of the Persian king Khosroes and founder in Georgia of the Sassanid dynasty) still delayed to confess Christ openly as God, but on the contrary sought to be a zealous idolater. Once he even resolved to destroy the confessors of Christ, and together with them St. Nina, and this for the following reason. A close relative of the Persian king, a learned man and a zealous follower of the teaching of Zoroaster, came to visit Mirian, and after some time fell into a grievous sickness of demonic possession. Fearing the wrath of the Persian king, Mirian implored through envoys that St. Nina come and heal the prince. She ordered the sick man to be brought to a cedar that stood in the middle of the royal garden, had him stand facing the east with his hands raised upward, and bade him repeat three times:

“I renounce you, Satan, and give myself to Christ, the Son of God!”

When the demoniac said this, the spirit immediately threw him to the ground, shaking him, as one dead; yet, being unable to withstand the prayers of the holy virgin, it came out of the sick man. The prince, upon his recovery, believed in Christ and returned to his land a Christian. Mirian was more alarmed by this than if the prince had died, for he

feared the wrath of the Persian king, who was a fire-worshipper, because his kinsman had been converted to Christ in Mirian's house. He began to threaten that for this he would put St. Nina to death and destroy all the Christians in the city.

Assailed by such hostile thoughts against the Christians, King Mirian went into the Mukhran forests[35] to divert himself with hunting. Conversing there with his companions, he said:

"We have drawn upon ourselves the terrible wrath of our gods, in that we have permitted Christian sorcerers to preach their faith in our land. However, I shall soon destroy by the sword all who worship the Cross and the One crucified upon it. I shall command the queen too to renounce Christ; if she does not obey, I shall destroy her together with the other Christians."

With such words the king ascended the summit of the steep Mount Tkhoti. And suddenly the bright day turned into impenetrable darkness, and a storm arose like that which overthrew the idol of Armazi; a flash of lightning blinded the king's eyes, and thunder scattered all his companions. In despair the king began to cry out for help to his gods, but they gave no voice and did not hear. Feeling over himself the punishing hand of the living God, the king cried out:

"God of Nina! Dispel the darkness before my eyes, and I shall confess and glorify Thy name!"

And immediately it became light all around, and the storm subsided. Marveling at such power in the mere name of Christ, the king turned his face to the east, lifted his hands to heaven, and with tears cried out:

"O God, whom Thy handmaid Nina preaches! Thou alone art truly God above all gods. And now I see Thy great goodness toward me, and my heart feels joy, consolation, and Thy nearness to me, O blessed God! In this place I shall raise up the tree of the cross,[36] so that the sign Thou hast now shown me may be remembered for all time!"

As the king returned to the capital and walked through the streets of the city, he cried aloud:

35. Twenty versts north-west of the town of Mtskheta.
36. On the summit of Mount Tkhoti there stands to this day a church built by Mirian.

"Glorify, all ye people, the God of Nina, Christ, for He is the eternal God, and to Him alone all glory is due for ever!"

The king sought St. Nina and asked:

"Where is that wanderer, whose God is my Deliverer?"

The saint was at that time performing the evening prayers in her tent. The king, and the queen who had come out to meet him, accompanied by a multitude of people, came to that tent, and seeing the saint, fell at her feet, and the king cried:

"O my mother! Teach me, and make me worthy to call upon the name of the Great God of thine, my Savior!"

In answer to him, unrestrained tears of joy flowed from the eyes of St. Nina. At the sight of her tears the king and queen wept, and after them the whole assembled people broke into loud weeping. The eyewitness, and afterward the chronicler, of this event, Sidonia, says:

"Each time I recall these holy moments, tears of spiritual joy involuntarily flow from my eyes."

The conversion of King Mirian to Christ[37] was decisive and unshakable; Mirian was for Georgia what the Emperor Constantine the Great was at that time for Greece and Rome. The Lord chose Mirian as the leader of salvation for all the Iberian peoples. Mirian at once sent envoys to Greece to Emperor Constantine, asking him to send a bishop and priests to baptize the people, to teach them the faith of Christ, and to plant and establish the holy Church of God in Iberia. Until the envoys returned with the priests, St. Nina unceasingly taught the people the Gospel of Christ, thereby showing them the true path to the salvation of souls and the inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom; she also taught them prayers to Christ God, thus preparing them for holy baptism.

The king wished, even before the priests arrived, to build a church, and chose for this a place in his garden at the indication of St. Nina, namely where the aforementioned great cedar stood, saying:

37. It was not earlier than 323 A.D. Many chronicles give different years, from 276 to 338. Mirian reigned from 263 to 342. Emperor Constantine the Great, to whom Mirian sent an embassy concerning the bishop, became sole ruler of both the Western and Eastern halves of the Roman Empire in 323, after the deposition of Licinius, ruler of the eastern provinces and persecutor of Christians.

"Let this perishable and transitory garden be transformed into an imperishable and spiritual garden, bearing fruit unto life everlasting!"

The cedar was felled, and from its six branches six pillars were hewn, which were set in their intended places in the building without any difficulty whatsoever. But when the carpenters wished to raise the seventh pillar, hewn from the very trunk of the cedar, to set it at the foundation of the church, all were astonished, for it was impossible by any force to move it from its place. When evening came, the grieved king went home, pondering what this might signify. The people also dispersed. Only St. Nina remained at the site of the construction for the whole night, with her disciples, praying and bathing with tears the stump of the felled tree. Early in the morning there appeared to St. Nina a wondrous youth, girded with a belt of fire, who spoke to her in the ear three mysterious words, and upon hearing them she fell to the ground and bowed down to him. Then this youth approached the pillar and, embracing it, lifted it with himself high into the air. The pillar shone like lightning, so that it illumined the whole city. The king and the people gathered at this place; looking with fear and joy upon the wondrous vision, all marveled how this heavy pillar, supported by no one, rose up some twenty cubits[38] above the ground, then descended again and touched the stump on which it had grown; at last it stopped and stood immovable in its place. From beneath the base of the pillar there began to flow fragrant and healing myrrh, and all who suffered from various diseases and wounds and anointed themselves with this myrrh in faith received healing. Thus, a Jew, blind from birth, as soon as he touched this light-bearing pillar, immediately regained his sight, and, believing in Christ, glorified God. The mother of a boy who had lain in grievous sickness for seven years brought him to the life-giving pillar and implored St. Nina to heal him, confessing that Christ Jesus, whom she preached, is truly the Son of God. As soon as St. Nina touched the pillar with her hand and then laid it upon the sick boy, the boy at once recovered. The great concourse of people at the life-giving pillar prompted the king to instruct the builders to erect a fence around

38. The *lokot'* or *lakot'* – a measure of length equal to 10½ vershoks.

it. From that time this place began to be venerated not only by Christians but also by pagans. Soon the construction of the first wooden church in the land of Iberia was also completed.

The envoys sent by Mirian to Emperor Constantine were received by him with great honor and joy, and they returned to Iberia with many gifts from him. Together with them came Eustathius, Archbishop of Antioch, sent by the emperor, with two priests, three deacons, and everything necessary for divine worship. Then King Mirian gave orders to all the governors of the provinces, the voivodes, and the courtiers that all must without fail come to him in the capital city. And when they had gathered, King Mirian[39], the queen, and all their children were at once, in the presence of all, received holy baptism. The baptistery was established near the bridge over the river Kura, where formerly stood the house of the Jew Elioz, and afterward a pagan temple of the idol-priests; there the bishop baptized the military commanders and the royal nobles, and for this reason the place was called "Mtavarta Sanatlavi," that is, "the font of the nobles." A little below this place two priests baptized the people. With great zeal and joy they went to be baptized, remembering the words of St. Nino that if anyone does not receive rebirth of water and the Holy Spirit, he shall not see the life and the eternal light, but his soul will perish in the darkness of hell. The priests went through all the neighboring cities and villages and baptized the people. Thus, in a short time, the whole Kartlian land was peacefully baptized, except only the Caucasian highlanders, who long remained in the darkness of paganism. The Jews of Mtskheta did not accept baptism, except only their high priest Aviaphar, who was baptized with his whole household; with him fifty Jewish families were also baptized, who, as is told, were descendants of the robber Barabbas (Mt. 27:17). King Mirian, as a sign of his favor for their acceptance of holy baptism, gave them a little place above Mtskheta called "Tsikhe-Didi."

Thus, by the help of God and the Lord's confirmation of the word of the Gospel preaching, Archbishop Eustathius of Antioch, together with St. Nino, within a few years enlightened the land of Iberia. Having es-

39. From the history of Georgia it is evident that the Georgians, especially those of the higher estates, did not change their national names even after becoming Christian.

tablished the order of divine worship in the Greek language, consecrated the first church in Mtskheta, in the name of the twelve apostles, built after the model of the one in Constantinople, and enjoined peace upon the young Church of Christ, Archbishop Eustathius returned to Antioch[40]; as bishop of Iberia he ordained the presbyter John, who was subject to the Antiochian see.

After the passing of several years, the pious King Mirian sent a new embassy to Emperor Constantine, beseeching him to send to Iberia as many priests as possible, so that no one in his kingdom should be deprived of the opportunity to hear the word of salvation, and so that the entrance into the blessed and eternal Kingdom of Christ might be open to all[41]. He also asked that skilled architects be sent to Georgia for the construction of stone churches. Constantine the Great, with holy love and joy, fulfilled Mirian's request. He handed the envoys of Mirian, besides a large quantity of gold and silver, also a part (the base) of the life-giving Tree of the Cross of the Lord, which by this time had already been discovered (in 326 A.D.) by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great; he also handed them one of the nails with which the most pure hands of the Lord were nailed to the Cross. They were also given crosses[42], icons of Christ the Savior and of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, as well as, for the foundations of churches, relics of holy martyrs. At the same time, Mirian's son and heir Bakurius, who had been living in Rome as a hostage, was released to his father.

The envoys of Mirian, returning to Iberia with many priests and architects, laid the foundation of the first church in the village of Erusheti, on the border of the Kartlian land[43], and left for this church[44] a nail

40. Here is meant Antioch in Syria – one of the most ancient and wealthiest cities of Syria, its capital. At present Antioch is a small Turkish town.

41. Others maintain that Mirian had a personal meeting with Constantine the Great, that he himself travelled to Jerusalem and there obtained, for the building of a monastery in honour of the Cross of the Lord, the place where the sign had appeared to Lot.

42. The receipt of these priceless gifts points to a time not indicated in the Georgian chronicles: that Mirian's envoys were in Constantinople between 326 and 330, the first of which years saw the finding of the Cross of the Lord, and the last of which saw the consecration of Constantinople and the transfer of the capital here from ancient Rome.

43. Now in the Akhaltsikhe District.

44. It has long lain in ruins.

from the Cross of the Lord[45]. They founded a second church in the village of Manglisi, forty versts south of Tiflis, and here they left the aforementioned part of the life-giving tree[46]. In Mtskheta, a stone church in honor of the Transfiguration of the Lord was founded by them; at the wish of the king and by the direction of St. Nino it was laid in the royal garden, near St. Nino's tent. She did not see the completion of this majestic church. Avoiding the glory and honors which both the king and the people rendered to her, burning with desire to serve yet further to the glorification of the name of Christ, she withdrew from the crowded city into the mountains, to the waterless heights of the Aragvi, and there began to prepare herself by prayer and fasting for new evangelical labors in the regions adjoining Kartli. Finding a small cave hidden behind the branches of trees, she lived in it. Here, by tearful prayer, she drew water from the rock. From this spring drops of water still fall, like tears, whence it is called among the people the "tearful" spring; it is also called the "milky" spring, for it gives milk to the withered breasts of mothers.

At that time the inhabitants of Mtskheta beheld a wondrous vision: for several nights a bright cross crowned with a wreath of stars shone over the newly built church in the heavens. At the coming of morning dawn, four of the brightest stars separated from this cross and went their way: one toward the east, another toward the west, a third illumined the church, the bishop's house, and the whole city, and the fourth, having illumined the refuge of St. Nino, ascended to the summit of a cliff on which there grew one majestic tree. Neither Bishop John nor the king could understand what this vision meant. But St. Nino ordered this tree to be felled, four crosses to be made from it, and one to be set up on the aforementioned cliff[47], another to the west of Mtskheta, on Mount Tkhoti, the place where King Mirian first went blind

45. In the middle of the 13th century this nail was set by King David IX, son of Rusudan, into the crown of the episcopal mitre. Afterwards, in 1681, this mitre was transferred by King Archil to Moscow, where it is preserved to this day in the Dormition Cathedral.

46. This relic is considered lost; it is more likely that in the troubled times of Georgia the wood was divided into many pieces and in this form found its way into the houses of private persons. Even now considerable parts of the Life-giving Tree can be seen in the family icons of the Georgian princes.

and then regained his sight and turned to the true God; the third cross she commanded to be given to the king's daughter-in-law, the wife of Rev, Salome, that she might set it up in her city of Ujarma; the fourth she destined for the village of Bodbi (Budi), the possession of the Kakhetian queen Sodzhi (Sophia), to whom she herself soon set out to bring her to the Christian faith.

Taking with her the priest James and one deacon, St. Nina went into the mountain country north of Mtskheta, toward the upper reaches of the rivers Aragvi and Iori,[48] and preached the Gospel in the mountain villages of the Caucasus. The wild highlanders who dwelt in Chaleti, Ertso, Tioneti and many other places, moved by the divine power of the Gospel word and by the wondrous signs wrought through the prayer of this holy preacher of Christ, received the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ, destroyed their idols, and received Holy Baptism from the priest James. Then, passing on to Kokabeti and bringing all its inhabitants to the Christian faith, the holy preacher turned toward the south of Kakheti; and having reached the village of Bodbe (Budi), the limit of her holy labors and earthly pilgrimage, she settled there. Setting up a tent on the slope of a mountain, and spending her days and nights in prayer before the holy Cross, St. Nina soon drew the attention of the neighboring inhabitants. They began to gather continually about her to hear her moving instructions concerning the Christian faith and the way to eternal life. At this time Soja (Sophia), queen of Kakheti, was living in Bodbe; she too came, together with others, to hear the wondrous preacher. Having once come and listened to her with delight, she no longer wished to leave her, for she was filled with sincere faith in the saving preaching of St. Nina. Before long Sophia, together with her courtiers and a multitude of the people, received Holy Baptism from the priest James.

47. Later, on this site, a church in honour of the Holy Cross and a monastery were erected. The church still exists; the monastery was destroyed in the 14th century by Tamerlane. The Cross was transferred to the Mtskheta cathedral; in 1725 it was set in silver by King Teimuraz II and to this day stands behind the Holy Table.

48. The Iora is a right tributary of the river Alazani (a left tributary of the Kura). The greater part of the Iora lies in the Tiflis Governorate; on the Iora stands the district town of Tionsti, mentioned in the Life of St. Nina.

Having thus accomplished in Kakheti the last work of her apostolic ministry in the land of Iberia, St. Nina received from God a revelation of the approach of her death. Writing of this to King Mirian, the saint called down upon him and upon his kingdom the eternal blessing of God and of the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God, and protection by the invincible power of the Cross of the Lord, and went on to write:

"As for me, as a wanderer and a stranger, I now depart from this world and shall go the way of my fathers. I beseech you, O king, send me Bishop John, that he may prepare me for the eternal way, for the day of my death is already near."

The letter was sent with Queen Sophia herself. On reading it, King Mirian, all his courtiers, and the whole sacred clergy, headed by the bishop, hastened to the dying woman and found her still alive. A great crowd of people surrounded the holy one's deathbed and watered it with their tears; many of the sick received healing through touching it. Toward the end of her life, at the urgent request of the disciples weeping at her bedside, St. Nina told them of her origin and her life. Salome of Ujarma wrote down what she related, and this is briefly set out here (all the later accounts of St. Nina were compiled on the basis of Salome's notes). St. Nina said:

"Let my poor and slothful life be described, so that it may become known also to your children, as well as your faith and the love with which you have loved me. Let even your distant descendants know of the signs of God which you were privileged to see with your own eyes and of which you are witnesses."

Then she gave several instructions concerning eternal life, devoutly received from the hands of the bishop the saving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, bade that her body be buried in the same humble tent where she now lay, so that the newly founded Kakhetian Church might not be left orphaned, and peacefully yielded up her spirit into the hands of the Lord.[49]

The king and the bishop, together with the whole people, were deeply grieved at the death of this great ascetic of the faith and piety;

49. St. Nina reposed in 335 A.D.

they resolved to transfer the precious remains of the saint to the cathedral church of Mtskheta and to bury them beside the Life-giving Pillar, but despite every effort they could not move the coffin of St. Nina from the resting place she herself had chosen. The body of this herald of Christ was buried on the site of her humble tent in the village of Budi (Bodbe). Over her grave King Mirian soon laid the foundation of a church, which his son, King Bakur, completed[50] and consecrated in the name of St. Nina's kinsman, the holy Great Martyr George. This church was renovated many times, but it was never destroyed; it has survived to the present day. At this church was established the Metropolis of Bodbe, the oldest in all Kakheti, from which the Gospel preaching spread into the depths of the mountains of the eastern Caucasus.

The All-Good God glorified the body of St. Nina with incorruption; it had been hidden beneath the ground by her command (and after her, it was not the custom in Georgia to open the relics of the saints). At her tomb there occurred numerous and continual signs and miracles. These gracious signs, the holy and angel-like life, and the apostolic labors of St. Nina, which she undertook and gloriously completed, moved the young Iberian Church, with the blessing of the Church of Antioch, to acknowledge St. Nina as Equal-to-the-Apostles Enlightener of Iberia, to number her among the saints, and to establish an annual feast in her honor on January 14, the day of her blessed repose. And although the year of the establishment of this feast is not known with precision, it was evidently instituted soon after St. Nina's death, for shortly thereafter churches began to be built in Iberia in the name of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Nina. To this day there still stands a small stone church in honor of St. Nina, opposite Mtskheta, built by Emperor Vakhtang Gorgasali[51] on the hill where St. Nina first destroyed the idol Armaz by her prayer.

The Orthodox Russian Church, which received the Iberian Church into herself as into a saving ark, the Iberian Church being troubled by repeated attacks from its unbelieving neighbors, has never doubted that St. Nina should be honored as Equal-to-the-Apostles. Therefore its

50. In 342 A.D.
51. He reigned in Georgia from 446 to 459 A.D.

hierarchs, appointed at the head of the governance of the Iberian Church with the title of Exarchs of Georgia,[52] have consecrated many churches in the name of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Nina, especially in the buildings of women's schools. One of the former Exarchs of Georgia, afterwards Primate of the All-Russian Church, Metropolitan Isidore, translated even the service to St. Nina from Georgian into Slavonic, and published it in 1860, with the blessing of the Most Holy Synod, for church use.

Rightly does the Orthodox Iberian Church, the elder sister of the Russian Church, glorify its foundress, St. Nina, as Equal-to-the-Apostles, who enlightened the whole land of Iberia with Holy Baptism and converted many thousands of souls to Christ. For "he who shall turn a sinner from the error of his way" (Jas. 5:20) "shall be as God's mouth," and "he that takes forth the precious from the vile" (Jer. 15:19); how much more truly, then, has she been God's mouth, who converted to God from the ruinous pagan delusion so many peoples who previously did not know the true God! She has been joined to the choir of the saints in the Kingdom of Christ our God, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, belong honor, glory, thanksgiving, and worship, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

It will not be superfluous to say here also the following. Within the bounds of present-day Georgia (which includes Kakheti, Kartli, Imereti, Guria, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, Svaneti, part of Ossetia, and also Dagestan), especially along the western shore of the Caspian Sea, there were, although in small numbers, Christians even before St. Nina, and the same first-called Apostle Andrew first preached of Christ the Savior in the mountains of the Caucasus, the same Andrew by whose preaching, according to tradition, the Kievan hills also were enlightened. The ancient tradition recorded in the Georgian chronicles, agreeing also with the account of the Menaion (under November 30),[53] says that the Apostle Andrew preached of Christ in the following places: in Klarjeti, which lies not far from Akhaltsikhe, to the southw-

52. Exarch – an archbishop governing the churches of a particular region. Today in Russia the title of exarch is borne by the Archbishop of Georgia.
53. The memory of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called is celebrated on November 30.

est;[54] in Adhvari, now the village of Atskhuri, near the entrance to the Borjomi gorge; in Tskhum, now the city of Sukhum-Kale in Abkhazia; in Mingrelia; and in northern Ossetia. In Atskhuri the Apostle founded a church and left there a wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, which in all the following time enjoyed great veneration not only among the Christians but also among the unbelieving highlanders; it still exists in the Gaenati monastery, which lies not far from the city of Kutaisi and is called the Atskhuri monastery.[55] The companion of the Apostle Andrew, Simon the Cananite, preached the Holy Gospel to the wild Suans (Svans),[56] who stoned him. According to local tradition, his tomb is in the ancient city of Nicopsis or Anacopia.

Concerning the Holy Cross of grapevine, which the Mother of God entrusted to St. Nina, the following is known: until the year 458 A.D., the Cross of Nina was preserved in the Cathedral church at Mtskheta. Afterwards, when the fire-worshippers raised persecution against the Christians, the Holy Cross was taken from Mtskheta by a monk named Andrew, who carried it into the region of Taron in Armenia, which at that time was still of one faith with Georgia. It was first kept in the church of the Holy Apostles, which the Armenians called Gazar-Vank (the Cathedral of Lazarus). When persecution broke out here too, on the part of the Persian magi, who everywhere sought to destroy all that the Christians revered, the Holy Cross of Nina was moved from place to place and hidden in the Armenian fortresses of Kapofti, Vanak, and Kars, and in the city of Ani; so it continued until the year 1239 A.D. At that time the Georgian Queen Rusudan, together with her bishops, obtained from the Mongol voivode Charmaghan, who had then seized

54. Akhaltsikhe – a district town of the Tiflis Governorate, Akhaltsikhe District.

55. Gaenati – the Nativity-of-the-Theotokos Men's Monastery, Imeretian Eparchy, 8 versts from Kutaisi; founded at the beginning of the 12th century. Also known by the local name Gelati, or of Gelati.

56. The Svaneti are a small Caucasian mountain tribe, known from very ancient times under the name Svans, or Suans, inhabiting the upper course of the river Ingur, at the southern foot of Mount Elbrus, and along the right tributary of the river Kon, Tskhenis-Tskali. In antiquity the Svans were engaged chiefly in brigandage and did not submit to any of the neighbouring rulers of Mingrelia, Imeretia and Georgia. Only at the end of the 15th century did the Georgian princes succeed in establishing their authority over Lower Svaneti, which lasted until the emancipation of the peasants in Transcaucasia. The free Svans first submitted to the Russians only in 1853.

the city of Ani, that the Holy Cross of Nina should be returned to Georgia, to which it had belonged from the beginning. And this Holy Cross was again set up in the Cathedral church at Mtskheta. But here too it found rest only for a short time. Many times the Cross of Nina, to avoid being outraged by enemies, was hidden in the mountains: sometimes in the church of the Holy Trinity, which stands to this day on the small mountain of Kazbek, and sometimes in the fortress of Ananuri, in the ancient church of the Mother of God. The Georgian Metropolitan Roman, departing from Georgia for Russia in 1749, secretly took the Cross of Nina with him and handed it to Tsarevich Bakar Vakhtangovich, who then lived in Moscow. After that, for about fifty years, this cross remained in the village of Lyskovo, in the Nizhny Novgorod province, on the estate of the Georgian princes, descendants of Tsar Vakhtang, who had emigrated to Russia in 1724. The grandson of the aforementioned Bakar, Prince George Alexandrovich, presented the Cross of Nina to Emperor Alexander Pavlovich in 1801, and it pleased the Emperor to restore to Georgia this great sanctuary which belonged to her. From that time until now this symbol of the apostolic labors of St. Nina has been preserved in the Sioni Cathedral at Tiflis, near the north gate of the sanctuary, in a reliquary bound with silver. On the upper panel of this reliquary is an embossed image of St. Nina and of the miracles wrought through her by the power of the Precious and Life-giving Cross.

As for the Tunic of the Lord, which St. Nina came from the city of Jerusalem into Iberia to seek, the Georgian chronicles speak of it briefly. From their testimony it is evident that Nina found with certainty only the place where the Tunic of the Lord had been hidden, that is, the tomb in which, together with the deceased maiden Sidonia, the honorable Tunic of the Lord had been buried. Although the cedar that had grown over this tomb was felled by command of St. Nina, its stump, beneath which the coffin of Sidonia was hidden and in it the Lord's robe, was left whole, as is thought, by the command of a radiant man who appeared to Nina and spoke three mysterious words in her ear, when she was praying tearfully at night beside this root. It is thought so because from that time Nina never again considered remov-

ing the root of the cedar and digging up the coffin of Sidonia, nor did she seek the Tunic of the Lord, so precious to her, in any other place.

Once she was consoling King Mirian when he grieved that his envoys, having received from Emperor Constantine a part of the Life-giving Wood of the Cross of the Lord and a nail, had not brought them to Mtskheta, but had left the one at Maiglis and the other at Yerushet. The Saint said to him:

"Do not grieve, O King! It had to be so: that the borders of your kingdom should also lie under the protection of the divine power of Christ's Cross, and that the faith of Christ should spread. For you and for your capital city, the grace is sufficient that the most honorable Tunic of the Lord abides here."

The presence of the Tunic of the Lord beneath the root of the cedar, both during the life of St. Nina and after, manifested itself by the outflowing of healing and fragrant myrrh from the pillar and its root; this myrrh ceased to flow only in the 13th century, when the Tunic was dug out of the earth. The presence of the holy Tunic was also made known through the punishment of those unbelievers who out of curiosity dared to touch this place. The Catholicos[57] Nicholas I, who governed the Georgian Church in the middle of the twelfth century (in 1150–1160), renowned for his holiness of life and his wisdom, noticing that many in his time doubted whether the Tunic of the Lord was really under the life-bearing pillar, says that although the doubt of such people is natural, since the Tunic of the Lord had never been opened and no one had ever seen it, yet those signs and miracles, both the former ones and those which are now accomplished before the eyes of all, proceed from the Tunic of the Lord, only through the mediation of the myrrh-streaming pillar. In enumerating the miracles that had come from the Tunic of the Lord, Catholicos Nicholas recalls how the wife of a Turkish sultan, who out of curiosity wished to open the coffin of Sidonia and

57. Catholicos (Greek – universal) – the title of the supreme hierarchs of the autocephalous Georgian Church, which they assumed after this Church acquired independence from the Patriarchate of Antioch, under King Vakhtang Gurgasali (446–459). When the Georgian Church entered the Russian Church, its highest hierarch from 1811 began to be called exarch. From the middle of the 6th century the title of Catholicos was also assumed by the supreme hierarch of the Armenian Church.

look at the Tunic of the Lord, was burned by fire that came forth from the earth; and the Tatar grave-diggers she had sent were struck by an invisible power.

"This miracle," he says, "many have seen, and it is known to everyone."

About forty years before the death of Catholicos Nicholas, Tiflis and Mtskheta were indeed occupied by the Seljuk Turks, who were later driven out of Georgia by King David the Restorer, who reigned from 1089 to 1125. Catholicos Nicholas pointed to the flowing myrrh as a constant miracle, always and by all visible.

"All see," he says, "the moisture on the eastern side of the pillar; out of ignorance some have tried to plaster that place with lime, but have been unable to stop the flowing of the myrrh. And how many healings have come from it, we are all witnesses."

This Catholicos Nicholas composed a service in honor of the finding of the Tunic of the Lord beneath the life-bearing pillar (later this service was corrected and supplemented by the Catholicoi Vissarion and Anthony), and he said:

"The pillar set up by God Himself, and the Tunic of our Savior Jesus Christ which lies beneath it, must be adorned with a radiant festival."

(Here end the accounts taken from Catholicos Nicholas.)

The outflowing of myrrh from the aforementioned life-bearing pillar ceased when, by the will of God, the Tunic of the Lord was taken out of the earth.

"It was," says an anonymous Georgian writer, "in the grievous years for all of Georgia, when the barbarian hordes of Tamerlane, or rather of Genghis Khan,[58] invaded. They took Tiflis, slew its inhabitants to the number of about one hundred thousand souls, destroyed all the churches of Tiflis and the Church of Sion, and gave over to desecration all the Christian holy things, as well as the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God of Sion, which they forced the Christians themselves to

58. Around 1228, when the Mtskheta church was also destroyed. Tamerlane, however, invaded Georgia in 1387, when the Mtskheta church no longer existed. This church was rebuilt again by King Alexander I in the 15th century.

trample underfoot. After this they rushed upon the city of Mtskheta, whose inhabitants fled, together with their bishops, into the forests and the inaccessible gorges of the mountains. Then one pious man, foreseeing the ruin of Mtskheta and unwilling to leave to the barbarians' profanation the sanctuary of its church, after a preliminary prayer to God opened the tomb of Sidonia, took from it the most precious tunic of the Lord, and afterwards handed it to the chief archpastor. The Mtskheta church, the majestic edifice of King Vakhtang Gorgasali, was then razed to its foundations. From that time the Tunic of the Lord was kept in the vestry of the Catholicoi, until the Mtskheta church was restored to its former splendor (in which it remains to this day) by King Alexander I, who reigned in Georgia from 1414 to 1442. The Tunic of the Lord was then brought into this cathedral church and, for greater safety, hidden within a church cross, where it remained until the seventeenth century. In 1625 the Persian Shah Abbas, having conquered and seized the Iverian land, in order to secure the favor of the Russian imperial court, which then already patronized Georgia, took the Tunic of the Lord from the Mtskheta church, placed it in a golden reliquary adorned with precious stones, and, with a special letter, sent it as a priceless gift to the All-Russian Most Holy Patriarch Philaret, father of the then-reigning sovereign Michael Feodorovich. Pious Tsar Michael and the Most Holy Patriarch Philaret, receiving this great gift with joy, a gift infinitely surpassing all the most precious earthly gifts, gathered from the Greek bishops and wise elders then present in Moscow the traditions known to them concerning the garment of the Lord, the tunic of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ (Jn. 19:23–24); these traditions agree with what is set forth here. Having been assured, after prayer and fasting, through the many miraculous healings received after this garment was laid upon the sick, that it was indeed the garment of Christ, the Tsar and the patriarch ordered a special chamber adorned with precious ornaments to be built in the right corner of the western side of the Moscow Dormition Cathedral, and there they placed the garment of Christ. It is here to this day; all behold it and venerate it with due reverence; from it healings are still given to the sick and help to all who come in faith. In the Russian Church, from the time of the

Most Holy Patriarch Philaret, the feast of the Laying Down of the Robe, that is, of the Tunic of the Lord, was established on the 10th day of the month of July.[59] Although in the Iverian Church the feast of the Tunic of the Lord on the 1st day of October was established only in the twelfth century, it may be supposed that in Iveria, especially in Mtskheta, this day was celebrated brightly, as it is celebrated now, if not from the time of the first Christian king Mirian, then at least from the fifth century, that is, from the glorious reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali; it was celebrated as the memorable day of the consecration of the new and magnificent Mtskheta church which he built on the site of Mirian's ancient church."

Troparion to St. Nina:

O servant of the Word of God, who didst imitate the first-called Andrew and the other Apostles in apostolic preaching, enlightener of Iveria and pipe of the Holy Spirit, holy Nino, Equal-to-the-Apostles, pray to Christ God that our souls be saved.

* * *

Commemoration of Venerable Stephen

Память преподобного Стефана

Venerable Stephen of Chinolakkos shone with his holy life in Palestine. From youth, striving for the ascetic life, he often visited the monasteries of pious men situated along the Jordan, as well as the monasteries of the saints located in the desert not far from Jerusalem: Euthymius the Great, Sabbas the Sanctified, and Theodosius the Great; in each monastery the saint labored, becoming acquainted by his own experience with its rule. After this the Venerable went to Constantinople, in the time of the emperor Leo the Isaurian, and was received by the holy Patriarch Germanus; with him he lived for some time, learning in the spiritual life and on his own part proving a beneficial counselor to the hierarch. Afterwards Venerable Stephen founded

59. Since the Robe of the Lord was brought to Russia in Great Lent, its celebration has been transferred to July 10 (the eve of the day of the coronation of Tsar Michael Feodorovich).

the monastery of Chinolakkos,[60] in which a multitude of monks gathered, whom the saint trained in the teaching of the Lord and in good instruction, and brought them to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Having lived virtuously on earth and, in unceasing prayer, drawn near to the heavenly inhabitants, Venerable Stephen received a revelation that the hour of his departure to the heavenly abodes was near. At his separation from the body, the Lord received his holy soul through the Angels with glory, since it was filled with purity; some of the brethren were granted to see this glorious departure of the Venerable to the heavenly dwellings and related it to many.

* * *



60. That is, "by the goose pond." From the Greek words for goose and pond. This monastery is located in the Asia Minor province of Bithynia (the north-western region of Asia Minor), not far from Chalcedon, across from Constantinople.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 15

15 января

New Calendar January 15 · Old Calendar January 28 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Paul of Thebes

Житие преподобного отца нашего Павла Фивейского

When Venerable Anthony was living with his disciples in the Egyptian desert,[1] it once came into his mind that there was no other monk as perfect as he was, no one who had settled in the desert before him and chosen so solitary a life. He himself related afterwards that when he thought thus, he heard in a vision a voice saying:

"Anthony! There is a servant of God who came here before you and who is more perfect than you. If you wish, you may find him in a remote desert; only go to him quickly, before he departs to the Lord."

Hearing this and coming to himself, the elder at once took his staff and hastened into the desert, ardently desiring to find as quickly as possible the one who had been revealed to him. It was noon, and it became so hot that the stones themselves grew hot from the sun's heat. The elder's body grew faint, but his spirit was steadfast, and he did not think of turning back from the path he had undertaken. Although he did not know where to go further, he kept firm and said:

"I believe that God will show me, as He promised, His servant."

Passing through this harsh and inaccessible desert, the elder saw nothing but the tracks of beasts. Having spent the second day on the way and the second night in prayer, he did not know where to turn next. At dawn of the third day he suddenly saw a she-wolf walking along the edge of a mountain and howling. Following her from a dis-

1. The Venerable Anthony the Great is the first founder of the monastic life. His memory is celebrated on January 17. The cave in which he labored was in southern Egypt, in the wild and uninhabited region of the Thebaid, on the eastern bank of the river Nile.

tance, he came to a cave in which lived the holy servant of God Paul.[2] The elder rejoiced at the sight of the cave; but its inhabitant, noticing Anthony's approach, locked the door. Coming up, the elder knocked, but there was no answer, and he continued to stand outside and knock in vain. Seeing that the door was not being opened to him, he fell to the ground before the entrance to the cave and prayed until the sixth hour, that he might be granted to enter within and see the one he had found with such difficulty.

The saint said:

"Open to me, servant of Christ, open! For you know who I am, whence and why I have come, since God has revealed it to you. I myself know that I am unworthy to see your holy face; nevertheless, I will not depart from here until I see you. Do not hide yourself, if God has revealed you to me: you receive beasts—why then do you reject a man? I have found you after long searching, and now I knock, that you may open to me. But if you do not open, I shall die on your threshold, and you will bury my corpse here."

He said much else to him besides, with tears, and reproached him for his severity. Then the servant of God answered him from within the cave and said:

"Can one ask with threats, or reproach with tears? You wonder that I do not open to you; it is because you boast that you have come here to die."

With these words the saint opened the door, and they embraced and kissed one another, each calling the other by name, for God had revealed to each the other's name. When they had sat down, Venerable Anthony said:

"Rejoice, Paul, chosen vessel and pillar of fire, dweller in this desert!"

Saint Paul answered:

"It is well that you have come, sun illuminating the whole universe, teacher of those who are being saved, mouth of God, who has peopled

the desert and driven the devil out of it! But why have you undertaken so great a labor, coming to me, a sinful and insignificant man? Here you see before you a decrepit old man, disorderly covered with gray hair, a man ready to turn to dust and corruption. But love knows no obstacles—and you have come. Tell me, I beg you: how do people live now, and in what state is the world? Are there still idolaters, and at the same time, do not persecutions of the faithful continue?"

"By your prayers," answered Anthony, "the world is in prosperity, the persecutions have ceased, and the Church glorifies the True God. But since you have mentioned persecutions, I beg you, tell me, for God's sake, about yourself, and reveal for what reason you left the world for this distant desert."

"I was born[3] in the Thebaid,"[4] began Saint Paul his account, "and I had a sister, whom our parents, while still living, gave in marriage. Being Orthodox themselves, they, having given me a secular education, instructed me also in the truths of the Orthodox faith. Dying, they divided between us their wealthy estate. After their death, my sister's husband, out of greed, planned to appropriate the part of the property that was due to me, and he resolved to hand me over, as a Christian, to torment by an impious prince, so that, by thus destroying me, he might take possession of my inheritance. The emperor was then Decius.[5] He persecuted all Christians, and the whole Thebaid trembled with fear before the cruel tortures he devised. At that time a Christian youth was seized by the impious persecutors. They tormented him for a long time, trying to induce him to renounce the faith of Christ—but in vain. At last they brought him into a flourishing and fragrant garden and, laying

2. The cave of the Venerable Paul, on Mount Holzim, lies in a straight line no more than four versts from the mountain of Anthony, but it is separated by so high and steep a wall that the way around it is very long, which is why it took the Venerable Anthony about two days to make the journey.

3. The year of birth of Paul of Thebes, according to his Life, is determined as follows. When Anthony came to Paul, Paul had already been in the desert for 91 years, having withdrawn into it at the age of 22. Consequently he was 113 years old. Anthony, born in 251, came to him at the age of 90; therefore the Venerable Paul was born around 228.

4. The Thebaid is the region of the famous ancient Egyptian city of Thebes; by the name of its principal city the whole of Upper (southern) Egypt was also called by this name.

5. Decius was a Roman emperor and a cruel persecutor of Christianity; he reigned from 249 to 251.

him on his back on a luxurious bed, tied his hands and feet to it with soft cords. When everyone had left the garden, they let a young girl in to him, to tempt him into sin. The shameless maiden embraced and kissed the youth, trying in every way to seduce him. And what did the valiant sufferer do, after he had already endured so many torments? Seeing himself in danger of carnal enticement, he bit off his tongue and spat it into the harlot's face; by the terrible pain he overcame the passion within himself, spattering the face and garments of the wanton with blood, while he himself, with the help of Christ's grace, remained steadfast in purity. Another youth, who remained firm in the Christian faith, after many tortures was stripped, his whole body smeared with honey, and placed in the sun's heat with his arms bound behind his back; they thought that, stung by bees, wasps and hornets, he would not endure it and would consent to offer an idol sacrifice. But the valiant sufferer, although his whole body was so bitten and covered with blood that he had lost even the appearance of a human being, did not deny Christ. Seeing all this, and also the ever-growing malice of my sister's husband, which neither my sister's tears nor our kinship could restrain, I left him everything and fled into this desert. With God's help I gradually reached this place. Finding this cave with a spring of water within it, I understood that the Lord Himself had appointed me this place of dwelling. I settled here and live, feeding on dates and making my clothing from leaves."

As the saint was telling this, suddenly a raven flew up, holding bread in its beak; quietly laying the bread before them, it flew off and vanished into the air. Seeing the astonishment of the blessed Anthony, Saint Paul said:

"It is the Lord, most merciful and loving to mankind, who has sent us, His servants, our dinner. For sixty years now I have received half a loaf. But on account of your coming, Christ the Lord has doubled the gift and sent to His warriors a whole loaf."

Taking this bread, the great servants of God began to ask one another to bless and break it, each placing the other above himself in honor. Saint Paul wished to honor Venerable Anthony as a guest, and Venerable Anthony Saint Paul as the master of the house and the elder in

years; and for a long time they contended lovingly between themselves. At last the blessed Paul took the bread by one edge, and placed the other in the hands of Venerable Anthony: the bread at once broke of itself in the middle, and each received his own half.

Sitting by the spring, the servants of Christ ate and were satisfied; then they drank from this spring, which had clear and very pleasant water. After offering the prayer of thanksgiving, they sat down again and conversed the whole night until morning. With the coming of day, Saint Paul said to Abba Anthony:

"I have known for a long time, my brother, that you dwell in this desert, and I would wish, living with you, to serve our Master together. But since the time of my departure has come, which I always awaited with joy, desiring 'to depart and be with Christ' (Phil. 1:23), the Lord has sent you to me, that you may bury my humble body and commit earth to earth."

Hearing this, Anthony cried out with tears:

"Do not leave me alone, my father, but take me with you!"

"It is not for yourself that you must be concerned," answered Saint Paul, "but for the good of your neighbor. If it would be good for you, freed from the burden of the flesh, to follow the Lamb into heaven, the benefit of the rest of the brethren requires that you still teach and strengthen them. I beg you, go quickly to your monastery and bring the mantle given you by Bishop Athanasius, to cover my body with it."

Saint Paul asked for this not because he needed a mantle. He did not care whether his corruptible body, which he had clothed so long with date-palm leaves, would be buried in the earth naked or covered; he desired only that his soul be parted from the body in the silence of solitude, and therefore he sent Venerable Anthony away from himself to the monastery.

Anthony was greatly astonished at what he heard about Athanasius and the mantle. Seeing in Paul, as it were, Christ Himself, and honoring the God who dwelt in him, he did not dare to object any further; for a long time, in silence and with tears, he kissed his eyes and hands, and then hastened to fulfill the command: against his own wish he set out for the monastery, his body faint, but his spirit overcoming the infirmit-

ies of his old age. As he approached his cell, two disciples met him and asked:

"Where have you been all this time, our father?"

"Woe is me, my children," Anthony replied, "woe is me, a sinner and a monk in name only. I myself am called a monk, but I have seen one who is truly Elijah, John in the wilderness; I have truly seen Paul in Paradise."

The disciples wished to hear more about this and began to entreat him to tell them. But Anthony, covering his mouth with his hand, said:

"For everything there is a season: a time to speak, and a time to keep silence" (Eccl. 3:1–7).

Taking his mantle with him, and without resting at all or taking even food for the journey, he went out and hastened once more into the wilderness, hoping to find St. Paul still alive; for he feared that if he delayed, Paul might die without him.

On the following day, at about the third hour, while he was on the way, Abba Anthony saw in the air the ranks of Angels and the assemblies of Prophets and Apostles; and in their midst, the soul of St. Paul, shining more brightly than the sun, ascended to Heaven. St. Anthony fell to the ground, sprinkled dust upon his head, and cried out with sobs:

"Why have you left me, Paul? Why are you departing without a final kiss? For so long I did not know you, and now, so soon after I came to know you, you leave me!"

Blessed Anthony later recounted that he covered the rest of the way with such speed, as though flying through the air on wings, so that from walking so swiftly he could not even feel the ground beneath his feet. Soon he reached the cave and, entering it, saw the saint standing on his knees, with his hands stretched upward and his face turned heavenward. Thinking that he was alive and praying, Anthony joined him in prayer. An hour passed; and since he heard neither words nor sighs of prayer from St. Paul, blessed Anthony drew nearer and, seeing that he was already dead, understood that even after death the body of the holy man was offering worship to God, before Whose Face all are alive. For a long time he wept and lamented, kissing the holy body of

the Venerable Father; then he wrapped it in the mantle he had brought and, according to Christian custom, began to chant the psalms used at burials. But he could not think how he might bury the saint, since he had brought no mattock with which to dig a grave.

"Should I return to the monastery for a tool?" he wondered. "But it is three days' journey from here. Should I remain here? Yet without a mattock I can do nothing. Better that I remain here and die as I ought, breathing my last beside Thy warrior, O Christ!"

As he was thinking on this, suddenly two lions came from the depths of the wilderness, roaring as though mourning the loss of the saint. Anthony was somewhat afraid at first; but when he saw the gentle beasts lying beside the saint's body like lambs, roaring plaintively as though they were weeping, he marvelled at their gentleness. They began to dig the earth with their claws and, having made a grave of considerable depth, again fell beside the saint's body, roaring loudly as though taking leave of him. Then they came up to the Venerable Anthony and began to lick his hands and feet, as though asking for his blessing and prayers. Seeing that even the beasts bowed before God, the Venerable one glorified Christ and said:

"O Lord, without Thy will neither a leaf from a tree nor a single bird falls to the ground; grant Thy blessing to these beasts, as Thou knowest."

Then, pointing with his hand toward the wilderness, he bade the beasts depart there. When they had vanished, Abba Anthony buried the precious body of the holy and Venerable Father Paul, the first dweller in the wilderness, who reposed at the age of 113[6]. The Venerable Anthony spent the whole night following the burial beside the saint's grave, in tears and prayer; and at daybreak he set out back to his monastery, taking with him the garment woven from palm leaves that had belonged to the saint. When he arrived at his monastery, he related all that had happened in detail to his disciples, for their instruc-

6. The Venerable Paul of Thebes reposed in 341. By the will of the Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenus (1146–1180), his body was transferred to Constantinople and placed in the monastery of the Theotokos Periblepta; then in 1240 it was transferred to Venice and finally to Hungary, to Ofen; part of his head is in Rome.

tion. He kept and venerated St. Paul's garment so greatly that he wore it only twice a year: on the feast of holy Pascha and at Pentecost.

Through the holy prayers of the Venerable Fathers Paul and Anthony, may Christ our Lord grant us a portion among His servants, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father John the Hut-Dweller[7]

Житие преподобного Иоанна Кущника

In Constantinople, during the reign of Leo the Great[8], there lived a wealthy and distinguished military official named Eutropius, with his wife Theodora. He had three sons, two of whom had been given over to imperial service and had already attained high rank; the third, the youngest, named John, he sent to be instructed in various branches of learning. While still a boy of twelve, John stood out conspicuously among his companions, so that even his teachers marvelled at his abilities and at the remarkable maturity of his young age. Yet he advanced not only in worldly learning but also in spiritual wisdom. By the gracious action of the Holy Spirit upon him, he grew into a gentle, guileless, and modest boy; and when his lessons were over, he spent his time not in the games proper to childhood, but in reading the holy, God-inspired books and diligently attending the church services. His heart was warmed with love for God, and the flame of this love began to burn fiercely within his soul.

While John was thus advancing in piety, it once happened that a monk entered the house where the blessed boy was studying. Seeing him, the boy asked:

"Where are you from, Father, and where are you going?"

7. The Venerable John is called the Kushnik because at the end of his ascetic life he lived in a "kushcha," that is, a tent, in extreme poverty and destitution, near the house of his rich and noble parents, unrecognized by them; and in this same tent he was buried, and his parents later built a church in his name on the site of the "kushcha."

8. Leo I the Great was a Byzantine emperor; he reigned from 457 to 476.

"I am from the monastery of the 'Sleepless Ones'[604]," the monk replied, "and I am going to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places."

With his heart aflame, John began to ask him about the monastic life, about prayer and fasting, the unceasing chanting, and the other ascetic labors and struggles of monks. The monk, seeing the boy's piety and good judgment, told him in detail of all the customs and rules of his monastery.

John listened attentively to what the monk said, then asked him:

"Will you return to your monastery, Father, or remain in Jerusalem?"

"I have," the monk replied, "an instruction from my abbot to return; and after venerating the holy places, if it be pleasing to God, I shall come back without delay."

Then John took the monk by the right hand and said:

"I have a secret word for you, Father."

Then he drew him aside and began to speak:

"Listen to me, my father, I beg you, and show me mercy. I have a strong desire to leave the vain world and serve Christ. But my parents think quite otherwise of me. Loving me more than my elder brothers, they wish to secure some high position for me and marry me off. But I have often listened to the word of God in the holy church and read the holy books myself, and I have understood that all things worldly are vain, and that only one thing is profitable: to renounce the world and serve Christ in your monastic way of life. I adjure you by God, Who desires our salvation, to take me with you when you return to your monastery."

In these words the monk perceived that God Himself was calling the boy to Himself. He solemnly promised to take him with him on his return, and so they parted.

After the monk had departed for Jerusalem, blessed John, desiring to live according to the Gospel, began to ask his parents to procure a Gospel for him, so that by learning Christ's words from it he might learn to perform deeds pleasing to Christ. His parents rejoiced greatly at the sight of their son's zeal for the Divine Scriptures. They at once hired a skilled scribe to prepare a beautiful copy of the Gospel; then

they bound it in gold and adorned it with precious stones, so that their son might be drawn to diligent reading not only by the sweetness of Christ's words written within, but also by the outward beauty of the book. Having prepared such a Gospel, they presented it to their son. John gladly received the holy book and began to read it diligently; his heart delighted in Christ's words, and, burning with ever greater love for God each day, he impatiently awaited the monk's return from Jerusalem, to whom he had revealed the secret of his heart.

After a long time the monk returned, and John welcomed him with great joy.

"Here I am, my son, returned as I promised," said the monk, "and if you wish, I will take you with me to the monastery."

Blessed John replied:

"I thank God, Who has brought you back in good health and granted me to see you again. I am ready to set out. But what shall we do if my parents will not let me go? My mother is very tender-hearted, and when she learns that I wish to leave them, she will bathe the earth with her tears and hold me back, thus thwarting my desire. I beg you, my father, let us leave here secretly, so that none of my relatives or acquaintances may know either of my departure or the road by which I have gone."

"Let us do as you wish, my son," said the monk, "and may God fulfill the desire of your heart."

Thus they came to the seashore, to the ship's harbor; and finding a ship, they asked its owner to take them to the monastery of the Sleepless Ones. But he demanded a great deal of gold as payment for the passage, saying that he expected the ship to carry a heavy cargo, and that he must also hire it for the return journey.

John asked him:

"And how much does it cost to transport a full cargo on your ship?"

"A hundred gold pieces," the shipmaster replied.

"Wait three days, my brother," said John, "and I shall hire your ship."

After speaking with him, John and the monk departed. When they were alone, John said to the monk:

"The shipmaster is asking a high price for the passage; but it is even more costly for me to leave my parents secretly. Therefore I shall go to my parents and ask them to give me some gold for certain needs."

"Go, my son," the monk answered, "and may the Lord fulfill your purpose, according to His will."

When John returned to his home, he said to his mother:

"Mother, I would ask you for one favor, but I dare not."

"Ask for whatever you wish, my son," his mother answered.

"All my fellow students," said John, "have invited me to visit them, not once or twice, but many times. Yet I have never invited them to my home or repaid their hospitality. I am ashamed before them, and can no longer go to school for shame. I ask you to give me as much money as would be needed to entertain my fellow students."

"Wait until morning," his mother answered. "I will tell your father, and he will give you what you need."

When she told her husband of John's request, he, out of love for his son, gave him one hundred gold pieces. This came about through God's special providence, so that the boy's good intention might be fulfilled.

Having given his son the gold, his father entrusted him to the care of a faithful servant, commanding him to see that the boy did not spend the money needlessly. John gladly went with him to the seashore, saying:

"Let us look for some good fish and buy it."

When they came to a ship, he sent the servant to the school, saying:

"Go and see whether my fellow students are gathering, and then come back to me."

After the servant had gone, John went aboard the ship with the monk. They paid the shipmaster and sailed from shore, setting out on their way. John took with him also the Gospel his parents had given him, and found consolation on the journey in reading it.

When the servant returned from the school, he searched for John along the shore for a long time; but, not finding him, he thought that the boy had gone home. So he went to his masters and asked about John. At once they began searching everywhere in haste. But their long search, both in Constantinople and in its environs, came to noth-

ing, and in Eutropius' house they wept and mourned bitterly for their beloved son John. Meanwhile, as John journeyed, God plainly helped him: He sent a favorable wind to the ship, and in a short time the travelers arrived at the monastery of the Sleepless Ones. There the monk told Abbot Marcellus and the brethren all he knew about the boy John, and also how earnestly and zealously, with what faith, he aspired to receive the monastic habit and serve the Lord.

Seeing how very young the boy was, the abbot said to him:

"My son, you will not be able to bear the ascetic labors of monastic life and keep its strict fasts, for you are still very young. Moreover, we have a custom not to tonsure at once everyone who seeks the monastic life, but only after a long trial of the sincerity of his intentions and his zeal in the labors of piety. Therefore, if you wish to pursue the monastic life together with us, you must first live among us as you are, without the monastic tonsure, observe our way of life, and test yourself to see whether you can bear such labors."

Then blessed John fell at the abbot's feet and, weeping bitterly, began to entreat him:

"I beseech you, my father, tonsure me now. Look not upon my youth, but upon my zeal, for with all my heart I long to be deemed worthy to receive your Angelic Habit. Reject not my entreaty, but, for the sake of the Most Holy, Consubstantial and Life-giving Trinity, receive me as a monk into your monastery."

The abbot, moved by the boy's zeal and tears, and keenly sensing the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelling within him, at once consented to receive and tonsure him. Then he instructed him to fulfill without fail every degree of monastic obedience and to learn from the experienced elders.

When his desire had at last been fulfilled, John diligently and humbly carried out all that was commanded him. Gradually advancing in the ascetic labors of monastic life, he soon attained such perfection in virtue that he surpassed those who had embraced the monastic life before him and became an example to all of unceasing prayer, meek obedience, and patient endurance of the strictest fasting. Often for many days he tasted nothing except Communion of the Most Pure and Life-

giving Mysteries of Christ, and sustained himself by this alone. Even the abbot marveled at John and said to him:

"My son, why do you undertake such labors while you are still so young? Take care that immoderate fasting does not weaken your bodily strength and ruin your health, leaving you unable to undertake further ascetic labors and to serve for the glory of Christ."

John humbly bowed to the abbot, as was his custom, and answered:

"Forgive me, holy father, an unworthy servant, and pray for me, who am lazy and fainthearted, that the Lord may make me worthy of these labors and help my weakness."

In the midst of such ascetic labors, blessed John lived in the monastery for six years. Then the enemy and hater of all good, the devil, rose up against him. To weaken John's strength for further labors, to hinder and obstruct his valiant progress in keeping the Lord's commandments, he stirred within him thoughts of his parents and made his heart suffer with pity for them whenever he remembered his father's and mother's great love for him. He began to suggest such thoughts to John: "What are your parents doing now, without you? How they grieve, sorrow, and weep for you, since you left home without their knowledge! Your father weeps, your mother laments, your brothers grieve, your relatives and acquaintances mourn you; your father's whole household is in distress because of you." The evil one also brought to his mind his parents' wealth and fame, the honors enjoyed by his brothers, and the various other vain blessings of this earth. He troubled him with such thoughts incessantly, day and night, until at last John grew exceedingly weak in body and was scarcely alive: from his great abstinence and monastic labors, and from the inward torment of his thoughts, his strength dried up like a potsherd[9], and his flesh became like a reed shaken by the wind[10].

Seeing John grow weaker each day, the abbot said to him:

"Did I not tell you, my son, that God does not require immoderate labor of His servants, but wills that each serve Him according to his strength, to the glory of His holy name? You did not heed me in time,

9. The expression is taken from (Ps. 21:16).
10. The expression is taken from (Mt. 11:7).

my son, and now you have grown faint through immoderate fasting and labors beyond your strength."

"It is not fasting that has dried me up, my father," John answered, "nor have labors worn me out; rather, thoughts suggested by the evil one have tormented me day and night for a long time."

Then John confessed to the abbot his thoughts about his parents and his home. The abbot said to him:

"Did I not tell you before, my son, that the ascetic labors of monastic life are hard, and that monks endure many labors, assaults from the enemy, and ineffable temptations?"

At these words the abbot wept and mourned over John for a long time. But God, who turns all things to good, by a special, secret movement of the abbot's heart inspired him not to hinder John from going to his parents: the Lord wished later to work His wondrous desires in him[11]. The abbot blessed John to go wherever he wished, only admonishing him to guard carefully against the enemy's snares and preserve his purity on the journey.

"Though I go to my parents," John answered, "yet there too, with God's help and your prayers, I shall crush the head of my enemy and show his weakness."

Then John went to his cell to prepare for the journey. His preparation consisted in nothing else but prayers, tears, sighs of the heart, and prostrations, that the Lord might not allow the enemy to triumph, but might Himself direct his journey, as He knows and wills, according to His good and perfect will. The next morning John came to the abbot, fell at his feet, and began to entreat him not to be angry that he was leaving the monastery, but to send him on his way with his fatherly blessing and holy prayers.

Then the abbot called all the brethren together and, announcing that John wished to leave them, instructed them to pray for him. As he took leave, John said to the brethren:

"I know that the devil wishes to remove me altogether from this holy place, under the pretext of visiting my parents. But I trust in God

11. The expression is taken from (Ps. 15:3) (in the Slavonic translation).

and in your holy prayers, that I shall see my parents and also overcome the devil, vanquishing his deceit."

After this they all went to the church and prayed there for John with tears. As the abbot blessed him for the journey, he said:

"Go, my son, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and may our Lord Jesus Christ accompany you and direct your way according to His will."

All the other fathers also blessed him, raising their hands. John kissed them all and said:

"May the Lord save you, fathers and brethren; may He save you, His blessed company, good ascetics who received me lovingly into your fellowship, from which I am now separated, being unworthy to live with such God-pleasing men."

With these words he left the monastery and set out on his way.

When he had gone a stade[12] from the monastery, he looked back and, seeing the monastery, wept bitterly. He fell to his knees and, sobbing and wetting the ground with his tears, began to pray to God. Then he rose and continued on his way, committing himself to God and placing his hope in His providence and protection. On the road he met a beggar dressed in rags. John turned to him and said:

"I see, my brother, that your clothing is very worn and all torn. I ask you to give it to me, and take my better clothing in exchange."

The beggar was greatly pleased and at once took off his rags and gave them to John, who in turn gave him his better clothing.

When John came to Constantinople, he saw from afar the house of his parents. He fell face down upon the ground and prayed with these words:

"Lord Jesus Christ, do not forsake me!"

It was evening, and the Blessed John remained there to wait for the coming of night. At midnight, he approached the doors of his parents' house, again fell to the ground, and prayed:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Behold the house of my father, which I have so longed to see. But do not permit me to lose Thy grace because of it. I

12. A stadion equals 87 1/2 sazhens.

beseech Thee, O Master, grant me help from on high and strength to overcome the devilish temptation. Do not permit it to triumph over me, nor my fall; but grant that I may bravely end my life in this place."

Thus he prayed until the dawn of morning. When day came and the doors were opened, the steward of the house, who was in charge of the other servants, came out. Seeing a beggar clothed in rags, he asked him:

"Who are you, whence have you come, and why have you dared to come here? Go away quickly, for my masters are about to come out."

"As you see," John answered him meekly, "I am a beggar and have no place to lay my head. I beg you, my lord, have pity on me, do not drive me away from here, but allow me to remain in this corner. I will do no one any harm, and you yourself will receive mercy from God if you pity me and allow me to stay here."

Having taken pity on the beggar, the steward of the house left him. After a little while, John's parents came out of the house, on their way to the imperial palace. Seeing them, the Blessed One wept and spoke in his mind:

"My desire has at last been fulfilled: I see my parents. But you will not rejoice, O devil, for by the grace of my Lord I count as nothing your fiery darts directed against me."

Once again he called upon God with all his heart:

"Lord Jesus Christ, do not forsake me to the end!"

The Blessed John remained motionless in the corner by the gates and lay there like Lazarus (Lk. 16:20), or like Job upon the heap of ashes (Job 2:8). His father, seeing the poor beggar lying at the gate, began to send him food from his own table, saying:

"Great is the patience of this beggar. Without a roof over his head, he endures both winter and heat, both frost and rain. Truly, such people inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Perhaps for his sake God will also save us; that is why He has sent him to us, so that by showing mercy to him we may in turn be counted worthy to be shown mercy by Him. Who knows? Perhaps our beloved son John is now enduring the same poverty, and we do not even know where he is. We are doing for

this beggar what we would wish others to do for our son in such a case."

Once John's mother came out of the house and saw this beggar lying on a heap of dung in his rags. It seemed so repulsive to her that she said to the servants:

"Drag this disgusting man away from here, for I cannot come out as long as I see him lying here."

The servants at once dragged him to another place. The Blessed One could now only look from afar at the gates of his father's house. Once, seeing the steward of the house come out through the gate, he called him over and said:

"I beg you, my lord, as you were merciful to me from the beginning, so now have pity on me and make me a small tent, so that your mistress will not see me, and so that I may have at least some shelter from the cold."

The steward fulfilled John's request and soon built a small tent, in which the saint remained, spending all his time in prayer to God. Every day his father sent him food from his own table. John received it with gratitude but gave it away to the other beggars who visited him, while he himself always endured hunger and thirst. From such extraordinary abstinence and fasting he grew so thin that one could count all the joints of his bones.

For three full years John patiently endured such a life, concealing from his parents that he was their son. After three years had passed, our most gracious and merciful Lord Jesus Christ, seeing the patience and humility of His servant, determined to put an end to his sufferings and labors. He appeared to him in a vision and said:

"Rejoice, John, you who have become like My beloved disciple John the Virgin[13], for you, having left everything, have followed Me in pure virginity. The limit of your life is already approaching, and the end of your great sufferings is at hand: in three days you will come to Me and inherit the rest of the righteous."

13. That is, St. John the Theologian.

Coming to himself after the vision, John began to pray to the Lord with tears and said:

"I thank Thee, Lord, my God, that Thou dost wish to grant me, unworthy as I am, the rest of the righteous. But I beseech Thee, my Master, remember also my parents, have mercy on them in Thy great mercy, and cleanse their sins, for Thou alone art good and abounding in mercy."

After such a prayer he called to him the aforementioned servant of his parents, the steward of the house, and said to him:

"From the beginning until now you have been merciful to me. I beg you, my lord, be merciful to the end. I ask only one thing of you: go and tell your mistress the following: that beggar whom you ordered driven from the gate begs you through me with these words: for the sake of the Lord Christ, do not disdain me, a poor man, but deign to come to me, for I need to speak with you."

The servant conveyed the beggar's words to his mistress. She said:

"What more could a beggar have to say to me? I cannot even look at him, and yet he wishes to converse with me."

She told her husband about this, but he began to persuade her:

"Go, my wife, do not disdain the beggar, for God Himself has chosen the poor."

Nevertheless, she did not listen to her husband and did not wish to go. The Venerable John sent to her again with these words:

"In three days I shall die. If you do not wish to see and speak with me, you will later grieve greatly."

She began to hesitate in thought, whether to go or not. She was less eager to hear the beggar than curious to know what he wished to say to her. She barely overcame her indecision and resolved to go only upon hearing of his approaching death, hoping to learn something new from him. She went out of the house and ordered her servants to bring the beggar and lay him before her, since the Venerable John, because of his grievous illness, could no longer come himself. So that he would not be recognized, he covered his face and began to speak to her thus:

"Soon, my lady, I shall no longer need the shelter and help that are given to me, and a reward is already prepared for you for your alms, ac-

cording to the word of the Lord in the Gospel: 'Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of these My least brethren, you have done it unto Me' (Mt. 25:40). I, having no possessions because of my poverty, wish to leave you some blessing. But first I beseech you: swear to me that you will do what I say, and then you will receive the blessing."

She swore to do whatever he said. Then the Venerable John began to ask:

"I beseech you, my lady, that after my death you arrange for me to be buried in the place where my tent stands. Do not permit me to be covered with any other garments than these rags that are on me now, for I am not worthy of a more honorable place or finer clothing."

After this he took a Gospel from his bosom, and handing it to her, said:

"Let this be a consolation to you in this present life and a good path into eternity for you and for your husband, my master."

Taking the Gospel, she began to examine it, turning it now to one side and now to the other, and thinking to herself:

"How this Gospel resembles the one my master had bound for our son!"

Then she went and showed it to her husband. He recognized it and said:

"This is indeed the very Gospel that we gave to our beloved son, and not another. Let us go and ask him where he got it, and whether he knows anything about our son John."

The parents came to him together and said:

"We adjure you by the Holy and Life-Giving Trinity: tell us, where did you get this Gospel, and where is our son John?"

Unable any longer to hide the anguish of his heart or to restrain his tears, he answered:

"I am your son John, and this is the very Gospel that you gave me. True, I am guilty of the sorrow I have caused you; but the Gospel you gave me taught me to love Christ and to bear patiently His gracious yoke."

Hearing this, they fell down at his head, embraced him, and for a long time watered him with abundant tears. Their hearts were at once

filled with joy and sorrow: they rejoiced that their beloved son had at last been found, yet grieved in heart that they had found him in such poverty and misery, and had not recognized him when he lay at their gates. All the neighbors, friends, and acquaintances gathered at their house; the news of John's return spread throughout the whole city, and all, glorifying God, marveled at it. Meanwhile the Venerable John gave up his soul into the hands of God[14]. It was the will of God that John's life, even at its very end, should remain undefiled by worldly honors and detached from parental love; the Lord hastened to take him to Himself, so that he might enter the heavenly dwelling a stranger to the world and to worldly friendship.

Forgetting her oath, his mother removed his tattered rags and clothed him in precious, gold-woven garments. But suddenly she fell into paralysis and became dangerously ill. Eutropius, John's father, said:

"We must fulfill the will of our son, since he does not wish to be buried in such costly garments."

The worldly clothes were removed from the body of the Venerable One, and he was again clothed in beggar's rags; and Theodora, the mother of John, was at once healed and became well again as before. His parents buried the honorable and holy relics of the Venerable John in the same tent in which he had lived. Later they built over his grave a church and a large hospice for travelers, and gave all their property for the support of travelers and the sustenance of the poor. Soon afterward they themselves died peacefully and were buried in the same church which they had built over the grave of their son.

Such was the life of the holy and Venerable John the Kushnik, such the ascetic deeds and labors which he endured for Christ, and such his struggle with the devil; having overcome the devil, he is now crowned

14. The Venerable John the Kushnik reposed at the beginning of the second half of the 5th century. Under Pope Formosus (896) a church in honor of the Venerable One was built in Rome, where a part of his relics was kept. The pilgrim Antony saw his relics in 1200 at the gates of his courtyard in Constantinople. During the Crusades (1204–1261) his head was transferred from Constantinople to Besançon, and his relics are in the church of his name in Rome, but when they were transferred there from Constantinople is unknown.

with the heavenly crown in the Church Triumphant, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever, Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Pansophius

Память святого мученика Пансофия

St. Pansophius was the son of Nilus, proconsul[15] of Alexandria. Nilus, possessing great wealth, spared no expense in the upbringing of his son, and St. Pansophius, with his excellent abilities, acquired a thorough knowledge of the truths of Christianity along with a broad secular education. After his father's death the saint used his wealth to help those in need, and then withdrew into the desert, renouncing worldly cares, in order to seek the Lord. For twenty-seven years he lived in solitude, raising his mind from earthly things to the contemplation of the Heavenly Kingdom and remaining in unceasing prayer to God. The report of the virtuous life of the holy hermit reached the prefect[16] of Alexandria, who served under the emperor Decius, the persecutor of Christians. Brought before the prefect's tribunal, St. Pansophius exposed the falsehood of pagan teachings by the very tales the pagans told of their gods, and with proofs full of truth he preached that Christ is God, thereby shaming the arrogance of the tormentor. For this the Confessor of Christ was subjected to cruel scourging and thus received the crown of martyrdom[17].

* * *

NOTES

604. The monastery of the "Sleepless Ones," mentioned here, was located in Bithynia (a northwestern region of Asia Minor) and was established on the model of a similar monastery existing in Constantinople, which had been transferred there from Mesopotamia and founded by the Venerable Alexander at the end of the 4th century. The ordering of services and the monastic life of the inhabitants of this monastery were distinguished by especial strictness. The monastery received its name because its brethren, divided into

15. Proconsuls were persons who governed the provinces of the Roman state.
16. A prefect was a city governor.
17. In the middle of the 3rd century.

24 divisions corresponding to the 24 hours of day and night, continuously praised the Lord in two choirs, chanting the Psalms of David at length, so that the divine service in this monastery was performed without interruption and never ceased. A similar monastery was also founded in Bithynia, near the city of Sosthenium, by the disciples of the Venerable Alexander, John and Marcellus.



THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 16

16 января

New Calendar January 16 · Old Calendar January 29 (civil dates)

Veneration of the Honorable Chains of the Holy Apostle Peter

Поклонение честным веригам святого Апостола Петра

The holy Apostle Peter, by command of King Herod,[1] was cast into prison and bound with two iron chains.

But during the night, while he slept between two soldiers, the Angel of the Lord awakened him, striking him in the side, and led him out of the prison; and the iron chains fell from the Apostle's hands, as is related in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 12:7). The news of Peter's miraculous deliverance from his fetters and from the prison spread throughout Jerusalem, and some of the faithful, secretly taking these chains, kept them among themselves, so that by gazing upon them they might have before their eyes, as it were, the chief of the Apostles Peter himself, who, immediately upon leaving the prison, departed to preach the word of God in other lands and did not return to Jerusalem. These chains received healing power from the body of the Apostle, who had been tightly bound with them. It is known that the head-cloths and kerchiefs of the holy Apostle Paul healed diseases and drove out unclean spirits, because they had been saturated with his sweat (Acts 19:12); the chains of St. Peter worked in the same way, because they had once closely encircled the Apostle's body. The faithful venerated these honorable chains with profound reverence, offered

1. This refers to Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, king of the Jews, who slew with the sword the holy Apostle James, son of Zebedee, and wished also to destroy the Apostle Peter; he ruled Judea in the reigns of the Roman emperors Caligula (37–41) and Claudius (41–54); he died, struck by an Angel, of a grievous illness shortly after the miraculous deliverance of the Apostle Peter from prison.

them worship, and carefully preserved them as a precious inheritance from generation to generation, each time parents explaining to their children, and these to their heirs, what great prisoner these chains had touched and by whose body they had been sanctified. Thus they passed by inheritance into the hands of the most holy Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem. And when the pious Empress Eudocia, wife of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger,[2] was returning to Constantinople from Jerusalem, where during her stay she had built many churches and adorned the holy places at her own royal expense, Patriarch Juvenal, for her piety and her love of holy things, presented her with many spiritual treasures. Among them he gave her these honorable and wonderworking chains of the holy Apostle Peter.[3] On her return to Constantinople, Eudocia brought one chain as a gift to the church of the holy Apostle Peter, which stood within the Great Cathedral of St. Sophia,[4] and sent the other to Rome to her daughter Eudoxia, who was married to the Roman emperor Valentinian III.[5] The pious Eudoxia, like her mother, received this precious gift with love, and, having built a church in honor of the holy Apostle Peter on the Esquiline Hill, placed there this chain together with another chain of the holy Apostle Peter, found in Rome, with which Nero had bound him during his sufferings.[6] After that it was established that on January 16 there should be celebrated the feast

2. Theodosius II the Younger was a Byzantine emperor who reigned from 408 to 450.
3. The honourable chains of the holy Apostle Peter were preserved in Jerusalem until 439, in which year the Empress Eudocia received them from Patriarch Juvenal.
4. This refers to the principal cathedral in Constantinople in the name of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, founded by Constantine the Great. Afterwards this cathedral was magnificently restored and enlarged by the Emperor Justinian the Great in 537; in 1453, after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, it was converted into a mosque. The Justinianic church of St. Sophia still remains the most remarkable and most majestic monument of Christian architecture in the Byzantine style, in the most flourishing epoch of its development.
5. Valentinian III was a Roman emperor who reigned from 423 to 455.
6. Nero was a Roman emperor who reigned from 54 to 68; by his command the Apostle Peter was put to a martyr's death (about 67). The chains with which the Apostle Peter was bound by Nero's command were discovered at Rome in the second century.

of the veneration of these honorable chains,[7] in memory and honor of the holy Apostle Peter and to the glory of Christ our God.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thou didst not forsake Rome, but didst come to us with the honorable chains which thou didst bear, O first-throned of the Apostles. Therefore, venerating them in faith, we pray: through thy prayers to God, grant us great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Christ, the Rock, brightly glorifies the rock of faith, the first-throned disciple; for He calls all to celebrate, O Peter, thy honorable chains by miracles, and grants the forgiveness of sins.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us praise great Peter, the highest and first of the Apostles, the disciple of divine truth, and kiss his chains in faith, receiving the remission of transgressions.

* * *

Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs Speusippus, Eleusippus and Meleusippus, of their grandmother Leonilla, and of others with them

Страдание святых мучеников Спевсиппа, Елевсиппа и Мелевсиппа, бабки их Леониллы и других с ними

The holy Polycarp, disciple of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, desiring, by the action of the Holy Spirit, to increase the rational flock of believers in Christ, sent his disciples into various lands, so that they might fearlessly preach the word of God everywhere. Learning that in Gaul[8] persecution of Christians was taking place throughout the land by royal decree, by which all of them

7. The Roman feast of the Chains existed at the beginning of the second century, in the time of Pope Alexander (109–119), in memory of the chain of the Apostle Peter in the Roman prison, which was venerated and kissed; and afterwards this feast was renewed by a chain sent from Jerusalem. This feast is celebrated in the Roman church on 1 August.
8. Gaul is the present-day France.

were condemned to death, St. Polycarp sent thither two priests of God, Andochius and Benignus, and a third, the deacon Thyrsus. These were truly virtuous men, devoted to God, zealous in ascetic labors, always ready with love to set out on the labor of evangelizing, by land or by sea, desiring more to suffer and die for Christ than fearing torments and death. Having received the command from their bishop, they at once went aboard ship. In sending them off, the holy bishop Polycarp gave them the following words of exhortation:

"Go forth, valiant men, and with the grace-given help of Christ stand firmly for Him. Through the holy confession of the most holy name of Christ you will gain many companions, and rejoicing together with them in victory, you will attain glory and everlasting honor. May the abundant fruits of your labors multiply, and may joy be magnified in the paradise dwellings of the righteous at the sight of your holy acquisitions!"

Blessed with these and many other benedictions of St. Polycarp, they went aboard the ship and soon, by a special indication of God, arrived at the shores of Massilia;[9] stepping ashore, they at once set out on their way, and an Angel of God went before them. Arriving at a city called Edua,[10] they met, by God's providence concerning them, the senator Faustus, a most noble man, who received them with honor and love and offered them hospitality. When he learned that his guests were presbyters, he earnestly begged them to bring his family, relatives and acquaintances to Christ through holy baptism; he himself was already a Christian, though a secret one, because of the persecution of Christianity. He also brought to them his son, the youth Symphorian; afterward this youth, through the teaching of the saints, and chiefly by God's predestination, suffered for Christ when circumstances required it. Presenting the youth to the priests, Faustus besought St. Benignus to

9. Massilia was a seaport city of southern Gaul, with an excellent fortified harbour, one of the most important centres of Roman culture in southern Gaul; today it is Marseille, the chief city of the French department of the Bouches-du-Rhône, the first commercial seaport of France, with a population of more than 300,000; it lies between the mouth of the Rhône and Toulon, on the eastern bay of the Gulf of Lion, at the foot of the rocky spurs of the Provençal Alps. From here in antiquity Christianity spread throughout southern Gaul.

10. Aedua was an ancient city of Gaul, south-east of Paris, between the rivers Loire and Saône.

baptize him and St. Andochius to be his sponsor, and the servants of God fulfilled the pious desire of the father.

Then, remembering his sister and her grandsons, Faustus said:

"I have a sister of my own blood, named Leonilla, who dwells in one of the cities of the Lingones.[11] She has three grandsons, the children of her son, twins by birth. Although they have received an excellent education, following the example of their fathers they remain in paganism, worshipping idols. Their grandmother, my sister, would wish to make her grandsons soldiers of Christ and dedicate them to His service. I beg you, priests of God, help her and bring to completion the work begun: enlighten this whole noble house."

Hearing this, the saints resolved to divide for preaching: Andochius went with Thyrsus to the village of Augustodunum,[12] where, after many were converted to the Christian faith, he later died a martyr's death. Faustus sent the holy Benignus to his sister in the city of the Lingones.

Leonilla, the sister of Faustus, received St. Benignus with great joy, as one receiving manna fallen from heaven. Her grandsons were on that day in a village called Pasmasia, offering unclean sacrifices to the idol of the goddess Nemesis,[13] and on their return home they brought their grandmother the remains of the sacrificial meat. But she, loathing these impure pagan offerings, threw the meat out to be eaten by dogs, and turning to her grandsons in the presence of the holy presbyter Benignus, spoke to them as follows:

"My beloved grandsons! Know our Lord Jesus Christ, the true and living God, to Whom the Angels and all creatures render due worship,

11. The Lingones were an ancient Celtic people in the land of the Belgae, between the upper Saône and the region of the sources of the Marne and the Seine; their capital was the city of Andematunnum, which is meant here — today Langres, a city and first-class fortress in the French department of Upper Marne.

12. Augustodunum was the chief city of the Aedui (a Celtic people of Gaul); today it is Autun, in the department of Saône-et-Loire.

13. According to the beliefs of the ancient Greeks, Nemesis was a goddess who distributes to men a portion according to their deserts, happiness and misfortune, assigns reward or punishment by moral judgment for deeds done, and especially takes vengeance upon and punishes arrogant men, humbles their pride, and appoints loss and misfortune to one whom fate has given too much happiness, so that the just measure may be restored and man may not forget his human lot.

Who by His Word created the whole world, stretched out the height of heaven by His command, spread the breadth of the earth, gathered the depths of the seas and bounded them with sand, adorned the heavens with stars, set upon them two great luminaries to light with their rays all that He had made, filled the waters with fish, clothed the earth with trees and grass, and created upon it, by His will, all kinds of animals. Then He was pleased to create man in His own image and likeness, and adorned him with the special gift of wisdom, knowledge and reason, so that he might diligently seek the Lord, the Master of all creatures, and not show disrespect to Him through neglect of knowing Him; so that he might know good and learn to distinguish it from evil, and not only pay no reverence whatever to insensate idols, invented by the devil to delude men, but reject them as unclean and avoid all association with them, since these idols appeared in the world through the treachery of the devil, who had already beguiled the first man in Paradise. Most beloved grandsons! Forsake all unclean idols and firmly believe in the Creator of all, our Lord Jesus Christ. Behold, by the grace of God, this holy man whom you see before you has been sent to you from a distant land. Listen to him, for through his lips God Himself proclaims to you His commandments, and learn from Him what may contribute to your salvation."

As the blessed Leonilla, together with St. Benignus, thus admonished her grandsons, the grace of God invisibly penetrated their hearts. With wonder the youths listened to the words of their grandmother, looking at one another and reflecting, and then all together answered her:

"Why have you kept silent until now before us about a matter of such great importance? Why for so long a time have you concealed from us the path of truth and the radiant light?"

Lifting her eyes, and reverently raising her hands to heaven, Leonilla gave thanks to God that her grandsons were beginning to know the truth, and said to them with love:

"My son, and your father, who has now descended into the abyss, was neither wise nor prudent. His heart was so hardened and he was so plunged into the darkness of impiety that he would not only refuse to

believe in Christ God, but would not even pronounce His holy name. What benefit could the word of God bring to a heart wholly possessed by the malice of unbelief, so that, blinded by idolatry, he could not see the light of truth? It was only for his sake that I kept silent and did not speak to you of what serves your good: I feared that by his pernicious influence he would turn you from the right path forever. But now that, by the will of God, he is no longer in this world, all obstacles for you have vanished. The time is favorable: open and turn to heaven your bodily and spiritual eyes, and with the help of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, root out from your souls every inclination to idolatry, so that you may be filled thereby with unceasing joy."

The blessed Leonilla spoke to the youths at length, together with the holy presbyter, and under the influence of their words the youths recalled the dreams they had seen the previous night, in which their conversion to the Christian faith had been foreshadowed, and they began to tell them to one another.

"I saw," said the eldest, Speusippus, "as if I had thrown myself upon the breast of our grandmother and was sucking her milk-full breasts, and she tenderly said to me: 'Drink, Speusippus, the saving milk, that, strengthened by it, you may be able to stand against your enemies and win a glorious victory.'"

"And I saw," said Eleusippus, "a certain man sitting on a heavenly throne and shining with ineffable glory, from whose brightness my eyes grew dark, and horror and fear seized me entirely. He, turning his radiant face toward me, said: 'Fear not, for you shall be found worthy to receive the crown of victory!'"

The third brother, Meleusippus, related the dream that had come to him thus:

"I saw, and I do not know who He was, a Great King, in whose hands was a scepter. He received all three of us together into His host, girding us with military belts, and redeeming us at a precious price from the fetters of captivity; He decreed to us, in golden words, eternal freedom, and said to me: 'Meleusippus! I have appointed you, three brothers, to be My attendants, and to crown you with eternal rewards, because your grandmother unceasingly, both by day and by night,

prays to Me for your salvation, that you may be guided onto the true path of life, and, delivered from the delusions of the evil spirit, may be granted to behold the light of truth and, instead of death, inherit life.'"

Wondrous were these visions of the three brothers, all equally signifying their conversion to God! Under the impression of these visions, and under the influence of the exhortations of Leonilla and the presbyter, the brothers at last turned to their blessed grandmother with these words:

"Tell us what we must do, that your preaching may lead us to salvation, freeing us from our former errors."

The holy Leonilla and the godly presbyter rejoiced, and, with thanksgiving to the Lord in their souls, answered:

"Keep all the commandments of God, firmly believe in the King of kings, Christ God, and, rejecting the unclean idols, wholly devote yourselves to the service of your Creator, God."

After this, the holy presbyter Benignus, having carefully instructed the youths in the truths of the Christian faith, baptized them and finally confirmed them in the confession of Christ; he himself withdrew into one of the cities of the Divionians[14], where, having converted many to Christ in a short time, he died a martyr's death.

The three holy twin brothers, immediately upon their establishment in the Christian faith, sent their servants with the order to smash the aforementioned idol of the goddess Nemesis, and they themselves destroyed the twelve idols that were in their house. At once throughout the whole land of the Lingones the report spread that the grandsons of Leonilla, youths of such noble birth, had come to believe in Christ and had destroyed the idols. The people were embittered against them, the authorities rose up, and the judges and pagan priests burned with wrath. The chiefs who had gathered from all sides began to interrogate the holy youths:

"Whence has this madness so unexpectedly fallen upon you? Who has persuaded you to reject the worship of the gods whom your ancestors served from old? Are you so readily prepared to disregard the com-

14. The land of the Divionenses was situated in the east of Gaul.

mand of the emperor and to regard as God Christ, who was crucified by the Jews?"

Filled with the Holy Spirit, the youths answered:

"O you blind in heart, enveloped in eternal darkness, hardened in sins and destined for eternal torment and death! Why do you, yourselves deceived by the devil, incline us also to worship a stone or some other object to which the likeness of a man has been given? For these are the works of human hands: they are lifeless, insensible and worthless, and yet in your madness you regard them as gods. Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, is the living God, consubstantial, according to the teaching of our faith, with the other Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, the Father and the Holy Spirit, God of God, Light of Light, Radiance of Radiance, who always was, is, and will be, the Creator of all that is in the world."

Such words of the holy brothers brought the pagans to great fury, especially their priests and chiefs. One of them, named Quadratus, could not bear it and struck Speusippus and Eleusippus on the cheeks, because only these two youths were speaking against the pagans. Meleusippus, seeing the blows inflicted upon his brothers, cried out:

"Why do you not strike me too, as you strike my brothers? Why do you deprive me of such a benefit? Behold, they have already begun to bear sufferings, which we all so desire, and you do not allow me to endure holy suffering, as though you considered me an unbeliever in Christ and one of your own party. We all believe equally firmly in Christ, we all equally despise your pagan impiety, and we hope to receive the same reward from Christ."

"For the dishonor done to our gods," said Quadratus, "we shall now subject you to various torments."

Eleusippus answered:

"The more torments you prepare for us, the more you will strengthen us in the grace of God."

"If you do not cut out their tongues by the root," said another impious chief, Palmatus, "they will not cease to dishonor us and our gods."

Speusippus answered:

"If, in your cruelty, you cut off our bodily tongues, we shall with the inner tongues of our souls glorify the greatness of God, and your malice will never compel us to renounce the holy faith in Christ."

"Wretches!" cried Palmatus and the third chief, Hermogenes, "you are all together preparing yourselves for a death sentence."

"To die for Christ," answered Speusippus, "we consider a happiness for ourselves, for in this way we shall the sooner pass into eternal life, where there is no sorrow, but only unceasing joy."

Then the judges of the Lingones, Palmatus, Quadratus and Hermogenes, seeing the unshakeable firmness of the holy youths in the Christian faith, began to consult among themselves as to what most cruel tortures they should subject them to, to strike fear into the others, and by what most savage death they should put them to death. At first, however, they decided to call to them the venerable Leonilla, to attempt through her intercession to turn the youths from the Christian faith and bring them back again to paganism.

They said to her:

"If you wish to spare your grandsons from torments and save them from death, go and persuade them to set up again the gods they have broken, to worship them, and to offer them fitting sacrifices."

To these and other similar exhortations of the judges, Leonilla answered:

"I shall go and try to persuade them to take thought for their salvation."

When she came to her holy grandsons and learned of their steadfastness in the holy faith, she rejoiced greatly. She kissed each of them with love, weeping for joy and giving thanks to Christ God, and after a long prayer to Him she said to her grandsons:

"There has never been among your kin a man nobler, richer, better, or more pleasing to God than you; by the confession of the faith of Christ you enlighten your whole family, and although you are young, you have surpassed in wisdom all the elders of your kin. Having become soldiers of Christ, you have acquired a vast and priceless treasure. Be therefore unyielding and steadfast in the holy law of Christ, and, armed with faith in Christ, fear neither threats nor torments. The visible king-

doms of this world, together with all the present life, are worthless, and their end is near. But the invisible Kingdom of God is eternal, and to desire it and to strive toward it belongs to true wisdom; for brief labors you may receive it, and through momentary sufferings you may enter into possession of eternal joys."

Seeing the youths filled with the grace of God and firm in the faith, she, with these words, commended them to Christ, and, comforted, departed.

Soon afterward the judges summoned the saints and asked whether they agreed to worship the gods and to declare this loudly before the assembled people. But the youths openly confessed before all their faith in the one true God, and their full readiness, out of love for Him, to undergo every torture and death, and at the same time they renounced the false and worthless pagan gods. Then the holy brothers were bound hand and foot, hanged on one tree, and stretched, like strings on a harp, so tightly that the bones in their bodies began to come out of their joints. But, strengthened by the gracious power of Christ, they patiently endured the dreadful sufferings and mocked their tormentors, the judges.

The holy Meleusippus said to them:

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was nailed to the Cross for the redemption of our sins; from that holy tree we have received for our help and protection the sign of the cross. We, His three servants, hanging upon this one tree, have become martyrs for His Name. Blessed is the fruit of that tree which bears three martyrs offered in sacrifice to the Most Holy Trinity.

The judges, seeing that the holy youths not only did not weaken in spirit amid their torments, but seemed rather to grow stronger, said to them:

"You shall not die upon this tree, as you wish, but shall perish in the fire."

"Our blessedness will be all the greater," Meleusippus replied again, "if we stand before God after we have been purified by fire, and pass through the flame of fire from darkness into eternal light."

Then the judges commanded that wood, brushwood and other easily kindled materials be gathered, and they kindled a great pyre, into which they cast the three holy brothers, bound. But the saints, with the help of their Saviour Christ, remained unharmed in the midst of the fire; the cords with which they were bound burned through and fell apart, and they, like the three ancient youths of Babylon, walked in the midst of the flame and glorified God. The impious men began to stoke the fire more fiercely, wishing to burn the servants of Christ; but the more the fire increased, the more manifest became the glory of the saints, and when at last, after a long time, the fire went out, it was found that the saints were alive, unharmed, and not even singed. They only laughed at their tormentors and said:

"We have been given the power to pass over to Christ our God only when we ourselves desire it; but we have resolved to mock your madness a little longer in this life, although we shall not be slow to appear at the heavenly feast."

At last the three holy brothers, twins, seeing before them the hosts of holy Angels ready to accompany their souls into the Kingdom of Heaven, bowed their knees to the earth, and, having prayed together, committed their holy souls to God. Their honourable bodies were buried at a distance of two *poprishcha*[15] from the city, in a village named Urvat, where afterwards a church was built in their honour, and where miracles were wrought and the sick received healing.

After the death of the holy martyrs, a woman named Iovilla, kindled with divine zeal and disregarding her husband and her only young son, cried out in the midst of the unbelieving pagans:

"I too am a servant of Christ, and I steadfastly confess Christ, the living and true God, while your impure and worthless idols I reject."

She was immediately seized, hanged by the hair, and subjected to every kind of torment. When, despite this, she would not renounce Christ, she was brought together with the holy Leonilla, grandmother of the holy youths, to the aforementioned village of Urvat, and there both of them were beheaded with the sword. A certain Neon, who had

15. *Poprishche* was a measure of distance equal to 690 of our sazhens. Two *poprishcha* thus made 1380 sazhens (a little more than 2.5 versts).

been a witness of the saints' exploits and had described their sufferings, handed his manuscript to Turvon, and himself openly confessed the faith in Christ and was beaten until he died a martyr's death, committing his soul to the Lord. And Turvon himself, imitating the example of the holy sufferers, passed through a martyr's death into eternal life.

All this took place on the 16th day of the month of January, in the reign of Aurelius Verus, otherwise Antoninus,[16] or more precisely, when the world was ruled by our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honour and glory, now and always and unto ages of ages, Amen.

* * *

Memory of the holy martyr Danactus, reader

Память святого мученика Данакта чтеца

The holy martyr Danactus was a native of Illyria, from the city of Avlon[17], and served as a church reader. During the invasion of the pagans he took the church vessels in order to hide them from the unbelievers, but in one place he was seized by them. The pagans compelled him to offer sacrifice to their god Dionysus[18]. But the holy Danactus did not obey them, and suffered a martyr's end[19], pierced with a sword.

* * *

16. Marcus Aurelius (otherwise Antoninus) was a Roman emperor who reigned from 161 to 180.

17. Illyria was a region of the Roman Empire embracing the whole eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea with the lands lying behind it (present-day Dalmatia, Bosnia and Albania). Avlon was a city in Illyria, on the Adriatic Sea.

18. Dionysus, otherwise Bacchus, was the Greco-Roman god of the vine and of winemaking, who by the gift of wine gladdens the hearts of men and drives away sorrow and care. At first the modest festivities in his honour afterwards took on an unrestrained character and were accompanied by wild orgies, riotous drunkenness and debauchery, and Dionysus, or Bacchus, came to personify the deity of drunkenness.

19. The martyr's death of the holy Danactus took place in the second century.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 17

17 января

New Calendar January 17 · Old Calendar January 30 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Anthony the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Антония Великого

The Venerable Anthony was a native of Egypt.[1] His parents were noble people, known for their Christian piety; they brought up their son so that he knew no one but them and his own household. When he came to the age of youth, he was in no hurry either to take up learning or to associate with other youths, but, remaining in his house, he kept the purity of his heart and strove to advance in piety. Not giving himself over to the amusements of youth, Anthony loved to go to the house of God together with his parents, and, listening there to the readings from the Divine Books, he sought to draw from them every benefit possible for himself and to live exactly as they taught. He did not ask his elders for sweet food, as is customary with children, and in general he paid little attention to food, always being content with whatever was given him.

The parents of the Venerable Anthony died when he was about twenty years old. Remaining after them with a young sister, he at first took care of the household and of the proper upbringing of his sister. Often, as was his custom, visiting the church, he heard from the Divine Books read there how the Apostles, having left everything, followed the Savior, and how, according to the testimony of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, many of the Christians sold their possessions and laid the price of what was sold at the feet of the Apostles for distribution to

1. The native village of the Venerable Anthony was the village of Koma, situated on the northern border of the Thebaid (the southern region of Egypt), in the district of Heracleopolis. Anthony was born in the year 251. His parents were Coptic Christians.

those in need (Acts 4:34). Anthony pondered how steadfast was the faith of these people and what great reward was prepared for them in heaven. With such thoughts he came one day to the church, and here he suddenly heard again the words of Christ spoken to the rich young man: "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mt. 19:21). Anthony took this as a reminder from on high, as if Christ had spoken these words personally to himself, and immediately upon leaving the church he sold his property, and the large sum of money obtained from the sale he distributed to the poor, leaving only a small part of it for his weak and young sister. He had three hundred very good date palms, abundant in fruit, and he gave them to his neighbors, so as to free himself and his sister from all care for them.

When soon after this he again came to the church and heard the words of the Lord in the Gospel: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow" (Mt. 6:34), he at once went out and distributed the remaining part of his property to those in need as well. Not wishing any longer to live in his house, he entrusted his sister to faithful and known virgins[2], who had dedicated themselves to the service of the Bridegroom, Christ, so that she might be brought up among them by the example of their life; he himself began to lead a harsh and strict ascetic life.

At that time there were still few monasteries in Egypt, and the life of the desert dweller was not yet widespread; but everyone who desired to serve Christ and be saved exercised himself in virtue, withdrawing somewhere near his village. At that time, not far from Anthony's village there lived an elder who from his youth had given himself to monastic labors in solitude. Having visited him and received benefit to his soul from this, Anthony began to imitate him and likewise to seek

2. In the ancient Church, before the appearance of women's monastic communities and in the early period of their appearance, there existed a special class of virgins who devoted themselves wholly to the service of God and took a vow of virginity. Such persons were called virgins (*parthenoi*), and they enjoyed great respect in the Church and were regarded as its adornment. They gathered for the ascetic labours of silence, contemplation and prayer in private houses under the direction of experienced elder women who instructed them in the spiritual life. Very often the Church entrusted them to the direction and oversight of the most respected of the deaconesses.

solitude in various places near his village. If after this he happened to hear of some hermit, he, like a prudent bee, went out to seek him and did not return until he found the one sought and, through meeting and conversation with him, drew from him some benefit for himself, just as the bee draws honey.

Such were the first labors of the blessed one; advancing in them, he more and more strengthened his thoughts in a good direction. At the same time he earned his livelihood by the labor of his hands, remembering the words of Scripture: "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). With the money obtained from the sale of his handiwork he bought bread and fed the hungry; his soul was in constant prayerful communion with God, since he knew from Scripture that one must pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). He listened to the reading of Holy Scripture with such deep attention that he forgot absolutely nothing of what was read, and, with strict observance of all the commandments of the Lord, memory took the place for him of the most sacred books. So lived Anthony, and all the brethren loved him; he came to them to receive spiritual benefit from them, and, while in obedience to them, learned virtue from them, from whichever of them was especially distinguished in it: from one he sought to imitate abstinence, from another vigilance, from another meekness, from another watchfulness, from another attentiveness to what was read; from one he learned the labors of fasting, at another he marveled at lying on the bare ground, he glorified the humility of one, the patience of another. Having gained the love of them all and received benefit from all, he would return to his cell, and there, pondering all that he had seen, he sought to appropriate and combine in himself the virtues of all, directing his efforts so as not to be the very last in any of the aforementioned virtues. Acting thus, although he began to surpass all in renown, he nonetheless continued to enjoy general love: the neighbors and monks whom he often visited, seeing such a life in Anthony, called him a God-lover, and some loved him as a son, others as a brother.

When Anthony thus advanced and was strengthened in good, the enemy of the Christian name, the devil, being unable to bear such virtues in the youth, rose up against him with his ancient cunning and

began to try to turn him aside from good intentions through seduction and to lead him from the right path. He brought to his memory the thought of the property sold and given away, of the insecurity of his sister, of the greatness of his family, of vain worldly glory, of the pleasure that could be had from various foods and other allurements of worldly life. At the same time he presented to Anthony in his mind the difficult path and the grievous end of virtue, and the weakness of the body and the length of the time of ascetic labor; with these and many other thoughts the tempter sought to darken his mind and corrupt his heart. But when the devil saw himself defeated by Anthony through his prayers to God, his patience and his faith, he turned to the temptations customary at the youthful age: he began to disturb him with night dreams, fear and apparitions, noise, voices and cries in the night, and by day with open assaults. Anthony firmly resisted the devil: the latter instilled in him impure thoughts, and Anthony drove them away by unceasing prayer; the latter strove to bring his senses to the gratification of natural irritation and the agitation of lust, while the former guarded his body by faith, vigilance and fasting; the devil at night took the form of a beautiful woman and in every way tried to arouse passion in Anthony, but he quenched it by the thought of the unquenchable fire of Gehenna and the undying worm; the devil inclined the young Anthony to step onto a slippery path close to falling, while he, bringing to his mind the eternal torments after the Last Judgment, inviolably preserved the purity of his soul amid the temptations. All this served only to put the devil to shame: the wretch who had imagined himself like God was now put to shame by a youth; he who rises against flesh and blood was overcome by a man possessed of flesh, because the Lord, who for our sake took on flesh and through it granted flesh the power to overcome the enemy, aided His servant, so that all who were tempted in this way, one after another, might each repeat the words of the Apostle: "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

The malicious serpent was at last convinced that he was unable to overcome Anthony by such crafty temptations, and, seeing himself always only driven away, he gnashed his teeth helplessly. Then he ap-

peared to him visibly, in the form of a black and terrible youth, who, weeping, spoke with a human voice:

"Many I have led into temptation, many I have seduced, but now I am defeated both by other saints and by thee through thy labors."

Indeed, the cunning tempter said this, calculating to lead the humble youth to a high opinion of himself.

"Who art thou, that speakest thus of thyself?" the blessed Anthony asked him.

"I am the seducer to fornication," answered the devil, "by manifold cunning I strive to incline all youths to this sin, for which reason I am called the spirit of fornication. How many men who had vowed chastity have I inclined to such a sin! How many who had already begun to live in continence have I succeeded in returning to their former impure life! I am he for whom the prophet Hosea reproaches the fallen, saying: 'For the spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err' (Hos. 4:12), and indeed, they were seduced by me; I too often tempted thee myself, but every time I was driven away by thee."

Anthony, when he heard this, gave thanks to the Lord and, with even greater fearlessness than before, said to the enemy:

"In much thou art put to shame, in much thou art confounded, for which reason both thy blackness and the form of the youth thou hast assumed are nothing other than signs of thy weakness. Now I no longer fear thee at all: 'The Lord is my helper; I shall look upon mine enemies' (Ps. 117:7)."

At these words of Anthony the apparition vanished at once, leaving no trace. Such was Anthony's first victory over the devil, won by the grace-filled power of Christ. Yet Anthony did not grow careless about himself after this single victory, nor had the devil's strength been weakened by one defeat, for he "goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Anthony, remembering from Scripture that the snares of the devil are many, labored unceasingly in severe ascetic struggles, reasoning that if Satan had been overcome when he tempted with carnal lust, he might subject him to other temptations still heavier and more perilous. Therefore Anthony more and more wore down and enslaved his body, so that, having conquered

in one thing, he would not allow himself to be defeated in another. Accustoming himself gradually to an ever harsher life, he made many extraordinary feats of service to God habitual to himself, and turned his habits, as it were, into nature: each day he fasted until sunset, and he spent all his nights in prayer; sometimes he took food only every second day, and only on the fourth night did he fall into a brief sleep. His food consisted of bread and salt, with a small quantity of water; his bed was a mat or a hair shirt, and sometimes the bare earth. He never ate oil at all, and of meat and wine there is no need to speak, since even the less zealous monks did not partake of them. The blessed one said that the body of a young man cannot overcome the enemy if it is softened by the sweetness of oil, and that one must lay upon the body the heaviest possible labors, so that with its weakening the spirit grows stronger, according to the word of the Apostle: "when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). Taking upon himself each day new and ever newer labors, he called to mind the prophet Elijah, who said: "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand today" (3 Kgdms. 18:15).[3] And he reasoned thus within himself:

"It is not without purpose that this word 'today' is added here in Scripture, for Elijah did not reckon his labors of past time, but as it were began his struggles anew each day, striving with all his might to stand before the eyes of God as, in his judgment, a man worthy of beholding God ought to stand: that is, with a pure heart and ready to fulfill the will of God."

He thought, too, that every ascetic ought to imitate the great Elijah, and, having his image before him, to study his own life by it—as in a mirror. Therefore he went to the tombs that lay not far from the village, having first asked one of his acquaintances to bring him food on certain days. That man shut him up in one of these tombs, and there, in solitude, the blessed one gave himself to silence. Seeing this, the devil began to fear that Anthony would in time arm himself against him through the ascetic life of the wilderness; gathering the demons, he, by God's permission, subjected him to such terrible beatings that the

3. The above words of Scripture belong to the holy Prophet of God Elijah the Tishbite.

blessed one afterward lay motionless and speechless, as he himself often related; the torments inflicted upon him surpassed all human suffering. But by the mercy of the Lord God, who never forsakes those who hope in Him, Anthony did not die. A few days later the acquaintance mentioned earlier came to Anthony, bringing his usual food. Opening the doors and seeing him lying on the ground as one dead, he lifted him up and carried him to his village.

When the report of this spread, neighbors and kinsmen gathered to Anthony and, in great sorrow, began to perform over him, as over one already dead, the service for the departed. But at midnight, when all had fallen fast asleep from weariness, Anthony began gradually to come to himself; sighing and raising his head, he noticed that only the man who had brought him there was not asleep. Calling him to himself, he began to beg him that, without waking anyone, he would carry him back to his former place, which was done, and Anthony again lived in solitude. Unable, because of his wounds, to stand on his feet, he prayed lying prostrate, and after prayer he cried out loudly:

"Demons! Here I am, Anthony. I do not flee the struggle with you; know that if you do something still greater than before, nothing can separate me from the love of Christ."

The blessed one sang at this:

"Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear" (Ps. 26:3).

Then the hater of good, the devil, marveling that Anthony had dared to return here after such beatings, summoned his demons and said to them in fury:

"You see, we have not succeeded in conquering him either by the spirit of fornication or by bodily wounds; after both he mocks us with still greater boldness. Arm yourselves, then, each for a still more powerful and stubborn struggle with him, so that he may feel with whom he has picked a quarrel."

And immediately after this the whole multitude of demons was thrown into frenzied motion, for the devil has many ways of fighting against men. Suddenly there arose such a thunder that the place shook to its foundations and the walls fell apart; and at once a multitude of

demons burst in and filled Anthony's dwelling, appearing in the forms of phantoms of lions, wolves, asps,[4] serpents, scorpions,[5] lynxes, and bears, and each of these phantoms displayed its fury in the manner proper to its form: the lion roared, preparing to devour Anthony; the buffalo terrified him with its bellowing and horns; the serpent hissed as it writhed; the wolves rushed at him; the lynx made ready for attack in its own way. All these phantoms were exceedingly dreadful in outward appearance, and the noise produced by their roaring was truly terrifying. Anthony, struck and torn by them, endured the most agonizing sufferings, yet he did not fall into fear and kept his courage and clarity of mind. Though his bodily wounds caused him pain, remaining unshaken in soul, he as it were mocked the enemies and said:

"If you had any strength at all, then for fighting against me one of you would have been enough; but since the Lord has taken your strength away, you try to terrify by your multitude. The very fact that you have taken upon yourselves the forms of irrational beasts already serves as a clear sign of your weakness."

And again he bravely went on speaking to them:

"If by God's permission you have the power to attack and devour me, then here I am—why do you delay? And if such power over me has not been granted to you, then why trouble yourselves in vain? The sign of the cross and faith in God serve us as an impregnable wall of defense."

Thus the demons, after many assaults and fruitless efforts to terrify the blessed Anthony, only gnashed their teeth, for not only did not one of them have any success, but, on the contrary, they themselves were overcome and put to shame by him.

The merciful Lord Jesus, protecting His servant, did not forsake him during so grievous a struggle with the demons. Lifting up his eyes, Anthony saw that the vault of the tomb had opened above him, and a bright ray, dispelling the darkness, was descending to him. With the

4. *Aspis* — a kind of poisonous snake.

5. A poisonous animal of the family of crustacean-arachnids, with a sting at the end of its tail; it is found in hot countries and lives in damp places, among stones in cracks of walls, in cellars and the like.

appearance of the light there was not a single demon left, the bodily pain at once subsided, and the tomb, which had fallen apart at the demons' appearance, was again found intact. Perceiving in this the visitation of the Lord, and sighing deeply from the heart, the blessed one cried out, his face turned toward the light that illumined him:

"Where wert Thou, merciful Jesus? Where wert Thou, and why didst Thou not from the beginning appear to heal my wounds?"

And there was a voice to him:

"Anthony! I was here, but I waited, wishing to see your courage; now, since you have firmly endured the struggle, I will always help you and make you glorious throughout the whole world."

Hearing this, Anthony rose and felt himself so strong that, as it seemed to him, he had received back strength far greater than what he had spent in the struggle. The blessed Anthony was then thirty-five years old.

After this Anthony went to the aforementioned elder, from whom he had sought guidance at the very beginning, and began to beg him to go and settle with him in the desert in some inaccessible place. When the elder refused—both because of his old age and because of the novelty of such a manner of ascetic life[6]—Anthony fearlessly set out alone on a long journey to a mountain in the desert, unknown among the monks. But the enemy, not ceasing to tempt him and wishing to hinder the fulfillment of his purpose, cast a silver dish in his path, in order to tempt him with the love of silver. Seeing the dish, Anthony understood the enemy's treachery and paused for a while in thought. Looking aside at the dish, he began to rebuke the seducer hidden in the phantom of silver, and so he spoke within himself:

"How could this dish be in the desert? This is only a path for beasts and birds; there is not even one human footprint here. Besides, if it had fallen out of a bag, then, because of its large size, the loss could not have gone unnoticed by the one who dropped it, and he would in any case have returned and, searching the road he had traveled, would have found the lost thing, since the place is desolate. This is your cunning,

6. Before the Venerable Anthony the Great and his contemporary, the Venerable Paul of Thebes, this form of ascetic life, the eremitic life, was unknown.

devil; but you will not hinder my purpose by this: 'Let thy silver perish with thee' (Acts 8:20)."

And no sooner had he said this than the dish vanished at once, as smoke dissolves before fire.

Another time after this he saw gold lying in great quantity on his path. He leapt quickly over it, as though over some fire, and hastened into the desert. Having crossed a river there, he found in a mountain a certain empty, walled-off place, which, because of long neglect, was full of all kinds of poisonous reptiles and serpents. Antony settled here,[7] and the whole multitude of scorpions, as though driven by someone, at once scattered. He blocked the entrance with stones; having brought with him bread for six months (for storing it was the custom of the Thebans, with whom it often kept without spoiling for a whole year), and having a little water inside the enclosure, he began to live there in complete solitude as a hermit, never going out himself and receiving no one. Only twice a year did he receive, through the roof, bread brought to him by a friend whom he had earlier asked to do this; but he spoke not a word to the one who brought it.

When many, wishing to see Antony in order to gain spiritual benefit from him, came to the doors of his dwelling, they heard various voices of unclean spirits directed against Antony, crying out:

"Why have you come into our domain? What business have you in this desert? Go away from foreign borders! You will not be able to live here and endure our assaults!"

In such unceasing struggle with the demons, and in such solitude far from people, the Venerable Antony lived for a full twenty years.

When the time came to labor not only for his own salvation but also for the benefit of others, a great many persons, desiring to imitate his ascetic life, gathered at Antony's dwelling, and they forcibly broke open the entrance to his dwelling. Seeing that his face was bright and his body healthy, they marveled that after such fasting and feats, and after such struggle with the demons, he had changed neither in face nor in body. From this time the Venerable became a guide, shepherd, teacher

7. This was in the year 285.

of the ascetic life, and leader on the way to heaven for others as well. God helped him to such a degree that afterwards he had an innumerable multitude of disciples, whom he led to renounce the world and themselves. Within a short time many monasteries arose, in which he lovingly guided in the ascetic life monks both new and old, both in age and in the duration of such life. Once the brethren, gathering together, begged him to give them a rule of monastic life. Raising his voice, he answered:

"For learning to fulfill the commandments of God, the Divine Scriptures are altogether sufficient; yet it is not wrong to consider it a very good and excellent thing if the brethren encourage one another with words. Therefore, reveal to me, as children to a father, what you know, and I, as to children, will report to you what I have learned from long experience. First of all, let this be a common rule for all of you: that no one should weaken in the struggle he has undertaken, but that each should always strive, as one just beginning, to increase and enlarge what he has begun."

Continuing his discourse, Antony gave them many useful instructions, as can be seen from his conversation, set out in detail in the Life of Antony composed by Athanasius the Great. From this conversation only the most important will be cited here. The holy Antony spoke thus about eternal life:

“In this present life the price of a thing bought equals what it is worth, and the seller receives no more than that. But the promise of eternal life is acquired at too small a price: it is offered to us in exchange for a brief life, of which it is written: ‘The days of our years are seventy years, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow’ (Ps. 89:10). Even if we should live, laboring in the service of God, eighty or a hundred years, still in the future life we are not to reign for some limited time; but for the abovementioned number of years we shall reign for ever and ever, and we shall receive, not the earth as a possession, but heaven, laying aside our corruptible flesh and receiving it again in incorruption. Therefore, my children, do not give yourselves over to sorrow, for ‘the sufferings of

this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:18)."

Concerning those who leave the world and are inclined to exaggerate the worth of their struggle, he said:

"Let no one who has renounced the world think of himself that he has left something great, for in comparison with the heavenly goods the whole earth is insignificant and small. If the whole world taken together is not worth the heavenly mansions, then let each one consider and understand that, having renounced a few vineyards, or fields and houses, or a small amount of gold, he can neither say that he has left something great, nor grieve that he will receive a small reward. Like one who gives up a small copper coin in order to acquire a hundred gold coins, the one who renounces the whole world, even if the whole world were in his power, would still receive in the Heavenly Kingdom a reward a hundredfold greater."

On the illusoriness of earthly goods and the great benefit of the virtues, the Venerable said the following:

"We must particularly keep firmly in mind that even if someone should not wish to part with his riches, death will nevertheless forcibly separate him from them. If so, why should we not ourselves do the same for virtue? Why not, for the sake of the Heavenly Kingdom, willingly give up our property, which in any case we shall lose at the end of this life? Let Christians not be concerned with what they cannot take with them when they die. Let us rather strive with all the strength of our soul to acquire that which raises us to heaven after death: wisdom, chastity, justice, a virtuous life, discretion, love of the poor, steadfast faith in Christ, meekness, hospitality. By striving toward this, we shall also lead a sorrow-free life even on earth.[8]"

On zealous and unceasing service to Christ God, the holy Antony spoke thus:

"We must not forget that we are slaves of Christ and must serve Him, our Creator. A slave cannot refuse to carry out orders relating to

the present or the future time on the pretext that he has already worked in the past, and he will not dare to say that, having grown weary in former work, he must now be free. On the contrary, every day with equal diligence he performs the same task, both to please his master and to avoid being beaten and punished for idleness. In like manner we too must always zealously fulfill the commandments of God, firmly remembering that the Lord is a righteous rewarder, and that in whatever sin death overtakes a man, in that he will be condemned. He bears witness to this clearly through the words of the prophet Ezekiel: 'he shall die in his iniquity that he hath done' (Ezek. 33:13). That is why the wretched Judas, in one night, for the wickedness he committed, lost the fruits of his labors over the whole previous time. Therefore we must always strive with equal diligence to fulfill the commandments of the Lord, and God Himself will help us in this, as it is written: 'to them that love God all things work together for good' (Rom. 8:28)."

And so that they would not give themselves over to idleness, Antony urged them always to remember death, and he cited the words of the Apostle, who spoke of dying daily: “We are in jeopardy every hour. I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:30).

"Therefore," Antony continued, "let us, too, men, strive to live righteously, and, reflecting on the hour of death, not to sin. Rising from sleep, let us not hope to live until evening; and going to sleep, let us remember that perhaps we shall not live until morning. Let us not forget that the measure of our life is unknown to us and that we are wholly in God's power. Passing each day thus, we shall neither sin, nor be seduced by any destructive desires, nor be angry with one another, nor gather earthly riches for ourselves; but, as those who every moment await death, we shall disregard all that is corruptible. Love for women will then lose all meaning for us, the fire of lust will be extinguished; we shall forgive one another's sins, always keeping before our mental eyes the day of the Last Judgment. Fear of that Judgment and trem-

8. In the full biography of Anthony the Great, composed by St. Athanasius of Alexandria, this last expression is rendered more in keeping with the general course of thought, namely thus: "These acquisitions will prepare for us a dwelling-place on the earth of the meek (that is, in heaven) before we arrive there."

bling at the thought of eternal torments of hell will in advance remove the pleasure of bodily gratification and keep the soul from falling into the abyss of sin."

Antony also spoke about the Kingdom of God:

"The pagans, seeking wisdom, travel across the sea and inquire about empty doctrines from foreign teachers. But we have no need at all to pass from one foreign land to another, or to cross the sea, in seeking the Kingdom of Heaven, since our Lord Jesus Christ Himself said in the Gospel: 'The kingdom of God is within you' (Lk. 17:21), and to attain it only one thing is needed: our good will."

Concerning the struggle with demons, Antony gave the following instructions:

God Himself has bidden us to keep watch over what passes within our souls with unslackening attention at all times, for we have enemies who are very cunning in battle — I mean the demons — and, in the words of the Apostle (Eph. 6:11–12), we must wage unceasing war against them. Their number is beyond counting; they drift in the air, and whole hosts of enemies surround us on every side. I could not explain to you all the differences among them; I will say only briefly of the methods by which I know they seek to beguile us. First of all we must firmly remember that God is not the author of evil, and that the demons became evil not by His will: the change in them did not come about by nature but depended upon their own will. Created good by a good God, they were at first good spirits, but on account of self-exaltation they were cast down from heaven to earth, where, hardening in evil, they deceived the nations with false visions and taught them idolatry; and us Christians they envy beyond measure, and they unceasingly raise against us every kind of evil, fearing that we shall inherit their former glory in heaven. The degrees of their submersion in evil are many and varied: some have fallen to the utmost depth of impiety, others seem less malicious, but all of them, according to their strength, struggle in various ways against every virtue. Therefore we need intense prayer and ascetic abstinence in order to receive from God the gift of discernment — so as to grasp the differences between the evil spirits, to recognize in each particular case their various kinds of cunning

and deception, and to repel them all with one and the same Christian sign, the Cross of the Lord. Having received this gift, the holy Apostle Paul admonished: "lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his designs" (2 Cor. 2:11). We must imitate the Apostle and warn others of what we ourselves have suffered, and in general instruct one another. For my part I have seen many treacherous deceptions from the demons, and I tell you of them as to children, so that, having been forewarned, you may preserve yourselves amid such same temptations. Great is the malice of the devils against all Christians, and especially against monks and the virgins of Christ: everywhere they set snares for them in life and strive to corrupt their hearts with God-opposing and impure thoughts. But let none of you be afraid on this account, for the devils are immediately driven off by fervent prayer to God and by fasting. Yet if they cease their assaults for some time, do not think that you have already been completely victorious, for after a defeat the devils usually attack again with still greater force. Cunningly changing the methods of battle, if they cannot entice a man with thoughts, they try to beguile or frighten him with phantoms, taking now the form of a woman, now of a scorpion, or turning into some giant as tall as a church, into whole regiments of warriors, or into other apparitions, all of which vanish at the first making of the sign of the cross. If they are detected in this deception, they appear as prophets and strive, like the prophets, to foretell future events. If they suffer shame in this case too, they call upon their own prince for help in the battle, the root and center of all evil.

Our Venerable Father Anthony the Great often told also of a devilish form exactly like that which appeared before the God-enlightened gaze of Job: "His eyes are like the eyelashes of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth" (Job 41:9–10). In such a dreadful appearance did the prince of devils show himself. He would wish to destroy the whole world in an instant, but in reality he has no power whatever: the almighty power of God subdues him, just as a beast is governed by a bridle, or as a prisoner's freedom is destroyed by

his fetters. He fears both the sign of the cross and the virtuous life of the righteous, and St. Anthony spoke of this thus:

"Great power, beloved brethren, do a pure life and an unblemished faith in God have against the devil. Believe my experience: what is terrible to Satan is the watchfulness of people who live according to the will of God, their prayers and fasts, meekness, voluntary poverty, modesty, humility, love, self-restraint, and above all their sincere love for Christ. The serpent who exalts himself so highly knows well that he is condemned to be trodden under the feet of the righteous, according to the word of God: 'Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy' (Lk. 10:19)."

Venerable Anthony also related, for the spiritual benefit of his listeners, this as well:

"How many times the devils attacked me in the guise of armed warriors, and, taking the forms of scorpions, horses, beasts, and various serpents, surrounded me and filled the room in which I was. But when I began to sing against them, 'Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the Lord our God' (Ps. 19:8), they fled, driven off by the grace-filled help of God. Once they even appeared in a very bright form and began to say: 'We have come, Anthony, to give you light.' But I shut my eyes so as not to see the devilish light, began to pray to God in my soul, and their God-opposing light went out. After a short time, however, they appeared again, stood before me, and began to sing and to dispute with one another from Scripture; but I was as one deaf and did not listen to them. It happened that they shook my very monastery, but with a fearless heart I prayed to the Lord. Often around me were heard cries, dancing, and clamor; but when I began to sing, their cries turned into doleful wailing, and I glorified the Lord who had destroyed their power and put an end to their frenzy."

"Believe, my children," Anthony continued, "what I am about to tell you: once I saw the devil in the form of an extraordinary giant, who dared to say of himself:"

"I am the power and wisdom of God," and addressed me with these words:

"Ask of me, Anthony, whatever you want, and I will give it to you."

But I in reply spat in his mouth, and, armed with the name of Christ, rushed upon him with all my strength; and that giant at once melted away in appearance and vanished from my hands. When I was fasting, he appeared to me again in the guise of a monk, who brought loaves and urged me to eat.

"You," he said, "are a man and are not free of human weakness; make some indulgence to your body, or else you may fall ill."

But I understood that this was the treacherous deception of the crafty serpent, and when I turned to my usual weapon, the sign of the Cross of Christ, he at once turned into a stream of smoke which, stretching toward the window, vanished through it. The devils often tried to entice me in the desert by apparitions of gold, reckoning to seduce me either by the sight of it or through touching it. Nor will I conceal that the demons many times set about beating me. But I bore the blows patiently and only cried out:

"No one can separate me from the love of Christ!"

At these words they fell into rage against one another and at last were driven off, not by my will but by the command of God, in accordance with the words of Christ: "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (Lk. 10:18).

Once a demon knocked at the gate of the monastery. Going out, I saw before me a huge giant whose head seemed to reach to the heavens. And when I asked:

"Who are you?"

He answered:

"I am Satan."

I asked:

"What do you need here?"

"In vain," he answered, "are all the monks accusing me — and for what do all Christians curse me?"

"And they act justly," I said in reply, "for they are often deceived by you."

"I do nothing to them," he answered, "but they themselves disturb one another. For I am accursed and cast down — have you not heard from Scripture that 'the enemy's weapons are utterly gone, and You

have destroyed their cities' (Ps. 9:7)? And indeed, see, I am already deprived of every place in the world; no city remains under my power, and I have no weapon; all peoples in all lands confess the name of Christ; the deserts are filled with monks. Let them look to themselves, and let them not curse me in vain."

Marveling then at the grace of God, I answered him:

"This so new and unheard-of confession from you I ascribe not to your truthfulness, of which you have none at all, but solely to the power of God. You, being the father of lies, should have confessed what actually is; and this time, against your will, you have spoken the truth, because Christ by His coming has utterly overthrown your power, and, deprived of angelic glory, you now drag out a wretched and shameful life in all uncleanness."

No sooner had I said this than the demon at once vanished.

Thus the Venerable Father urged the brethren not to fear the power of the devils, which Christ had subdued and overthrown, but to fight against them manfully with God's help, strengthening their hearts by faith in Christ. Hearing this, the brethren rejoiced and committed to memory for their own benefit the teaching of their father. In some the striving toward virtue grew stronger; in others faith, previously weak, was strengthened; some were cleansed of false deceptions of thought; the hearts of others were freed from the effect upon them of terrifying apparitions; and all together were filled with a bold readiness to despise the devilish deceptions, and they marveled at the great grace of discernment and of the distinguishing of spirits that God had granted to Anthony.

On that mountain where Venerable Anthony lived, there arose a multitude of monasteries, which, covering it like tents, were filled with the divine assemblies of psalm-singers, readers of the Scriptures, men of prayer, ascetics, and people who joyfully hoped for the blessings to come and labored only to give alms. Mutual love and concord reigned among them, and their dwellings were like a city, a stranger to the turmoil of this world, full only of piety and righteousness. There was among them neither any lewd person, nor any reviler, nor any hater, nor any slanderer, nor any murmurer; there was only a multitude of as-

cetics who served God with one accord, so that everyone who happened to see these monasteries and their manner of life could not help exclaiming with the words of Scripture: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy dwellings, O Israel! As gardens by the river's side, as the trees of aloes which the Lord hath planted" (Num. 24:5–6).

Time passed, and Anthony continued to labor more and more zealously. Meanwhile there arose a cruel persecution against the Church of Christ on the part of the impious emperor Maximian[9].

When the holy martyrs were led to Alexandria, the Venerable Anthony also followed the victims of Christ, leaving his monastery for this purpose.

"Let us go," he said, "and we too to the bright feast of our brethren, either to be found worthy of the same, or to see others striving."

By his love and good will the Venerable was truly a martyr. But although he desired to suffer for the name of Christ, martyrdom was not granted to him, for the Lord, for the benefit of His flock, preserved the teacher and instructor Anthony. He openly showed his devotion to the holy martyrs: bound to them by the bonds of unbroken love, he ministered to them when they were in chains, accompanied them to judgment, presented himself before the faces of the tormentors and, without concealing that he was a Christian, openly sought, as it were, to suffer for Christ in this way. Yet no one dared to lay hands on him, because it was so pleasing to God, who preserved the life of Anthony, which was more profitable to people than his martyr's death. After the most holy Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, had suffered martyrdom and the persecution ceased, the blessed Anthony returned to his former monastery and, imitating the holy martyrs in faith and hope throughout the rest of his life, wore out his body with especially severe ascetic labors and constant vigil. His undergarment was a hair shirt, his outer garment a leather cloak. He never washed his body, except perhaps on those occasions when it was necessary to cross water, and until his death no one ever saw his nakedness.

Once, when he was in solitude and, shut up in his cell, received no one, the military commander Martinian came to him with his demon-

possessed daughter. He began to knock and to beg the Venerable to come out and pray and help his suffering daughter. Anthony, without opening the door, looked out from above and said:

"Why do you turn to my help? I am mortal, as you are; equally we are both weak by nature. If you believe in Christ, whom I serve, then go, pray to God according to your faith, and your daughter will be healed."

Martinian believed, called upon the name of Christ, and went home with his daughter, who was immediately healed. The Lord worked many other miracles through His servant Anthony. In the Gospel He promised: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Mt. 7:7), and in accordance with this, having found a man worthy of His grace, He did not refuse him the power of working miracles: many demoniacs lay before the entrance to his cell, since its doors were locked, and all of them received healing through his God-pleasing prayers. Anthony saw that this multitude of visitors hindered him from remaining in the silence he loved; on the other hand, he feared that his own mind might begin to exalt itself from the abundance of signs wrought through him, and so he resolved to go to Upper Thebaid, where he would be unknown to anyone. Taking bread, he sat down on the bank of the river and waited for a ship to cross to the other side. Suddenly he heard a voice from on high, which asked:

"Anthony! Where and why are you going?"

Not troubled, since he had already heard such a voice more than once, Anthony answered fearlessly:

"Since people give me no rest here, I have decided to depart for Upper Thebaid, so that they will not urge me to do what exceeds my strength, and so that they will not break my silence."

"If you go to Thebaid," the voice continued, "you will have to endure the same difficulties to an even greater degree. But if you truly want to labor in strict solitude, then go now into the inner desert."

"Who will show me the way there, since that place is unknown to me?" asked Anthony.

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9. Maximinus Daia — an eastern Roman emperor; he ruled Syria and Egypt and reigned from 306 to 313. The cruel persecution he raised against the Christians was in the year 311.

In answer, the voice pointed him to the Saracens, who customarily traveled this road into Egypt for trade. They were now returning, and Anthony, approaching them, began to beg them to take him with them and lead him to the desert. They willingly agreed, seeing in Anthony a companion sent by God Himself. After three days and three nights of travel with the Saracens, the blessed Anthony came upon a very high mountain, from beneath which flowed a spring of good water; a small plain surrounded the mountain, on which several wild date palms grew. The place pleased Anthony, as though it had been shown to him by God Himself, and He who had invisibly conversed with him on the river bank indeed inspired him to choose this mountain as his dwelling place. Taking bread from his companions, he began to live alone on this mountain, and no one lived with him. The Saracens, seeing his ascetic life, began to bring him bread, and at times he had some meager consolation in the dates of the wild palms. Afterwards, when the brethren learned of his whereabouts, they began to send him food with love, as children send to a father. But Anthony, seeing that he was causing the brethren labor, and wishing to spare them such labor, asked one of those who came to bring him a spade, a hoe, and a small quantity of seeds. When the man had done this, Anthony walked around the mountain and chose a small spot suitable for digging and sowing, since water could be brought down from above to irrigate it. Having loosened the soil here, he sowed the seeds, and from that time on he had his own bread each year; working, he rejoiced that, burdening no one, he sustained himself in the desert by the labor of his own hands. But since many there also began to come to him, he sowed several more vegetables for the hospitality of his visitors: beans, peas, and other things. At first animals came here to drink, and they trampled and devoured the vegetables. Once, when they had gathered here as usual, the Venerable took one of them and, striking it lightly with a rod, said to all of them:

"Why do you do me harm, when you yourselves see no oppression from me? In the name of the Lord I command you: depart from me and do not come here."

And from that time the animals, obedient to the prohibition, came no more. Thus the Venerable lived in solitude, abiding in prayer and unceasing labors. Nevertheless, moved by love for the elder, the brethren came to him and tried to serve him in some way. Each of them brought olives and oil or lentils and other vegetables, begging him to strengthen his body, which had grown feeble with age. How much the blessed one had to endure there from attacks, as we know from those who came to him!

Truly the words of the Apostle were fulfilled in him: "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the spirits of evil under heaven" (Eph. 6:12). How many terrible cries were heard there, like the shouts of a crowd and the clash of weapons—the whole mountain, it seemed, was full of demons! But the Venerable Anthony was like a fortress and alone overcame them all, repulsing all the hosts of demons by prayer on his knees. And indeed it is worthy of wonder how one man could live in an uninhabited desert, fearing neither the constant assaults of demons nor so many four-footed beasts and venomous reptiles. David rightly sang: "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever" (Ps. 124:1).

One night, when Anthony was praying and keeping vigil in the service of the Lord, he suddenly saw that his whole dwelling and even the surrounding desert were full of beasts, which terribly opened their jaws and gnashed their teeth. But the Venerable, immediately perceiving in this the cunning of the enemy, the devil, said:

"If power over me has been given you by the Lord, then I am ready to be devoured by you; but if you have come by satanic delusion, then flee away, for I am a servant of Christ."

And at the word of the Venerable, all the beasts turned to swift flight, driven by the power of God.

Some days later a new struggle took place with the same enemy. The saint had the custom of giving some gift in remembrance to each who came to him with an offering, and for this purpose he was weaving a basket. Pulling on the strip from which he was weaving the basket, he suddenly felt that someone was holding it. The Venerable rose and

saw a beast which had the form of a man up to the waist, while the other half of its body had the form of an ass. Anthony, making the sign of the cross, said:

"I am Christ's servant; if you have been sent against me, behold, I am here—I do not flee."

And at once the apparition, together with a multitude of other demons, turned to flight and vanished.

After some time the brethren asked the Venerable Father to visit them. Moved by fatherly love for them, Antony put bread and water on a camel together with them, since the way lay through a waterless region, and set out. Along the road the water they had taken ran out entirely, and because of the intense heat the travelers faced death from thirst. In vain they went round the surroundings, seeking anywhere in the hollows some remnant of rainwater; the camel was already dying of thirst and the scorching sun. In such a dire situation the elder, as was his custom, turned to the help of prayer. Withdrawing a short distance from his companions, he knelt, raised his hands to heaven, and began to pray. And at once a spring of water appeared on that spot. Having quenched their thirst and taken a supply of water with them, the travelers safely reached the brethren who were waiting for them. The brethren, gathering together, went out to meet the elder, kissed him with reverence, and received his blessing; and he, as though bringing from the mountain some law or precious gift for them, offered them spiritual food: he commended the labors of the elders and gave instruction to the younger.

Having stayed here for some time, he soon went back up to his mountain. Possessing power over unclean spirits, the Venerable Father healed many demoniacs by casting out the demons from them. Athanasius the Great recounts this in detail in his Life of Antony, which he composed. The Venerable Father also healed various other infirmities by his prayer, and he was not without the gift of prophecy: he foresaw the future and saw distant things as if they were before his eyes. Once two brethren were coming to the Venerable Father from afar; on the way their water ran out entirely, and one of them, by the will of God, had already died, while the other lay on the ground exhausted and

awaited death. Antony, who was then on the mountain, quickly called two monks to him and commanded them to take a vessel of water and hasten along the road leading to Egypt, saying:

"One brother who was coming here has already departed to the Lord; the other will die too, unless you come to his help in time."

The monks, setting out hastily on his directions, found everything just as the elder had said. They gave drink to the one who was faint from thirst and brought him back with them, and they buried the one who had died. On another occasion it happened that he was sitting on the mountain, and, lifting his gaze to heaven, he saw a soul ascending to heaven accompanied by Angels rejoicing over it. Marvelling at this, the Venerable Father prayed that it might be revealed to him what this vision signified. And there came a voice to him:

"This is the soul of the monk Ammonius, who lived in Nitria."

Ammonius was an elder who, from early youth until his death, led a strict ascetic life, as is seen from his Life (commemorated on the fourth day of October); and the distance from the mountain on which Antony lived to Nitria was thirteen days' journey. Antony's disciples, seeing their elder rejoicing and marvelling, began to ask him to explain to them the cause of his joy and wonder.

"Today Ammonius has fallen asleep," the elder answered them.

Ammonius was known to them, since he had often come here. Noting that day, Antony's disciples began to question the brethren who arrived thirty days later, and learned from them that Ammonius had indeed died on that very day and at the very hour in which the elder had seen his soul ascend into heaven[10]. Both parties greatly marvelled at the purity of Antony's soul, by which he could so quickly learn of an event that had happened very far away.

Once, about the ninth hour, the Venerable Father, having risen to pray before taking food, was rapt in mind and saw himself being carried through the air. At this, aerial demons tried to block his path and hinder his ascent. But the Angels resisted them and demanded that they state the reasons for detaining him. The demons began to recall

10. The Venerable Ammonius, otherwise Ammon, lived as a hermit in the Nitrian desert for 22 years; he died about the year 350. His memory is celebrated on 4 October.

Antony's sins from his very birth. But the Angels stopped them and said:

"What was from his birth, the Lord has blotted out; but if you know of any sins of his from the time when he became a monk and made a vow to God, you may speak of those."

Then the demons, out of malice, began to slander Antony, accusing him of sins he had not committed; and when this led to nothing, a free way was opened for Antony. Coming to himself, Antony saw that he was standing in his former place. Shaken by the vision, he forgot about food and spent the whole night in fervent prayer, sighing, and reflecting on how many enemies a man has and how difficult the aerial path of the soul to heaven is.

One night he heard a voice from on high, which said to him:

"Rise, Antony, go out and look!"

Antony went out and, lifting his eyes upward, saw someone terrible and so tall that his head touched the clouds; he also saw some other beings, as if winged, which strove to rise to heaven, but the terrible giant stretched out his hands and tried to bar their way; some of them he actually seized and cast down, while others, passing him by, flew boldly upward, and at these he only gnashed his teeth in impotent rage. Antony heard the voice again:

"Try to understand what you are seeing!"

Then his mind was opened, and he began to understand that these were human souls ascending to heaven, while the devil tried to hinder them; sinners the devil could detain and keep in his power, but over the saints his power did not extend, and he could not hold them back. The Venerable Father related such revelations to the brethren not out of vainglory, but for their benefit. Moreover, they themselves, seeing him astonished at something, begged him to tell them of the vision he had seen. His face was always illumined by a special grace and shone, so that even someone who had never seen him before would at once recognize him among many others: the saint's purity of soul was reflected in the gladness of his face, and, inwardly illumined by the vision of God, he was always joyful, as it is written: "A cheerful heart makes a cheerful countenance" (Prov. 15:13).

As gracious as he was in outward manner, so was he pure and marvelously unshaken in the faith; he never took the side of apostates, seeing their willful distortion of the faith; he never held friendly conversation with the Manichaeans[643] and other heretics, except only in cases when they showed readiness to renounce their former error; the Venerable Father said plainly that friendship and conversation with heretics bring harm to the soul. Above all he avoided the Arians, forbidding all the Orthodox to have fellowship with them as well. When some of the Arians came to him and he saw from their conversation their false belief, he at once ran away from them down the mountain, saying:

"Their words are more poisonous than the serpents themselves."

When once the Arians spread a false rumor that Antony thought in agreement with them, the Venerable Father marvelled at their boldness and, kindled with righteous anger, came to Alexandria; there, before the archbishop and the whole people, he anathematized the Arians, calling them forerunners of Antichrist, and confessed the Son of God not a creature but consubstantial with the Father, the Creator of the world[644]; and all Orthodox Christians were filled with great joy that the Christ-opposing heresy had been condemned by such a pillar of the Church. Then people of every sex and age, not only Christians but also heretics, and even pagans themselves, gathered to the Venerable Father, saying:

"We wish to see the man of God."

Thus all called Antony, and his name enjoyed such extraordinary renown that people strove to touch at least the edge of his garments, hoping to gain great benefit thereby. It is impossible to recount how many demoniacs and those suffering from various diseases received healing at that time, how many idol temples were closed, how many pagans were joined to the flock of Christ, through Antony's stay in the city, his words, and his miracles[11]. Some, thinking that the great crowd of people was burdening the saint, began to drive the people away from him; but he gently said to them:

11. According to the testimony of St. Athanasius of Alexandria, in the few days of the Venerable's stay in Alexandria, the number of pagans who turned to Christianity exceeded the number converted during a whole year.

"The number of those who come to me is no greater than the hosts of demons with whom we wage unceasing war on the mountain."

The compiler of this Life, Saint Athanasius the Great, says: When Antony was returning to his own place, and we went to see him off, a woman cried out behind him:

"Wait, man of God, I beg you, wait! My daughter is cruelly tormented by a demon. I beg you, wait, lest I too, running after you, suffer misfortune!"

Moved by these words and by our entreaties, the wondrous elder stopped and went no farther. When the woman came up, and her daughter, cast down by the unclean spirit, lay on the ground, Antony prayed in his soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, and at once the unclean spirit left the sick girl. Her mother and all the people gave thanks to God; Antony himself rejoiced that he was returning to his beloved desert.

It was also remarkable in the Venerable Father that, though he had not learned letters, he was wise and very discerning. Once two pagan philosophers, Hellenes by birth, came to Antony in order to test him and, if possible, to overcome him in wisdom. He was on the summit of the mountain, and when he saw them, understanding at the first glance who they were, he himself met the visitors and asked through an interpreter:

"Why, you wise men, have you taken upon yourselves the labor of coming from afar to a man without understanding, and wish to dispute with one devoid of sense?"

"We consider you not foolish, but on the contrary very wise," they answered.

"If you have come to a foolish man," the saint again addressed them boldly, "then your labor is in vain. But if, as you say, I am a wise man, you ought to follow the one whom you call a sage, for it is fitting to imitate the wise and the godly. If I had come to you, I would have had to imitate you; but since you have come to me as to a sage, then be as I am: Christians."

And the philosophers went away, amazed both at the keenness of his reason and at the casting out of demons, which they had seen with their own eyes.

Other scholars, like these philosophers, also came to him, wishing to mock him as an unlearned and illiterate man. But he put them to shame and silenced them with this argument:

"Answer me," he said, "which came first: the mind or the letters? And which gave rise to the other: did the letters produce the reason, or did the reason produce the letters?"

"The mind invented letters and handed them down," they answered.

Then Antony said:

"Then, therefore, one in whom the mind is sound may have no need of letters."

A third time there came to him men who had studied all worldly wisdom and surpassed all their contemporaries in learning. With skillful questions they sought to learn from him the grounds of our faith in Christ, with the clear intention of deriding the Cross of Christ. After keeping silent for a little while and grieving over their error, the elder began to speak to them through an interpreter who knew the Greek language well:

"What is better and more fitting: to honor the Cross of Christ, or to extol the adulteries, child-murders and incest of your gods? Is it better to praise the contempt for death and the supreme virtue revealed in the Cross of Christ, or to praise the abominations taught by your corrupt faith? What can be better than to say and believe that the Word of God took upon Himself human flesh, so that by union with our mortal nature He might raise us up to heaven and make us partakers of the heavenly, the Divine? How then do you dare to mock the Christian faith, that Christ the Son of God, without any loss to His nature, began to be what He was not,[12] and abides in what He has begun to be,[13] when you yourselves, bringing the soul down from heaven, settle it not only in human bodies but also in serpents and animals, and move it now

12. That is, as God-man, which the Son of God was not before the Incarnation.
13. That is, the Son of God made man, for Christ ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father with His glorified humanity.

here, now there, and assert that it sometimes passes into a man, sometimes into a beast, sometimes into a bird or some other living creature? The Christian faith, confessing the almighty power and mercy of God, for this very reason holds the Incarnation possible for God, yet without its honor excluding honor.[14] You, however, idly prattle that the soul, flowing from the purest source of divinity, then falls low, and you dare to assert that, diminishing, it suffers changes and transformations. But in any case we must speak here of the Cross of Christ our God. Is it not better to bear the cross or some other death than, trusting your absurd inventions, to offer worship to the Egyptian goddess Isis, who mourns Osiris, her brother and at once her husband? Be ashamed, I beg you, of believing in the evil Typhon, the brother of your god Osiris.[649] Let it shame you for the flight of Saturn,[15] for his unnatural swallowing of his children. Be ashamed of the bloodthirstiness and licentiousness of Zeus, his lustfulness, of which your own ancient tales speak. This is what you believe, these are your gods, these are the adornments of your temples! You mock the Cross and the sufferings of the Lord. But why do you keep silent about His Resurrection? Why do you not heed His miracles: the restoring of sight to the blind, of hearing to the deaf, the healing of the lame, the cleansing of lepers, the walking on the sea, the casting out of demons, the raising of the dead, and many others, from which His Divine power and glory were clearly revealed? And if you would set aside the prejudice with which you are filled, you would at once be convinced that Jesus Christ is the true God, who became man for our salvation."

By these and many other arguments the Venerable One so put to shame his philosophical interlocutors that they found not a word to say in reply. Whoever wishes may learn all of this in detail from the Life of Antony composed by Athanasius the Great, where this conversation is

14. That is, the Divinity is neither limited by this nor suffers any diminution of its glory, nor does human nature lose its essential properties or change in the sense of being deified.

15. Saturn, or Kronos, a Greco-Roman god, was regarded as the son of Uranus (heaven) and Gaia (earth); after his father was cast down from the throne, he, according to the belief of the ancient pagans, seized power over the world. He wedded his sister Rhea, but since it had been prophesied that he would be overthrown from the throne by his children, he swallowed them immediately after their birth; afterward he was cast down by his son Zeus.

given in full. Since the narrative is extensive, we shall leave aside the Venerable One's address to the Hellenes and speak now briefly of the deeds of the Venerable One himself, which held outstanding significance in his life and are most useful for us.

It was also remarkable in the Venerable Antony that, although he lived on the very edge of the then-known world, the emperor Constantine and his sons Constans and Constantius[16] came to love him ardently from afar, and in their letters they asked him, as sons would, to come and see them.

"Should I go to the emperors or not?" he asked his disciples.

"If you go," they answered, "you will be Antony; if you do not go, you will be Abba Antony."[17]

"Since," said the Venerable One, "if I go I shall not be Abba, it is better for me not to go" — and he did not go.

After this the emperors began to ask him that he might at least bestow his blessing and comfort upon them in his letters. In reply the Venerable One did indeed send them a letter in which, praising them for their confession of the Christian faith, he exhorted them not to be proud of their power in this life, but, though they sat upon imperial thrones, not to forget that they were men — and above all to remember the future Last Judgment, at which they would have to give an account of how they had used their power. The Venerable One urged them to be merciful to people, to maintain justice, and to be fathers to the poor and the unfortunate orphans.

Once, sitting among the brethren at work, he was as though in a state of rapture; looking intently up toward heaven, he sighed, then, kneeling in prayer, wept bitterly for a long time. Those present were struck with fear and began insistently to beg him to tell them what he saw.

16. Constantius and Constans were the sons and successors of Constantine the Great. Constans governed the western half of the Roman Empire from 337 to 350; Constantius reigned in the east from 337 to 361, and from 363 also in the west.

17. *Abba*: father, the superior of a monastery, who enjoys the filial reverent honor of the brotherhood. The disciples' reply expresses the wish that Antony should not depart, but should remain as before their deeply revered spiritual father and guide.

"It would be better, my children, to die before the approaching calamity comes," the elder answered with great grief.

When they again began to beg him about the same thing, the Venerable Antony, bathed in tears, said:

"An unspeakable calamity is advancing upon the Church of Christ, and it will be delivered over to men like senseless beasts. I saw the sanctuary of the Lord's temple, and in it a multitude of mules which, surrounding the Holy Table, violently overturned everything that stood upon it, and scattering it upon the floor, trampled it under their feet; and I heard a voice saying: 'My altar shall be defiled!' This is the cause of my sighs and weeping."

This vision of the Venerable One came to pass two years later, when a cruel Arian persecution broke out: the churches of God were plundered, the sacred vessels were defiled, and the Holy Mysteries were touched by the impure hands of pagans. Whole throngs of the impious then rose against Christ and forced the Orthodox to go into the churches carrying branches of trees in their hands. This arose from the custom among the pagans of Alexandria of entering their idol-temples with palm branches in their hands; the Arians, wishing to win their help against the Orthodox, imitated them and also began to go into their churches with branches; agreeing together to act against the Orthodox Christian faith, they came to imitate one another in their customs — the Arians the pagans, and the pagans the Arians. The Orthodox too were compelled to this impious practice, so that they might be one with the Arians. O horror! O lawlessness! Women and girls were violated, the blood of the Orthodox was shed in the churches and splashed upon the Holy Tables, the baptismal fonts were defiled by the lust of the pagans. Then everyone saw in this the fulfillment of Antony's vision — that the mules were trampling God's altar. And many weak people, out of fear of the Arians, went over to their heresy.

Speaking of the impending calamity, Saint Antony at the same time comforted the brethren and said:

"Do not despair, children: as the Lord was angered, so will He afterward show mercy, and the radiant beauty and strength will again be restored to the Church, and those who have kept the Christian faith un-

shaken amid persecutions will shine with the light of grace. The serpents will then return to their holes, and piety will increase all the more. Only watch over yourselves, that you have no fatal fellowship with the Arians, for their teaching is not apostolic but diabolical, and of their father the devil; for this very reason they were signified in the vision under the image of senseless animals."

At that time there lived in Egypt a military commander named Valacius, who, incited by the malicious Arians, relentlessly persecuted Christians. He was so cruel that he would publicly strip and beat even maidens and monks in the square. The Venerable Antony sent him a letter of the following content:

"I see the wrath of God coming upon you. Cease persecuting the Christians, and then the destruction drawing near to you will depart."

The impious man, having read the letter, only laughed at it; spitting upon the letter, he threw it to the ground, subjected the messengers sent by Anthony to shameful punishment, and, reviling the Venerable Father, uttered various evil threats against him. But soon the divine judgment foretold by the Venerable Father fell upon the impious man. On the fifth day after this he set out together with the Egyptian commander Nestorius to a place called Chereum, in Alexandria; they rode on the gentlest and calmest of horses. Suddenly the horses began to play beneath them, pressing one against the other, and the horse on which Nestorius sat unexpectedly seized Valacius in its teeth, threw him to the ground, and began to gnaw the soft parts of his body. He was carried into the city as one dead, and on the third day he breathed out his impious soul. And all saw in this the fulfilment of Anthony's prediction, justly overtaking the persecutor.

But it is now time to speak of the repose of the Venerable Father. He had the custom of descending from the summit of the mountain where he himself dwelt, to visit the brethren who lived at the foot of the mountain. At one of these customary visits he told them of the approach of his death, which had been revealed to him by God.

"I have come to you for the last time, my children," he said. "I no longer hope to see you in this life, and it is now time for me to depart

from this life and rest, for I have already lived a hundred and five years."

At these words the brethren were plunged into deep grief; they wept and kissed the elder, as one already departing from the world. But he exhorted them to labour with unflagging zeal, not to despond amid the ascetic struggles of abstinence, but to live as though preparing for death every day, to guard the soul faithfully from impure thoughts, to follow the examples of the saints, not to draw near to the schismatics, the Meletians, nor to enter into communion with the impious Arians; rather, he exhorted them to hold to the traditions of the Fathers and to keep in all purity the pious faith in the Lord our Jesus Christ, as they had learned it from the Scriptures and from his many instructions.

After this the brethren earnestly besought him to remain with them, for all desired to be granted the honour of being present at his death. But he did not consent, because he knew of their desire to honour his body after death with a solemn burial. Avoiding even the honour and glory that men would render him after death, the Venerable Father hastened to depart from them and withdraw into solitude: taking leave of the brethren, he went to the summit of the mountain, to his beloved dwelling, the place of his labours. Some months later he fell seriously ill. Then, calling to himself two monks who had laboured together with him for the last fifteen years and who served the Venerable Father on account of his old age, he said to them:

"My children! As it is written (3 Kgdms. 2:2; cf. Josh. 23:14), 'I am going the way of all the earth,' the Lord calls me to Himself, and I hope to taste the blessings of heaven. But you, my dear children, I beg: do not lose the fruits of your many years of abstinence, but zealously and successfully continue the struggles you have begun. You know how many different obstacles the demons place before us, but do not fear their insignificant power. Hope in Jesus Christ, believe firmly in Him with all your heart, and all the demons will flee from you. Remember all that I taught you, strive to lead a pious life, and undoubtedly you will receive a reward in heaven. Avoid all communion with schismatics, heretics and Arians; you know that I never once had friendly converse with them, on account of their evil designs and their Christ-opposing

heresy. Above all, strive to fulfil the commandments of the Lord, so that the saints may receive you after your death into the eternal dwellings as kinsmen and friends. Remember, meditate on this and always consider it. And if you truly care for me, love me as a father, and are ready to fulfil my will, then do not allow anyone to carry my remains into Egypt, that they may not give my body a splendid burial there, for it is chiefly for this reason that I withdrew to this mountain. Bury me yourselves, my children, in the earth, and fulfil the following command of your elder: let no one but you know the grave where my body will be laid, which, by my faith in the Lord, will rise incorrupt at the general resurrection of the dead. Divide my garments thus: the sheepskin cloak[18] and the worn undergarment on which I lie, give to Bishop Athanasius;[19] give the other sheepskin cloak to Bishop Serapion;[20] take the hair shirt for yourselves. Farewell, my dear children! Anthony departs, and he will no longer be with you in this life."

When, after these words, the disciples kissed him in farewell, Anthony stretched out his legs, and with a quiet joy on his face, gazing at the Angels who had come for his soul as at his friends, he died and was gathered to the holy Fathers.[21] The disciples of the saint, according to his testament, clothed the body and committed it to the earth; and, besides them, no one until now has known the place of burial of the Venerable Anthony.

Athanasius, receiving from the disciples the worn garment and the sheepskin cloak of the saint, received these gifts as though receiving Anthony himself. As one made happy by a rich inheritance, he always gazed upon these garments with reverent joy, bringing to his memory the holy image of him.

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18. *Milot*: an outer garment, a cloak, a mantle.

19. That is, to St. Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria.

20. Here is meant St. Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis (in Egypt). His memory is celebrated on May 24.

21. The Venerable Antony the Great died on January 17, 356, in the 105th year of his life. The relics of the Venerable Antony were uncovered and translated to Alexandria in 561, under the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527–565); then, after the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, to Constantinople around 635, and from there around 980 to the diocese of Vienne (in Gaul, present-day France); in 1491 they were moved to Arles (the principal city of Provence, in southeastern France), to the church of St. Julian, where they rest to this day.

Such were the life and the repose of the Venerable Anthony, whose love and whose glory spread throughout all lands. Not by skilfully composed writings,[22] not by worldly wisdom, not by the nobility of his birth, not by vast riches did he become renowned, but by his pious life. And the word of the Saviour was fulfilled in him: "I will glorify him who glorifies Me" (1 Kgdms. 2:30). He lived not in some famous place known to all; rather, he withdrew almost to the very edge of the world, into the trackless desert. Yet even from there he became known in Spain, in Africa, in Italy, in Illyria, and even in ancient Rome itself. Anthony, who had deliberately hidden himself from all in the mountain, neither desired nor sought such glory. But the Lord Himself revealed and showed this lamp of faith and piety to all, so that, beholding it, men might learn virtue, and, marvelling at such a life of the Venerable Father, might glorify the Father in heaven, to Whom, with His only-begotten Son and the All-Holy Spirit, be honour, glory, thanksgiving and worship forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thou didst follow the ways of the zealot Elijah, and didst walk the righteous paths of the Baptist, O Father Anthony; thou wast an inhabitant of the desert, and by thy prayers thou didst establish the universe. Wherefore entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having cast off the tumult of worldly life, thou didst end thy life in silence, most venerable one imitating the Baptist in every way; wherefore we honour thee together with him, O Anthony, leader of the Fathers.

22. Although the Venerable Antony the Great had no formal education, Holy Scripture and nature were his school, and the grace of Christ was his teacher, illuminating him more and more as he mortified himself by his labors. Of the writings of the Venerable Antony there have come down to us: 1) his discourses, twenty in number; they treat of monastic virtues, of faith in Christ, of simplicity and innocence, humility, purity, patience, piety, virginity, and so forth; all the discourses are brief but full of divine teaching. 2) Epistles: seven to various monasteries and their superiors, on striving for moral perfection and on spiritual struggle, written already in the Venerable's very advanced age, and breathing apostolic edification; and thirteen other letters of the same content and character. 3) Rules of life and other exhortations and sayings to monks.

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NOTES

643. Manichaeism was a heresy that arose from an attempt to unite Christianity with the principles of the Persian religion of Zoroaster, which preached dualism, that is, the existence from eternity of two independent principles or kingdoms. According to the teaching of the Manichaeans, Christ is only a luminous aeon (spirit), proceeding from the Father of Light by emanation. One half of Him, it was said, was swallowed up by matter and became the soul of the visible world, the so-called suffering Jesus; the other half, with the help of another aeon, the Living Spirit, was freed from matter and placed in the sun; this is the so-called impassible Jesus. The Incarnation of Christ, according to the Manichaean teaching, was the descent from the sun of the impassible Jesus in order to deliver the suffering Jesus, whose luminous particles Satan had supposedly gathered and, for greater convenience of possessing them, enclosed in the person of a man. According to this teaching, the Incarnation of Christ was only apparent (Docetism). In moral terms, Manichaeism preached a struggle against matter for liberation from it, through the gradual mortification of the flesh within oneself. The heresy of the Manichaeans was especially widespread in the fourth and fifth centuries.

644. "The Son of God," said Antony, "is not a creature, nor is He from non-existent things, but the eternally existing Word and Wisdom of the Father's being. Have no fellowship whatever with the Arians, for what fellowship has light with darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14). If you keep piety, you are Christians; but those who call the Son of God and the Word existing from the Father a creature differ in no way from the pagans, for they serve a creature rather than the God who created it. Believe me," Antony continued, "the very elements of the world are indignant, and all creation groans at the Arian madness, seeing their Lord, through whom all things were made, placed on a level with themselves." At this time the Venerable Antony was already 104 years old. Even earlier, when the heresy of Arius was revealed, Antony had come forward as a defender of the truth: in 335 he wrote condemnatory letters to the Arian bishop Gregory and to the civil governor of Alexandria, who was likewise a heretic; at the same time, by letter, he petitioned the Emperor Constantine on behalf of Athanasius of Alexandria, who had then been driven from his throne.

649. Osiris, the Egyptian god, who was venerated throughout the land alongside Isis, was, according to the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, the husband and at the same time the brother of Isis. But his brother Typhon treacherously put him into a chest, nailed it shut, poured lead over it and threw it into the Nile; Isis found the coffin and hid it, but at night Typhon discovered it and tore the body into fourteen parts, which he scattered in all directions; Isis gathered them and buried them, and Typhon, after a long struggle, was utterly defeated. While Isis signified the land of the Nile, Osiris was the fertilizing god of the Nile; in a more general sense, Isis was deified as the earth, the mother who brings forth all things, while Osiris, on the contrary, represented the productive power of the sun embodied in the earth; he was venerated at once as the god of the Nile and of

the sun. The struggle of Typhon depicted the struggle against the productive power of the sun inherent in the earth. In the person of Typhon the pagans deified some terrible monster, explained as a destructive whirlwind and a scorching wind, or as vapor issuing with destructive force from the earth, from fire-breathing mountains.



THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 18

18 января

New Calendar January 18 · Old Calendar January 31 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria

Житие святого отца нашего Афанасия, архиепископа Александрийского

St. Athanasius the Great, that living and immortal image of virtue and of a God-pleasing life, was born in the famous capital of Egypt, Alexandria[1]. His parents were Christians, pious and virtuous people. Even in the days of Athanasius's boyhood, the following incident foreshadowed his future great work as a hierarch.

Once Athanasius was playing with his peers on the seashore. The children were imitating what they had seen in church, representing in their game the ministers of God and the church rites. They chose Athanasius to be their bishop; he appointed some of them priests and others deacons. These latter brought him other children, pagans who were not yet baptized. Athanasius baptized them with sea water, pronouncing the words prescribed for the sacrament of holy Baptism, as he had heard them from the priest in church; to this he added an instruction suited to his childish age. At that time the Patriarch of Alexandria was St. Alexander[2]. Glancing by chance from the windows of his house, which stood on an elevated spot not far from the sea, at the seashore and seeing the children's game, he watched with amazement the baptism Athanasius was performing. Immediately he ordered all the children to be brought before him. Questioning the children in detail, the

1. St. Athanasius of Alexandria was born around 297, shortly before the cruel persecution of the Christians under Diocletian, of which, however, he retained no personal memories.
2. St. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, a zealous defender of Orthodoxy against the Arians, governed the Alexandrian Church from 312 to 326.

patriarch sought to learn whom they had baptized, how they had questioned them before the baptism and what the candidates had answered, and he found that in their play they had performed everything in accordance with the church ordinance. Afterwards, having consulted his clergy, he acknowledged the baptism of the pagan children performed by Athanasius to be valid and completed it by chrismation. Then he called the parents of the children who had acted as priests and advised them to bring them up for the priesthood. To the parents of Athanasius, having summoned them, St. Alexander entrusted the task of raising him in piety and in book learning, and then, when he came of age, of bringing him to the patriarch so that he might be dedicated to God and to the holy Church.

When Athanasius had sufficiently studied the sciences and gained a broad intellectual education[660], his parents brought him to the holy Patriarch Alexander and, as Anna once dedicated Samuel (1 Kgdms. 1), so they dedicated him as a gift to God. Soon afterwards the patriarch made him a cleric and ordained him deacon of the Alexandrian Church[3]. How, in this rank, from his youth he courageously fought against heretics and what he suffered from them cannot all be enumerated; yet some of his most notable exploits and deeds must not pass unmentioned. At that time the impious Arius was spreading his mad heresy and by his pernicious teaching was shaking the whole Church. Although he had already been condemned at the first Ecumenical Council of the holy fathers at Nicaea[662], excommunicated from communion with the Church of Christ and sentenced to imprisonment, nevertheless, cast down and barely alive, he did not cease his struggle against Orthodoxy. He began to act through his disciples and like-minded followers, spreading the poison of his heresy everywhere. Having many inter-

3. It is known that Athanasius, while still little more than a boy, took a place as a beloved member in the house of St. Alexander, living with him "as a son with a father," and thus spent several fruitful years at the center of church activity, under the roof of the primate, whose authority was acknowledged by more than a hundred bishops of Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis. Athanasius became, as it were, an assistant and household secretary in the written correspondence on church affairs. St. Athanasius was ordained deacon in 319. Already at this time Athanasius became known especially through his writings: "Against the Pagans" and "On the Incarnation of the Word of God"; these were his first works, written early, but they gave grounds to hope for much from him.

cessors before the emperor, above all Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia[4], together with other bishops who held the same heresy, Arius through them petitioned Constantine the Great for mercy, that he be released from prison and allowed to return to Alexandria. Eusebius deceitfully persuaded the emperor that Arius introduced no teaching contrary to Orthodoxy and preached nothing inconsistent with the teaching of the Church, but that out of envy he suffered from the cunning of the bishops, and that the dispute between them was not about faith but only about empty, abstract words[664]. The emperor, in his simplicity and guilelessness, not suspecting heretical cunning and deceit, believed the false assurances and ordered the dispute to be stopped and no quarrel to be raised over words, so that there might be no discord between the churches. Without investigating the matter at all, out of his mercy he allowed Arius to return to Alexandria. And so this impious heretic, to the general misfortune of the Church, returned to Alexandria. This circumstance was very grievous and sorrowful for the Orthodox, and especially for St. Athanasius, as a warrior of Christ and a steadfast defender of the true traditions of Orthodoxy. At that time he had already been granted the rank of archdeacon. This warrior of Christ pursued the heretic who, like a wolf, had broken into the Church of Christ, exposing his malicious designs both in his writings and in his preaching. At the same time Athanasius urged the most holy Archbishop Alexander to write an epistle to the emperor, and he himself wrote together with him, pointing out the simple-mindedness by which the emperor, having believed the seductions and heretical fables, now received Arius, who had turned away from the Orthodox Church, rejected by God Himself and by all the holy fathers, and allowed him to shake the paternal ordinances. But the emperor, at the urging of Eusebius, replied to them with an even harsher epistle, threatening them with deposition from their rank if they did not fall silent. The pious and kind emperor acted

4. Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, was a friend and supporter of Arius, and protected him. At the First Ecumenical Council he defended Arius, and although he agreed to sign the Creed composed at the Council, he did not consent to the excommunication of Arius from the Church, for which, as well as for his communion with the excommunicated heresiarch, he himself was sent into exile. But, thanks to the patronage of Constantia, the emperor's sister, Eusebius was recalled from exile and, having again taken his see, began to act against the Orthodox.

thus not to satisfy his anger, nor because he was inclined toward Arianism, but out of a zeal, though not according to knowledge, that there should be no discord between the churches. Loving peace with his gentle heart, the emperor sought peace where it could by no means exist: for how can heresy live in peace with Orthodoxy?

Soon after this the most holy Alexander reposed; Athanasius was unanimously elected by all the Orthodox as his successor to the Alexandrian see, as a vessel worthy of such a world[5]. Then the secret sowers of tares, the Arians, fell silent for a time, not engaging in open struggle with Athanasius; but later, at the instigation of demons, they revealed their cunning and openly displayed the poison nesting within their malice, since St. Athanasius would not admit the impious Arius to church communion, although the latter had an imperial decree to that effect. Everywhere the Arians began to stir up enmity against the blameless one and to spread evil slander, striving that he who was worthy of the heavenly mansions should be not only cast down from the earthly episcopal throne but also driven out of the city. But Athanasius remained unshaken, singing with David: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear" (Ps. 26:3).

The leader of the treacherous plot was Eusebius, who bore only the name of piety[6], while in truth he was a vessel of impiety. Taking advantage, with his like-minded companions, of the emperor's guilelessness and supposing that the time had now come that was favorable for it, he roused everyone to depose Athanasius from the throne. Eusebius thought that if he deposed Athanasius, he would then easily overcome the rest of the Orthodox and establish the teaching of Arius. He began to spread unjust and false calumnies against the righteous man, which seemed credible to the heretics. For this purpose he hired for money

5. The death of St. Alexander of Alexandria followed five months after his return from the First Ecumenical Council. Athanasius was not in Alexandria at that time. Leaving his flock, the dying elder sought with a wandering gaze someone to whom to entrust it. "Athanasius, Athanasius!" cried Alexander, "you think to flee. No! You shall not escape." Indeed, Athanasius did not escape the lot appointed for him from above. Chosen beforehand by the departing shepherd and by the desire of the flock, as soon as he appeared in Alexandria the people insistently demanded of the assembled bishops that they consecrate Athanasius as bishop, and they did not calm down until they obtained what they desired, though against Athanasius' own will.

6. Eusebius, in Greek, means: pious.

Ision, a follower of Meletius[667], Eudaemon, skilled in cunning, and Callinicus, strong in malice. The accusations against Athanasius came down to the following:

1) that he compelled the Egyptians to pay taxes for priestly vestments, linen garments, sanctuary hangings and cloths, and other church furnishings;

2) that he showed ill will toward the emperor and despised the imperial decrees;

3) that he was avaricious, and that he had sent a chest full of gold to one of his friends for safekeeping. To this was added an accusation concerning the false priest Ischyras[7], who was crafty, treacherous, and cunning in his malice. Having assumed the name of presbyter without the customary ordination, he committed so many evil, lawless, and criminal deeds that he deserved not only deposition and disgrace but also severe punishment. Having learned everything about Ischyras, the Blessed Athanasius, always careful and cautious in deciding such matters, sent the presbyter Macarius to Mareotis[8] to investigate all the lawless deeds of Ischyras. Ischyras, however, fearing interrogation and exposure, fled from there, and coming to Nicomedia, began to slander Athanasius before Eusebius. Eusebius and his accomplices received Ischyras, that apostate from God and transgressor of the sacred canons, as a true priest, and treated him with honor; for it is natural to love one like oneself, whether in malice or in virtue. Themselves burning with fierce hatred against Athanasius, they received Ischyras with great joy. They encouraged his audacity and insolence and promised to honor him with the episcopal dignity, if only he could contrive to bring some accusation and calumny against the righteous man. Ischyras, being crafty and skilled in such matters, strove to bring accusations against the innocent Athanasius. He said that by Athanasius's command the presbyter Macarius, having made a brigand-like intrusion into

7. Ischyras was not a priest. True, he had been ordained to this rank, while St. Alexander was still living, by Colluthus, who had presumptuously seized episcopal rights for himself; but at the Alexandrian council of 324 this Colluthus was deposed as an impostor, and all whom he had ordained were not recognized as validly ordained.

8. The Mareotic region lay in northwestern Egypt, south of Alexandria, along the shore of the bay, and in ecclesiastical respects was under the authority of the Bishop of Alexandria.

the church, with great fury dragged him away from the Holy Table, overturned the Holy Table, broke the cup with the Divine Mysteries, and burned the sacred books. Accepting this calumny of Ischyras as truth and adding it to other slanders, the enemies of Athanasius approached Emperor Constantine, slandering St. Athanasius. They especially sought to arouse the emperor's anger by accusing Athanasius of disregarding the imperial written decrees and not heeding the imperial command, by not receiving Arius into ecclesiastical communion. Besides this, they also brought against the blessed one an accusation concerning a certain dead hand, alleging that Athanasius, supposedly by means of it, worked magical wonders and enchantments (they themselves being truly wretched and manifest sorcerers); this hand, it was said, belonged to a certain cleric named Arsenius, and had been severed by the machinations of Athanasius.

The emperor, having examined the matter, was perplexed: he well knew the virtue of Athanasius, and at the same time the accusations brought against him seemed to him more or less credible. Therefore he chose a middle course: not condemning Athanasius, yet not refusing an investigation of his case. And since at that time in Jerusalem the feast of the dedication of the Church of the Resurrection of Christ was being celebrated, and bishops were gathering there from all countries[9], the emperor, taking advantage of this occasion, commanded the bishops to assemble at Tyre[10] for a careful investigation of the accusations against Athanasius the Great, and also for consideration of the case of Arius: whether he indeed, as he himself asserted, teaches in accordance with the doctrine of the holy faith and holds to the true Orthodox traditions. If he had been deposed out of envy, then let him again be received by the clergy and the council and be joined, as one member, to the body of the Church; but if he believes contrary to its teaching and teaches impi-

9. The bishops gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of the consecration, by the Emperor Constantine the Great, of the magnificent church of the Resurrection of Christ, built over the place of the burial of the Body of the Savior and of His Resurrection. The church was consecrated on September 13, 335.

10. The city of Tyre was situated on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It was one of the most ancient, fortified and beautiful maritime trading cities of Phoenicia, and at the same time its capital city.

ously, then let him be judged according to the sacred laws and receive the worthy punishment for his deeds. As for the affair of Arsenius, the emperor commanded that an investigation be made first, so that if Athanasius should prove guilty, he might be condemned according to the laws. For a reliable inquiry into this matter, Constantine sent one of his stewards, named Archelaus, together with the Phoenician prince Nonnus. When these came to Tyre (Athanasius was at that time there, awaiting exposure of the calumny brought against him concerning the dead hand and sorcery), they postponed the investigation until the expected accusers should arrive from Alexandria, who asserted that they had seen with their own eyes that lawlessness of Athanasius (the severing of Arsenius's hand and the sorcery). This postponement of the investigation occurred by the providence of God, as the outcome of the affair clearly showed. For God, looking down from on high upon all, and delivering the wronged from those who wrong them, prolonged the time, so that Arsenius himself might have time to come to Tyre. Arsenius was one of the clergy of the Alexandrian Church, a reader by office; having committed a great crime, he was to be subjected to severe judgment and cruel punishment; fearing this, he fled and for a long time hid himself, no one knew where. But the crafty opponents of Athanasius, having become skilled in intrigues and not at all expecting that Arsenius would ever appear out of fear and shame for the sin he had committed, boldly wrote that there existed a dead hand of Arsenius, and everywhere spread the rumor that Athanasius had committed this vile crime. When the report that Athanasius was being brought to trial for the severing of Arsenius's hand spread through all lands, this rumor reached Arsenius himself, who was hiding in unknown places. Grieving for his father and benefactor, and sorrowing in his heart that truth was lawlessly overcome by falsehood, he secretly came to Tyre and presented himself to Athanasius himself, falling at his honorable feet. The Blessed Athanasius, rejoicing at Arsenius's arrival, commanded him not to show himself to anyone before the trial.

It was the thirtieth year of the reign of Constantine[11] when bishops gathered at Tyre from various cities[12]. The presbyter Macarius was

brought by soldiers; among them was the voivode, who wished to conduct the trial together with the bishops, and also some of the other secular authorities; the accusers appeared, and the trial began. Then Athanasius was summoned. At first he was falsely accused concerning the linen church vestments and the veil, and also of avarice; but immediately the falsehood of this calumny was exposed, and the malice of the accusers became clear to all.

Meanwhile the malicious hatred of Athanasius's opponents was not abated; they were still not satiated with false calumnies against Athanasius, but added one plot to another, and one lie to yet another. The impious heretics bribed a shameless woman to bring a calumny against Athanasius, to the effect that while staying at her house, he had committed a lawless act with her against her will.

When the trial began, the judges took their seats, the accusers stood forth, and this woman was brought in. Weeping, she complained against Athanasius, whom she had never seen and did not even know by appearance.

"For God's sake I received him into my house," she said of Athanasius, "as a venerable and holy man, desiring a blessing for myself and my household. And now, on the contrary, I have suffered from him. At midnight, when I was sleeping in my bed, he came to me and violently outraged me, for no one freed me from his hands, since everyone in the house had fallen into a deep sleep."

While the shameless woman was thus slandering and with tears calumniating, Athanasius's friend, the presbyter Timothy, standing with him behind the door and hearing this calumny, was stirred in spirit, and

11. Here the time of the reign of Constantine the Great is reckoned not from the beginning of his sole rule, but from the very beginning of his reign (from 306 to 324 he governed the western half of the empire, and from 324 to 337 the whole empire).

12. The council at Tyre took place in 335, under the supervision of the imperial official Dionysius. Up to sixty bishops came to the council. St. Athanasius arrived with 48 bishops of Egypt. Present were the bishops of the illustrious sees: Flacillus of Antioch, Maximus of Jerusalem, and Alexander of Thessalonica. St. Athanasius, upon his arrival, wished to take the place that belonged to him by the dignity of his see, but he was ordered by the presiding officer of the council, Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (the well-known church historian, a partisan of the Arians), to stand as a man under accusation. The deliberations of the council were conducted with bias, in favor of Arius and his partisans and to the detriment of St. Athanasius.

suddenly entering the courtroom, quickly stood before the eyes of that calumniator, as though he were Athanasius himself; he boldly addressed her with the following words:

"Did I, woman, commit violence upon you at night, as you say? Did I?"

But that woman, with still greater shamelessness, cried out to the judges:

"This man is my ravisher and a plotter against my chastity; he, and no other, while staying with me, repaid my kindness with outrage."

Hearing this, the judges laughed, while Athanasius's opponents were greatly ashamed, for their falsehood was openly revealed. All were astonished at such brazen calumny and acknowledged Athanasius to be wholly innocent of the sin charged against him. But Athanasius's opponents began to accuse the holy man of sorcery and of the murder of Arsenius; they brought before the eyes of all some frightful-looking dead hand, and, shamelessly waving it at the saint, they cried out:

"This hand silently cries out against you, Athanasius; this hand exposes you; it entraps you and holds you fast, so that you cannot escape condemnation; you will not be able to escape its testimony either by words, or by cunning, or by any intrigue. Everyone knows Arsenius, whose hand you unjustly and without any mercy severed. So tell us at last: why did you need this, and with what purpose did you cut it off?"

Athanasius, however, listened to them patiently, imitating Christ the Lord, who was once condemned by the Jews and did not contend or cry out, but "as a sheep led to the slaughter" (Is. 53:7); at first he kept silent, then, answering the accusation, he said with meekness:

"Is there among you anyone who knew Arsenius well? Is there not also someone who could state precisely whether this is indeed his hand?"

When many rose from their seats, declaring that they knew Arsenius himself and his hand well, Athanasius immediately drew back the curtain behind which Arsenius was standing, and commanded him to stand in the midst of the assembly. And so Arsenius stood in the midst of the courtroom alive and well, with both hands whole. The blessed one, looking with indignation upon the calumniators, said:

"Is this not Arsenius? Is this not the one whose hand, as you say, was severed? Is this not the man whom all Alexandrians know?"

And, commanding Arsenius to raise first his right hand and then his left, he cried out loudly, as if calling upon those who were far from the truth:

– Behold, men, here is Arsenius! Here are his hands, which were not cut off at all! Show now also your Arsenius, if you have such a one, and tell us to whom the severed hand belongs, the hand which condemns you yourselves as the perpetrators of this crime.

While the trial was conducted in this manner, a letter came to the council from the Emperor, sharply rebuking the calumniators and commanding that Athanasius be released from the unjust accusation and kindly summoning him to the Emperor. It happened as follows. Two presbyters of the Alexandrian Church, Apis and Macarius (not the one who had been brought to the trial in chains, but another of the same name), having come to Nicomedia, told the Emperor everything about Athanasius, how his enemies had brought false accusations against the holy man and had convened an unjust assembly. The Emperor, perceiving the truth and the slanders that had arisen out of envy, wrote to the bishops at the trial in Tyre a letter of such a kind that when it was read at the trial, the partisans of Eusebius were seized with fear and did not know what to do; yet, driven by great envy, they did not cease to rage, and not content with having once been defeated and put to shame, they turned to other false accusations and slandered Macarius, who had been brought to trial. The accuser was Ischyras, and the false witnesses were partisans of Eusebius, whom Athanasius had previously rejected as liars and unworthy of belief. Athanasius wished that it be reliably investigated whether Ischyras was in fact a true priest, and only then promised to answer the charges brought against him. The judges did not agree to this and continued to conduct the trial of Macarius. After the slanderers had exhausted all their calumnies, the hearing of the case was postponed, because an inquiry had to be made on the very spot where Macarius was supposed to have overturned the holy altar, that is, in Mareotis. Seeing that the very slanderers who from the beginning had been rejected by him as liars were being sent to Mareotis

for this purpose, Athanasius, unable to bear the injustice being committed, cried out without ceasing:

– Truth is extinguished, truth is trampled, justice is destroyed, lawful investigation and careful examination of cases have vanished from the judges! Is it lawful that one who desires to clear himself be kept in chains, and that the whole conduct of the trial be entrusted to calumniators and enemies, and that the accusers themselves judge the one whom they slander?

Thus St. Athanasius the Great cried out about this in the hearing of all and bore witness to the whole council. Seeing, however, that he would have no success, because of the growing number of his enemies and envious rivals, he secretly went to the Emperor. And immediately that council, or rather, to speak better, that wicked assembly, condemned the absent Athanasius. When the unjust inquiry in Mareotis concerning the aforementioned matter had been concluded, carried out according to the will and desire of St. Athanasius's enemies, the judges, themselves worthy of deposition, decided that Athanasius must be deposed definitively. Then they went to Jerusalem, where those very men who only in words held to piety, and who at the former Council of Nicaea had feignedly signed the dogma of the consubstantiality of the Son of God with God the Father, received into ecclesial communion the God-fighting Arius. But those who held the Orthodox faith both in heart and in lips, having attentively considered the words and speeches of Arius and carefully examined them, recognized the seduction that lay hidden beneath the covering of many words and speeches, and, having caught it, as one catches a fox, exposed him as an enemy of the truth. At this time another letter came from the Emperor (Athanasius had not yet managed to reach the Emperor), commanding Athanasius and all his calumniators and judges to appear before him at once. This caused great fear among the members of the council, for the enemies of Athanasius, who had conducted the unlawful trial, feared that their injustice would be exposed; therefore many of them dispersed to their own lands. Eusebius and Theognis, bishop of Nicaea[13], and some others, contriving some plausible pretexts in order to delay in Tyre, re-

mained here for a rather long time, and answered the Emperor by letters. Meanwhile Athanasius, appearing before the Emperor in Nicomedia, cleared himself of the charge of covetousness brought against him. And while the partisans of Eusebius dawdled and were in no hurry to appear before the Emperor, the latter sent Athanasius back to the Alexandrian see with his letter, in which the groundlessness and injustice of all the slanders against the hierarch were attested.

When St. Athanasius thus governed his see, and Arius was in Alexandria, the Arians caused great disturbance and agitation among the people. The blessed Athanasius, being unable to see that Arius was stirring up and shaking not only Alexandria but all Egypt, wrote to the Emperor about all this, exhorting him to punish the God-fighter and the troubler of the people. In response to this, an order came from the Emperor to Alexandria at once, to present Arius bound for the imperial trial. On the way to the Emperor from Alexandria, Arius, having reached Caesarea, met with his like-minded associates: Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicaea, and Marius, bishop of Chalcedon[14]; having consulted together, they devised new calumnies against Athanasius, fearing neither God nor sparing the innocent man, but having one desire – to cover the truth with a lie, as the Divine Isaiah says: "They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity," those who say: "for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hidden ourselves" (Is. 59:4, 28, 15).[15] Such was the effort the lawless heretics made to depose the blessed Athanasius from his patriarchal throne and to seize power over the Orthodox. And so they came to the Emperor – Arius wishing to clear himself, and Eusebius and his accomplices to further his unjust cause, openly bearing false witness against the truth

13. Theognis, Bishop of Nicaea, together with Eusebius of Nicomedia, was among the first to adopt the teaching of Arius; he supported it at the First Ecumenical Council, after which, although he signed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith, he was exiled for his dealings with Arius, and upon Arius's return Theognis was recalled from exile. Outwardly he renounced the false teaching, but secretly he protected the Arians.

14. Marius, Bishop of Chalcedon, like Theognis of Nicaea and many others, shared the teaching of Arius, accused Athanasius at the Council of Tyre, and was among the investigators in the Mareotic affair, together with Theognis and other partisans of Arius.

15. The prophet here speaks of those whose sins separate them from God. The accusers of Athanasius acted like such sinners, covering the truth with lies.

and against Athanasius. When they presented themselves before the Emperor, they were immediately questioned concerning the council held in Tyre, about what they had decided there and what judgment they had pronounced against Athanasius. They answered the Emperor:

– O Emperor! We do not greatly grieve over the errors of Athanasius, but we are seized with sorrow and zeal for the sanctuary which he destroyed, and for the chalice with the holy Mysteries which he shattered and broke into pieces, and also for the fact that he forbade and prohibited the sending of the wheat ordinarily sent from Alexandria to Constantinople[677]: this especially grieves us, this wounds our soul. Witnesses of such his evil deeds were the bishops Adamantius, Anubion, Arvestion and Peter[16]; accused by them of all this, Athanasius escaped the trial, which he had justly deserved by his deeds, but he could not escape deposition, but was unanimously deposed by the whole council for having dared such lawless deeds.

Hearing these words, the Emperor at first remained silent, troubled in his soul; then, being unable to restrain the calumniators, he ordered that the righteous man be sent for a time to Gaul[17] – not because he believed the slander or was seized by anger, but for the sake of pacifying the Church (as men who had reliably learned the Emperor's intention bear witness). The Emperor saw how many bishops had risen against Athanasius, and how great a turmoil had arisen from this among the people of Alexandria and of Egypt. And so, wishing to calm such a storm, to stop the rumors and to heal the afflictions of so many bishops, he commanded the holy man to withdraw for a time from the city[18].

After this Emperor Constantine himself died in the thirty-first year of his reign, at the age of sixty-five. Dying, he left three sons as heirs

16. All these were Arianizing bishops, partisans of Eusebius of Nicomedia.

17. Gaul is present-day France.

18. St. Athanasius was sent to the city of Treves, now Trier, a populous and flourishing principal city of the northeastern region of ancient Gaul (the so-called Belgica). Here Constantine the Great himself had often resided when he possessed only the western half of the empire; now Constantine, the eldest son of the emperor, who in 335 had become ruler of Gaul, Spain and Britain, had his residence there. The Bishop of Trier at this time was Maximinus, a defender of Orthodoxy. He received Athanasius with love and respect, and Athanasius in turn preserved affection for him. And Constantine the Younger, cherishing respect for the hierarch, sought to lighten the sorrow of exile. In Trier St. Athanasius remained for two years and four months.

to his kingdom: Constantine, Constantius and Constans, among whom, by his will, he divided the realm, assigning the greater part to the eldest son, Constantine. But since none of his sons was present at the death of Constantine the Great, he entrusted his will to a presbyter[19], who was a secret follower of Arius. Concealing the heresy within himself, this presbyter also kept back the imperial testament; when many asked him whether the emperor had made a will at his death, he said nothing about it. His secret accomplices in this affair were some of the imperial eunuchs. While the eldest son Constantine was slow to come to his dead father, Constantius hastened to set out from Antioch and arrived before them all. The aforementioned presbyter secretly handed him his father's will, and in return asked for no reward except that he should go over to the Arians and help them. He wished Constantius, in place of thanksgiving to the immortal Christ the King for his earthly kingdom, to madly acknowledge Him not as God and Lord of all and not as Creator, but as a creature! The aforementioned Eusebius and all his accomplices lent their help to this, rejoicing that the time they desired had come; they hoped to spread and strengthen the Arian heretical teaching only if the new emperor too confirmed the decision concerning the banishment of Athanasius as just and fully lawful. At that time they won over to their heresy and to agreement with themselves the praepositus[20] who was in the imperial palace, and through him the disease of Arian heresy spread also to the other eunuchs[21], who by their very nature are very inclined both to receive and to spread among others every kind of evil. Then the empress too, gradually corrupted by blasphemous talk, was herself infected with the same heretical poison.

19. The Arian presbyter Eudoxius, the very one who had strong influence over Constantia, sister of the Emperor Constantine the Great, in the matter of the return of Arius and his partisans from exile.

20. The praepositus was the chief of the imperial household and of the eunuchs. Especially enjoying Constantius's confidence was the eunuch Eusebius, an Arian.

21. In antiquity those who served at royal courts as guards at the bedchambers of queens and princesses were called eunuchs. For the most part, eunuchs were castrati. At the Byzantine court the office of eunuch was very honorable; they generally formed a class of courtiers and grandees, and had great influence over sovereigns and over the government of the country. Constantine the Great began to appoint them to lower posts and thereby limited their influence; but under Constantius the eunuchs acquired strong significance at court.

At last the emperor himself, seduced by Arian false wisdom, rose up against Christ, his Lord and Master, so that upon Him were fulfilled the words of the divine Jeremiah: "The pastors have forsaken Me" (Jer. 2:8).[22] Constantius commanded publicly that the Arian false teaching be confirmed, and that all bishops should think as he did, and he ordered that those who disobeyed be persuaded by threats.

In the midst of this great storm and confusion, the true pilots of the churches were the following chief pastors: Maximus of Jerusalem[23], Alexander of Constantinople, and Athanasius of Alexandria (of whom we are speaking), who, although he was in exile, did not give up the helm of the Church, confirming Orthodoxy by his word and his epistles. Eusebius of Nicomedia, however, with his like-minded companions, spread his heretical false teaching with all their might, raising a struggle against the Orthodox and oppressing the Church of Christ. They armed themselves against her especially after the terrible death of Arius. The crafty and treacherous Eusebius brought Arius into Constantinople with great honor, to the great seduction and scandal of the faithful, for at that time there was no one there to withstand Arius, since many of the authorities had joined him, Athanasius being in exile. But God, who wisely orders all things from on high, frustrated their plans by cutting short the malice and life of Arius. And with what force his tongue had poured out blasphemous words against Orthodoxy during his life, with the same, and even greater, force his belly burst, his entrails fell out, and he, the wretch, lay wallowing in his blood in unclean places[686].

22. The verse in full reads thus: "The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew Me not: the pastors also transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit." Here, in the name of the Lord, the prophet Jeremiah rebukes the priests, rulers and prophets of Israel, who forgot the mercies of God and turned away from Him. The biographer of St. Athanasius of Alexandria, in a figurative sense, applies these words to Constantius and the Arianizing bishops, who had departed from the true faith in Christ God.

23. St. Maximus III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, occupied the see from 333 to 350. He suffered for the name of Christ and was a confessor. When at the Council of Tyre the Arians demanded that the Orthodox bishops sign the lawless sentence against Athanasius, Paphnutius, Bishop of the city of Tais, in Upper Thebaid, a confessor who had suffered under Maximian II, took Maximus by the hand, led him out of the assembly and said: "It is unfitting for us, confessors, to take part in such a council." The memory of St. Maximus is celebrated in the Greek Church on November 17.

Thus was worthily executed judgment upon an unbridled tongue and an evil vessel filled with the stinking pus of heresy, which was Arius!

After this heresiarch had so terribly destroyed both soul and body, Eusebius and his fellow conspirators took upon themselves the whole labor of defending and spreading the heresy, and everywhere caused disturbance, having as zealous helpers the eunuchs, as it were their own hands. They especially tried to stop the mouth of Athanasius, who was in exile, so that he might not spread his epistles in defense of Orthodoxy. But God's Providence inclined to mercy the heart of the eldest son of Constantine the Great, likewise named Constantine[24], who was the first among the brothers both in years and by birthright. This last freed St. Athanasius from banishment and sent him with his own epistle to Alexandria, to his see. In this epistle it was written: "Constantine the Conqueror wishes rejoicing to the Church and people of Alexandria. I think there is none among you who does not know what has recently befallen the great preacher of Orthodoxy and teacher of the law of God, Athanasius: how a general struggle was raised against him by the enemies of the truth, and how he was bidden to remain with me in Gaul, that he might be able to withdraw for a time from the calamities that threatened him; but he was not condemned to perpetual exile. We treated him with all solicitude, taking care that no unforeseen unpleasantness should befall him, although he is truly patient as no other is; inflamed with zeal for God, he can easily bear every burden. Our father Constantine desired soon to restore him to the patriarchal throne, but, dying and not having been able to carry out his intention concerning him, he left this affair to me, his heir, bequeathing to me this last command concerning this man. Therefore we command you now to receive him with all honor and solemn welcome."

With this imperial epistle St. Athanasius reached Alexandria, and all the Orthodox joyfully greeted him[25]. But those who held to the Arian heresy began to hold malicious gatherings among themselves and again raised persecution against the hierarch and stirred up confusion

24. Constantine II, the eldest son of Constantine the Great; at the division of the empire, as emperor, he received the administration of Gaul and the western part of northern Africa.
25. This was at the end of 338.

among the people; they devised various pretexts to slander the saint: that he had returned to the patriarchal throne without a conciliar judgment and had entered the church of his own will[26]; they accused him also of being the cause of various disorders, murders and exiles, and brought against him other charges, old and new. At the same time the people, deeply infected with the Arian heresy, rose up against St. Athanasius; once a crowd surrounded the hierarch, abusing him with insulting words and raising their hands to tear him apart and kill him. Athanasius barely managed to save himself and to leave the city by secret ways. Meanwhile the Arian bishops, sending out letters everywhere, declared that Athanasius, lawfully deposed by a conciliar decision, had again taken the Alexandrian throne without a conciliar decision; at the same time they spread reports of the violence that had supposedly accompanied his return to Alexandria. Thus they closed to him access to the cities and churches in all lands. Meanwhile Constantine, the patron of Athanasius, was no more: he had been killed at Aquileia by soldiers[27]. The enemies of Athanasius took advantage of this and aroused such anger against the saint in the emperor Constantius, who favored them, that he promised property and honors to whoever should reveal where Athanasius was, if he was alive, or should bring to him the head of the slain hierarch. Athanasius, however, hid for a rather long time in a deep, waterless and dry ditch of an abandoned well, and no one knew of him except one God-loving man, who fed him and guarded him in that place[28]. Later, when some began to suspect that Athanasius was there, for they were searching for him

26. Athanasius's enemies appealed to the fact that by the decision of the Council of Tyre he had been deposed, and that he now occupied the see by the order of the secular authority, contrary to the church canons.

27. Aquileia was in antiquity a large and important city in Upper or Northern Italy, north of the Adriatic Sea. Here, in March 340, a civil battle took place between Constantine and Constans, in which the former was killed, and Constans became master of the whole West.

28. In his secret hiding-place Saint Athanasius wrote a powerful appeal to the bishops of all the churches, in which he depicted all the horrors of impiety that had taken place before his eyes, and entreated them to bring aid to the glorious Church of Alexandria, trampled underfoot by heretics. But the pious pastors could only weep and ask for help from on high, so great was the confusion caused in Alexandria by the onrushing horde of Arians, and there was no one to whom to turn for help, since the lawlessness of the heretics enjoyed the full protection of the Emperor Constantius.

everywhere and questioning about him, and were already intending to seize him one morning, he, guided by Divine Providence, came out of the ditch at night and moved to another place; fearing that he would be found and seized there too, he withdrew from the eastern lands into the regions of the western empire.

At that time in the west, after the death of Constantine II, reigned the youngest of the sons of Constantine the Great, Constans. Having reached Europe, the blessed Athanasius went to Rome, and, appearing before Pope Julius[29] and before Emperor Constans himself, related everything about himself in detail. Meanwhile at Antioch there was then taking place a council of Eastern bishops, gathered for the consecration of the church[30] which Constantine the Great had begun to build and which his son Constantius completed. For this all the Eastern bishops had assembled there, among whom were not a few Arians. These latter, enjoying the protection of the emperor, convened a lawless council and again declared St. Athanasius, who was then in the west, deposed, writing to the pope with slanders against Athanasius, urging the pope too to recognize him as deposed. For the Alexandrian patriarchal throne they first elected Eusebius of Emesa[31], distinguished for eloquence, but he refused, knowing how deeply the Alexandrians honored their chief pastor Athanasius. Then they set up on the Alexandrian patriarchal throne a certain Gregory, a native of Cappadocia[32]; but he had

29. Saint Julius, Pope of Rome, a zealous defender of Orthodoxy against the Arians and a patron of Athanasius, occupied the throne from 337 to 352.

30. The so-called Golden Church, magnificently founded by Constantine the Great and rebuilt by Constantius. Here the Council of Antioch was held in January 341. At the council there were present as many as ninety bishops. The Fathers of the council rejected the Symbol of the Ecumenical Council, and at the same time, disagreeing among themselves, issued one after another three of their own (semi-Arian) creeds, and then yet a fourth, and in none of them did they wish to include the expression that clearly defined Orthodoxy: consubstantial. Having decided the matter of faith in their own way, they then turned to the affairs of the Church of Alexandria.

31. Eusebius of Emesa was renowned for his education; he studied in Alexandria, and then under Eusebius of Caesarea. He is called "of Emesa" after the city (Emesa, a city in Syria, south of Antioch), in which he was bishop. He was a favorite of Constantius, whom he accompanied on his campaigns.

32. Gregory of Cappadocia (Cappadocia, an eastern region of Asia Minor) received his education in Alexandria and once enjoyed the favor of Saint Athanasius. Gregory was a man of coarse and violent character.

not yet reached Alexandria when Athanasius arrived there from Rome. This happened as follows.

Pope Julius, having carefully examined the calumnies brought against Athanasius, declared them false, and therefore sent him back to the Alexandrian throne together with his epistle, in which he sharply denounced, with threats, those who had dared to depose him. The saint was received by the Orthodox Alexandrians with great joy. His opponents, however, learning of this (their leader, Eusebius of Nicomedia, had by then already died[33]), were greatly dismayed and at once persuaded the emperor to send to Alexandria, together with Gregory, an army to install Gregory on the patriarchal throne. And so the emperor sent with the heretic Gregory, who had been elected to the patriarchal throne by heretics, a voivode named Sirianus with a multitude of armed soldiers, commanding him to put Athanasius to death and to install Gregory on the archiepiscopal throne. On one occasion, on the eve of a feast, while the All-night Vigil was being celebrated in the Alexandrian cathedral church and all the Orthodox were praying in the church with their pastor Athanasius and singing the ecclesiastical hymns, Sirianus suddenly burst in with armed soldiers. Going round the church, he sought Athanasius alone, to kill him. But the saint, shielded by the providence of God, secretly left the church, surrounded by the people, and since at that time the darkness of night had fallen, he passed unnoticed amid the general confusion and the multitude of people, thus escaping destruction, like a fish from the very midst of a net; after this he returned again to Rome. Afterwards the impious Gregory seized the Alexandrian throne like a predator. A great agitation arose among the people, so that the rebels even set fire to one church, called the Church of Dionysius.

Saint Athanasius remained in Rome for three years, enjoying the profound esteem of Emperor Constans and of Pope Julius. There he had as a friend Saint Paul, Archbishop of Constantinople, who had likewise been expelled from his throne by the impious heretics. At last, by the common agreement of both emperors, Constantius and Constans, a

33. Eusebius of Nicomedia died in 342.

council of Eastern and Western bishops was convened at Sardica[34] concerning the confession of faith, and also concerning the cases of Athanasius and Paul[35]. Of these there were more than three hundred Western bishops and a little more than seventy Eastern, among whom was the aforementioned Ischyras, by then already Bishop of Mareotis[36]. The bishops who had gathered from the churches of Asia[37] did not even want to meet with the Westerners until the latter had removed Paul and Athanasius from the council. The Western bishops would not even hear of this. Then the Eastern bishops set out on their return journey and, arriving at the Thracian city of Philippopolis[38], held there their own council, or, to put it better, an unlawful gathering, and openly anathematized the consubstantial faith; this impious decision they sent in writing to all the churches subject to them. Learning of this, the holy fathers gathered at Sardica first of all anathematized this blasphemous and heretical assembly and its impious confession[39]; then they deposed the calumniators of Athanasius from the hierarchical ranks they held, and, confirming the definition of faith composed at Nicaea, clearly and precisely confessed God the Son to be consubstantial with God the Father.

After all this, the Western emperor Constans, in a letter to his brother Constantius concerning Paul and Athanasius, besought him to

34. Sardica was located on the border of the domains of the two brothers, Constantius and Constans, in Illyricum—now Sofia, the capital of present-day Bulgaria.

35. Constantius consented to the convening of a council, yielding to the demand of his Orthodox brother, who had been asked to do so by the Eastern bishops, and who, deeply respecting Saint Athanasius, desired his vindication. The council took place in 344. It 1) confirmed the Nicene Symbol, 2) having examined the case, acquitted Athanasius, and 3) declared the leaders of Arianism deposed, forbade the Orthodox to have communion with them, and subjected the condemned to anathema.

36. Ischyras was appointed bishop by the Arians.

37. Of the Asian bishops, that is, the Eastern ones; the chief among them were Theodore of Heraclea, Narcissus of Neronias, Menophantus of Ephesus, Stephen of Antioch, Acacius of Caesarea, and George of Laodicea.

38. Philippopolis was a city in Thrace, to the southeast of Sardica. The Council of Philippopolis took place under the presidency of Stephen of Antioch. This council again condemned Athanasius, Paul of Constantinople, Julius of Rome, Protogenes of Sardica, and other Orthodox bishops. Constantius supported the decision of the Council of Philippopolis, and Athanasius, together with the other persecuted men, had to remain in exile. He withdrew to Naissus, in Dacia.

39. The Council of Philippopolis drew up a new creed, more Arian than the creeds of the Council of Antioch.

permit them to return to their thrones. When the latter kept postponing their return, Emperor Constans wrote to him again, in sharper terms. "If you," he wrote, "do not willingly obey me, then even without your consent I shall set each of them on his throne, for in that case I shall march against you with armed force." Frightened by his brother's threat, Constantius received Paul, who had come first, and sent him back to his throne with honor. Then, through an epistle written in a spirit of gentleness, he summoned Saint Athanasius from Rome, and after a conversation with him he saw that this was a man very wise and divinely inspired. Marveling at the great wisdom of Athanasius, Constantius showed him great honor and restored him gloriously to the patriarchal throne; at the same time he wrote to the people of Alexandria and to all the bishops and princes in Egypt, to the augustal[40] Nestorius, and to the governors in the Thebaid and Libya[41], that they should receive Athanasius with great honor and respect. Furnished with the aforementioned imperial letter, the blessed one went through Syria and Palestine and visited the Holy City of Jerusalem, where he was received with love by the most holy Maximus the Confessor; they told each other of the sufferings and afflictions they had endured for Christ. Having convened the Eastern bishops who, earlier, out of fear of the Arians, had consented to his deposition, Athanasius brought them to unanimity and communion with himself, and they paid him due honor; and he, with joy, forgave them the sin they had committed against him. This was the third return of Saint Athanasius to the patriarchal throne after his three exiles[42]. And so, after countless labors, sorrows and illnesses, he at last rested a little and intended to spend the remainder of his time in relief from them and in peace. Meanwhile, new disturbances and cruel calamities were gathering over him. At this time the impious Magnentius, commander of the Roman troops, having formed a conspiracy with his fellow-conspirators, murdered Constans, his sovereign[43]. Then the Arians raised their heads and launched a

40. Augustalis was the imperial governor of a Roman province.
41. The Thebaid was the southern region of Egypt; Libya lay to the north of Africa, west of Egypt.
42. This was in 348.

fierce struggle against the Church of Christ. Against Athanasius the calumnies and persecutions began anew, and all the former evil was renewed. Imperial decrees and threats against Athanasius appeared again; again Athanasius had to endure flights and fears; again they sought him throughout the land and across the sea. The emperor sent to Alexandria, to occupy the patriarchal throne, George the Cappadocian[44], who, on arriving in Alexandria, shook Egypt, unsettled Palestine, and threw the whole East into confusion. Again were deposed from their thrones: Saint Maximus from the Jerusalem see, and Saint Paul from the Constantinopolitan. And concerning what was happening at this time in Alexandria[45], Saint Athanasius himself relates the following: "Again some, seeking to kill us," says Saint Athanasius, "came to Alexandria, and calamities ensued more cruel than the former ones. Soldiers suddenly surrounded the church, and instead of prayers there resounded lamentations, outcries and confusion; all this took place during Great Lent. Having seized the patriarchal throne, George of Cappadocia, chosen by the Macedonians and the Arians, increased the evil even more. After Pascha week, virgins were bound in chains, bishops were led away bound by the soldiers, the houses of orphans and widows were plundered, and in the city there was complete lawlessness. Christians went out of the city at night, houses were sealed; the clergy suffered for their brethren; all this was truly most grievous, but a far greater evil followed soon after. After Holy Pentecost the people fasted and gathered to pray at the tomb of the holy hieromartyr Peter, for all loathed George and avoided communion with him. Learning of this, the crafty George stirred up against them the stratelates[46] Sebastian, who adhered to the Manichaean heresy. Sebastian, with a multitude of soldiers armed with drawn swords, bows and arrows, burst

43. Magnentius incited Constans's army to revolt against him, and it overthrew him from the throne; Constans fled, but on the way was killed by Magnentius. This was in early 350.

44. This George was an uneducated man of coarse character who at first was a supplier of meat for the army. George was a false bishop for about four years (357–361), and during this time he caused much sorrow and oppression not only to the Church of Alexandria and the Orthodox population, but also to the pagan population.

45. This was during Athanasius's absence.

46. A stratilates was a military commander, a voivode.

into the church itself and fell upon the people present there, but found few praying, since most had withdrawn because of the late hour. To those who were in the church Sebastian caused the most cruel grief. He ordered an enormous bonfire to be kindled, and, placing the virgins near the fire, compelled them to confess the Arian heresy. But when Sebastian proved unable to force them to this, for he saw that they paid no attention at all either to the fire or to the threats, he stripped them and ordered them beaten without mercy, and their faces he cut with wounds to such a degree that, after a long time, their kinsfolk could scarcely recognize them. The men, who numbered forty, he subjected to a new torment: the tormentors subjected them to a dreadful flogging with the hard and thorny branches of a freshly cut date palm, and tore their shoulders so that in some cases the flesh had to be cut several times, because the thorns had pierced deep into it; others, unable to endure the pain, died of their wounds. All those virgins whom he had tormented with especial cruelty he sent into imprisonment in the great Oasis[47], and the dead bodies of the slain he did not allow either the Orthodox or their own people to take, but the soldiers concealed them unburied in one place, thinking that in this way such cruelty would remain unknown to anyone; thus they acted, being mad and deranged in mind. The Orthodox rejoiced over their martyrs for their steadfast confession of the Orthodox faith, but at the same time wept over the bodies, which lay — no one knew where. And through this the impiety and cruelty of the tormentors were the more exposed. Following this, bishops were exiled from Egypt and Libya: Ammonius, Moin, Gaius, Philo, Hermias, Paulinus, Psinosiris, Linamon, Agathon, Agamphas, Mark, another Ammonius and another Mark, Dracontius, Adelphius, Athenodorus, and the presbyters Hierax and Dioscorus; the persecutors oppressed them so cruelly that some died on the way and others in their places of confinement. To perpetual imprisonment the Arians condemned more than thirty bishops; for their malice, like that of Ahab[48], was so great

47. Oasis, or the Great Libyan Oasis, lies to the west of the Thebaid Desert, in the eastern part of the present-day Sahara—an ancient Greek colony that was often used as a place of exile.

48. Ahab was the eighth king of Israel, who at the urging of his wife Jezebel, a wicked, domineering, and depraved woman, spread idolatry among the Israelites and with malice persecuted the servants of the true God.

that, had it been possible, they would gladly have driven out and destroyed the truth from the face of the whole earth."

Meanwhile Emperor Constantius, after the death of his brother, Emperor Constans, having defeated Magnentius, came to hold both the East and the West.[49] Both in the East and in the West he began to spread the Arian heresy, inducing the Western bishops by every means: by fear, by flattery, by gifts, and by various enticements, to consent to the Arian definition of the faith and to accept their heresy. To this end he commanded that a council be assembled in the Italian city of Mediolanum[50] for the deposition of Athanasius; he thought that Arianism would be firmly established only when Athanasius had been completely deposed and destroyed from among the living. The Emperor then had many like-minded men: some accepted Arianism out of fear, others were drawn by imperial honors. Those who were steadfast in Orthodoxy withdrew from this lawless council.[51] Such were Eusebius, Bishop of Vercellae; Dionysius of Mediolanum; Rhodanus of Tolosa; Paulinus of Trivirum; and Lucifer of Calaris.[52] They did not sign the decree for the deposition of Athanasius, considering his deposition a rejection of the true faith and of the truth. As a result they were sent into exile at Ariminum.[53] The other bishops gathered at Mediolanum condemned Athanasius to deposition. It is necessary to say here how Eusebius and

49. For three and a half years after the death of Constans, Magnentius retained the title of Caesar in the West. Constantius scattered his adherents, whereupon Magnentius ended his life by suicide. The whole empire was afterwards united under the leadership of Constantius, until his death, which followed in 361.

50. Mediolanum was an ancient city of Cisalpine Gaul, or present-day northern Italy, a center of the flourishing of the sciences and arts; today it is Milan, the chief flourishing city of the Italian region of Lombardy, with a numerous population.

51. The council was convened at the request of the Roman pope, Saint Liberius, the successor of Julius, in 355. As many as 300 Western bishops were present at it. The Arians demanded at it the condemnation of Athanasius, but the Western bishops insisted on the original signing of the Nicene Symbol. Then Constantius, who had been listening to all the deliberations of the Fathers of the council from an adjoining room, entered the council hall with a sword in his hands and said that he himself accused Athanasius. Those who refused to sign the condemnation of Athanasius were threatened with exile, so some signed, while the dissenters were sent into exile.

52. Vercelli was a city in northwestern Italy; Tolosa was on the Garonne river, in southern France; Trier (otherwise Treves or Trivirium) was on the Moselle river, in eastern France; Calaris was on the island of Sardinia (in the Mediterranean Sea).

53. Ariminum, now Rimini, the most ancient flourishing city of Umbria, in northeastern Italy, on the shore of the Adriatic Sea.

Dionysius did not sign the decree of this lawless council. When the Arian bishops assembled at Mediolanum, and without waiting for the other, Orthodox bishops, formed a council and signed their names beneath the decree for the deposition of Athanasius, Dionysius of Mediolanum, recently raised to the episcopal rank and still young in years, was persuaded by the Arian bishops to sign the conciliar decree; for he was ashamed before so many dignified bishops who had labored much, and he signed his name with them against his will. Afterward the Orthodox Bishop of Vercellae, Eusebius, venerable in years, came to Mediolanum (when that lawless council had already concluded with the signing of names) and asked Dionysius what had taken place at the council. Dionysius, recounting the lawless judgment carried out against St. Athanasius, confessed with great regret and repentance his transgression, how he had been deceived and had signed his consent to the deposition of Athanasius. The blessed Eusebius rebuked him as a father rebukes a son; for Dionysius regarded Eusebius as a spiritual father, partly on account of his advanced age and partly because he had already been a bishop for many years; moreover, by rank the Bishop of Vercellae stood above the Bishop of Mediolanum.[54] Seeing Dionysius' heartfelt repentance, Eusebius bade him not to grieve: "I know," he said, "what I must do so that your name may be erased from among theirs." And this is what happened.

The Arian bishops, learning of Eusebius' arrival, summoned him to their assembly and, showing him the condemnation of Athanasius for deposition, with their names signed to it, wished him also to sign his name to the decree. Eusebius, pretending to agree with their council, and as if desiring to sign, took the paper and began to read the names of the bishops who had signed. Reaching the name of Dionysius, he exclaimed, as if offended:

"Where shall I sign my name? Beneath Dionysius'? In no case! Let Dionysius not be above me! You say that the Son of God cannot be equal to God the Father: why, then, have you preferred my son to me?"

And the old man refused to sign until the name of Dionysius had been erased from the higher place. The Arian bishops, earnestly desir-

ing Eusebius' signature and wishing to pacify him, ordered that the name of Dionysius be erased. Dionysius, with his own hand, erased his signature from the paper, as though yielding the higher place to the senior bishop, Eusebius of Vercellae, and as if he himself intended to sign beneath him. When Dionysius' name had been erased, so that not even a trace of the letters remained, the blessed Eusebius ceased his feigned agreement with the Arian council and openly confessed the truth, mocking the Arians.

"I will not defile myself with your iniquities," he said, "nor will I permit my son Dionysius to share in your impiety; for it is unlawful to sign the lawless condemnation and deposition of an innocent hierarch, and this is forbidden by the law of God and the canons of the Church. Let it be known to all that Eusebius and Dionysius will no longer sign your condemnation, which is filled with malice and lawlessness. Thanks be to God, who has delivered Dionysius from complicity with you, and has taught us how to erase from among your names the name that was unlawfully signed."

The Arians, seeing themselves mocked by Eusebius and Dionysius, laid hands on them to do them violence, and, insulting them with many abusive words, sent both into confinement, each separately; and they so oppressed the blessed Eusebius in confinement that he died there in suffering. Hearing of this, and learning that the soldiers of the eparch were coming by imperial command to seize him, St. Athanasius, admonished by a certain divine appearance, went out of the episcopal residence at midnight and hid himself at the house of a virtuous maiden, who had been dedicated to God and lived as a true servant of Christ. He remained hidden there until the death of Emperor Constantius, and no one knew anything of him at all except God and that one maiden, who herself attended him and brought him from others the books he requested; during his stay there Athanasius wrote many works against the heretics.[718]

Meanwhile the people of Alexandria were seeking their shepherd, St. Athanasius, searching for him everywhere; all grieved greatly for

54. That is, the episcopal see of Vercelli was considered hierarchically higher than that of Milan.

him and sought him with such zeal that each was ready to give his life gladly for finding him, and the holy Church was oppressed by deep sorrow. The heresy of Arius, meanwhile, greatly increased not only in the East but also in the West. By imperial decree in Italy and throughout the West, those bishops who would not consent to sign the "heteroousian" doctrine, the heretical teaching that the Son of God is of a different essence from the Father, were deposed from their thrones. At that time St. Liberius, Pope of Rome, the successor of the blessed Julius and heir of St. Silvester, was exiled from the Roman throne for his Orthodoxy; in his place a certain man named Felix was chosen from among the heretics.[55] After the holy Church had been oppressed and persecuted for a long time on every side, the death of Emperor Constantius drew near. Between Cappadocia and Cilicia, in a place called "the Springs of Mopsus," he lost both his kingdom and his life.[56] Likewise the false bishop of Alexandria, set up by the heretics, was overtaken by the judgment of God, "and the ungodly shall perish with a noise," for he was killed by the pagan populace, who rose in revolt over a place in Alexandria that belonged to him and which George wished to take away.[57]

After the death of Constantius, Julian ascended the imperial throne;[58] he set about annulling the statutes and laws of Constantius and recalled all from exile. Athanasius learned of this as well, but he feared lest the Arians might draw Julian into their impiety (at that time Julian's apostasy and complete renunciation of Christ had not yet become manifest). Nevertheless St. Athanasius, in the depths of night, went out from the aforementioned house of the maiden in which he had been hiding, and appeared in the midst of the Church of Alexandria. Who could depict the joy that seized all the Orthodox, how from every

55. Saint Sylvester governed the Church from 314 to 335 (his commemoration is on January 2). His immediate successor was Saint Mark (336), and after him Saint Julius (337–362), defender of Athanasius and a strict zealot of Orthodoxy, and finally Saint Liberius (352–366). Felix II occupied the see after the removal of Liberius by the emperor (355–356), and simultaneously with him—for which reason he is otherwise called an antipope.

56. In the southeastern part of Asia Minor. Constantius died on his return from the East, after his struggle with the Persian king Sapor, on 3 November 361.

57. This was in December 361.

58. Julian the Apostate, nephew of Constantine the Great.

side they flocked together to see him, with what great delight the clergy and citizens and the whole people gazed upon him and embraced him with love! His arrival roused courage in the Orthodox, and they immediately expelled the Arians from Alexandria, entrusting the city and themselves to Athanasius, their shepherd and teacher.

Meanwhile the lawless Julian, formerly a secret pagan, now openly showed his apostasy. Having established himself on the throne, he renounced Christ before all, blasphemed His most holy Name, bowed down to idols, erected pagan shrines everywhere, and commanded that abominable sacrifices be offered to the impious gods: and altars were set up everywhere, a stench and smoke spread abroad, animals were slaughtered, and their blood was poured out. Rebuked by the great pillars and teachers of the Church, Julian raised a cruel persecution against the Church, and at the very beginning of the persecution he armed himself against St. Athanasius. When the emperor took counsel with his like-minded men and his wise sorcerers, and also asked magicians and enchanters how to eradicate Christianity from the face of the earth, it occurred to all that Athanasius must be removed and destroyed from the face of the earth. They reasoned thus: "If the foundation is overthrown, then it will be easy to ruin the remaining parts of the Christian faith separately." A lawless trial of Athanasius was again assembled, again troops were sent to Alexandria, and again the city was thrown into confusion. The Church was surrounded and shaken by armed soldiers, but they sought only Athanasius, to kill him. He, as before, shielded by the providence of God, passed through the crowd, escaped the hands of those seeking him, and by night reached the river Nile. When the saint boarded a ship with the intention of sailing to the Thebaid, those who loved him overtook him and said with tears:

"Where are you going again, Father? Whom are you leaving us to, like sheep without a shepherd?"

The saint answered:

"Do not weep, children, for this tumult which we now see will soon come to an end."

Having said this, he set out on his voyage. Meanwhile, one of the military commanders was hurrying after him; the tyrant[59] had ordered him to kill Athanasius at once, as soon as he overtook him. When one of those with Athanasius noticed from afar the commander who was sailing behind the ship and was already catching up with them, and recognized him well, he began to urge his rowers to row faster, so as to escape from the pursuers. But St. Athanasius, after waiting a little and foreseeing what was to befall him, ordered the rowers to turn the ship back toward Alexandria. When they hesitated over this and feared to carry out Athanasius' command, he bade them take courage. Then, turning the ship to the right, they sailed toward Alexandria straight toward the persecutors; when they drew near to them, the eyes of the barbarians were darkened as if by mist, so that, seeing, they did not see, and they sailed past. Athanasius then asked them:

"Whom are you seeking?"

They answered:

"We are seeking Athanasius. Have you not seen him anywhere?"

"He is sailing," answered Athanasius, "a little ahead of you, as though fleeing from some pursuers. Hurry, and you will soon overtake him."

Thus the saint escaped from the hands of his murderers. Arriving at Alexandria, he entered the city, and all the faithful rejoiced at his return; yet he remained in hiding until the death of Julian[60]. When, soon after that, the impious emperor perished, Jovian, who was a pious Christian, ascended the imperial throne. Once again Athanasius sat fearlessly upon his throne, governing the Church with care. But Jovian also reigned briefly, only seven months,[61] and died in Galatia. Valens,[62] infected with the Arian heresy, ascended the throne. Once again calamities fell upon the Church. The impious emperor, upon assuming power, was concerned not with the common peace or with victories over en-

59. That is, the Emperor Julian.
60. Julian was killed during a battle with the Persians on 26 June 363.
61. Jovian died on 17 February 364.
62. After Jovian's death, on 26 February the army elected as his successor Valentinian, who a month later gave the eastern half of the empire to his brother Valens, a zealous Arian. Valens reigned from 364 to 378.

emies, but began anew to strive to spread and establish Arianism. He deposed from their sees the Orthodox bishops who would not consent to his heresy. In this way he first drove out St. Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch.[63] When this internal struggle, oppressing the Church of Christ everywhere, reached Alexandria, and by the command of the eparch soldiers were to take St. Athanasius into custody, the blessed one secretly left the city, and, hiding in a family tomb, remained there for four months, and no one knew where he was. Then all Alexandria, grieving and lamenting St. Athanasius, raised a great tumult, troubled by such great and such numerous sorrows from the emperors. The Alexandrians were already ready to break away from Valens and had prepared arms for revolt.

Learning of this, the emperor, fearing their defection, their courage, and civil war, permitted Athanasius, though against his own wishes, to govern the Alexandrian Church fearlessly. Thus Athanasius, the aged warrior of Christ, after long labors and many exploits on behalf of Orthodoxy, having lived briefly in quiet and peace in his see just before his own end, fell asleep in the Lord[64] and was joined to his fathers, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, like whom he had struggled on earth. He had served as bishop for forty-seven years,[65] and he left as his successor on the Alexandrian see Peter,[66] his blessed friend and sharer in all his sorrows. He himself departed to receive the bright crowns and the recompense of ineffable blessings from Christ the Lord, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory and dominion, honor and worship, now and always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 3:

Thou wast a pillar of Orthodoxy, confirming the Church by divine dogmas, O hierarch Athanasius; for by proclaiming the Son

63. Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch, occupied the see from 358 to 381. He was a defender of Orthodoxy, for which, through the intrigues of the Arians, he was several times removed from the see.
64. Saint Athanasius the Great reposed on 2 May 373.
65. Of these he spent more than 20 years in exile.
66. Peter II, Patriarch of Alexandria, governed the Church from 373 to 380.

consubstantial with the Father, thou didst put Arius to shame. O Venerable Father, entreat Christ God that He grant us great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having planted the teachings of Orthodoxy, thou didst cut down the thorns of blasphemy, and by the rain of the Spirit thou didst multiply the seed of faith, O Venerable One. Wherefore we sing thy praises, O Athanasius.

* * *

NOTES

660. Alexandria, Athanasius' birthplace, afforded him many means for the education of his mind, and he acquired diverse knowledge: he studied law, became acquainted with the works of the pagan sages and poets of Greece, and in a word, in the expression of St. Athanasius' biographer, studied the "circle of sciences," that is, in the sense of the Alexandrian scholars; but he devoted little time to this, as St. Gregory the Theologian testifies. The main attention, however, he directed to the study of Holy Scripture under the guidance of experienced teachers; and St. Athanasius so studied all the books of the Old and New Testaments as no one else had studied even one. As may be supposed from one of St. Athanasius' earliest writings, his teachers were those of the Catechetical School in Alexandria. Athanasius' intellectual education was completed in the company of ascetics, whom he loved and with whom he sought occasions to become acquainted; he often saw St. Anthony the Great, and Athanasius himself was counted among the ascetics for his austere life.

662. The First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (a city in Bithynia, in the northwestern part of Asia Minor) took place in 325. At it the heresy of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, was exposed and condemned; he taught that the Son of God is not eternally begotten of the essence of God the Father, but was created by Him out of non-being in time, is not consubstantial with Him, and is not equal in honor; in this heresy was hidden a decisive denial of the Divinity of Jesus Christ and of our redemption by Him, in short, the overthrow of all Christianity. When the impiety of Arius was revealed, Athanasius took an active part in the struggle of St. Alexander, Archbishop of Alexandria, against Arius, and thereby incurred the enmity of the Arians. This was already before the Ecumenical Council; and at the Council of Nicaea St. Athanasius, then in the rank of archdeacon of the Alexandrian Church and accompanying St. Alexander to the Council, victoriously refuted Arius, to the consolation of the fathers of the Council.

664. At the First Ecumenical Council the champions of error, lacking truth on their side, thought to help themselves by guile, proposing to the other members of the Council a creed in which the indefiniteness of the expressions concerning the Son of God gave

room for the Arians' re-interpretations. But the holy fathers, confessing the Son of God as begotten "of the essence of the Father" and "consubstantial with the Father," included these expressions in their creed, and thereby established the ancient faith "in the true God from the true God." All members of the Council signed this creed, even those who held the Arian side, but insincerely; at the same time they read the Greek term expressing the consubstantiality of the Son of God, *homoousios*, as *homoiousios*, like-in-essence, or at least understood it in the latter sense. Eusebius also wished to present the matter to the emperor in such a way that between the Orthodox and the Arians there was only a misunderstanding and disputes over the different understanding of the terms and expressions of the Creed, and not over the essence of the faith, and that Arius was in complete agreement with the creed of the Council of Nicaea.

667. Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis (in the Thebaid), opposed the restoration to the Church of those who had fallen away from her during the persecution of Diocletian. St. Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, more lenient toward the lapsed, as supreme archpastor of all Egypt, excommunicated him for this. But Meletius, together with bishops of like mind, arrogated to himself the rights of chief regional bishop and did not acknowledge the authority of St. Peter's successors. At the First Ecumenical Council the schism of Meletius was condemned, but Meletian bishops continued to exist until the middle of the fifth century. In 326 Meletius and his partisans obstructed the election of St. Athanasius to the Alexandrian see, and when the election nevertheless took place against their wishes, they began to spread the slander that Athanasius had been elected illegally, by six or seven bishops, secretly from the others. The Meletians were thus opponents of Athanasius, on a par with the Arians, whose side they took.

677. From ancient times Egypt, renowned for its fertility, sent to Rome through Alexandria a fleet laden with grain for distribution to the needy people. When Constantine the Great founded in 330 a new capital at Byzantium, named after him Constantinople, and also Tsargrad, then, concerned to strengthen its population and the means of its support, he changed the destination of this fleet: the largesse of grain distribution was assigned to Constantinople. In all, up to 80,000 measures of grain were distributed. The enemies of Athanasius thus reckoned, by spreading a new slander and stirring the anger of the emperor, to produce at the same time an uprising of the people in the capital. The mob, dissatisfied with Athanasius, might cause a riot during it, and, as the bishops hostile to Athanasius hoped, kill the holy man. "How can I do this (stop the transport of wheat)?" Athanasius objected to the new slander; "I am a private man and poor?" Eusebius of Nicomedia replied: "No, Athanasius is a powerful, rich man; he has enough for everything!"

686. The Greek church historians of the fifth century, Socrates and Sozomen, describe the death of Arius as follows. On the fateful morning, when, according to the command of the Emperor Constantine the Great, Arius was to be received into church communion, he, more haughty than usual and making various empty remarks, was on his way to the church, surrounded by the Eusebians who shared his views and by a curious, agitated crowd. But suddenly he was seized by a sudden attack of stomach pain and went to a privy behind Constantine's square. Soon afterward he fainted there, and together with

his excrement his bowels came out, with a prolapse of the intestines, liver and spleen and a copious flow of blood, so that he died almost immediately. Meanwhile those who accompanied him waited for him for a rather long time. Finally, going to him with the intention of calling him, they were struck by a terrible sight. Arius (he was then more than 80 years old) had burst open in the belly, and he lay, floating in his blood and presenting a horrifying spectacle. This terrible death of Arius involuntarily invited comparison with the death of Judas the traitor. It produced deep dejection in the ranks of his supporters and was naturally accepted by the Orthodox as the highest judgment upon his whole cause. And indeed, even if the death of Arius was natural, in any case it was a terrible, sudden death, and in it one cannot fail to see the higher judgment of God.

718. Saint Athanasius the Great was one of the most celebrated writers of the ancient Church. He was distinguished by a profound knowledge of Holy Scripture and by theological talent. Since he spent his whole life in struggle with the Arians, his writings also bear the imprint of this struggle and are directed chiefly against the Arians. The most important of Saint Athanasius's writings are the following: 1) four discourses against the Arians, in which Athanasius makes a complete refutation of all their objections; 2) the epistle to Epictetus, bishop of Corinth, on the divine and human nature in Jesus Christ; 3) four letters to Saint Serapion, bishop of Thmuis, in which he proves the Divinity of the Holy Spirit and His equality with the Father and the Son against the Macedonians, who taught that the Holy Spirit is a ministering creature, having no part in the Divinity and glory of the Father and the Son; 4) an epistle on the decisions of the Nicene Council in defense of consubstantiality; 5) the book On the Holy Spirit. In many of his writings Saint Athanasius described the disturbances and deeds of the Arians, accompanying the descriptions with remarks in favor of the truth of Christ; such, for example, is his history of the Arians, written for the monks. A lofty model of pastoral apology (defense) is Saint Athanasius's letter to the Emperor Constantius. Besides these, there are known writings of Saint Athanasius relating to the interpretation of Holy Scripture; among them, first of all, the paschal letter of Saint Athanasius attracts attention, very important in that it enumerates the books of the Old and New Testaments; the epistle to Marcellinus on the Psalms; there also remain brief fragments of his commentaries on the books of Job and the Song of Songs, and on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Among his moral writings are his epistle to Ammun, against those who disparage marriage, and his epistle to Rufinian on how to receive heretics into the Church. One of the most edifying writings of Saint Athanasius is the Life of Anthony the Great; Saint John Chrysostom advises every person, whatever his condition, to read the Life of Anthony.



THE NINETEENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 19

19 января

New Calendar January 19 · Old Calendar February 1 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Macarius of Egypt

Житие преподобного отца нашего Макария Египетского

Venerable Macarius of Egypt[1] was born in the land of Egypt, in a village called Ptinapor[2]. His parents bore the same names as the ancient holy forebears, Abraham and Sarah: for the father of Venerable Macarius was named Abraham (he was a presbyter), and Macarius's mother bore the name Sarah. Since the marriage of Macarius's parents was childless, they resolved to lead a life of chastity, yet without separating from one another, but continuing to live together. And so for many years Macarius's parents lived united in spiritual communion, and not in the flesh. They adorned their lives with abstinence and fasting, frequent prayers, unceasing vigils, generous almsgiving, hospitality to strangers, and many other virtues. At that time, by divine providence, barbarians attacked Egypt and plundered all the possessions of its inhabitants. Macarius's parents, along with the others, lost all their property, and therefore even wished to leave their homeland and depart for some other country. But one night, while Macarius's father, Abraham, was asleep, the holy Patriarch Abraham appeared to him in a dream, in the form of a venerable, white-haired old man dressed in shining garments. The holy Patriarch who appeared

1. The Venerable Macarius is called "of Egypt," to distinguish him from another ascetic of the same name and contemporary, who was born and spent most of his life in the city of Alexandria, and who is therefore called "of Alexandria" or "the city-dweller." For his holiness and wisdom, Macarius of Egypt is called "the Great." He was born about 301.

2. Ptinapor, or Pezhizhvir, was a village on the western bank of the Nile, within the bounds of the present Egyptian province of Menuf or Menoufiyeh, in the southern part of the Nile valley, in the so-called Lower Egypt. At present only ruins remain of it.

comforted Abraham in his misfortune, commanding him to put his trust in the Lord and not to leave the borders of Egypt, but to move to the village of Ptinapor, which lay in that same land. The Patriarch Abraham further foretold to Macarius's father that God would soon bless him with the birth of a son, just as He had once blessed the Patriarch Abraham himself when he was a sojourner in the land of Canaan, granting him a son in his old age (Gen. 21:2). When Presbyter Abraham awoke, he recounted to his wife Sarah the vision that had appeared to him, and they both gave praise to God. Immediately thereafter Abraham and Sarah moved to the village of Ptinapor, as they had been directed; it lay not far from the Nitrian Desert. All this came to pass by divine providence, so that the son to be born to them, Venerable Macarius, might love the desert life all the more, to which, as we shall see, he devoted himself with his whole soul. While Macarius's parents were living in the village of Ptinapor, it happened that Macarius's father, Abraham, fell so gravely ill that he was near death. One night, as he lay upon his sickbed, he saw in a dream that an Angel of the Lord came forth from the sanctuary in the church where Abraham served, and, drawing near to him, said:

"Abraham, Abraham! Rise from your bed."

Abraham answered the Angel:

"I am ill, lord, and therefore cannot rise."

Then the Angel took the sick man by the hand and said gently to him:

"God has had mercy on you, Abraham: He heals you of your illness and grants you His favor, for your wife Sarah shall bear a son, whose name shall be the same as blessedness. He shall be a dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, for he shall live on earth in the likeness of an Angel, and shall bring many to God."

After this vision Abraham awoke and found himself completely well. Filled with fear and joy, he immediately told his wife Sarah all that he had seen in the vision and all that the Angel had said to him. The truth of the vision was confirmed by his sudden recovery from his grave illness. And both of them, Abraham and Sarah, gave thanks to the most merciful Lord God. Soon afterwards Sarah conceived in her old age,

and when the appointed time had passed, she gave birth to a boy, whom they named Macarius, which means "blessed," and they enlightened him with holy Baptism.

When the youth Macarius reached maturity and had learned to understand Holy Scripture, his parents, as though forgetting what the Angel who had appeared to Abraham in the vision had foretold concerning him, wished Macarius to marry, though Macarius himself had no desire to do so. On the contrary, with all his strength he resisted his parents' entreaties, wishing to be betrothed to one incorruptible bride—the pure and spotless life of virginity. Nevertheless, submitting to his parents' will, Macarius obeyed them, placing himself wholly in the hands of the Lord and hoping that He would show him the path of life ahead. After the wedding feast, when the newlyweds had been led into the bridal chamber, Macarius feigned illness and did not touch his bride. From the depths of his heart he prayed to the one true God, placing his hope in Him, that the Lord might soon grant him leave to forsake worldly life and become a monk. Some days later, one of Macarius's relatives happened to set out for Mount Nitria[3], to bring back from there natron, which was found there in great abundance, and from this the mountain itself had taken the name "Nitria." At his parents' wish, Macarius went with him. When they came by the road to Lake Nitria, Macarius stepped away from his companions, wishing to rest a little from the journey, and fell asleep. And behold, in a dream a wondrous man appeared before him, shining with light, and said to Macarius:

"Macarius! Look upon these desert places and consider them attentively, for it is appointed for you to dwell here."

When Macarius awoke, he pondered what had been said to him in the vision and wondered what would become of him. At that time no one yet dwelt in the desert except Antony the Great and Paul of Thebes, a desert-dweller unknown to anyone, who struggled somewhere in the inner desert and had been seen only by Antony. When

3. The Desert of Nitria, which the blessed Jerome calls "the city of God" because of the holiness of the desert-dwellers who lived in it, was a vast desert bordering on Libya and Ethiopia. It took its name from a nearby mountain, where in the lakes there was a great quantity of natron, or saltpeter.

Macarius and his companions returned home after a three-day journey to Mount Nitria, he found his wife suffering from such a severe fever that she was already at the point of death. Soon she died before Macarius's eyes, departing for eternal life an immaculate virgin. Macarius gave thanks to God that He had deemed him worthy to witness his wife's death, and took this as a lesson, reflecting also upon his own death:

"Take heed to yourself, Macarius," he said, "and care for your soul, for you too must soon leave this earthly life."

From that time onward Macarius cared for nothing earthly, but remained continually in the church of the Lord, occupying himself with the reading of Holy Scripture. Seeing the manner of life he led, Macarius's parents no longer dared even to mention the name of a woman in his presence, but greatly rejoiced in his chaste life. Meanwhile, Abraham, Macarius's father, had grown old and fallen gravely ill, so that old age and illness robbed him of his sight. Blessed Macarius lovingly and diligently cared for his aged and sick father. Soon the old man departed to the Lord, and six months after his death Sarah, Macarius's mother, also fell asleep in the Lord. Venerable Macarius buried his parents with the customary Christian burial and became entirely free from the bonds of the flesh, distributing all his possessions to the poor after their burial, for the repose of the departed. Macarius was deeply grieved that now he had no one to whom he could disclose his secret and from whom he could receive good counsel for a God-pleasing life. Therefore he began earnestly to pray to God to send him a good guide, who would lead him on the path to salvation.

Some time later came the day of the commemoration of a certain saint, in whose honor Macarius, following the custom of his parents, wished to hold a feast. For this purpose he prepared a meal, intending it not so much for his neighbors as for the poor and needy. As he was present at the church service that day, Macarius saw a venerable old monk enter the church. The monk had long white hair and a beard reaching almost to his waist; his face was pale from prolonged fasting, and his whole appearance was comely, for the inner life of his soul, too, was adorned with the beauty of virtue. This elder lived not far from the

village of Ptinapor, in a desert place where he had a hermit's cell. He never showed himself to anyone, but on this day alone, by divine dispensation, he came to the church in the village to receive the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Macarius persuaded the monk to come to his house for the common meal. After the meal, when all those invited by Macarius had gone home, Macarius detained the monk and, leading him to a secluded place, fell at the elder's feet and said:

"Father! Allow me to come to you tomorrow morning, for I wish to ask your experienced counsel concerning the life I should lead from now on!"

"Come, child," the elder answered, "whenever you wish." With these words he departed from Macarius.

Early the next morning Macarius came to the elder and disclosed the secret of his heart: that he wished with all his strength to labor for the Lord. He earnestly begged the elder to teach him what he must do for the salvation of his soul. The elder kept Macarius with him throughout the day in soul-profiting conversation; and when the sun had set, they ate a little bread with salt, after which the elder commanded Macarius to lie down to sleep. The elder himself stood at prayer, directing his mind on high. When the deep night came, he entered into an ecstatic state and saw a company of monks, clad in white garments and having wings. They circled around the sleeping Macarius and said:

"Arise, Macarius, and begin the service that God has appointed for you; do not postpone it to another time, for the slothful acts unwisely, while the one who is not slothful earns also his wages."

The holy elder related this vision to Macarius the next morning, and in dismissing him gave him this admonition:

"Child! Whatever you intend to do, do it quickly, for God calls you to the salvation of many. Therefore from now on be not slothful in works pleasing to God!"

Having given Macarius further instruction concerning prayer, vigil and fasting, the elder dismissed him in peace. On returning home from the elder, the blessed Macarius distributed all his possessions to the poor, keeping nothing for himself, not even for his daily needs. Freed in

this way from all worldly cares, and having himself become as it were a beggar, Macarius came again to the elder, in order to surrender himself wholly to the service of the Lord, which he had long desired. The elder received the humble youth with love, showed him the beginnings of the silent monastic life, and taught him the customary monastic handiwork of weaving baskets. He also arranged for Macarius a separate cell not far from his own, for he himself loved to serve the Lord in solitude. Into the newly built cell he led his new disciple, once more giving him the necessary instruction concerning prayer, food and handiwork. Thus the blessed Macarius, with God's help, began to walk the difficult monastic path, and day by day he advanced in monastic ascetic labors. After some time it happened that a bishop of that country came to the village of Ptinapor, and having learned from the villagers of the ascetic labors of the blessed Macarius, he summoned him and, against his will, ordained him a cleric of the local church, although Macarius was still young. But St. Macarius, burdened by the office of clergyman, which disturbed his silent life, fled from there after a few days and settled in a desert place near another village. There a certain devout man of humble condition came to him and began to serve Macarius, selling his handiwork and buying him food with the money received. The enemy of all good, the devil, seeing that he was being overcome by the young monk, planned warfare against him and began to wage war against him vigorously, devising against him manifold snares, sometimes suggesting sinful thoughts to him, and sometimes attacking him in the form of various terrifying apparitions. When Macarius kept vigil at night, standing in prayer, the devil shook his cell to its very foundations, and at other times, transformed into a serpent, crawled upon the ground and rushed furiously at the saint. But the blessed Macarius, protecting himself by prayer and the sign of the Cross, regarded the snares of the devil as nothing, exclaiming, as David once did:

"Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flieth by day, nor of the pestilence that walketh in darkness" (Ps. 90:5).

Then the devil, unable to conquer the unconquerable, devised a new stratagem against him. One of the inhabitants of that village, near

which Macarius dwelt, had a daughter, a maiden, whom a youth, also living in that village, asked to have as his wife. But since the youth was very poor and of humble condition, the parents of the maiden would not consent to give their daughter in marriage to him, although the maiden herself loved that youth. After some time the maiden found herself with child. When she began to ask the youth what answer she should give her parents, he, instructed by the teacher of evil, the devil, said to her:

"Say that this was done to you by the hermit who lives near us."

The maiden obeyed the treacherous counsel and sharpened her tongue, like a serpent's, against the innocent monk. And when the parents noticed that the maiden was to become a mother, they began to question her with blows as to who was the author of her fall. The maiden then answered:

"Your hermit, whom you consider holy, is guilty of this. Once, when I was beyond the village and came to the place where he lives, the hermit met me on the road and did violence to me, and out of fear and shame I told no one of it until now."

Wounded by these words of the maiden as by arrows, her parents and relatives all together rushed to the dwelling of the saint with loud cries and abusive words. Dragging Macarius out of his cell, they beat him for a long time and then led him with them into the village. There, gathering a multitude of broken vessels and potsherds and binding them together with a rope, they hung them about the saint's neck and in this state led him through the whole village, mercilessly mocking him, inflicting blows upon him, pushing him, tearing him by the hair and striking him with their feet. At the same time they cried out:

"This monk has defiled our maiden, beat him, all of you!"

It happened at that time that a certain prudent man was passing by. Seeing what was taking place, he said to those who were beating the saint:

"How long will you go on beating an innocent wandering monk, without having truly learned whether the accusation against him is just? I think the devil is tempting you."

But they, not heeding the words of this man, continued to torment the saint. Meanwhile the man who, for God's sake, served Macarius by

selling his handiwork, walked at a distance from the saint and wept bitterly, unable either to prevent them from beating the saint or to rescue Macarius from the hands of those who "compassed him like dogs" (Ps. 21:17). And those who were beating the saint, turning round, rushed with abuse and threats also upon this man.

"See what that hermit whom you serve has done!" they cried, and continued to beat Macarius with sticks until they had satisfied their fury and anger; and Macarius was left half dead on the road. But the parents of the maiden would not even now leave him, but said:

"We will not let him go until he gives us sureties that he will provide for our daughter whom he has dishonored."

Scarcely recovering his breath, Macarius said to the man who served him:

"Friend! Be my surety."

The latter, ready even to die for the saint, stood surety for him, and taking Macarius, utterly exhausted from his wounds, with great effort led him to the cell. Having somewhat recovered from his wounds, Macarius began to labor more intensively at his handiwork, saying to himself:

"You now, Macarius, have a wife and children, and therefore you must work day and night, so as to provide them with necessary sustenance."

Making baskets, he sold them through the aforementioned man, and sent the money received to feed the maiden. When the time came for her to give birth, the just judgment of God overtook her for having slandered the innocent saint. For a long time she could not be delivered of her burden, and she suffered for many days and nights, weeping bitterly from very severe pain. Seeing her torments, her parents suffered together with her, and in bewilderment asked her:

"What has happened to you?"

Then the maiden, though she very much did not wish it, was compelled to reveal the truth. With loud lamentations she said:

"Woe is me, wretched one! I deserve a terrible punishment for having slandered the righteous man, saying that he was the author of my

fall. It was not he who is the cause of this, but the youth who wished to marry me."

Hearing the lamentations of the maiden, her parents and relatives who were near her were greatly struck by her words; a strong fear fell upon them, and they were deeply ashamed that they had dared so to insult the innocent monk, the servant of the Lord. In fear they cried out: "Woe to us!" Meanwhile the news of what had happened spread through the whole village, and all its inhabitants, young and old, gathered at the house where the maiden lived. Hearing there the maiden's lamentations that the hermit was innocent of her shame, the inhabitants greatly reproached themselves and sorrowed deeply that they had all beaten the saint without mercy. Having consulted with the maiden's parents, they all resolved to go to the Venerable Macarius and, weeping, to fall at his feet, asking his forgiveness, lest the wrath of God overtake them for having insulted an innocent man. Learning of this resolve, the man who served Macarius, the one who had stood surety for him, ran quickly to him and joyfully said:

"Rejoice, Father Macarius! Happy and joyful is this day for us, for God today has changed your former reproach and dishonor into glory. And I need no longer be surety for you, for you have proved to be a dispassionate, righteous and most glorious innocent sufferer. Today the judgment of God has overtaken her who unjustly accused you and slandered you, though you were innocent. She cannot be delivered of her burden, and she has confessed that it was not you who were the author of her fall, but a certain youth. Now all the inhabitants of the village, young and old, wish to come to you in repentance, to glorify God for your chastity and patience and to beg your forgiveness, lest some punishment from the Lord overtake them for having unjustly insulted you."

With sorrow the humble Macarius heard the words of this man: he desired neither honor nor glory from men, for it was far more pleasing to him to receive dishonor from men than honor. Therefore, when night came, he arose and withdrew from those parts, going first to Mount Nitria, where he had once had a vision in a dream. Having lived there for three years in one cave, he went to Anthony the Great, who was ascet-

ically striving in the desert of Pharan[4], for Macarius had long heard of him, even while he was still living in the world, and greatly desired to see him. Received with love by the Venerable Anthony, Macarius became his most sincere disciple and lived with him for a long time, receiving instruction for a life of perfect virtue and striving in all things to imitate his father. Then, at the counsel of the Venerable Anthony, Macarius withdrew to a solitary life in the desert of Scete[5], where he so shone forth in his ascetic labors and so advanced in the monastic life that he surpassed many of the brethren and received from them the name "youthful elder," since, despite his youth, he displayed a wholly aged way of life. Here Macarius had to contend with demons day and night. Sometimes the demons, appearing openly and transformed into various terrifying shapes, rushed upon the Venerable Father with fury; sometimes, in the form of armed warriors mounted on horses and riding into battle, they rushed upon the saint with great shouting, dreadful cries, and clamor, as though preparing to slay him. At other times the demons raised an invisible warfare against the saint, suggesting various passionate and impure thoughts to him, and by many cunning means striving to shake and destroy this firm wall built by Christ. Yet they could in no way overcome this valiant champion of the truth, who had God as his helper and, like David, cried out:

"Some with chariots (with weapons), some with horses, but I boast in the name of the Lord our God: they have been shaken and have fallen; with God I shall work valiantly" (Ps. 19:8–9; 59:14), and He will destroy all my enemies—the demons who so fiercely attack me.

Once at night, as Macarius lay sleeping, a multitude of demons surrounded him, awakened him, and said:

"Rise, Macarius, and sing with us, and do not sleep."

The Venerable Father, however, perceiving that this was a demonic temptation, did not rise, but lying down said to the demons:

4. Faran was an empty and mountainous land between Palestine, Egypt, Idumea and the Sinai peninsula.

5. The Desert of Scete lay at a distance of one day's journey (25–30 versts) from Mount Nitria, in the north-western part of Egypt. It was a waterless, stony desert, a favored place of the Egyptian desert-dwellers, renowned for the ascetical labors of the monks who lived there.

"Depart from Me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for your father the Devil" (Mt. 25:41), and for you as well.

But they said:

"Why do you insult us, Macarius, reviling us with such words?"

"Can it be," the Venerable Father replied, "that any demon would rouse anyone to prayer and the glorifying of God, or instruct him in a virtuous life?"

But the demons continued to call him to prayer, and for a long time could not accomplish this. Then, filled with rage and unable to bear Macarius's contempt, they came against him in great numbers and began to beat him. The saint, however, cried out to the Lord:

"Help me, O Christ my God, and You surround me with the joys of deliverance, for dogs have surrounded me and opened their mouths against me" (Ps. 31:7, 21:14, 17–18).

And suddenly the whole multitude of demons vanished with a great noise.

On another occasion it happened that Macarius gathered in the desert a quantity of palm branches for weaving baskets and was carrying them to his cell. On the way the devil met him with a sickle and wished to strike the saint, but could not. Then he said to Macarius:

"Macarius! Because of you I suffer great grief, for I am unable to overcome you. Behold, I do everything that you do. You fast, and I eat nothing at all; you keep vigil, and I never sleep. There is, however, one thing in which you surpass me."

"What is that?" the Venerable Father asked him.

"Your humility," the devil answered; "that is why I cannot contend with you."

When the Venerable Macarius reached the age of forty, he received from God the gift of working miracles, of prophecy, and authority over unclean spirits. At the same time he was ordained to the priesthood and made abbot (*abba*) of the monks dwelling in the skete. Of his food and drink, that is, of how he fasted, there is no need to say much, for even the most infirm of the brethren of his skete could not be reproached either for gluttony or for the use of any refined food. Though this was partly due to the lack of any refined food in those places, it was chiefly

because of the zeal of the monks dwelling there, who strove not only to imitate one another in asceticism but also to surpass one another. Concerning the other labors of Macarius, that heavenly man, various accounts circulate among the Fathers. It is related that the Venerable Father unceasingly raised his mind to heavenly things, and spent most of his time directing his mind toward God rather than toward the things of this world. Often Macarius visited his teacher Anthony the Great and received from him much instruction, conversing with him on spiritual matters. Together with two other disciples of the Venerable Anthony, Macarius was granted to be present at his blessed end, and as a most precious inheritance he received the staff of Anthony, with which the latter had supported his infirm body on the road, worn down by old age and ascetic labors. Together with this staff of Anthony, the Venerable Macarius received doubly the spirit of Anthony the Great, just as the prophet Elisha once received such a spirit after the prophet Elijah (4 Kgdms. 2:9). [6] By the power of this spirit Macarius worked many wondrous miracles, to the narration of which we now turn.

A certain impious Egyptian was inflamed with unlawful love for a beautiful married woman, but could in no way persuade her to be unfaithful to her husband, for she was chaste, virtuous, and loved her husband. Earnestly desiring to possess her, this Egyptian went to a sorcerer with a request that by his magical arts he would arrange that the woman should love him, or else that her husband should come to hate her and drive her from his house. The sorcerer, having received rich gifts from the Egyptian, employed his customary sorceries, attempting by the power of magical arts to seduce the chaste woman into an evil deed. Unable to bring the steadfast soul of the woman to sin, the sorcerer bewitched the eyes of all who looked upon her, so that she appeared to everyone not as a woman with human form, but as an animal with the appearance of a horse. The woman's husband, coming home, saw with horror a horse in place of his wife, and was greatly astonished that an animal lay on his bed. He spoke to her, but received no answer; he only noticed that she grew furious. Yet knowing that this

6. As is expressed in the service to the Venerable Macarius (see the monthly Menaion, the ikos after the 6th ode of the canon).

must be his wife, he understood that it had been done out of someone's malice; therefore he was deeply grieved and shed tears. Then he summoned presbyters to his house and showed them his wife. But they could not perceive that before them was a human being and not an animal, for their eyes too had been bewitched, and they saw an animal. Three days had now passed since the woman had come to appear to everyone as a horse. During this time she had taken no food, for she could eat neither hay, like an animal, nor bread, like a human being. Then her husband remembered the Venerable Macarius and resolved to lead her to the saint in the desert. Putting a bridle on her, as on an animal, he went to the dwelling of Macarius, leading his wife, who had the appearance of a horse. As he approached the cell of the Venerable Father, the monks standing near the cell were indignant at him for wishing to bring a horse into the monastery. But he said to them:

"I have come here so that this animal may, through the prayers of Saint Macarius, receive mercy from the Lord."

"But what evil has befallen her?" asked the monks.

"This animal you see," the man answered them, "is my wife. How she was turned into a horse I do not know. But three days have passed since this happened, and all this time she has taken no food whatever."

Having heard his account, the brethren at once hastened to the Venerable Macarius to tell him of this; but he had already received a revelation from God, and was praying for the woman. When the monks related to the saint what had happened and pointed to the animal brought in, the Venerable Father said to them:

"You yourselves are like animals, since your eyes see a bestial form. She, however, as she was created a woman, so she remains, and she has not changed her human nature, but only appears to your eyes, which have been deceived by magical enchantment, as an animal."

Then the Venerable Father blessed water and, with prayer, poured it upon the woman who had been brought in, and at once she received her former human appearance, so that all who looked upon her saw a woman with the face of a human being. Commanding that she be given food, the saint made her completely well. Then the husband, the wife, and all who witnessed this marvelous miracle gave thanks to God. Ma-

carius gave instruction to the healed woman that she should go as often as possible to the house of God and partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

"This happened to you," said the Venerable Father, "because five weeks have now passed since you partook of the Divine Mysteries."

Having given instruction to the husband and wife, the saint dismissed them in peace.

In a similar way Macarius healed also a certain maiden whom a sorcerer had transformed into a she-ass, and whom her parents had brought to the saint in that form. Another maiden, who was wholly festering with wounds and sores and swarming with worms, he made completely whole by anointing her with holy oil.

Very many different people came to the Venerable Macarius: some asked for his prayers, his blessing and his fatherly instruction, others sought healing from their infirmities. Because of this multitude of people coming to him, Macarius had little time to devote himself in solitude to contemplation of God. For this reason the Venerable Father dug a deep cave beneath his cell, about half a stadion[7] in length, and there he hid himself from those who constantly came to him and disturbed his contemplation and prayer.

The Venerable Macarius received from God such a grace-filled power that he could even raise the dead. Now there was a heretic named Hierakites, who taught that there would be no resurrection of the dead; he came from Egypt into the desert and led astray the minds of the brethren who dwelt there. Afterwards he came to the Venerable Macarius and, in the presence of many brethren, disputed with him about the faith. Being himself skilled in speech, he mocked the simplicity of the Venerable Father's words. The Venerable Macarius, noticing that the brethren were beginning to waver in the faith because of the words of this heretic, said to him:

"What profit is there in our contending in words, which serves more to unsettle those who listen to our dispute than to establish them in the faith? Let us go to the graves of our brethren who have fallen asleep in

7. A stadion equals 87½ of our sazhens.

the Lord, and whomsoever of us the Lord grants to raise a dead man, by that all shall be convinced that his faith is the right one and is attested by God Himself."

The brethren approved these words of the Venerable Father, and all went out to the cemetery. There the Venerable Macarius said to Hierakites that he should call forth from the grave some one of the brethren who had died. But Hierakites said to Macarius:

"You do it first, for it is you who proposed this trial."

Then the Venerable Macarius prostrated himself in prayer before the Lord, and after a long prayer he lifted up his eyes on high and cried out to the Lord:

"O Lord! Thou Thyself show now which of us two believes (in Thee) more rightly, and make it manifest by arranging that one of the dead lying here rise from the grave."

Having prayed thus, the Venerable Father called by name a monk who had been buried recently, and the dead man at once answered his voice from the grave. Then the monks hastily opened the tomb and found their brother risen. Unbinding the wrappings that were upon him, they led him out of the grave alive. At the sight of so wondrous a miracle, Hierakites was struck with such terror that he took to flight. All the monks pursued him as one pursues enemies, and drove him far beyond the borders of that land.

On another occasion the Venerable Macarius also raised another dead man, as the Abba Sisoes relates.

"I was," he recounts, "with the Venerable Macarius in the skete. It was then the season of the grain harvest. Seven of the brethren had hired themselves out for the harvest. During it a certain widow gleaned the ears of grain behind us, and all the while she wept. The Venerable Macarius, calling the owner of the field, asked him:

"What has happened to this woman, and why does she weep unceasingly?"

The owner of the field told the Venerable Father that the husband of that woman, having taken money from a certain man for safekeeping, had suddenly died without having told his wife where he had put what

he had taken. For this reason the creditor wishes to take this woman with her children into slavery. Then Macarius said to him:

"Tell the woman to come to us at the place where we rest at noon."

When she had done what the Venerable Father said and came to him, the Venerable Macarius asked her:

"Why do you weep unceasingly, woman?"

"Because," the widow answered, "my husband died suddenly, and shortly before his death he took gold from a certain man for safekeeping, and did not tell me where he had put the gold he had taken."

"Show us where your husband is buried," said Macarius.

Taking the brethren with him, the Venerable Father went to the place indicated. Coming to the grave of that widow's husband, the Venerable Father said to her:

"Go home, woman!"

Then, after praying, Macarius called out to the dead man, asking him where he had put the gold he had taken. Then the dead man answered from the grave:

"I hid it in my house, at the foot of my bed."

"Rest again," said Abba Macarius to him, "until the day of the general resurrection!"

The brethren, seeing such a miracle, fell at the feet of the Venerable Father from great fear. For the edification of the brethren the elder said:

"All this came about not for my sake, for I am nothing, but God worked this miracle for the sake of this widow and her children. Know then that God is gracious to a sinless soul, and whatever it asks of Him, it receives."

Then the Venerable Father went to the widow and showed her where the gold her husband had taken was hidden. She took the hidden treasure and gave it back to its owner, and in this way delivered both herself and her children from slavery. Hearing of so wondrous a miracle, all glorified God.

Rufinus the presbyter[8] relates yet another raising of a dead man by the Venerable Macarius, a third. "Once," he recounts, "an innocent man

was accused of a murder that had taken place in the places where the cell of the Venerable Father was. The accused man ran to the dwelling of Macarius, and there came after him those who wished to seize him as a murderer and hand him over to lawful judgment. He, however, swore and declared that he was innocent of the blood of the slain man, but the accusers strove to show him guilty. When both the accusers and the accused had argued for a long time, the Venerable Macarius asked:

"Where is the slain man buried?"

Having learned the place of burial, the Venerable Father rose and went there together with those who had come to him. After praying a long time on his knees over the grave, the Venerable Father said to the accusers who stood by:

"The Lord Himself will now show whether this man, whom you accuse of murder, is indeed guilty of it."

Then, calling out with a loud voice, Macarius named the slain man by name. And he answered from the grave at his call, and the Venerable Father asked him:

"By the faith of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I command you to answer us: is it by the man brought here that you were slain?"

At once the dead man answered from the grave in a clear voice that he had not been slain by this man, and that he was accused of the murder in vain. All who had come to the grave, struck by this wondrous miracle, fell to the ground. Then, falling at the feet of the Venerable Father, they earnestly begged him to ask the dead man a second time by whom he had been slain. But the Venerable Macarius answered them:

"I will not ask about this, for it is enough for me that I have saved an innocent man from perdition; as for the guilty, I will not hand them over to judgment."

Palladius, in the *Lausiac History*,[9] relates yet the following about the Venerable Macarius.

Once a youth possessed by a demon was brought to the Venerable Father by his mother. He was bound, and two strong men held him. A

demon of gluttony had entered into him: he would eat three enormous loaves and drink a large vessel of water, and vomit all of it out again, as though converting all that he had eaten and drunk into steam or smoke. And food and drink were consumed within him as if by fire. If his mother did not allow him to eat and drink so much, he would even consume his own excrement. She, weeping, begged the Venerable Macarius to have mercy on her son and to heal him of so terrible a possession. The Venerable Father began to pray fervently to the Lord for the youth, and after two days the youth grew easier and began to ask less for food and drink. Then the Venerable Father asked the youth's mother:

"How much do you wish your son to eat?"

"Ten litrai[10] of bread," the woman answered.

But the Venerable Father said to her reproachfully:

"Why do you desire so much, woman?"

After a seven-day fast and fervent prayer to God, the Venerable Father cast the demon out of the youth, and through the prayers of the Venerable Father the youth began to be satisfied with three litrai of bread a day. Giving the youth the instruction to pass his life not in idleness but to live by the labor of his hands, the Venerable Father, by the grace of God, having fully healed him, delivered him to his mother and dismissed both of them in peace.

The Prologue relates yet the following about the Venerable Macarius. Once the Venerable Father was on a journey, and when night overtook him, he entered a pagan cemetery to spend the night there. Finding there an old bone of a dead pagan, the Venerable Father placed it

9. Palladius of Helenopolis (368–430), a disciple of the Venerable Dorotheus, a native of Gaul, arrived in Alexandria in 388, whence he afterwards withdrew into the nearby desert, where the Venerable Dorotheus also labored, and later moved to Bethlehem. In 390 he was chosen bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia, in Asia Minor. Afterwards the Emperor Arcadius exiled him, as a supporter of St. John Chrysostom, to Upper Egypt, from where in 408 he was transferred to Antinoe, and in 412 returned to his see at Helenopolis. At the request of Lausus, prefect of Cappadocia, in 420 he compiled a collection of lives of the saints and accounts about them, which he named in his honor the *Lausaikon*. Because of the edifying and instructive character of this collection, the Church Typikon prescribes readings from it at Matins during holy Great Lent.

8. Rufinus, presbyter of Aquileia, was born about 345 and died in 410; he was a church writer. Of his works the following are known: *History of Monasticism*, *Church History*, and *Apologies of St. Jerome* (2 books).

10. A litra was a pound, a Byzantine unit of weight equal to 72 zolotniks.

under his head. The demons, seeing such boldness on the part of Macarius, rose up against him, and wishing to terrify him, began to cry out, calling the bone by a woman's name:

"Go and wash yourself in the bath."

To this summons answered the demon who was in the dead bone which the Venerable Macarius had placed under his head.

"I have a stranger above me," he said, "and therefore I cannot come."

The Venerable Father was not dismayed by these diabolical wiles, but boldly began to strike the bone he had taken, saying:

"Arise and go, if you can."

As soon as he uttered these words, the demons cried out with loud voices and shouted to him:

"In everything you overcome us, Macarius," and they withdrew from the Venerable Father, put to shame.

On another occasion the Venerable Macarius was walking through the desert and found a dried human skull lying on the ground. Turning it with his staff, the Venerable Father heard, as it seemed, some sound from it. Then Macarius asked the skull:

"Who are you?"

"I," it answered, "was the chief of the pagan priests who dwelt in this place. When you, Abba Macarius, filled with the Spirit of God, having compassion on those who are in torments in hell, pray for us, we then receive some relief."

"What relief do you receive," asked Macarius, "and what are your torments? Tell me."

"As far as the heaven is distant from the earth," the skull answered with a groan, "so great is the fire in the midst of which we are, scorched on every side from head to foot. Moreover, we cannot see one another's faces. But when you pray for us, we see each other a little, and this brings us some consolation."

Hearing such an answer, the Venerable Father wept and said:

"Cursed be the day on which man transgressed the Divine commandments."

And again he asked the skull:

"Are there any other torments more grievous than yours?"

"Far beneath us, much deeper down, there are many others," the skull answered.

"Who are they that are in those more grievous torments?" asked Macarius.

"We who did not know God," answered the skull, "although we still feel a little of the mercy of God. But those who knew the name of God, yet rejected Him and did not keep His commandments, are tormented far beneath us with much heavier and more grievous torments."

After this the Venerable Macarius took that skull, buried it in the earth, and withdrew from that place.

The Venerable Macarius, Rufinus further relates concerning him, lived in the great desert, having a cell there; his monastery was situated lower down in another desert, and in it there were many brethren. Once Macarius was sitting on the road leading to the monastery. Suddenly he sees the devil coming in human form, clothed in a shaggy garment and hung all over with gourds. Macarius asked him:

"Where are you going, breather of malice?"

"I am going to tempt the brethren," the other answered.

"Why do you carry those gourds hung upon you?" asked Macarius.

"I am carrying," answered the devil, "food for the brethren."

"Is there food in all the gourds?" asked the Venerable Father.

"In all of them," answered the devil. "If anyone does not like one kind, I offer another, a third, and so on, so that each may taste at least one."

Having said this, the devil withdrew.

The Venerable Father, however, remained on the road, wishing to see the devil's return. Seeing that he was returning, Macarius asked:

"Did things go well at the monastery?"

"Badly," answered the devil. "And how could I have succeeded?"

"Why so?" asked the Venerable Father.

"Because all the monks have risen up against me," answered the devil, "and no one has received me."

"Do you not have a single monk who obeys you?" Macarius asked again.

"I have only one," answered the devil, "who obeys me. When I come to him, he whirls around me like a top."

"What is his name?" asked the Venerable Father.

"Theopemptus!" answered the devil; and, having said this, he withdrew.

Then Abba Macarius rose and went to the distant desert, to the monastery mentioned. The brethren, hearing that the Venerable Father was coming to them, went out to meet him with palm branches, and each of them prepared his cell, thinking that the Venerable Father would wish to stay with him. But Macarius asked the monks:

"Which of you is called Theopemptus?"

When Theopemptus was pointed out to him, he went into his cell. The other received the Venerable Father with great joy. Being left alone with Theopemptus, the Venerable Macarius asked him:

"How are you getting on, brother?"

"Well," answered he, "by your prayers, Father!"

"Are you not tempted," asked the Venerable Father, "by any sinful thoughts?"

Ashamed to disclose his sinful thoughts, the monk answered:

"No! Now nothing tempts me."

Then the Venerable Macarius said with a sigh:

"For so many years now I have struggled in fasting and prayer, so that everyone honors me, yet, despite my old age, the demon of lust tempts me sorely."

To this Theopemptus said:

"Indeed, Father, I too am sorely seized by the spirit of lust."

In the same way the Venerable Father questioned the monk also about other sins troubling his soul, until the other had confessed to him all his transgressions. After this the Venerable Father asked the monk:

"How long do you fast?"

"Until the ninth hour," the other answered.

"Fast until evening," said the Venerable Father, "and instruct yourself from the Holy Gospel and from other holy books, so that you may always be exercised in meditation on God. If any sinful thoughts assail

you, struggle against them, never let your mind descend downward, but always direct your mind upward, and the Lord will help you."

Having thus strengthened Theopemptus, the Venerable Father returned to his desert. There, sitting by the road, he again saw the devil going to the monastery. The Venerable Father asked him:

"Where are you going?"

"I am going to tempt the brethren," answered the devil.

And, having said so, he went on. When he returned, the Venerable Father asked him:

"How did you find the brethren?"

"Now they have all risen up against me," answered the devil, "even the one who was formerly my friend and always obeyed me; and now he too, I know not by whom, has been corrupted and does not obey me at all. On the contrary, he now rises up against me more than all the other monks. And I have now sworn never again to go to that monastery, unless after a long time."

Having said this, the devil withdrew. And the Venerable Macarius returned to his cell.

Once two wanderers came to the Venerable Macarius at the skete, one with a beard, the other younger, having only a mustache. The newcomers asked the Venerable Father:

"Where is the cell of Abba Macarius?"

"What do you want from him?" the Venerable Father asked them.

They answered:

"We have heard much about him and his life from the elders of the skete, and we have come to see him."

Then the Venerable Father said to them:

"It is I myself."

They, bowing down to the ground before him, said:

"We would like to settle here."

The Venerable Father, seeing that they were still young and people of means, answered them:

"You will not be able to live here."

To this the younger objected:

"If you do not allow us to stay here, we will go to another place."

The Venerable Macarius then thought: "Why should I drive them away, and they be tempted? It is better that I receive them, and they themselves will flee from here because of the great labors of the desert." Turning to them, he said:

"Settle here, and if you can, build yourselves a cell."

And he gave them an axe, a basket with bread and salt, and, leading them deep into the desert, showed them a certain stony place and said:

"Build yourselves a cell here, bringing trees for it from the meadow, and live here."

In this the Venerable Father thought that they would not endure the hardship of desert life and would run away from there. The young men asked Macarius:

"What handicraft do the monks practice?"

"They weave baskets," answered the Venerable Father.

And, taking date palm fronds, he began to plait a cord, saying:

"From this baskets are woven. So you too do, and give the finished ones to the church sextons. They in return will bring you bread and salt."

And the Venerable Father left them alone.

The young men began patiently to fulfill everything the Venerable Macarius had enjoined on them, and for three years they did not come to him. Remembering them, the Venerable Father thought: "What are these two young men doing, and why do they not come to me to disclose their thoughts? Here many come from afar, while these live nearby, yet do not come to me." This happened because those young men went nowhere except to church, where they stood in silence, to partake of the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ. The Venerable Father for a whole week prayed to God, eating no food at all; he asked that the Lord reveal to him the struggles of the two brothers. At the end of the week the Venerable Macarius went to them, wishing to see how they lived. When he came and knocked at the door of their cell, they opened to him, and seeing the Venerable Father, bowed down to the ground before him. And the Venerable Father, after offering prayer, sat down. The elder gave a sign to the younger, and he went out of the cell, while he himself sat down and began to weave a basket, without speaking a

word. At the ninth hour of the day the younger came back, knocking, and having prepared a little cooked food, offered a meal, laying out three slices of bread, while he himself stood in silence.

"Come," said the Venerable Father, "let us eat bread."

And they ate, giving thanks to the Lord. Then the younger brought water, and they drank. When evening came, the monks asked the Venerable Father:

"Father! Will you go away from here?"

But he said to them:

"No! I will spend the night here."

Then they spread a mat for the Venerable Father in one corner of the cell, and in the other they lay down themselves, also on a mat. Night came. The Venerable Macarius rose and began to pray to God that He would reveal to him the virtue of the young men. At midnight the roof of the cell suddenly opened, and a strong light shone forth. But the two brothers did not see the light; thinking that the Venerable Father was asleep, the elder nudged the younger, and, rising, both girded themselves and, raising their hands to heaven, prayed secretly. The Venerable Father saw a multitude of demons, who, like flies, surrounded the younger brother, and some of the demons wanted to sit on his lips, others on his eyes. But an Angel of the Lord appeared with a fiery sword in his hands, with which he defended him, driving the demons away from him. As for the elder brother, the demons did not even dare to approach him. Toward morning both brothers lay down again and fell asleep. In the morning the Venerable Macarius made as though he had just awakened. And they all rose. The elder brother asked the Venerable Father:

"Father! Do you wish us to read the twelve psalms?"

"I do wish it," answered the Venerable Father.

First the younger brother began to chant, and after each verse there came from his mouth, as it were, a fiery candle, which rose up to heaven. Then the elder began to chant; from his mouth there came fire, as it were a long cord, which reached up to heaven. After the conclusion of the morning rule, the Venerable Father wished to withdraw to his dwelling. As he departed, he said to the brethren:

"Pray for me, brethren."

In answer to his words they bowed down to the ground before him in silence; and the Venerable took his leave of them. Thus the Venerable Macarius learned that the elder brother had already attained perfection in the virtues, while the younger was still struggling with the devil. Some time after the Venerable Macarius' visit to the brothers, the elder brother departed to the Lord, and three days after his death the younger also fell asleep. Afterwards, when honorable Fathers came to the Venerable, he would lead them into the cell of those two brothers and say:

"Come, let us look at the place where the great servants of Christ struggled."

Once, while the Venerable Macarius was at prayer, a voice came to him, saying:

"Macarius! Thou hast not yet attained such perfection in the virtuous life as two women who live together in the nearest city."

Having received such a revelation, the Venerable took his staff and went to that city. Finding there the house where the said women lived, Macarius knocked at the door. At once one of those women came out at the knock, and seeing the Venerable, received him into her house with great joy. Calling both women to him, the Venerable said to them:

"For your sake I have undertaken so great a labor, coming here from the distant desert, for I desire to know your good deeds, and I ask you to tell me of them, concealing nothing."

"Believe us, honorable Father," the women answered, "that only last night we shared our bed with our husbands. What virtues, then, dost thou wish to find in us?"

But the Venerable insisted that they tell him the manner of their life. Then, persuaded by him, the women said:

"We were not related to one another before, but afterwards we married two brothers by blood, and for fifteen years we have lived all together in one house. During all the time of our life together we have never spoken to one another a single spiteful or evil word, and we have never quarreled. Up to the present time we have lived in peace and concord, and lately we resolved with one mind to leave our fleshly hus-

bands and withdraw into the company of holy virgins who serve God. But we cannot persuade our husbands to release us, although we have begged them about this with great insistence and many tears. Not having received the permission we desired, we made a covenant with God and with one another: not to utter a single worldly word until our death."

Having heard their account, the Venerable Macarius said:

"Truly God does not seek a virgin, nor a married woman, nor a monk, nor a layman, but a free intention; accepting it as the deed itself, He grants to the free will of every man the grace of the Holy Spirit, who acts in the man and directs the life of everyone who desires to be saved."

In the days of this Venerable Macarius of Egypt there shone forth, in the same desert places where Macarius of Egypt lived, another Venerable, Macarius of Alexandria, distinguished by his virtuous life. He was a presbyter in a monastery bearing the name of Cells.[11] This place lay in the desert between Nitria and the Skete. This blessed Macarius of Alexandria often came to the Venerable Macarius of Egypt, and they often walked together through the desert, for they had great love for one another. When the impious Emperor Valens, an Arian,[12] came to the throne, he raised a very cruel persecution against the Orthodox. By imperial order, Lucius, the Arian bishop,[13] arrived in Alexandria with a numerous army; he cast down from the episcopal throne the Orthodox bishop, the blessed Peter, successor of St. Athanasius the Great. Besides this, Bishop Lucius sent soldiers into the desert to seize and send into exile all the holy Fathers who were hermits. Among the first to be

11. This refers to the Desert of the Cells, which lay about 7 versts south-east of Mount Nitria. It was a vast desert in which the cells of hermits were scattered at such distances that one could neither see nor hear one another. Lovers of solitude usually withdrew from Mount Nitria to the Desert of the Cells after they had become established in the monastic life. Here they led a more silent life, and their cells were so far apart that neither sight nor hearing was distracted by the close company of other brethren. The monks had made it a rule not to go alone into another's cell, so as not to break the silence. Only on Saturdays and Sundays did they gather in the church for common worship. The Desert of the Cells was governed by presbyters, among whom the Venerable Macarius of Alexandria was especially well known.

12. The Emperor Valens reigned from 364 to 378.

13. Lucius the Arian, who occupied the Alexandrian patriarchal throne after St. Athanasius the Great.

seized were both Venerable Macarii. The soldiers took them at night, placed them on a ship, and carried them to a distant island whose inhabitants did not know the true God but worshipped idols. Among the idol-priests on that island was one whose daughter was possessed by a demon. Sensing the arrival of the Venerable Fathers, with the others, on the island, this girl ran out to meet them, crying loudly:

"Why have you come here? This island is our ancient dwelling place."

The Venerable Fathers, having offered prayer, cast the demon out of the girl, and she became perfectly healthy. Seeing this, her father, the idol-priest, at once believed in Christ and received holy baptism. Likewise all the inhabitants of that island turned to Christ and converted their pagan temple into a Christian church. Learning of what had happened, the impious Bishop Lucius was greatly shamed that he had exiled such great Fathers from their monasteries. Therefore he secretly sent orders that the blessed Macarii and all the holy Fathers who were with them should be returned to the places of their former dwelling. Thus the Venerable Macarius of Egypt returned again to the Skete desert, and the Venerable Macarius of Alexandria to the aforementioned place of the Cells; and the other honorable Fathers likewise returned to their monasteries.

Meanwhile a multitude of people came to the Venerable Macarius of Egypt from everywhere: some for the benefit of their souls, to receive instruction from him; others for healing of their infirmities; and a great throng of the sick gathered at his dwelling. Therefore there arose the necessity of building a hostel where wayfarers and the sick could find shelter. This the Venerable Macarius arranged. Each day he had the custom of healing one sick person, anointing him with holy oil and sending him home completely well. The Venerable acted thus with the wise purpose that the other sick, not healed at once, might stay with him for some time and thereby receive healing not only of body but of soul, hearing in the meantime his God-inspired teachings. For service at the hostel the Venerable appointed one of the monks. This monk, troubled by a demon, gave himself over to the passion of covetousness, and to satisfy it he began to hide away little by little some of what was

allotted for the support of the poor. The Venerable Macarius learned of this and, calling the monk to him, gave him an admonition, saying:

"Brother John! Listen to me and accept my counsel, which may serve thee for good. Behold, the spirit of love of silver tempts thee — for this has been revealed to me — and I know that if thou acceptest my counsel and ceasest to act sinfully, thou wilt end thy days in the fear of God, and wilt succeed in good works, and wilt be glorified in this place; 'and no plague shall come near thy dwelling' (Ps. 90:10). But if thou wilt not obey me and cease to sin, thou wilt meet the fate of Gehazi, whose passion thou sufferest (4 Kgdms. 6:15–16, 20–27)."

But John did not obey the Venerable and did not cease to do his evil deed. Fifteen or twenty years after the blessed death of the Venerable Macarius, during which the said monk continued to labor, in the manner of Judas, at the noose of covetousness that had been placed upon him, appropriating to himself a part of what had been allotted for the poor, suddenly his whole body was stricken with leprosy, and he died, having lost not only the goods he had sinfully gathered but his soul as well.

Once the Venerable Macarius went from the Skete toward Mount Nitria with one of his disciples. When they were already approaching the mountain, the Venerable said to his disciple:

"Go a little ahead of me."

The disciple went ahead of the Venerable and met a pagan priest hastening toward him, carrying a large log. Seeing him, the monk cried out:

"Dost thou hear, dost thou hear, thou demon! Where art thou going?"

The priest stopped and beat the monk so severely that he barely remained alive. Then, seizing the log he had dropped, the priest ran away. Some time later he met the Venerable Macarius, who said to him:

"Save thyself, laborer, save thyself."

Astonished at such words from the Venerable, the priest stopped and asked him:

"What good hast thou seen in me that thou greetest me with such words?"

"I see that thou labourest," answered the Venerable.

Then the priest said:

"I was moved to tears, Father, by thy words, for through them I see that thou art a man of God. Just now another monk met me, who reviled me, and I beat him to death."

With these words the priest fell at the Venerable's feet, embracing them and saying:

"I will not leave thee, Father, until thou convertest me to Christianity and makest me a monk."

And he went together with St. Macarius. Having gone a little way, they came to the place where the monk beaten by the priest lay, and found him barely alive. Taking him up, they carried him into the church located on Mount Nitria. The Fathers dwelling there, seeing the pagan priest together with the Venerable Macarius, were greatly astonished. Then, baptizing him, they made him a monk, and because of him many pagans turned to Christianity. Abba Macarius, on this occasion, gave the following instruction:

"An evil word," he said, "makes even good men evil, and a good word makes even evil men good."

Once the Venerable Macarius came to the monastery of Abba Pambo. Here the elders asked the Venerable:

"Speak to us, Father, a word for the edification of the brethren."

Consenting to their request, Macarius began to speak as follows:

– Forgive me, for I am a poor monk; yet I have seen monks. Once I was sitting in my cell in the skete, and the thought came to me to go into the inner desert to see what was there. For five years I struggled against this thought, thinking that the demons were tempting me. But when, even after five years, the same thought pursued me, I resolved to set out into the inner desert. Arriving there, I found a vast marsh, in the midst of which I saw an island. At that time the beasts of the desert came to drink water. Among the beasts I saw two naked men, and my whole body trembled, for I thought I was seeing bodiless spirits. Seeing that I was very frightened, these men said to me:

– Do not be afraid, for we are men like yourself.

Then I asked them:

– From where have you come into this desert?

– We are from a coenobium, – they answered, – having taken counsel with one another, we resolved to come here. And now it is thirty years since we left the monastery. One of us is an Egyptian, the other a Libyan.

Then they also asked me:

– In what condition is the world now? Do the rivers still fill with their streams? Does the earth abound in its customary fruits?

I answered them: "Yes." Then I asked them again:

– In what way can I become a monk?

They answered me:

– If a man does not renounce everything that is in the world, he cannot be a monk.

To this I said:

– I am weak, and therefore I cannot be as you are.

– If you cannot be as we are, – they said, – then sit in your cell and grieve over your sins.

And again I asked them:

– When winter comes, do you not suffer from the severe cold? Likewise, when a very hot summer comes, are your bodies not scorched by the heat?

They answered me:

– The Lord God has given us such bodies that we suffer neither from frost in winter nor from heat in summer.

– That is why I have told you, brethren, – the Venerable Macarius concluded his discourse, – that I have not yet become a monk, but I have seen monks.

Once the Venerable Macarius was asked by the elders of Scete how he had come to the point that his body always remained lean. For his body remained lean not only when he fasted, but even when he ate food.

The Venerable Macarius gave this answer to those who asked him:

– As a poker with which one turns burning logs and brushwood in an oven is always scorched by the fire, so in the man who always directs his mind to the Lord and always keeps in memory the dread tor-

ments of the fire of Gehenna, this fear not only consumes the body but dries up the bones.

Then the brethren asked the Venerable again:

– Tell us, Father, how ought one to pray?

The Venerable gave them this instruction:

– Prayer does not require much speaking, but one must raise one's hands on high and say: "Lord! As Thou desirest, and as Thou Thyself knowest, have mercy upon me." If the enemy stirs up sinful battle in the soul, one need only say: "Lord, have mercy." The Lord knows what is profitable for us and will show us mercy.

On another occasion Abba Isaiah asked the Venerable:

– Tell me, Father, some instruction for the benefit of the soul.

– Flee from men, – the Venerable Macarius answered him.

– What does it mean to flee from men? – then asked Abba Isaiah.

The Venerable answered him:

– Sit in your cell and grieve over your sins.

To his disciple Paphnutius[14] the Venerable said:

– Wrong no one, slander no one, – doing so, you will be saved.

Besides this, the Venerable also gave this instruction:

– Do not spend the night in the cell of a brother who has an evil reputation.

Another monk came to the Venerable and asked him:

– Abba, what must I do to be saved?

– Go to the cemetery and revile the dead, – the Venerable answered him.

The monk went to the cemetery and, as the Venerable had told him, reviled the dead there, struck their tombs with stones, and on returning related everything to the Venerable. The Venerable asked him:

– Did the dead say anything to you?

– No, they said nothing, – the monk answered.

Then the Venerable said:

– Go again, and now praise them.

The monk went and began to extol the dead with various praises:

14. Paphnutius, presbyter; he shared with the Venerable Macarius the burden of governing the monks of Scete.

– Apostles, saints, and righteous ones, – he said.

Then, coming again to the Venerable, he told him that he had praised the dead.

– And now the dead gave you no answer? – asked the Venerable.

– No, they gave no answer, – said the monk.

Then the Venerable gave him this instruction:

– You see, – he said, – that when you reviled the dead they gave you no answer, and when you extolled them with praises they gave you no answer either. So you too, if you desire to be saved, be like the dead: do not be angry when you are dishonored, do not exalt yourself when you are praised. Doing as these dead do, you will be saved.

The brethren also related the following about the Venerable Macarius. If any of the brethren came to him as to a holy and great man, the Venerable said nothing to such a one. But if some monk, not honoring the Venerable at all, said to him:

– Abba! When you were a camel-driver and took saltpeter at will and sold it, were you not then beaten by your elders?

And when anyone spoke to the Venerable in this manner, he rejoiced to converse with such a one and gladly answered all his questions.

Once the elders who dwelt on the Mount of Nitria sent to the Venerable Macarius at Scete with this request:

– Father! So that the whole multitude of brethren need not be burdened by coming to you, come yourself to us before you depart to the Lord.

The Venerable fulfilled their request and came to the Mount of Nitria. Learning of his coming, all the monks living there gathered to him, and the elders earnestly asked him to say something for the edification of the brethren. The Venerable, moved to tears, began to speak thus:

– Brethren! Let us weep, and let tears flow from our eyes, cleansing us before we pass to where tears will burn our bodies in torment.

Heeding the Venerable's instruction, all shed tears, and falling prostrate, they besought him:

– Father! Pray to the Lord for us.

Once, when the Venerable Macarius still lived in Egypt, he found in his cell a thief stealing the things that were in it. Outside the cell, near it, a donkey had been tied, onto which the thief was loading the stolen things. The Venerable, seeing this, did not let the thief understand that he was the master of the house, but appeared as a stranger. Not only did he not hinder the thief, but he even began to help him take the things and load them onto the donkey. Then he dismissed him in peace, reflecting within himself:

– We brought nothing with us into this world, – it is clear, therefore, that we can carry nothing away from here either. The Lord gave us everything, and as He desires, so everything comes to pass. Blessed be God in all things!

Of this same Venerable Macarius the fathers related that he had become, as it were, an earthly god, for just as God, though He sees the whole world, does not punish sinners, so the Venerable Macarius covered the human infirmities he saw. He was seeing, as though not seeing, and hearing, as though not hearing.

It happened that one of the disciples of the Venerable Macarius went to the city to sell his handiwork: baskets and mats. In the city he met a harlot, who, seeing the handsome youth, was tempted and called him to her, as if wishing to buy the baskets he was selling. The monk, not perceiving her crafty design, entered her house. Taking one of the baskets, the woman began to ask the monk for what price he wished to sell it. But soon she began to speak to him lewd words, attempting to seduce him into sin, just as in ancient times the Egyptian woman tried to entice the chaste Joseph. The monk, seeing himself in great danger, for he was already close to sin, raised his mind on high and began to pray:

– Christ the King! Who didst deliver Thy prophet from the belly of the whale, deliver me also from this sin and spiritual death through the prayers of Thy servant, my father Macarius.

At once he was caught up by an invisible hand, as once the prophet Habakkuk was by an Angel, and was set down in the midst of his cell. There he saw the Venerable Macarius, who was fervently praying to God on his behalf, that He would deliver his disciple from the calamity that had come upon him, for the Venerable had learned what had be-

fallen the monk. With his spiritual eyes he saw things far off as clearly as if they were near. Seeing his disciple, the Venerable said:

– Child! Let us give thanks to the Human-loving God that He has delivered you from the serpent's mouth and from the gates of hades, snatching you by His divine power from the fall into sin and bringing you into your cell, just as once He carried His Apostle Philip to Azotus (Acts 8:39).

Such was the power of the Venerable Macarius's prayer with God. On another occasion the Venerable himself was caught up into the air and carried over a great distance to the place where he needed to go. He was carrying baskets from the skete, and, wearied by the long road, he sat down to rest. At this he prayed to the Lord:

– O God! Thou knowest that I am exhausted.

At once the Venerable found himself near the river to which he had needed to go.

It is fitting now to tell also of the blessed repose of this Venerable Father, concerning which Serapion, the writer of his life, relates as follows.

Finally, the Venerable Macarius, as a mortal man, had to pay the tribute of death, for he had already reached advanced age, being ninety-seven years old. The time of his death did not remain unknown to the Venerable. Shortly before his repose, two radiant men appeared to him in a vision and said:

– Rejoice, Macarius!

Among those who appeared was Venerable Antony, teacher and leader of the desert-dwellers, and the other was Venerable Pachomius, the originator of common monastic life. Then those who had appeared said to Macarius:

"The Lord Jesus Christ has sent us to announce to thee thy joyful repose. On the ninth day from today thou shalt depart into eternal life. On that day we shall come to thee again and gladly take thee with us, that together with us thou mayest stand before the Lord's throne and enjoy immortal life."

Then, having said, "Peace be to thee," the venerable ones became invisible to Macarius. Then Divine Macarius called his disciples and said to them:

"Children! The time of my departure from here has come, and I commend you to the goodness of God. Therefore keep the paternal rules and the traditions of the ascetics."

Besides this, to some whom the venerable one knew to be more perfect than others in virtuous life, he entrusted the care of those newly entering monasticism, who were infants in their spiritual age. Then, laying his hands upon his disciples, and having sufficiently instructed and prayed for them, the venerable one began to prepare for his death. When the ninth day from the appearance of Venerable Antony and Pachomius had come, a Cherub appeared to Venerable Macarius with a multitude of Angels and said to him:

"Arise, follower of the Lord, and pass with us into eternal life. Lift up thine eyes around thee and see how many bodiless companies of the saints the Almighty has sent to bring thee to Him. Behold: here is the apostolic assembly, here the host of prophets, here the multitude of martyrs, the choir of hierarchs, fasters, venerable ones and righteous. Now give me thy soul, which I was commanded by God to guard during its earthly life; and freed from the bonds of the flesh, I shall receive it with honor as a great treasure, and, passing through the opposing powers, shall present it to the Divine throne of the Lord, that it may rejoice forever with all the saints who have stood before the throne of God from the beginning of the world."

After these words of the Cherub, the blessed Macarius took leave of all who were with him and prayed to God for them; then, lifting up his eyes and stretching out his hands on high, he said:

"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!"

And with these words he delivered his blessed soul to the Lord, leaving his disciples in deep grief for him.

The writer of the life of the Venerable One, Serapion,[15] adds the following, which he heard from Venerable Paphnutius, one of the disciples of Venerable Macarius. When the holy soul of Macarius was taken by

the Cherub and was being carried up to heaven, some of the fathers saw with their mental eyes that the aerial demons stood at a distance and cried out:

"What glory hast thou been granted, Macarius!"

The saint answered the demons:

"I am afraid, for I know of nothing good that I have done."

Then those demons who were still higher along the path of the soul of Macarius cried out:

"Truly thou hast escaped our hands, Macarius!"

But he said:

"No, but I must yet escape."

And when the venerable one was already at the gates of paradise, the demons cried out with a loud wail:

"He has escaped us, he has escaped!"

Then Macarius answered the demons in a loud voice:

"Yes! Protected by the power of my Christ, I have escaped your snares."

Such was the life, the repose, and the passage into eternal life of our Venerable Father Macarius[746].

Having finished the narrative of the life of the venerable one, let us glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God, glorified forever in His saints. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

In the house of abstinence the Lord truly placed thee, as an unerring star, leading the ends with light, Father of fathers, Venerable Macarius.

Another Kontakion, Tone 1:

Having ended a blessed life with the choirs of martyrs, thou art worthily settled in the land of the meek, God-bearing Macarius; and

15. Serapion, bishop of Thmuis (in Lower Egypt), one of the remarkable church figures of the early 4th century. He compiled the *Monastic Rules*. His *Letters to Monks*, the *Life of the Venerable Macarius of Egypt* (in the Coptic language), and some others are also known. Serapion was a zealous champion of Orthodoxy, for which he was even subjected to exile.

having peopled the desert as a city, thou hast received from God the grace of wonders: wherefore we honor thee.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Macarius of Alexandria

Житие преподобного отца нашего Макария Александрийского

Venerable Macarius of Alexandria was from the city of Alexandria[16]. In the first period of his life he was a vegetable merchant, and he received holy baptism already at the age of forty. After this, renouncing the world, he became a monk, and when he had labored sufficiently in monastic exploits and toils, he was granted to receive the holy priesthood, together with which he received the leadership of a monastery called the Cells, which was in the Egyptian desert between Nitria and the skete. He was the most sincere friend of Venerable Macarius the Egyptian, together with whom, in the reign of Valens, through the intrigues of the Alexandrian pseudo-bishop, the Arian Lucius, he was exiled from his homeland. Many times he lived together with this Venerable Macarius. Both Macarii were very similar to each other in character and manner of life, and had one and the same common teacher and instructor, Antony the Great, from whom, being his disciples, they repeatedly received instructions for advancement in virtuous life. Macarius the Egyptian was older and was the first to depart to the Lord. This Venerable Macarius of Alexandria lived on for several years after the death of Macarius the Egyptian. Bishop Palladius in the *Lausiac History* writes the following about Venerable Macarius of Alexandria:

"I saw the one who was a friend and fellow-striver in piety with the holy Macarius the Egyptian, and who bore the same name. I mean the holy Macarius of Alexandria, who was a presbyter in the place called the Cells, where I also dwelt for nine years. Of these I spent three years together with the holy Macarius, whose deeds and signs of God-pleasing life I saw myself in part, while concerning others I learned from those who had lived with him earlier. Once, seeing that Great Father

16. Hence he is called "of Alexandria," or "the city-dweller." His birth is dated to 295.

Antony had gathered date palm branches from which he was twisting ropes and weaving baskets, the holy Macarius asked him for one bundle of those branches; and the holy Antony answered him:

"It is written: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods' (Deut. 5:21)."

But as soon as he had said these words, all the branches suddenly dried up, as if by the action of fire. Seeing this, Antony said to Macarius:

"Behold, the Holy Spirit has rested upon you, and after me you will be the continuer of my works."

Some time later Venerable Macarius was traveling in the desert and was very greatly exhausted by the length of the journey. Suddenly the devil appeared to him and said:

"Behold, you have received the grace of Antony; why, then, do you not use it and ask God for food and strength on the way?"

The venerable one answered him:

"The Lord is my strength and my glory; but do not tempt the servant of God."

Then the devil began to tempt the saint with phantoms: a camel laden with various edible things, wandering about the desert, appeared to the saint. When the saint noticed what seemed to be a camel approaching him, and understood that it was a phantom, he began to pray, and suddenly the apparition was swallowed up by the earth.

Once Venerable Macarius of Alexandria came to Macarius the Egyptian, who was in the skete. And when they both set out on the journey and wished to cross the river Nile, they had to cross on a large ferry, onto which also two tribunes (commanders of a thousand) boarded with great dignity and outward splendor, having a bronze chariot, horses with gilded bridles, and a retinue of soldiers, armor-bearers and bodyguards adorned with chains and golden belts. When these tribunes noticed the two venerable elders, dressed in worn garments and standing in a corner, they praised their humble and poor life, and one of the commanders of a thousand said to the elders:

"Blessed are you, who despise the world."

Macarius of Alexandria answered:

"We indeed despise the world, and the world laughs at you. Know, then, that what you have said was not said by your own will, but prophetically, because we are both called Macarii, that is, 'blessed.'"

Moved by these words of Macarius of Alexandria, the tribune, on returning home, took off his garments, distributed his property to the poor, and chose the life of a hermit.

It happened that very fine fresh berries were sent to Venerable Macarius of Alexandria, and he wished to eat them. But then, resolving to overcome his desire by abstinence, he sent the berries to a weaker brother who desired the same food. That one, too, upon receiving them, did the same, although he himself was very hungry. Thus the berries were passed from one to another and went round many of the brethren; at last they came back to Venerable Macarius from the last brother, and, as a precious gift, were returned whole, for no one had wished to taste them. When Venerable Macarius learned that the berries had gone round the whole brotherhood, he was greatly astonished, and, giving thanks to God for such virtue of abstinence in the entire brotherhood, he tasted nothing of them himself.

When the Venerable Macarius learned that someone was undertaking some ascetic feat, he would strive in every way to imitate it himself and would carefully perform the same practice. Thus, for example, having learned that the monks living in the Tabennisi monastery[17] during the whole of the Great Lent partook of no food prepared over the fire, he resolved to abstain for seven years from everything cooked over the fire, whether baked or boiled. In this, the Venerable Macarius went further still, eating neither bread nor cooked food, but only hard millet or some seeds soaked in water. The Venerable lived in this abstinence for a full seven years. Once, hearing of another monk who ate only one

17. The Monastery of Tabennisi was the first cenobitic monastery. It stood at Tabennisi, in Upper (Southern) Egypt, north of its ancient capital, Thebes, on the bank of the Nile. It was founded about 340 by the Venerable Pachomius the Great (his memory is on May 15), and gave rise to a strict cenobitic monastic rule that spread rapidly throughout the Christian world. The Monastery of Tabennisi had such enormous significance in the history of early Christian monasticism, and the success of the Rule of Pachomius was so great, that even before his death about 7,000 monks had gathered in Tabennisi and its environs. Afterwards Tabennisi, a name that at first belonged to an island in the Nile and later passed to the neighboring riverbank where Pachomius and his disciples settled, was renowned for its monasteries.

pound of bread in the course of a day, and wishing to imitate him, Macarius broke bread into small pieces and placed them in a vessel with a very narrow opening, through which the hand could barely pass. The Venerable Macarius then set himself the rule of eating during the day only as much bread as the hand could take out of that vessel, once it had been thrust into it.

This was for the Venerable Macarius a very powerful mortification of the flesh, as the aforementioned Palladius relates. For the Venerable Macarius afterwards recounted with a smile:

"I often grasped at many pieces in the vessel with my hand, but because of the narrowness of the vessel's neck I could not pull them out. Thus my vessel did not allow me to eat as much as I would have wished!"

Thus fasting, Macarius lived for three years, eating each day only a small piece of bread, and drinking water in the same measure. Of oil for food he used one sextarius[18] for a whole year. Once, desiring utterly to overcome sleep, he did not enter under the roof of his cell for twenty days and nights, but remained near it by day under the scorching heat and by night, trembling with cold, exerting every effort not to fall asleep. And, as he later related for the instruction of others, from this feat his brain dried out, and had he not entered the cell and slept for a while longer, he would have gone mad. The Venerable added at this point:

"As far as I had strength, I overcame sleep; but the nature of man, which requires sleep, I was not able to overcome, and so I had to yield to it."

Once the demon of lust began to tempt the Venerable Macarius very strongly. In order to overcome this enemy, Macarius resolved to sit naked for six months in the marsh of the Skete, located in the distant desert. In it there were mosquitoes as large as wasps, which could pierce even the hide of wild boars. The Venerable was so severely bitten by these mosquitoes that some thought he had leprosy. When, after six months, he returned to his cell, his disciples barely recognized by

18. A sextarius was an ancient Roman measure of liquid, holding a little more than two modern bottles.

his voice that it was their Abba Macarius. But St. Macarius again condemned himself to the same torment from the mosquitoes. This happened after he once killed a mosquito that was tormenting him severely on his leg, from which much blood flowed. After this he repented and began to reproach himself as a murderer and avenger, until he took vengeance upon himself by giving himself up, naked, to the mosquitoes' stings.

On another occasion the Venerable wished to see the garden and the tomb called "Kipotaphion," in which Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians who lived in the time of Pharaoh (Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7), had been buried, in order to contend there with demons; for it was said of that place that a multitude of the most fierce demons had been gathered there by the said magicians through their sorcery. These magicians were brothers, and by their cunning and great skill in sorcery they were held in high honor by Pharaoh and had very great power throughout all Egypt. In a remote place of the desert they had made a garden of square stones, and in it they had built with great art a tomb for themselves, into which they placed a multitude of gold; near it they planted many kinds of trees and dug a large well, since the place was low-lying and there was much moisture. All this the magicians did because they firmly hoped, after their death, to live there forever, enjoying, as in a paradise, all the blessings found in that place. Since the Venerable Macarius did not know the road to that place, he went by the stars, just as sailors cross the sea, and thus on foot he crossed the whole desert. Macarius took with him several stakes and, after each stage of the journey,[19] he drove one stake into the ground, so that he could return by these marks. When, after nine days of traveling through the whole desert, he drew near to the said garden, and at nightfall wished to rest a little from the road and fell asleep, the devil, the eternal adversary of Christ's ascetics, gathered all the stakes by which Macarius marked his road and, while the Venerable slept, laid them about his head. When Macarius awoke, he found all those stakes lying around him, bound into a bundle. This happened by the provid-

19. A *poprishche* equaled 690 of our sazhens.

ence of God, to strengthen the Venerable's ascetic struggle, so that he would not place his hope in stakes but in the help of God, who had once led Israel by a pillar of fire for forty years through this vast desert (Ex. 14:19–20). Afterwards St. Macarius recounted his journey as follows:

"When I drew near to the garden," he said, "to that said burial ground, there ran out to meet me as many as seventy demons in various forms; some of them shrieked loudly, others gnashed their teeth at me with terrible malice, and still others flew about like ravens, flung themselves into my face, and cried out:

'What do you seek here, Macarius? Why have you come to us? Have we ever seduced any of your monks? Possess, in the place of your dwelling, together with those like you, what once belonged to us. For you possess the desert from which you drove out demons like us. We have nothing in common with you. Why have you come into our places? Be content, as a hermit, with the desert; those who founded this place gave it over to us. You cannot remain here. Why do you want to enter our domain, into which no living man has entered since the time when we performed the burial of the brothers who built this place?'

And when the demons raised the strongest wailing and outcry, St. Macarius said to them:

"I will only go in, look, and then go out from here!"

The demons said to him:

"Promise us this in accordance with your conscience."

The servant of Christ answered:

"I will do so."

And the demons vanished. When Macarius was entering the garden, a devil of terrible appearance met him with a drawn sword and barred his way. St. Macarius said to the devil:

"You come against me with a sword; I come against you in the name of the Lord of Sabaoth, in the strength of the God of Israel (1 Kgdms. 17:45)."

And the devil ran away from him. Entering within the garden, the Venerable examined everything there, namely: the well, in which there hung only an old copper bucket fastened to an iron chain; pomegranates that had nothing inside them, because they had dried in the sun; and

the beautiful structure of the tomb, richly adorned with gold. Having examined everything in detail, the saint went out from there without hindrance or difficulty, and after twenty days he set out back to his cell. On the return journey all the bread and water he had taken with him for the road ran out. Macarius began to weaken from hunger and thirst, so that he almost fell. Then, as he himself later related, there appeared to him the apparition of a maiden clothed in white garments, carrying at a distance from him, about a verst away, a pail of clean water. Often stopping, the maiden showed him the water and called him to herself, promising to give him a drink. However, the saint was not able to reach her. Nevertheless, drawn by the possibility of quenching his thirst, he, exerting dreadful effort, followed her for three days, during which the maiden kept appearing ahead of him. Then a herd of buffaloes appeared (in that region there are very many of them), one of which, having a little calf with her, stood before the weary and exhausted old man; and from her teats milk flowed. At that moment the Venerable heard a voice speaking from above:

"Approach, Macarius, and drink her milk."

Coming near, he drank the milk for a long time and was strengthened in body.

St. Macarius added the following: "My Lord, desiring to show me still greater mercy and to teach my weakness to hope only in His good providence, showed such a miracle. By His command I bade that buffalo follow me to my cell and nourish me throughout my journey. The obedient buffalo, by the command of her Creator, did indeed follow me and would not allow her calf to approach her teats, so that she nourished me alone."

Once this saint and wondrous man was digging a well for the monks to drink from. In the place where the Venerable was digging there was much brushwood and thornbush, from which an asp crawled out and stung the saint.

Then the saint, seizing the asp with both hands by the jaws, tore it apart, saying:

"Since my Lord did not send you against me, how did you dare to approach me and bite me?"

And, O wonder! The asp's sting did the Venerable no harm whatsoever.

Having heard a second time concerning the Tavennisiots that their rule of life was very strict, the Venerable Macarius changed his monastic garb for secular clothing and set out for them. After a journey of fifteen days through the desert, the Venerable arrived at the Tavennisiot monastery as a man of the world. Here he wished to see the archimandrite Pachomius[20], a man experienced and far-sighted, endowed with the gift of prophecy, but to whom it had not yet been revealed by God who Macarius was. Entering to Pachomius, Macarius said:

"Father, I beg you, receive me into your monastery, for I desire to be a monk in it."

Pachomius answered:

"You cannot be a monk, for you are old and unable to labour. The brethren here have from youth been accustomed to the labours of the monastic life, but you, being already advanced in years, would not be able to endure the ascetic struggles, and, growing weak, would depart from here and speak evil of us."

And Pachomius did not receive him on the first day, nor on the second, and so until the seventh day. Macarius, meanwhile, kept a strict fast throughout this time, and on the seventh day said to the archimandrite:

"Father, receive me! And if I do not fast and do what the other brethren do, then command that I be cast out of the monastery."

Then the holy Pachomius told the brethren to receive him. There were fourteen hundred brethren, and Macarius was received by them into the monastery. After some time had passed, the holy fast of Great Lent came, and Macarius saw each of the brethren fasting according to his strength. One took food in the evening, another after two days, another ate after five days, another stood the whole night in prayer, and during the day sat at his work. Imitating them, Macarius himself, having soaked palm branches, took his place in one corner, and throughout the whole of Lent until Pascha he took neither bread nor water, except

20. That is, of the Venerable Pachomius the Great.

for a small quantity of dried cabbage leaves, which he ate on Sundays. And he did this only so that the other monks might see that he ate, and so that he would not fall into the sin of pride. Standing in his corner, the Venerable Macarius worked unceasingly and did not rest from his labours; at no time during all this period did he sit or lie down. If by necessity he left his place, then upon returning he stood again, not opening his lips, speaking with no one, but in silence offering prayers to God with all his heart. Seeing such an ascetic feat of the Venerable, the ascetics of that monastery were angered at their abbot and began to say to him:

"Where have you brought to us, to our shame, such a bodiless man? Either remove him, or we shall leave the monastery."

Having heard this from the brethren, and having learned of the strict fast of Macarius, the Venerable Pachomius began to pray to God that He would reveal to him concerning the newcomer, who he was. And it was revealed to him that this was Macarius. Then the Venerable Pachomius, taking the Venerable Macarius by the hand, led him into the church, and, embracing him affectionately, said:

"You have come well, honourable father! I know that you are Macarius, but you had not disclosed your name to me. For many years I have heard of you and greatly desired to see you. I thank you for having taught humility to my children, so that they should not be lifted up in mind, boasting of their feats and fasting; you have brought us much benefit."

The other brethren also heard of Macarius, and, coming from everywhere in great numbers, kissed him affectionately and asked him to pray for them. The Venerable Macarius, having given instruction to all, returned to his place.

This dispassionate man, the Venerable Macarius, related also the following about himself:

"Once I desired to so direct my mind that, thinking of nothing earthly, it might abide in unceasing contemplation of the One God, never for a moment departing from Him. For this contemplation of God I set myself five days. And so, having shut my cell and my courtyard so that no one might enter to me, and I could converse with no one, I

began on Monday, and I commanded my mind, saying thus: 'Look! Do not come down from heaven! There you have with you the Angels, Archangels, Cherubim, Seraphim, all the heavenly powers, and their Creator God. Therefore remain in heaven and do not descend into the lower world, lest you fall into earthly thoughts.' When I had thus stood for two days and two nights, fixing my mind on high, I so provoked the devil that he, changing himself into a flame, burned everything that was in my cell, so that even the mat on which I stood caught fire, and I thought I myself would be burned. Frightened by this, on the third day I abandoned my intention; being no longer able to keep my mind occupied with thoughts of heaven, I descended, by the will of God, to earthly thoughts, so as not to fall into the sin of high-mindedness."

Concerning this same Venerable Macarius, Bishop Palladius also relates the following:

"Once, coming to him," he relates, "I found before his cell some village presbyter, whose head was so eaten away by a disease called gangrene that the mouth could be made out from the back of the head. He had come to the Venerable Macarius asking for healing; but the saint did not admit him into his presence, not wishing to speak with him. Then I too began to entreat the saint, saying:"

"Have mercy on this unfortunate man and answer him."

But the Blessed One said to me:

"He is unworthy of healing, for this is a punishment to him from the Lord. But if you desire that he receive healing, then counsel him to cease from this time forward from officiating."

I asked the saint:

"Why?"

He answered:

"He celebrated the Liturgy after committing adultery, and for this he is so punished. But if he fears God and gives up his vice, which he committed without fear, God will heal him."

"When I," Palladius continued, "related this to the presbyter, he promised with an oath that he would no longer officiate. After this the Venerable Macarius, taking that presbyter, said to him:"

"Do you believe that there is a God, for Whom there is no mystery?"

The presbyter answered:

"Yes, father, I believe, and I beg you, pray to Him for me, a sinner."

Then Macarius asked:

"So you could not conceal yourself before God?"

"No, I could not," he answered.

"If you confess your sin and recognize God's punishment for it," Macarius continued, "then from this time reform yourself."

And the presbyter confessed his fall and promised no longer to sin or to officiate, but to live as a man of the world. After this the holy Macarius laid his hands upon him and prayed to God for him, and a few days later the presbyter was healed of the gangrene; his hair grew back on his head, and he returned to his house healthy, glorifying God and giving thanks to the great Macarius.

The Venerable Macarius had several cells in various places: one in the skete situated in the inner desert, another in Libya, a third in the place called the Cell, and a fourth on the Mount of Nitria. None of his cells had either doors or windows. And the Venerable Macarius dwelt in these cells in darkness throughout all the days of the holy Lent. One of his cells was so narrow that one could not stretch one's legs in it; another was roomier, and in it the Venerable conversed with those who came to him; at the same time he healed a countless multitude of people suffering from unclean spirits.

Palladius records a certain noble maiden who for many years had been paralysed, and who was brought to the Venerable Macarius from Thessalonica[21]. The Venerable healed her, anointing her with holy oil for twenty days and praying to God, and dismissed the maiden completely healed to her native city. After her healing she distributed abundant alms among the monasteries.

On another occasion there was brought to the Venerable a youth possessed by a demon, who was all swollen with dropsy. Laying his right hand on the youth's head and his left on his heart, the Venerable

21. Solun, or Thessalonica, a very considerable and ancient city of Macedonia, lay at the head of the great Gulf of Thessalonica or Thermaic Gulf on the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago). At present this city, under the name Salonica, is after Constantinople the first commercial and manufacturing city in European Turkey, with a very numerous population.

began to pray to God. Suddenly the youth cried out in a loud voice, and immediately an enormous quantity of water poured out of his body. After this the youth's body returned to its natural state, as it had been before. Having anointed the youth with holy oil and sprinkled him with holy water, the Venerable gave him back to his father. At the same time he commanded the youth that for fourteen days he should eat no meat and drink no wine. Thus the Venerable made the youth healthy.

The devil, the ancient enemy of the human race, was greatly embittered against the Venerable Macarius for his strictly ascetic manner of life and for the many healings of the sick who came to him. Then he began to tempt his mind with vainglory. Thoughts arose in the Venerable that he ought to leave his cell and set out for Rome. At the same time his mind presented all plausible reasons for this, pointing out that the Venerable, possessing abundant grace and the gift of casting out unclean spirits, could bring much benefit to those who suffered in Rome. The Venerable struggled for a long time against the thoughts that tempted him, although they assailed him strongly. At last, falling on the threshold of his cell, he stretched his legs out beyond the cell and said:

"Drag me, demons, if you can, but I myself will not go!"

Thus, on the threshold, the Venerable lay until late evening.

During the night the same thoughts again attacked him with great force. Then the Blessed One, taking a basket holding two measures, filled it with sand, and, placing it on his shoulders, began to walk through the desert. There he met the monk Theosebius, a native of Antioch, who asked him:

"Father! What are you carrying? Give me your burden, and do not labour yourself."

"I am tormenting the one who torments me," Macarius answered; "when he is in idleness and inactivity, he calls me to wander."

Thus, laboring for a long time, the Venerable returned to his cell, weary in body, but victorious over the wicked thoughts.

The blessed Paphnutius, a disciple of the Venerable Macarius, relates the following about the saint.

"Once the Venerable was sitting in the courtyard. Suddenly a hyena ran up, carrying in her teeth her puppy, which was blind. Running up to Macarius, the hyena threw the puppy at his feet. The saint took up the puppy, spat into its eyes, and prayed to God — and the puppy received its sight. The hyena took her puppy and ran off. The next morning she ran to the Venerable again, carrying an enormous sheepskin; seeing it, the saint said to the hyena:

"Where did you get this skin? Surely you have not eaten someone's sheep? If you obtained it by violence, I will not take it."

The hyena, however, bowed her head to the ground and bent her knees, and laid the skin she had brought at the saint's feet. But the Venerable said to the beast:

"I said that I will not take it until you promise me that you will no longer wrong the poor by devouring their sheep."

Then the hyena bowed her head, as though agreeing with the saint's words and promising to obey him. After this the Venerable Macarius took the skin from the hyena and gave it to St. Melania the Roman (her death is December 31), who often visited the holy fathers in the desert. From then on this skin was called "the gift of the hyena." And what is wondrous in men who have renounced the world is this: even a beast, having received a benefit for the glory of God and in honor of His saints, understood it and brought a gift to the blessed one. He who tamed the lions for the prophet Daniel (Dan. 14:31) gave the hyena understanding of the benefit received and taught her gratitude.

The aforementioned Palladius, once coming to this Venerable, troubled by thoughts and despondency (as he himself later reported), asked:

"What shall I do, Abba Macarius, for thoughts beset me, saying: you do nothing here — leave this place!"

The holy Father Macarius answered him:

"Say also to your thoughts: I am guarding these walls for Christ's sake."

For the instruction of Palladius, the Venerable Macarius related about the Venerable Mark (his memory is March 5), how he received Communion of the Divine Mysteries from the Angels themselves. The

holy Macarius saw this with his own eyes when, during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, he communed the brethren.

"I never gave the Divine Mysteries to the ascetic Mark," he said, "but an Angel from the sanctuary gave them to him invisibly, and I only saw the fingers of the one giving."

This Venerable Mark, when he was a youth, knew the whole Old and New Testaments by heart; he was also very meek and temperate.

"One day, having nothing to do in my cell," related the holy Macarius, "I went to him, by then grown old, and sat down at the door of his cell. I regarded him as someone above men, as he indeed was, and wished to know (I was then still, Macarius remarks, guileless and unlearned) what the elder was doing or what he was speaking about. He, being inside the cell, was struggling with himself and with the devil, being already a hundred years old, so that his teeth had even fallen out. He spoke to himself:

"What do you finally want, wicked old man? Here you have already drunk wine and tasted oil. What else do you desire, insatiable slave of the belly, in old age?"

And to the devil Mark said:

"Depart from me, devil! You have grown old in struggle with me. You laid bodily weakness upon me, making it so that I began to drink wine and taste oil; you made a voluptuary of me. Do I still owe you anything? You will find nothing in me for you to steal. Enemy of mankind! Withdraw from me at last."

Of this the holy Macarius told Palladius, who also wrote down what was said. The presbyter Rufinus, in addition to the Life of this Macarius of Alexandria, adds the following.

One night the devil, knocking at the door of Macarius's cell, said:

"Arise, Abba Macarius, and let us go to the church for the singing."

He, being filled with Divine grace, recognized the enemy's snare and answered:

"O liar and hater of good! What fellowship have you, and what friendship, with the assembly of the saints?

"Do you not know, Macarius," the devil said in reply, "that without us no church singing and no monastic gathering is accomplished? Come, and you will see our works."

The elder answered:

"May the Lord rebuke you, wicked demon!"

And, then turning in prayer to the Lord, he began to beseech that He show him whether what the devil had boasted of was true. And so, when the time of the midnight singing came, Macarius went into the church and again prayed inwardly to God that He would reveal to him whether the devil's words were true. After some time the Venerable saw in the church, in the form of certain small boys, black Ethiopians, running swiftly here and there, as though flying. In the monastery there was a custom that one monk would chant the psalms while all the other brethren sat and listened. And the small Ethiopians would sit down beside each brother and laugh; if they touched anyone's eyes with two fingers, that brother at once began to doze, and if someone had a finger laid on his lips, he soon roused himself. Before some they went about in the likeness of women, and before others they appeared as if desiring to create or bring something or to arrange various affairs. And whatever the demons, mocking someone, represented, the same things those monks thought in their hearts. But from some monks, when the demons began to do before them something like what was described above, they were suddenly driven away by a certain power, thrust out headlong, and no longer dared either to linger before such monks or to pass by them. Over other, weaker brethren, who were not at all attentive to prayer, they did outrages, sitting on their necks and shoulders. Seeing this, the Venerable Macarius sighed deeply and, weeping, began to pray to God:

"Lord! Look upon us and do not be silent! Arise, O God, and let Thy enemies be scattered and flee from Thy face, for our soul is filled with reproach."

After the dismissal, Abba Macarius began to call each monk to himself one by one and to examine him as to what he had been thinking of during the church singing. Each confessed his thoughts to him, and

thus it was plainly revealed that the thought of each had been exactly about what the demons, mocking, had represented before him.

This same Venerable Macarius also related another, still more marvelous and terrible thing: namely, that at the time when the brethren came forward to the Divine Mysteries and stretched out their hands to receive the Body of Christ (at that time they did not yet receive with a spoon, but took the Body of Christ into their hands, as now with the antidoron, and drank the Precious Blood from the chalice; so it was until the time of St. John Chrysostom, of which there is witness in the Life of St. Theoctista), then the Venerable noticed that the Ethiopians were placing burning coals into the hands of some of the brethren, and the Body of Christ, given by the priest's hand, returned back into the sanctuary. From those who were worthy of the holy Communion the demons fled far away. Meanwhile, beside the sanctuary with the priest stood an Angel of the Lord, and together with the priest's hand he stretched out his own for the distribution of the Divine Mysteries.

Thus the Venerable Macarius, being clairvoyant, distinguished the worthy from the unworthy and foresaw human thoughts suggested by the demons.

The Venerable Macarius related much else for the benefit and edification of the brethren; he corrected the slothful and performed various miracles. Having lived such a God-pleasing life, the Venerable Macarius departed peacefully to the Lord, being one hundred years old from his birth.[22]

Now, together with the other venerable fathers, he glorifies in endless life the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God in Trinity, to Whom be glory, honor, and worship from us sinners forever. Amen.

* * *

22. The Venerable Macarius of Alexandria died about 395. Like the Venerable Macarius of Egypt, the Venerable Macarius of Alexandria was also a church writer. Under his name the following are known to this day: 1) a monastic rule in 30 chapters; 2) an epistle to monks; 3) a discourse on the departure of the soul and on its condition after death.

Memory of the Holy Martyr Euphrasia

Память святой мученицы Евфрасии

The holy virgin Euphrasia was from the city of Nicomedia[23] and lived in the reign of the emperor Maximian.[24] She was of noble birth, beautiful in appearance, pious, and served Christ as His faithful servant. During the persecution of Christians, St. Euphrasia was seized by idolaters and compelled to offer sacrifice to the demons. When she refused to obey, they began to beat her cruelly; but she endured the blows with courage. After the tortures, they gave St. Euphrasia over to a barbarian for defilement, and he, taking her, led her into his house. The saint unceasingly prayed to her Most Pure Bridegroom, Christ the Lord, that He would keep her unharmed. And so, when the impious barbarian led the saint into the bedchamber, Euphrasia asked him to wait a short while, promising to give him a certain miraculous plant.

"If you always carry this plant about you," she said, "no enemy weapon will touch you."

The saint spoke thus, presenting herself as though she were a sorceress.

But the barbarian said to her:

"You will give me this plant afterward."

The wise maiden answered:

"This plant cannot be taken by the hands of a woman; only a virgin who has not known marriage can take it. If it is taken by one who is not a virgin, it will have no power at all."

Then the barbarian agreed not to touch Euphrasia until she had plucked the named plant for him. Going into the garden and finding there a certain plant, the saint gathered it and showed it to the barbarian. The latter asked her:

"How shall I know whether what you tell me is true?"

23. Nicomedia was a flourishing populous city in the region of Bithynia, on the shore of the Sea of Marmara, in the north-western part of Asia Minor.

24. Maximian Galerius, son-in-law and co-ruler of the Emperor Diocletian (284–305), and afterwards emperor of the eastern half of the Roman Empire (305–311).

In answer to this, St. Euphrasia laid the plucked plant upon her neck and said to him:

"Take a sharp sword, raise it with both hands, and strike me on the neck as hard as you can; then you will see that your sword will not harm me in the least."

The barbarian, believing the saint's words, took the sword, raised it, and struck with great force, and severed the honorable head of St. Euphrasia, and she fell dead[25]. Seeing that he had been mocked by the saint, the barbarian began to gnash his teeth. But the wise virgin passed undefiled to her Bridegroom, Christ, leaving us an example of the preservation of chastity, for she preferred to die rather than to lose her virginity.

* * *

Memory of St. Arsenius, Archbishop of Corfu

Память святого Арсения, архиепископа Керкирского

St. Arsenius, Archbishop of Corfu[26], was from Palestine, born to pious parents. From his youth he dedicated himself to the service of God and received the tonsure of the monastic life. Living a strictly ascetic life, the saint was at the same time distinguished by a high level of learning. Having reached maturity, he received the priesthood, and after some time was ordained Archbishop of Corfu. In the rank of archpastor he became renowned for his wisdom, his teaching[27], and his repeated intercession before the authorities on behalf of the innocent. Thus, already in old age, he went to Constantinople to plead for his flock, which was threatened by the unrighteous wrath of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus[28]. Returning from Constantinople, Ar-

25. The death of the Martyr Euphrasia took place in 303.

26. The island of Corcyra, now Corfu, lies in the Ionian Sea, near the western coast of northern Greece. St. Arsenius was the first archbishop on the island of Corfu.

27. The patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, famed for his learning, who corresponded with St. Arsenius, expresses in his letters to him deep admiration for him as a man of high spiritual life who was also acquainted with Greek literature. St. Arsenius is known also as a writer: he composed a canon for the anointing of the sick, a eulogy to the Apostle Andrew, and a description of the suffering and death of the Great Martyr Barbara.

28. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Byzantine emperor, reigned from 780 to 797.

senius fell ill on the way at Corinth[29] and peacefully gave up his spirit to God[30].

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Macarius, Deacon of the Kiev Caves .

NOTES

746. The Venerable Macarius died about 391. The place of the Venerable Macarius's labors is still called the Desert of Macarius, and a monastery bearing his name stands there. The relics of the Venerable Macarius are at the city of Amalfi in Italy. The precious legacy of the Venerable Macarius's experienced wisdom consists of fifty homilies, seven instructions, and two epistles. The subject of the Venerable Macarius's discourses and instructions is inner spiritual life, chiefly in the form it takes on the path of contemplative solitude. Despite the profound and little-understood subject, the discourses and instructions of this experienced teacher are clear and intelligible: the spiritual, so little known to some of us, is brought close to the heart and mind in the words of St. Macarius. What would be obscure through its spiritual loftiness is brought nearer to understanding by the Venerable Macarius through comparisons and images, which are always simple and all the more striking for it.

29. Corinth was the most ancient, famous and wealthy city of Achaia; it lay in a beautiful and fertile plain at the south-eastern corner of the Gulf of Corinth, between the Ionian and Aegean Seas. At present the ruins of ancient Corinth are near the modern Corinth, called Kourounto.
30. St. Arsenius died at the end of the 8th century.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF JANUARY

January 20

20 января

New Calendar January 20 · Old Calendar February 2 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Euthymius the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Евфимия Великого

The Venerable Euthymius was a native of the city of Melitene in Armenia, near the Euphrates.[1] His parents, Paul and Dionysia, both Christians, were of a noble family and adorned with virtues. For many years they were barren and childless, which grieved them deeply. Visiting the church of the holy martyr Polyeuctus, which stood near the city, they always prayed to God that their childlessness might be relieved. And so, when they were in fervent prayer one night, a divine vision appeared to them, and they heard:

"Be comforted, for God will give you a son whose name means consolation,[2] because at his birth God will bring consolation to His Churches."

After this vision Dionysia conceived a son, whom his parents, even before his birth, promised to dedicate to God. And so a son was born to them, and they named him Euthymius. At that time Valens reigned in the East, and his nephew Gratian in the West.[3] For the Churches of Christ, troubled by the Arians, there was as yet no peace or quiet. From the reign of Constantius, son of Constantine, until the death of Valens, the Orthodox for almost forty years suffered persecution and

1. Armenia is a mountainous country south of the Caucasus and east of Asia Minor; it was divided into two parts: Greater or Eastern Armenia, and Lesser or Western Armenia. The city of Melitene, now Malatya, was situated in the southern part of Lesser Armenia, on one of the tributaries of the Euphrates.
2. Euthymius – from the Greek verb meaning to rejoice, to be comforted – in translation means: good-spirited, cheerful.
3. Valens reigned 364–378 A.D., Gratian 375–383 A.D.

violence. But when the holy Euthymius was born, all the sorrows of the holy Churches turned into consolation and joy: not yet five months after Euthymius' birth, the impious emperor Valens was defeated by the barbarians who were laying waste Thrace, and while fleeing, he took refuge in a village near Adrianople,[4] in a barn, where he was burned to death. Thus this impious man perished terribly by temporal fire, which was for him, as it were, a foretaste of the eternal fire. With the destruction of this impious emperor, all Arian power was destroyed, and soon, with the accession of Theodosius the Great,[5] quiet and peace came to the holy Churches.

After a fairly short time, Euthymius' father died. Dionysia, fulfilling her vow, brought the boy Euthymius to her brother, the presbyter Eudoxius, who was the spiritual father of Bishop Otrius of the Melitene Church,[6] dedicating her son to God as once Hannah dedicated Samuel (1 Kgdms. 1). Eudoxius brought the boy to the bishop and told him everything about him: how, after a certain divine appearance and voice, he had been granted to barren parents through their fervent prayer, and that even before his birth he had been promised to the service of the Lord. Bishop Otrius, hearing this and amazed at what was related, said:

"Truly the Spirit of God rests upon this child."

Taking the boy to himself in place of a son, Otrius carefully attended to his education, entrusting the task to two teachers from among the clergy, Acacius and Synodius, prudent and virtuous men, each of whom in his time later became bishop of that same Melitene Church. When the blessed Euthymius had thoroughly studied the Divine books, the bishop appointed him a reader, and his mother, the blessed Dionysia, who served God with unceasing zeal, he appointed a deaconess of his church. Then the holy Euthymius, known from his youth for his virtu-

4. Thrace is a region of the Byzantine Empire, in the north-eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Adrianople is a city on the river Hebrus (Maritsa); today it is a large and populous city and the chief city of the Turkish vilayet (province) of the same name.

5. Emperor Theodosius the Great reigned from 379 to 395.

6. Otreus, Bishop of Melitene, shone forth at the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381; afterwards he was numbered among the saints. His memory is celebrated in the East on April 17.

ous life and undefiled virginity, having passed through all the lesser church ranks and already being a monk, was ordained to the rank of presbyter. At the same time he was entrusted, although he did not desire authority, with the care of the monasteries in that city, since from childhood he had greatly loved the monastic life and stillness. Therefore the Venerable Euthymius often stayed at the monastery of the holy martyr Polyeuctus, which stood at some distance from the city. During the holy Fortieth Day fast he withdrew to a desert mountain and there devoted himself to stillness amid ascetic labors known to the One God alone. But recognizing that the leadership and administration of the monasteries hindered his stillness, and at the same time wishing to avoid human glory, the Venerable, in the twentieth year of his life, secretly departed for Jerusalem.[7] Having venerated the Honorable Cross and the Tomb of Christ and the other holy places, he visited the holy fathers living in the surrounding desert, and, examining the life and virtue of each, strove to imitate them. Then he came to the Lavra of Pharan,[8] which was six poprishches from the holy city, and finding outside the monastery an empty cell in a secluded place, he settled in it, having nothing at all; having learned to weave baskets, he lived by the labor of his hands. Thus, freed from every earthly care, he had only one concern: how to please God.

The holy Euthymius had a neighbor and friend, the Venerable Theoctistus, with whom he was joined in such spiritual love that they both had one will, one aspiration toward God, one common struggle. They shared their thoughts with each other, and each was as though enclosed in the soul of the other: whatever one desired, the other also strove for, as if one soul dwelt in two bodies. Every year, after the eighth day of the holy Theophany, Euthymius and Theoctistus withdrew into the Desert of Kutilia[9] and remained there until Palm Sunday,[10] wearing down the body with fasting and labors and nourish-

7. Venerable Euthymius was then about 29 years old. This was in 406.
8. The Lavra of Pharan, or Pharee, was founded by the Venerable Chariton (his memory is celebrated September 28) in the first half of the fourth century, six milliaria (a little less than 8 versts) east of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho.
9. The Desert of Kutilla lay north-east of Jerusalem, at no great distance from Jericho, below the Lavra of St. Sabbas the Sanctified towards the Dead Sea, lying 12 versts east of Jerusalem.

ing the soul with spiritual food. Then they would return each to his own cell with abundant riches of virtue, which they offered to the Risen Christ. Living thus in the Lavra of Pharan, the Venerable Euthymius once withdrew at the usual time with the blessed Theoctistus into the Kutilia Desert.[11] Passing through the desert, they came to a rock near which lay a wild ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a stream; on the north side of the stream, on the rock, was a cave in which wild beasts lived and into which one could enter only with difficulty by climbing the wall. Rejoicing, as if this place had been prepared for them by God Himself, they settled there, feeding on the herbs growing around, and never returned to the Lavra.

After some time, when God was pleased to reveal the Venerable ones for the benefit of the faithful, by His providence some shepherds from Lazaria[12] brought their flocks to this stream. And when they lifted their eyes to the cave on the mountain, they suddenly noticed two men walking on the rock, and, frightened, they fled. The fathers, however, called out after them in a gentle voice:

"Do not be afraid, brethren, do not be afraid: for we too are human beings, but for our sins we live in this place."

Then the shepherds, reassured, came to them and entered the cave; finding nothing there necessary for earthly life, they were astonished, and afterward returned home and told their households about the Venerable ones. After that, the inhabitants of Lazaria began to come to Euthymius and Theoctistus, bringing them what was necessary for daily needs. Meanwhile the fathers of Pharan, noticing that the Venerable ones did not return, searched for them for a long time throughout the desert, until they learned where they were, and after finding them, began to visit them often. Afterward some wished to settle together with them; the first who came to the Venerable Euthymius and Theoctistus and did not return to the Lavra were Marinus and Luke.[13] Then others began to gather, for the fame of the Venerable Euthymius

10. That is, the Venerable Euthymius and Theoctistus withdrew into the desert after the feast of the Theophany of the Lord, and remained there until the feast of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, or Palm Sunday (the Sunday of Flowers, otherwise Vaia).

11. This was in the year 411.

12. Today it is the village of el-Azariya, not far from the Desert of Kutilla.

spread everywhere in a short time, and many desired to see him and to struggle under his guidance. He, receiving those who came, entrusted their guidance to his friend, the blessed Theoctistus, for he himself loved solitude above all. Soon a cenobium was established in the desert,[14] and the cave was made into a church. The Venerable Euthymius was a spiritual physician to all: each of the brethren opened his conscience before him, confessing his thoughts; and he, possessing great spiritual experience, instructed each one profitably, teaching and exhorting, chastising paternally and comforting. To all the brethren the Venerable Euthymius said:

"Brethren! For what purpose have you gone out of the world? Labor at that, and do not neglect your salvation, but watch every hour, according to the word of the Lord: 'Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation' (Mt. 26:41). Above all, know that those who renounce the world and desire to live the monastic life must have no will of their own, but always keep obedience and humility; and let them have in mind the remembrance of death and the hour of judgment, fear the eternal fire, and desire the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven."

He also said that monks ought, while inwardly contemplating God, to labor bodily as well, especially the young, for the disciplining of the body, so that the flesh might obey the spirit; they should be imitators of the Apostle Paul, who labored day and night, not only avoiding idleness but serving both himself and others, as he himself says: "These hands have ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me" (Acts 20:34). For if laymen undertake so many labors and suffer, working unceasingly to feed their wives and children, and from that same labor offer sacrifices to God, give alms, and pay taxes: shall we not, all the more, labor for our necessary bodily needs, to avoid idleness

13. Marinus and Luke were well-known disciples of the Venerable Euthymius. Having received their monastic upbringing from him, they showed themselves to be ascetics of the eremitic life; within a few years they shone forth in places near the village of Metopa (today Khirbet Jubb er-Rum, on the road from Jerusalem to the Lavra of St. Sabbas the Sanctified), and founded monasteries; they brought the Venerable Theodosius the Great to monastic perfection; he was the cenobiarch of this desert and archimandrite of the cenobia.

14. Cenobium: a community, a coenobitic monastery.

and not eat the labors of others, according to the commandment of the Apostle (2 Thess. 3:10)?

Thus our Venerable Father Euthymius, instructing the brethren, urged them toward diligence. He commanded them not to converse in the church during the divine services, nor at the table during the brethren's meal, but to keep silence everywhere, attending to the word of God. When he saw any of the brethren, especially the young, who wished to fast more than the rest of the brotherhood, he did not approve of this and did not allow the brother to follow his own will; he required him to keep the time of abstinence and the time of eating in common with all. The Venerable Father taught that a brother should eat at the table with restraint, not sating his belly, but taking less than it requires, so that in this way he might conceal his fasting, not making it openly known, but secretly arming himself against his growing passions. Enlightened by such admonitions and instructions of the Venerable Euthymius, the brethren labored and bore fruit worthy of their calling.

Now it is necessary for us to speak of Aspebetus and Terebon, chieftains of the Saracens, and how they were converted to God by Euthymius.

There lived in Persia a Hellene named Aspebetus, who had a young son, Terebon, who was struck by a demon, as a result of which the whole right side of him, from head to foot, withered; and no one could heal him, although many of the most skilled physicians were brought to him. Afterward Aspebetus, together with his sick son, removed to Arabia. This came about as follows. At the beginning of the persecution of the Christians then raised in Persia by the magi[15], toward the end of the reign of Izdegerd[16], all the military commanders, among whom was

15. The Magi in Persia were members of the priestly caste, belonging to a distinct tribe of Medes. In their hands was concentrated all scientific learning; they presided over religious rites and played an influential role in the life of the state. They were also credited with the art of astrology (divining a person's fate from the courses of the heavenly bodies), with divination and sorcery, the more so since the pagan religion of the Persians was combined with various dark superstitions.

16. The Persian king Yazdegerd I reigned from 399 to 420. The uprising raised by the Persian Magi against the Christians took place in 419.

Aspebetus, were ordered to guard carefully all the roads, so that none of the Christians could flee from Persia to the Greeks. Then Aspebetus, seeing such great malice against the innocent Christians, took pity on them, and not only did not hinder them from fleeing from the Persian land, but himself, as far as he could, helped them, protecting them from dangers and death. As a result, he was slandered by the unbelievers before the king Izdegerd. Fearing torments, Aspebetus, taking his son, his property and all his household, hastily fled from Persia into the borders of the Greek kingdom. The Greek emperor, receiving him, entrusted to him the command of the Saracens who lived under the rule of the Greeks in Arabia. When Aspebetus settled there, his son Terebon saw in a dream the Venerable Euthymius, who promised him recovery if he turned to Christ. Waking, Terebon told his father of his dream; the latter immediately took the youth and, accompanied by a multitude of servants, came to the monastery of the Venerable Euthymius and Theoctistus. The brethren, seeing the multitude of Saracens, were frightened. But the blessed Theoctistus, going out to the Saracens, asked them:

"What are you seeking here?"

They answered:

"We are seeking the servant of God Euthymius."

Theoctistus said to them:

"He whom you seek lives here, but until the Sabbath he sees no one, because he keeps silence."

Aspebetus, taking Theoctistus by the hand, pointed to his sick son and commanded him to tell everything about himself.

The youth began to speak:

"A year ago I received this sore in Persia, and having experienced the medical skill of physicians and the magical incantations of the magi, I received no benefit, but became even more ill. Coming here to the land of Arabia and feeling no relief, one night, lying on my bed, I pondered whether I would ever receive healing, and I spoke to myself: 'O Terebon! Where is the medical art of the Hellenes and the Persians? Where are the spells and charms? Where is the power of our idols, and what benefit is there from them? Where are the inventions of the astrologers and the fables of our teaching, and the useless invocations of our

gods? Truly all this is only dreams worthy of laughter, for it helps no one at all, without the consent of the One true God.' Reasoning thus, I turned to prayer and prayed with tears, saying: 'Great and dread God, who created heaven and earth, if Thou wilt have mercy on me and deliver me from this grievous illness, I will become a Christian, forsaking all the iniquities and errors of the Hellenic faith.' Having thus prayed, I fell asleep and saw in a dream a certain monk with gray hair and a great beard; he said to me: 'What are you suffering from?' When I showed him my illness, he said to me: 'Will you fulfill what you promised God?' I answered: 'I will fulfill it, if I am freed from this illness.' Then the elder said to me: 'I am Euthymius, who dwell in the eastern desert, at a distance of ten poprishches from Jerusalem, not far from the road leading to Jericho. So, if you wish to be healed, come to me, and God will heal you through me.' Of all this that I saw and heard in the dream I told my father, and so we have come here by the command of him who appeared to me in the vision. We beg you, show us that physician, revealed by God."

The blessed Theoctistus went and told the great Euthymius of all he had heard. He, judging that it was not fitting to resist the command of God, came out of his silence and, coming to the sick man, prayed to God for him and marked him with the sign of the cross, and at once Terebon was healed, as if he had never been ill. The barbarians, struck by such sudden healing of Terebon, believed in Christ, and all, falling prostrate on the ground, asked to be baptized. Euthymius the Wonderworker, seeing that they had believed in God with their whole heart, instructed them as catechumens and baptized first Aspebetus, whom he named Peter[17], after him Marinus, the brother of Aspebetus's wife, then Terebon, and also all the Saracens who had come with him. Having kept them with him for forty days, the Venerable taught them by the word of God and, establishing them in the faith, dismissed them to their homeland. Marinus, the uncle of Terebon, did not leave the monastery, but received tonsure in it and remained here until his very death; he greatly pleased God and was abbot of that monastery after the Vener-

17. Afterwards Peter, bearing the name Aspevetos, was the first Bishop of the Saracens and took part in the Council of Ephesus (the Third Ecumenical Council) in 431.

able Theoctistus, as will be seen from what follows. As for his considerable property, which he brought as a gift to the monastery, it was partly distributed to the poor and partly spent on the building and enlargement of the monastery.

Meanwhile, after the report of the miraculous healing of Terebon had spread everywhere, great numbers of the sick began to flock from all sides to the blessed Euthymius, the physician who took no fee, and all soon received healing and returned home well.

As a result, the name of the saint became famous not only in Palestine but also in the surrounding regions. The Venerable, seeing that his silence was being disturbed, grieved and sorrowed that many came and glorified him, recalling his former silence and secretly intending to depart into the desert called Ruba[18]. The blessed Theoctistus, learning of this, told the brethren. And so all, gathering together, came and fell at the feet of the Venerable Euthymius, begging him with tears not to leave them orphaned. He, wishing to console them, promised at first not to withdraw from there; but after a few days, driven by the desire to remain in unceasing silence and being no longer able to endure worldly fame, he secretly went out of the monastery at night, taking with him one disciple, Dometian, of virtuous life, who, like the Venerable himself, came from Melitene, and went to Ruba. Passing through the southern desert near the Dead Sea, he climbed a high mountain set apart from the other mountains, called Marda[19], and, finding on it a well with water and a collapsed hut, he rebuilt it and settled there and lived for some time, feeding on desert herbs. Afterward the Venerable went into the desert of Ziph, situated near the village of Aristobulgada[20], wishing to see the cave in which David once hid, fleeing from Saul. Having seen that place, the Venerable Euthymius built a monastery there.

The occasion for the building of the monastery was the following. The son of the elder of the village of Aristobulgada was possessed by

18. Ruva is a desert on the north-western shores of the Dead Sea, between it, the present Jerusalem road and the Lavra of the Venerable Sabbas the Sanctified.
19. Marda, otherwise Mores, is a mountain near the Dead Sea.

an unclean spirit and cried out loudly, calling upon the name of Euthymius, for thus God had invisibly commanded him. The youth's father and relatives inquired diligently everywhere about Euthymius, who he was and where he was. Learning that he was living between Caparbaricha[21] and Aristobulgada in David's cave, the father of the sick man brought his demoniac son to him. As soon as the latter saw the saint, the demon immediately threw him to the ground and came out of him. When news of the miracle spread, many from the surrounding villages came to the saint and built him a monastery. The brethren gathered around him, and God sent them food. The saint there converted many who belonged to the Manichaean heresy to Orthodoxy, persuading them to anathematize the heresiarch Manes. Then, feeling disturbed by the multitude of visitors, he said to his disciple Dometian:

"Come, child, and let us visit the Venerable Theoctistus and the brethren."

And they set out. Drawing near the cenobium, the Venerable Euthymius found on the mountain a place that pleased him, and upon which his laura later arose: the place was level and secluded, and the air was healthful. There he halted in a small cave that happened to be there, where after his repose his body was afterwards buried.[22] The Blessed Theoctistus, learning of the Venerable Euthymius's arrival, hastened out to greet him and begged him to come and dwell in his place in the cenobium together with the brethren. But Euthymius did not consent, and only promised to come to the church services on all Sundays. Aspebet, also called Peter, hearing that the Venerable Euthymius had returned to his place, rejoiced and came to him with a multitude of Saracens, with their wives and children, and asked him to speak to them a word of salvation. The elder, having given them instruction, turned to Christ all who had come with Aspebet; leading them into the lower

20. The Desert of Ziph forms part of the Judaean desert, south of Jerusalem and south-east of Hebron. To its west and east are caves, in one of which David hid, escaping the pursuit of Saul (1 Kgdms. ch. 18 ff.). Aristobulias is a village near Hebron.

21. Kaparzarikh, today Beni-Naim, was a monastery lying south-east of Hebron, in the desert along the course of the river Jordan, not far from it.

22. Today it is Der Mukelik. The Lavra of the Venerable Euthymius lay 3000 paces (about 4 versts) south of the lower monastery, to the right of the road to Jericho.

monastery, he enlightened them with holy Baptism, and remained with them seven days, teaching and confirming them in the faith. After this, desiring quiet, he returned to his cave.

Aspebet Peter, seeing that the elder had no cell but lived in a small cave, summoned masons and built for the saint three cells, a small church and a bakehouse; then he made a two-mouthed cistern and supplied the Venerable with everything necessary, so that he should lack nothing. The newly baptized Saracens no longer wished to be parted from the Venerable, but, desiring always to be nourished by his teachings, asked the saint to allow them to live near him. But Euthymius did not agree to this, fearing that his quiet would then be wholly disturbed; instead, he led them to another suitable place, bade them build for themselves a cell and a church, and appointed for them presbyters and deacons. Their assembly increased with each day, for many Saracens came and received holy Baptism. The Venerable often visited them, teaching them the word of God. When their settlement had become as it were a great city, the Venerable approached Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem,[23] with the request to ordain Peter, the father of Terebon, as bishop for the newly enlightened Saracens. And Peter was ordained bishop, ministering to the spiritual needs of the multitude of Saracens who had accepted the holy faith.

The Venerable Euthymius did not wish to have companions in the place where he dwelt in silence, and therefore did not establish either a cenobium or a laura, but sent those who came to him for tonsure to the lower monastery, to the Venerable Theoctistus; likewise, if anyone brought him anything for bodily needs, he sent it all to the monastery of Theoctistus. But when God was pleased to people that place with many monks, He commanded the great Euthymius in a vision not to drive away those who came to him for the sake of salvation. Once three brothers according to the flesh came to him, natives of Cappadocia, reared in Syria: Cosmas, Chrysippus and Gabriel; they burned in spirit for spiritual perfection. But the elder did not wish to receive them, partly because he loved his solitude, partly because they were young,

23. St. Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, a defender of Orthodoxy against heretics, held the see from 420 to 458.

and especially because the youngest of the brothers, Gabriel, was a eunuch from his mother's womb and very young, and in face resembled a woman. Then in the night a certain divine appearance came to the Venerable, in which a voice spoke to him:

"Receive these brethren, for God has sent them, and henceforth do not turn away anyone who desires to be saved."

Then the saint received them and said to the eldest of them, Cosmas:

"Behold, I receive you, as God has commanded me; you also must do what I shall order: do not allow the younger brother to go out of the cell, so that none of the other brethren may see him; for it is not fitting for a female person to dwell in the laura, lest hostile warfare arise against someone."

Then the saint foretold to him what was to follow.

"As I suppose," he said, "you will not remain here long; for God wishes to entrust to you the episcopate in the church of Scythopolis."[24]

This prediction was afterwards indeed fulfilled.

After this the Venerable began to receive all who came. Thus he received Domninus, a native of Antioch,[25] nephew of John, Archbishop of Antioch;[26] he received also three other brothers from Melitene, nephews of that Synodius who, together with Acacius, had been Euthymius's teacher, by name Stephen, Andrew and Gaianus; then John, presbyter of Raithu,[27] Anatolius and Phalassius, also Cyrion of Tiberias,[28] presbyter of the church of the holy martyr Basil in Scythopolis; having received them all, he bade Bishop Peter make small cells for them and adorn the church with every kind of splendor. In this way he established a laura after the pattern of the Pharan one. And to the laura came the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Juvenal, with St. Passarion,[29] then a

24. Scythopolis is a city north of Jerusalem. At that time it was a flourishing, populous city. Now it is a poor village (Bessan) amid barren desert.

25. Antioch is the ancient capital of Syria; it lies north of Palestine, on the bank of the river Orontes, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea.

26. John, Archbishop (Patriarch) of Antioch, held the see from 423 to 440.

27. Raithu, today Et-Tor, is a village on the eastern shore of the Sinai Peninsula, on the Red Sea.

28. Tiberias, today Tabaria, is a city on the western shore of the Lake of Gennesaret or Tiberias (otherwise the Sea of Galilee), in the north of Palestine.

chorepiscopus,[30] and Hesychius,[31] presbyter and church teacher, and he consecrated the laura's church.[32] Euthymius was at that time fifty-two years old. The Patriarch also appointed two deacons for the laura, Dometian and Domninus; the presbyters were John and Cyrion. The great Euthymius rejoiced in spirit at the consecration of his laura, especially at having seen the Patriarch, the most reverend Passarion and Hesychius the theologian, who were both renowned lights. But St. Passarion fell asleep, not yet seven months after this, being in deep old age.

In the first year after the consecration of the laura, when the brethren together with the Venerable Euthymius were in great straits regarding bodily necessities, Dometian was appointed steward[33] for the time being. It happened once that a crowd of Armenians, going from the holy city to the Jordan, turned off the road to the right and came to the laura, for God so arranged it that the virtue and faith of the great father might shine forth still more. They numbered no fewer than four hundred persons. Seeing them and noticing that they were hungry, the Venerable summoned the steward Dometian and said:

"Offer these people something to eat."

Dometian answered:

"Father! The cellarer[34] has nothing with which to satisfy ten men: whence then shall I get bread for so great a multitude?"

The saint, filled with prophetic grace, said:

"Go and do what I command you, for the Holy Spirit says that these people shall eat to the full, and food shall remain to us in abundance."

Dometian went into the bakehouse, where there lay a little bread, but could not open the doors, because God's blessing had filled the cell

29. The memory of the Venerable Passarion is celebrated on the Saturday of Cheesefare.

30. In the ancient Church, besides the bishops of cities and dioceses, there were also bishops of villages, who (from the Greek word for village) were called chorepiscopi. They acted under the supervision of the city bishop, had in their charge a certain district of village churches, chose lower clergy for the churches subject to them, offered the Divine Gifts and distributed alms from church property, but did not have the power to ordain presbyters and deacons. In their activity they gave account to the principal bishop of the city and were his immediate assistants. Afterwards they were abolished.

31. Hesychius was afterwards numbered among the venerable saints. His memory is on the Saturday of Cheesefare.

32. In 429.

33. The economos is the person in charge of the monastery's household affairs.

to the top. Summoning some of the brethren, with their help he broke open the door, and the loaves poured out of the cell. The same blessing happened with the wine and oil, for the vessels were suddenly all filled. And all ate and were satisfied. For a whole three months they could not put the door back in its place because of the abundance of bread: the loaves did not diminish, just as once the meal of the barrel and the cruse of oil did not fail for the widow of Sarepta of Sidon who entertained strangers (3 Kgdms. 17:14).[35] Dometian, astonished at that miracle, threw himself at the feet of his teacher, asking forgiveness. The elder, admonishing him, gave instruction on hospitality and hope in God.

From that time the laura began to increase, to be blessed with every abundance and to be enlarged with cell buildings; and in the church the Divine service was performed daily. The steward was obliged, for the needs of the monastery, to acquire livestock for the service of the brethren. In the laura there was a certain brother, a native of Asia,[36] named Auxentius, very fit for this monastery service. The steward asked him to watch over and pasture the monastery's mules and donkeys, but he did not obey. Then the steward turned to the presbyters John and Cyrion and together with them begged Auxentius to take up this service; but he did not obey them either. When Saturday came, and an opportunity arose to speak with the great Euthymius about monastery affairs, the steward told the Venerable of Auxentius's disobedience. The Venerable, summoning Auxentius, said to him:

"Listen to us, child, and accept the obedience laid upon you."

He answered:

"I cannot, honored father—three causes hinder me from doing this: the first is that I am a foreigner and cannot speak the local language; the second is the fear of falling into sin; the third is that, having the care of the livestock, I shall no longer be able to sit in my cell in contemplation and keep silence."

34. The kelarios is the keeper and dispenser of the monastery's provisions.

35. A *chvanets* is a small vessel, a little jug.

36. Asia is the western part of Asia Minor; it was so called after its conquest by the Romans even before Christ. Later the name Asia was transferred to the entire continent; in this case the western part of Asia Minor is meant.

The great Euthymius answered:

"We pray God that you may suffer no harm from all this, for God knows that you serve His servants out of fear of Him. Hearken to the Lord who says: 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister' (Mt. 20:28), and again: 'I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me' (Jn. 6:30)."

But even after such exhortations of the Venerable, Auxentius hardened himself and did not obey. Then the Venerable, angered, said:

"We, child, counsel you what is profitable for you, and you do not listen; you shall see what the reward of disobedience is."

And immediately Auxentius fell to the ground in a fit of demonic frenzy, trembling and shaking; the fathers present begged the saint on his behalf, and he, scarcely prevailed upon, raised him up and, making the sign of the Cross over him, healed him. Coming to himself, Auxentius, falling at the feet of the saint, begged forgiveness. The saint said to him:

"Obedience is a great virtue, for God requires obedience more than sacrifice; disobedience, however, brings death."

Then, having offered a prayer over Auxentius, the Venerable Euthymius blessed him and said:

"You are healed; sin no more, lest something worse befall you" (Jn. 6:14).

After this Auxentius accepted the obedience laid upon him and began to fulfil it with zeal.

Two brothers, Maron and Climatius, weighed down by the harsh life in the Lavra, agreed to flee by night; and when they had already made ready for this, their intention became known to Venerable Euthymius. He saw in a vision the devil casting a bridle upon them and drawing them into deadly nets. Immediately summoning them, the Venerable addressed them at length, teaching them about patience, persuading and exhorting them to abandon their ruinous intention. He spoke of how one must carefully guard oneself: Adam, being in Paradise, transgressed the commandment of God; but Job kept it, sitting upon the dunghill. To this admonition he added the following:

"We must not admit wicked thoughts that instil in us sorrow or hatred toward the place where we live, or toward our companions; we must not listen to thoughts that counsel us to move to another place. Rather, we must be sober at every hour and turn our mind away from the snares of the demons, lest by our removal our rule be destroyed; for a tree that is often transplanted does not bear fruit. If anyone wishes to accomplish something good in the place where he lives and cannot, let him not think that he will be able to bring it about elsewhere; for a good work is achieved not by place, but by will and faith. Hear one account, which I heard from the Egyptian monks. A certain brother lived in Egypt in a cenobium and was often angry and agitated, and abusive words were constantly on his lips. Falling into despondency, he left the monastery and settled in solitude, supposing that if he had no one to converse with, he would be freed from his habit of anger. One day, when for some need he had filled a vessel with water, it overturned; he filled it a second time, but the vessel overturned again; the same happened a third time. The brother, deceived by a demon, grew angry at the vessel and, seizing it, smashed it."

As Saint Euthymius was saying this, Climatius laughed. The elder, looking at him, said:

"Are you, too, brother, beguiled by a demon, that you laugh so senselessly? Have you not heard that the Lord counts those who laugh as rejected, and blesses those who weep?"

Having said this, the Venerable turned away from Climatius and went into his inner cell. Climatius at once fell prostrate, seized with trembling, for some fear and dread had come upon him. At that time Dometian was there; he gathered some of the fathers and, going in to the Venerable, asked him to forgive Climatius.

Heeding them, the Saint came out, raised the one who lay prostrate, and healed him with the sign of the Cross, saying:

"Henceforth attend to yourself and do not disregard the instructions of the fathers, receiving them as it were as the words of God, and become wholly an eye, as we have heard of the Cherubim. Guard yourself carefully on every side, for you walk amid nets."

Having thus admonished the brother and instructed both who had agreed to flee, the Venerable sent them back to their cells, steadfast.

In those times the Third Ecumenical Council was assembled at Ephesus against the impious Nestorius[37]. At that time Synodius, who with Acacius had been his teacher during the Venerable's youth, came from Melitene to Palestine for pilgrimage. Having three nephews of his, Stephen, Andrew and Gaianus, in Euthymius' Lavra, Synodius came there and, after kissing Venerable Euthymius, told him of the impious heresy of Nestorius, who, by the permission of God, had for a time been Patriarch of Constantinople and had by his false teachings disturbed the whole world; he told him of the zeal for Orthodoxy of the blessed Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria[38], and of Acacius, Bishop of Melitene, who had once been his teacher. The Venerable rejoiced on their account. To Peter, formerly called Aspebetus, who was by then already bishop of the Saracens and who, together with the other Palestinian bishops, was setting out for the Council of Ephesus, the Venerable gave command to hold to the teaching of Cyril and Acacius and to defend it in every way. When the council was concluded and Nestorius deposed, Peter, returning, related to the elder in detail all that had taken place at the council; the elder rejoiced at the establishment of Orthodoxy, but grieved over John, Archbishop of Antioch, who, though Orthodox, had defended Nestorius.

The deacon Domninus, grieving over his uncle, asked the great Father to let him go to Antioch to correct his uncle. But the Saint said to him:

"Do not go, child: if you remain in the place to which you were called and do not heed the thought that would draw you away from the desert, you will advance in virtue and be glorified in God; but if you disobey me and go, you will receive your uncle's throne, but not to your benefit, and you will not be honored on it for long, for it will soon be taken from you by evil men."

But Domninus, not heeding the command of his father, went to Antioch without his blessing, and everything the Saint had foretold came

37. In 431.

to pass in him[39]; afterward he returned to the elder, weeping and repenting, and marveling at the Saint's foresight.

Concerning this our Venerable Father Euthymius, the Venerable Cyriacus the Hermit, his disciple, bears the following witness: "Never did we see him eat except on Saturday and Sunday, nor converse with anyone except in great necessity; nor did we ever see him sleep on his side, but only sometimes dozing while seated; at times he would take hold with both hands of a rope stretched in the corner of his cell, and so, out of bodily necessity, sleep a little, following the saying of the great Arsenius about sleep: 'Come, wicked slave!' For in his life he imitated the holy Venerable Arsenius, and with delight he heard about him from the brethren who came from Egypt."

A certain Anastasius, sacristan of the church of the Holy Resurrection[40], desired to see the great Euthymius, and with his friends, the Jerusalem clergy, went to his Lavra. The Venerable Euthymius, foreseeing their coming in spirit, summoned the Lavra's steward Chrysippus and said to him:

"Prepare to receive guests, for behold, the Patriarch of Jerusalem is coming."

When the guests arrived, the Venerable received Anastasius as a patriarch and conversed with him as with a patriarch. All who were present were astonished; but the steward Chrysippus, coming up, said to the elder in his ear:

"Reverend Father, there is no patriarch here; this is Anastasius the sacristan."

The Saint, marveling, said:

"Believe me, child, that until now I have seen him clothed in patriarchal vestments. And truly I was not deceived: for what God has predestined, so He will bring to pass."

38. The memory of St. Cyril of Alexandria (444) is celebrated by the Church on June 9 and January 18, together with Athanasius of Alexandria.

39. Domninus held the patriarchal see in Antioch from 441 to 448.

40. The Church of the Holy Resurrection in Jerusalem was built by Constantine the Great and consecrated in 335, on September 13. It was built over the cave of the Lord's Tomb and was distinguished by magnificent and numerous adornments. In the church there were many vessels with precious stones, whose keeper (in Greek, skevophylax) was Anastasius.

This word of the Venerable was spoken before everyone and was fulfilled in its time, when Anastasius was appointed patriarch[41].

The aforementioned Terebon, son of Bishop Peter, called Aspebetus, took a wife from his own kin and, living with her a long time, had no children, since she was barren. Bringing her to the wonderworker Euthymius, he entreated him, saying:

"I know, Father, that God will hearken to your prayer, for He fulfils the will of those who fear Him. Therefore I beseech your holiness: pray for us to the Lover of mankind God, that He may grant us a child."

The Saint signed him and his wife three times with the sign of the holy Cross and said to them:

"Behold, God grants you the bearing of children, and you will have three sons."

There was a certain brother in the Lavra named Emilian who, one night, at dawn on a Sunday, was kindled with fleshly passion by a demonic delusion and was troubled by impure thoughts, feeling in his heart the desire for sin. By chance the Venerable Euthymius, going to Matins in the church, passed by the place where the brother, troubled by desire, was standing; perceiving the stench of the lustful demon and understanding what was happening, the Saint said:

"May God rebuke you, accursed unclean spirit."

And at once the brother fell to the ground, foaming at the mouth and raging. The brethren gathered, a candle was brought, and the Venerable said to the brethren:

"Do you see this brother? From his youth until now he has lived virtuously, in bodily chastity; but now, when he was for a short while carried away by fleshly lust and dwelt on those impure thoughts with desire and took delight in them, a demon has taken hold of him. Let us also receive instruction from his affliction, and let each one know that if anyone, though he does not touch another's body and commit the unclean sin, yet in his mind commits fornication, being carried away by impure thoughts, retaining them, consenting to them and delighting in them,—that one is a fornicator, and a demon possesses him."

41. Anastasius held the patriarchal see in Jerusalem from 458 to 478.

To this the elder added the following account:

"Listen, brethren," he said, "to an account which some Egyptian Fathers related to me concerning a certain brother whom everyone considered holy, but who in his heart provoked God, being carried away by impure thoughts and committing adultery in his mind. When he drew near to death, a certain discerning elder came there and heard about him that he lay sick unto death; and he found all the inhabitants weeping and saying: 'If this saint dies, we have no further hope of salvation, for we are all being saved by his prayers.' Hearing this, the discerning elder hastened to the sick man, desiring to receive a blessing from this supposed saint; and when he drew near to his dwelling, he saw a multitude of people with candles, priests and deacons, waiting for the bishop to conduct the solemn burial of that saint. Entering the chamber, the elder found him still breathing, and, gazing with the eyes of his soul, he saw a devil holding a trident; piercing the heart of the dying man with it, the devil was drawing out his soul with many torments. At that moment the saint heard a voice from heaven saying: 'Since his soul did not give Me rest for a single day, so do you also continually torment him and tear his soul out of him.' Thus that brother died in torment, for outwardly he appeared holy, but inwardly in his heart he provoked God." "Heeding this, brethren," continued the Venerable Euthymius, "carefully guard yourselves against thoughts that defile the soul; for at the time of the soul's separation from the body, those who dream of fornication will endure the same torment as those who commit that sin. But let us pray for this brother Emilian, that God, who chastises him but does not deliver him to death, may free him from the devil and from carnal passions."

When the saint had prayed, the devil came out, crying: "I am the spirit of fornication," and he filled the whole place with a stench as of burning sulphur. From that time Emilian was freed from unclean desires and became a chosen vessel of God.

At that time there came a drought without rain, and a great drought, and the word of Scripture was fulfilled: "And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee iron" (Deut. 28:23). And all were in great affliction because of the drought.

The brethren, together with the Venerable Theoctistus, asked the Venerable Euthymius to pray to God and obtain rain, for they knew how effective his prayer was before God; but he would not consent. The feast of the Theophany of the Lord arrived, and the day drew near on which the saint was accustomed to withdraw into the desert until Palm Sunday. A multitude of people from the holy city and the surrounding villages gathered at the monastery, bearing the cross and crying: "Lord, have mercy!" And they came to the great Euthymius, not allowing him to go into the desert until he had entreated God to send rain. Hearing the cries, the Venerable went out to them and said:

"What do you seek from a man, a sinner? Children, I have no boldness to pray to God about this, for I am a sinner and have more need than others of His mercy, especially in this present time of His wrath. Our sins separate us from Him; we have darkened His image, defiled His Church, serving lusts and various passions; we live in greed and envy and are worthy of hatred, since we hate one another. Therefore He has brought upon us this chastisement, so that, admonished by it, we might repent; and when we amend ourselves by repentance, then He will hear us, for it is written: 'The Lord is nigh unto all who call upon Him in truth' (Ps. 144:18)."

When the saint spoke thus to the people, all cried out as with one voice:

"Do you yourself, Father, pray for us; we believe that God will hear your prayer, for He fulfils the will of those who fear Him."

Moved by these words, the Venerable, taking with him the Fathers who were present, went into the church, bidding the people also to pray. Prostrating himself in the church, he entreated God with tears to have mercy on His creation, to visit the land with mercy and compassion, and to water it with rain. As he prayed, suddenly a south wind blew, the sky was covered with clouds, thunder rolled, and a great rain fell. Then the saint, rising and finishing his prayer, went out and said to the people:

"Behold, God has heard your prayers; He will bless this summer above other years. Therefore strive also to please God by good deeds, Who has shown you this mercy."

With these words the Venerable dismissed the people. And the rain continued to pour for many days, so that the saint could not, as was his custom, go into the great desert. And that summer was blessed with an abundance of the fruits of the earth above other years, according to the saint's word.

In the seventy-fifth year of the life of the Venerable Euthymius there was the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon against Dioscorus, the impious Patriarch of Alexandria.[42] Some of the Venerable's disciples who had been raised to the episcopal rank were present at the Council: Stephen, Bishop of Jamnia,[43] and John, Bishop of the Saracens, successor of Peter Aspebetus; having written down the definitions of the Council of Chalcedon, they reported them to their Abba, the holy Euthymius. He accepted the confession of faith set forth at the Council of Chalcedon and acknowledged it as orthodox, and a report quickly spread throughout the Palestinian desert and among all the monks, many of whom held heterodox beliefs, that the great Euthymius would follow the Council of Chalcedon. At that time there came to Palestine a certain heretic named Theodosius, a monk in appearance but in fact an impious man, full of the false teaching of Eutyches; he uttered blasphemies against the holy Council of Chalcedon, asserting that it had supposedly rejected the dogma of the Orthodox faith and restored the teaching of Nestorius, and he spread many other improper and false speeches. At that time the Empress Eudocia, wife of the pious Emperor Theodosius the Younger,[44] was living in Palestine in the holy places, having resided there since the death of her husband. And that Theodosius the heretic first led the Empress Eudocia to reject the

42. The Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon was in 451. Dioscorus, Archbishop of Alexandria, held the see from 441 to 451. Together with Eutyches, archimandrite of a Constantinopolitan monastery, he falsely taught that in Jesus Christ there is only one nature, the Divine (whence the heresy received the name Monophysitism, from the Greek words for one and nature), which, after the Incarnation, swallowed up the human nature. At the council this false teaching was condemned, and it was ordered to confess our Lord Jesus Christ "in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably known... not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word."

43. Jamnia is a city in Palestine, founded in remote antiquity by the Philistines, not far from Jaffa (ancient Joppa), which lies on the Mediterranean Sea, about twelve hours' journey northwest of Jerusalem.

44. Theodosius II, the Younger, reigned from 408 to 450.

Council of Chalcedon; then he infected many desert Fathers with his heresy and made them his fellow-thinkers. Then, with a multitude of deluded monks, he stirred up a rebellion against Patriarch Juvenal: he insistently urged him to reject the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon; when the latter refused, he was cast down from the patriarchal throne, and Juvenal departed to Constantinople to the Emperor Marcian.

Theodosius, relying on the support of the Empress Eudocia and the power of the monks blinded by heresy who aided him, ascended the patriarchal throne[45] and caused much harm to the Orthodox; he cast down some bishops and clergy who would not have communion with him, while others he tormented and killed, and he had already drawn all the Palestinian monks after himself, except those who were in Euthymius' monasteries: having before their eyes the example of their father, the great Euthymius, they stood firm in Orthodoxy. The false patriarch Theodosius made many efforts to bring the Venerable Euthymius into communion with himself, sending to him continually, entreating and threatening, and by all means trying to ensnare him in his heresy. But the Venerable was not caught in the snares of the enemy, nor was he shaken by his cunning, being like a firm pillar and an immovable wall. Burdened each day by the crafty entreaties Theodosius sent him, he gathered the brethren and, charging them to guard carefully against heresies and to hold firmly to Orthodoxy, withdrew into the great desert. Many of the brethren did likewise, avoiding the oppression of the heretics, and, imitating their father, went out into the desert.

At that time in the Jordan desert[46] there was a certain hermit, who had recently come from Lycia,[47] named Gerasimus; he had passed through all the rules of the monastic life and had prevailed in his struggle against unclean spirits. But while he conquered and drove away invisible devils, he was ensnared and deceived by visible devils, the heretics, for he had fallen into the heresy of Eutyches. Hearing of the Venerable Euthymius, whose fame for virtuous life was spread

45. In the spring of 452.
46. The Desert of the Jordan lay west of the Jordan, from Jericho to Jerusalem, and extended further south along the western shore of the Dead Sea; it is a wild, rocky, dry and barren region.
47. Lycia is a southern region of Asia Minor.

everywhere, Gerasimus went to him in the desert of Ruba, where he then dwelt. On seeing him he received great spiritual benefit from him; having remained with the Venerable Euthymius for a long time, and being nourished by the useful discourses of his sweet-speaking tongue and by his instructions in Orthodoxy, Gerasimus rejected the heretical false teaching, turned to the Orthodox faith, and deeply repented of his former error.

The turmoil caused by the heretics in Palestine through Theodosius continued for a whole year. Then an order came from the pious Emperor Marcian to seize the false patriarch Theodosius, that he might undergo judgment and punishment for his deeds; but he, learning of this, fled to Mount Sinai[48] and hid himself—no one knows where. Then the Venerable Euthymius returned from the desert to his Lavra.

Once when the Venerable was celebrating the Divine Liturgy, Therevon the Saracen and the eunuch Gabriel, brother of Chrysippus, saw during the Trisagion hymn a fire come down from heaven and surround the saint; and the Venerable stood before the Divine Table in a pillar of fire until the end of the service. The Venerable himself sometimes told some of the brethren that he often saw an Angel celebrating the Liturgy with him. He also had the gift of discerning by outward appearance the inner movements of the spirit and of knowing human thoughts, both evil and good. When the brethren partook of the Holy Mysteries, he saw with what soul each one communed: some he saw being sanctified by Communion, as they approached worthily; others he saw darkened, with faces as of the dead, because they had presumed to approach unworthily. Therefore the Venerable constantly admonished all with the words of the Apostle:

Take heed diligently, brethren, how you draw near to Communion: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself" (1 Cor. 11:28–29). For this holy thing is pre-

48. Mount Sinai is located in the north-west of Arabia, east of the Chermnoe, or Red, Sea. This mountain, which constitutes a group of mountains consisting of granite rocks, cut through and surrounded by steep and rugged valleys, is called by the Arabs Mount Tur or Jebel Tur Sina; it lies in the middle of the arms of the Red Sea that form the Sinai Peninsula.

pared for the holy, and not for the defiled; and if you have a pure conscience, then "those who looked unto Him were enlightened, and their faces shall not be ashamed" (Ps. 33:6).

When the most holy Juvenal had again taken his throne and set about correcting the disorders that had arisen in the Church, the Empress Eudocia, drawn by the aforementioned Theodosius into the heresy of Eutyches, wavered in her thoughts, not knowing what confession to hold, and sent to Antioch to the Venerable Simeon the Stylite, asking him for useful counsel and instruction. He wrote to her as follows:

"Know that the devil, seeing the riches of your virtues, asked to sift you "as wheat" (Lk. 22:31), and through that destroyer Theodosius he corrupted your God-loving soul; but take courage, for your faith has not failed. I am greatly amazed that, having a spring close at hand, you neglect it and strive to draw the same water from afar. You have there the God-bearing Euthymius; follow his teaching, and you will be saved."

Having received such a letter from the Venerable Simeon, the Empress at once began to inquire about the Venerable Euthymius. Learning that he never came out of the desert into the city, she resolved to build a pillar in the eastern desert, on a high hill, at a distance of thirty stadia from the Lavra of Euthymius,[49] so as to be able to see the Venerable often there and delight in his teachings; having built that pillar, she settled in it in solitude. She sent to the Venerable Euthymius the aforementioned Anastasius, who was then chorepiscopus after Passarion, and Cosmas the keeper of the Cross, entreating that he permit her to see him. They, coming, did not find him in the Lavra, for he had long since departed to Rouba. Taking with them the Venerable Theoctistus, they went to that desert and, finding him, earnestly begged him to go to the Empress and save her strayed soul; and they only with difficulty persuaded the elder to go to her. Seeing the great Euthymius, the Empress rejoiced greatly and, falling down at his honorable feet, said:

49. The pillar, or more precisely the fortress, was built by Empress Eudocia on the highest mountain in the whole eastern desert, today Muntar. (Thirty stadia equal a little over 5 versts.)

"Now I have learned that God has looked upon my unworthiness."

The elder, having sufficiently instructed her concerning Orthodoxy, bade her hold fast to the holy four Ecumenical Councils: the Nicene, which assembled against Arius; the Constantinopolitan, against Macedonius; the Ephesian, against Nestorius; and the Chalcedonian, against Dioscorus and Eutyches; and he commanded her to be reconciled with the Patriarch Juvenal, with whom she had formerly contended. Having said much else for her benefit, he blessed her and, having prayed over her, departed. The Empress received his words as though they had been spoken from the lips of God, and strove to fulfil them in deed; going at once to the Holy City for reconciliation with the most holy Juvenal, and openly renouncing the heresy, she entered into communion with the Orthodox Church. Seeing this, very many of the laity and monks who had been led astray by Theodosius, following the Empress's example, turned to Orthodoxy.

In the eighty-second year of Euthymius's life,[50] the blessed Sabbas, still a youth, came to his Lavra; the elder, receiving him, sent him to the lower monastery to the Venerable Theoctistus, and prophesied concerning him that in a short time he would shine in the monastic life above others, which came to pass, as may be seen from the Life of the Venerable Sabbas. There came at that time also to the Venerable Euthymius Martyrius, a Cappadocian by birth, and Elijah, an Arab by birth. After the murder of the Emperor Marcian, Timothy Aelurus[51] stirred up confusion and rebellion in Egypt, during which the most holy Proterius, Patriarch of Alexandria,[52] was also killed; unable to endure this rebellion, Martyrius and Elijah left Egypt and came to the great Euthymius as to a quiet harbor. The Venerable showed them love and reverence; he foresaw that both in their time would occupy the throne of the Apostle James, the brother of the Lord, in Jerusalem. He took

50. In 458.

51. Timothy, surnamed Aelurus, a presbyter of Alexandria, a heretic (Monophysite), a partisan of Dioscorus.

52. Proterius was Patriarch of Alexandria from 451 to 457; after the death of Marcian he was killed by the Monophysites as a defender of the Council of Chalcedon (his memory is February 28). After him Timothy Aelurus was made patriarch and held the see until 460, deposing bishops and persecuting all who accepted the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon.

them with him both to the Cuthilian desert and to the Rouban, together with St. Gerasimus, and there he remained with them, according to his custom, until Palm Sunday; every Sunday the Venerable celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and those great fathers received the Most Pure Mysteries from his hands.

Soon after that, in the reign of the Christ-loving Leo,[53] who ascended the throne after Marcian, the most holy Patriarch Juvenal died. After his death, by the common counsel of all, Anastasius[54], formerly sacristan and chorepiscopus, was unanimously chosen. And the prophecy of the Venerable Euthymius was fulfilled, which he had uttered when Anastasius visited him and the saint saw him with prophetic eyes in the patriarchal vestments. Remembering this, Anastasius sent to the saint honorable clerics with the following words: "Behold, Father, now your prophecy has been fulfilled; I beg you, allow me to come to you to greet your holiness."

The Venerable Euthymius answered this as follows:

"I always desire to see your holiness and to receive benefit from your conversation; but since your first coming to my humble self was quiet and had few attendants, while your present dignity requires that a multitude of attendants go with you, therefore the coming of your blessedness exceeds my feeble strength. Accordingly, I beg your holiness not to trouble yourself to come to my humility. If, however, you are pleased to come, I will receive you with joy, but then I shall also have to receive the others who come, and so it will be impossible for me to remain in this place, because of the disturbance from the many visitors."

Hearing this and pondering in his soul, the Patriarch said to himself: "If I go, I shall offend the elder. Therefore I will not go." Nevertheless, after some time, compelled by need, he did go to the Venerable and saw him, of which we shall speak afterwards.

The blessed Empress Eudocia built many churches and such a multitude of monasteries, almshouses and hostels that it is hard to enumerate them. At the church of St. Peter that she built, about twenty stadia from the Lavra of Euthymius, she ordered a large and deep cistern to

53. St. Leo I reigned from 457 to 474.
54. Anastasius I held the patriarchal see from 458 to 478.

be made for those who came. On the days of Pentecost she herself went there to see the work and sent to the Venerable, asking him to come to her, that she might be granted his prayer and blessing and delight in his instruction; at the same time she wished to give the saint an offering for the common needs of the Lavra. But the great Euthymius replied to her through the messengers:

"Do not expect still to see me in the flesh. But you, child, why are you concerned with many things? I think that you will depart to God before winter comes. Therefore take pains this summer to prepare for your departure; and while you are still in the flesh, do not strive to remember me, either in writing or without writing, neither by giving us anything nor by receiving anything. But when you depart to the Lord of all, then remember me there, that He may receive me also in peace when His love for mankind wills it."

Hearing this, the blessed Eudocia grieved greatly, especially at the words "do not strive to remember me, either in writing or without writing," for she had wished to leave him a large income by her will. Hastening to the Holy City of Jerusalem, she conveyed to the Patriarch Anastasius the words of Euthymius. At that time the Empress was building a church in the name of the holy protomartyr Stephen, and while the temple was still unfinished, she ordered it consecrated on July 15, assigning it large revenues. Afterwards she went around all the churches she had built, being present at their consecration and assigning a sufficient amount of revenue to each. After four months had passed since the consecration of the churches, the pious Empress Eudocia commended her soul into the hands of God.[55]

In the ninetieth year of the life of the great Euthymius, the Venerable Theoctistus fell seriously ill. The Venerable Euthymius came to visit the sick Theoctistus and to give him the last kiss, and remained in that monastery for several days, awaiting the death of his friend and fellow-ascetic, that he might commit his body to burial; in that illness the blessed Theoctistus died on September 3.[56] The Patriarch Anastasius, learning of Theoctistus's death and that the holy Euthymius was

55. Empress Eudocia died in 460; she was buried in the church of St. Stephen.
56. The Venerable Theoctistus died in 467.

there, went quickly with his clergy, under the pretext that he wished to bury the blessed Theoctistus, but more for the sake of seeing and kissing the holy Euthymius. Seeing him, the Patriarch took him by the hands and embraced him, saying:

"I have long wished to kiss these holy hands, and now God has granted me this. And now I beg you, honorable father, pray to the Lord for me, that your prophecy concerning me, which has been fulfilled, may be preserved to the end; and write to me often, instructing me how to govern the Church of Christ, for I see in you the working of God's gifts, and have experienced their power in myself."

The saint, with humility, said:

"Forgive me, holy vladyka; I beg your blessedness to remember me in your prayers to God."

Having together committed the honorable body of the Venerable Theoctistus to burial, and having delighted in conversation with one another, they parted.

Marinus, Terebon's uncle, a God-pleasing man, was appointed hegumen of the Theoctistus coenobium; but two years later he died, and the Venerable Euthymius, coming, buried him near the Venerable Theoctistus. In place of Marinus he appointed as hegumen Longinus, a virtuous man. With this Longinus, once, in the month of January, the Blessed Sabbas came to the Lavra to the Venerable Euthymius to accompany him as he departed into the great desert. Seeing Sabbas's readiness, Euthymius took him with him to the ascetic labors of the desert. When they were walking through the waterless places of Ruwa, Sabbas was greatly afflicted with thirst from the toil and could go no further, for he was exhausted by thirst. Then the Venerable Euthymius, having compassion on him, by prayer brought water out of the dry ground, as is written in the Life of the Venerable Sabbas.

After his many and countless labors, the Venerable Euthymius drew near to his blessed end, which he foresaw through Divine revelation. In the year when the time came for his customary withdrawal into the desert, on the eighth day of the feast of the Theophany of the Lord, that is, January 14, the brethren gathered and came to the Venerable Father, some wishing to accompany him, others expecting to go with

him; among them were Martyrius and Elijah, who had come from Nitria. Seeing that the Venerable Father was not preparing for the journey and was making no arrangements concerning which of the brethren would go with him and which would remain in the Lavra, they asked him:

"Are you not leaving tomorrow for the desert, honored father?"

The saint answered:

"This week I remain with you in the Lavra; on Saturday, at midnight, I shall part from you."

The saint said this, foretelling to the brethren the time of his departure to God, but they did not understand him. On the third day, January 17, the memory of our Venerable Father Antony the Great came, and St. Euthymius commanded that the All-night Vigil be served in the church. When the Vigil was completed, calling the Lavra presbyters to the sanctuary, the Venerable Father said to them:

"Henceforth, brethren, I shall not perform with you any vigil, for God is already calling me from this temporal life. Therefore send to me Dometian, and in the morning let all the brethren gather here."

Hearing this, the presbyters wept aloud, and immediately the brethren learned what the great Euthymius had said. In the morning all gathered to the Venerable Father, and he began to speak to them thus:

"Fathers and brethren, my children, beloved in the Lord, I am setting out on the way of my fathers; but you, if you love me, keep my commandments: above all acquire pure love, which is the bond of perfection. And as it is impossible to eat bread without salt, so it is impossible to order virtue without love, for every virtue proves firm and steadfast through love and humility: humility raises the one who zealously cares for it to the height of the virtues, and love holds it firmly and does not allow it to fall down from that height; for "love never ends" (1 Cor. 13:8). That love is higher than humility is clear from the example of our Lord Himself, for for the sake of His love for us He voluntarily humbled Himself and became man, as we are. Therefore we must unceasingly confess to Him and offer praises, especially we who have renounced this turbulent world. Let each of you, brethren, attend

to himself and keep body and soul in purity. Never abandon the usual church gatherings; carefully preserve all the traditions and monastic rules; help those who are suffering in afflictions according to your strength. If any of the brethren struggles with impure thoughts, unceasingly instruct him, teach him, strengthen him, so that he may not be made to stumble by the devil and fall. I add to you this last commandment: let the monastery gates never be locked against those who come, but let them always be open to wayfarers; let the very roof be common to you and to strangers, and let all that you have be offered to those in need. And then from above, from God, abundant blessing will be given to you."

Having enjoined all this on the brethren, the Venerable Euthymius asked them whom they wished to have as their shepherd after him. They unanimously named Dometian. But the saint said:

"This is impossible, for Dometian will not remain long in this life after me, but on the seventh day he will follow me."

Astonished at such a bold and clear prophecy of the saint, the brethren chose Elijah, a native of Jericho, steward of the lower monastery[57]. Euthymius, turning to him, said:

"Behold, all the fathers have chosen you as their shepherd and guide: therefore attend to yourself and to all your flock."

Giving him many instructions and teaching him concerning the guidance of the brethren, the Venerable Father foretold certain circumstances that would come to pass in his monasteries after his death; then he spoke the following last word:

"If I obtain boldness before God, I shall first of all ask of Him grace, that I may be with you in spirit always, with those who wish to labor here after you, until the end of the age."

Having said this, the Venerable Father dismissed all except Dometian. He remained within the sanctuary for three days and peacefully fell asleep on the Saturday night, and was numbered with his fathers, having lived on earth ninety-seven years. This was January 20[58]. Immediately the news of the death of the Venerable Euthymius

57. That is, the monastery of the Venerable Theoctistus.

spread throughout all Palestine, and monks came flocking from all the monasteries and hermitages, among them the great Gerasimus, and a great multitude of people gathered. The most holy Patriarch Anastasius also arrived with all his clergy. Because of the multitude of people it was impossible to bury the honored body of the Venerable Father until the ninth hour, until at last the soldiers, by command of the patriarch, drove back the people, and the saint's body was solemnly buried. All wept at parting from him; especially inconsolably wept over him Martyrius and Elias, who had come from Nitria and who afterwards occupied the patriarchal throne in Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of the saint: for after Anastasius Martyrius ascended the throne, after Martyrius came Sallustius, and after him Elias[59], as is written in the Life of the Venerable Sabbas. The blessed Dometian, disciple of the Great Euthymius, did not leave his father's tomb for six days and nights; and when the seventh day came, the holy Euthymius appeared to him in a vision by night, joyful, with a radiant face, and said to him:

"Come to the rest prepared for you, for the Lord Christ is entreated that you be with me."

Filled with ineffable joy, Dometian announced this to the brethren, and going with gladness into the church, he gave up his spirit to the Lord, and was buried beside the tomb of his father. After the repose of our Venerable Father Euthymius, many wonders occurred at his tomb, and healings were granted[60], to the glory of God, glorified in His saints, Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Rejoice, thou barren desert, exult, thou that hast not travailed, for the man of spiritual desires hath multiplied thee with children,

58. The Venerable Euthymius the Great reposed in 473. – In the name of the Venerable Euthymius there was a monastery in Constantinople under Patriarch Menas (536–552). The relics of Euthymius in his monastery in Palestine, as if living in the body, were seen by the Russian hegumen Daniel at the beginning of the twelfth century.

59. Martyrius was Patriarch of Jerusalem from 478 to 486, Sallustius from 486 to 494, and Elias II from 494 to 517.

60. They are described in detail by the biographer of the Life of the Venerable Euthymius, Cyril of Scythopolis, a monk of the Lavra, a contemporary of him and of his disciples St. Sabbas the Sanctified and John the Silent.

planting thee with piety, nourishing thee with abstinence to the perfection of virtues. By his prayers, O Christ God, grant peace to our life.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

In thy honorable nativity creation found joy, and in thy Divine memory, Venerable Father, it received the gladness of many of thy wonders: pour them out abundantly into our souls and cleanse the defilement of our sins, that we may sing: Alleluia.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Bassus, Eusebius, Eutychius and Basilides

Память святых мучеников Васса, Евсевия, Евтихия и Василида

The holy martyrs Bassus, Eusebius, Eutychius and Basilides suffered under the reign of Diocletian. At first they served at the imperial court, were wealthy and belonged to the members of the imperial senate[61]. Seeing the sufferings of the holy Hieromartyr Theopemptus, Bishop of Nicomedia, they believed in Christ and received holy baptism. In consequence of this they were brought before the impious emperor for torments, and received the martyr's death together with five of their slaves. St. Bassus was buried in a ditch up to the half of his body and, hacked over his whole body, gave up his spirit to God. St. Eusebius was hung head downward and cut into pieces. St. Eutychius was bound by the hands and feet and, stretched strongly between four pillars, was torn apart. St. Basilides was slain with a knife. And thus they all received the crowns of martyrdom[62].

* * *

61. The *synklit* was the military and civil government, composed of the most important imperial counsellors and dignitaries.

62. The holy martyrs Vassus, Eusebius, Eutychius and Basilides suffered martyrdom together with five slaves in Nicomedia in the year 303.

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Inna, Pinna and Rimma

Память святых мучеников Инны, Пинны и Риммы

The holy martyrs Inna, Pinna and Rimma[63] were natives of Scythia, from the northern land[64], disciples of the holy Apostle Andrew the First-called. They taught about the name of Christ, and converting many of the barbarians to the right faith, baptized them. For this reason they were seized by the prince of the barbarians, but could not be brought to the point of renouncing Christ and offering sacrifice to idols. It was then a severe winter; the rivers were bound by frost so that not only men but horses and sleds walked over the ice. The prince commanded that large logs, like whole trees, be set in the ice, and the saints bound to them. Thus, when the water became turbulent and the ice gradually thickened, until it reached the necks of the saints, they, tormented by the terrible cold, gave up their blessed souls to the Lord[65].

* * *

63. According to the Serbian Prologue of the thirteenth century, these martyrs are called Enen, Niren and Pen.

64. Here is meant the so-called Lesser Scythia, which extended from the mouths of the Danube to Thrace. The holy Inna, Pinna and Rimma belonged to the agricultural tribe of southern Slavs who dwelt on the right bank of the Danube and along the western shore of the Black Sea.

65. They suffered in the second century.

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF JANUARY

January 21

21 января

New Calendar January 21 · Old Calendar February 3 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Maximus the Confessor

Житие преподобного отца нашего Максима Исповедника

Great not only in name[1] but also in his life, Venerable Maximus was born in the great imperial city of Constantinople. Descended from high-ranking and pious parents, he received a serious scholarly education. He studied philosophy and theology thoroughly, attained the highest renown by his wisdom, and was respected even in the imperial palace. Emperor Heraclius[2], seeing his intellect and righteous life, honored him, against Maximus's will, with the title of his first secretary and included him among his counselors. Venerable Maximus was loved and esteemed among the courtiers and was of great benefit to the whole imperial city.

At that time there arose the heresy of the Monothelites, who acknowledged in Christ our Lord only one will and one volition[3]. This heresy developed out of the earlier Eutychian heresy, which senselessly acknowledged in Christ only one nature, contrary to the Orthodox confession, which requires us to acknowledge in our Lord, the God who became incarnate, two natures and two wills, two volitions and opera-

1. Maximus – Latin *Maximus* – corresponds to the Greek, meaning "greatest." That the name of St. Maximus corresponds to his personal qualities and his life is pointed out by his disciple, Venerable Anastasius, in his letter to Theodore, presbyter of Gangra. – St. Maximus was born about 580. At his second interrogation in Constantinople, in 655, he said that he was 75 years old.

2. Emperor Heraclius ascended the throne in 600 and reigned until 641.

3. The Monothelite heresy arose at the beginning of the seventh century and was a continuation of the Monophysite heresy. The Monothelites acknowledged in Christ one will and one divine action, and thus distorted the dogma of the incarnation of the Word of God. According to the Orthodox teaching, however, the will is a property of the nature, not of the person; and therefore the Lord Jesus Christ, being God by nature and man by nature, had both a divine and a human will. Without the latter He would not have been perfect man by nature.

tions, proper to each nature, but united in the one Person of Christ, for Christ is God, not divided into two persons, but known unconfusedly in two natures. The first defenders and propagators of the Monothelite heresy were Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria, Sergius of Constantinople[4], and even Emperor Heraclius himself, who had been drawn into this heresy by them. Having convened local councils, Cyrus in Alexandria and Sergius in Constantinople, they confirmed this heresy, sent their decree everywhere, and seduced the whole East. Only St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, opposed the heresy and refused to accept the false teaching. Blessed Maximus, seeing that the heresy had penetrated even the imperial palace and had seduced the emperor himself, feared lest he too might be seduced into heresy, as many had been. Therefore he left his office and all worldly glory and went to a monastery far from the city, called Chrysopolis[5], where he became a monk, preferring "to be a doorkeeper in the house of God, rather than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps. 83:11).[6] There, some years later, he was elected abbot (hegumen) on account of his virtuous life.

Meanwhile Patriarch Sergius persuaded Emperor Heraclius to write a confession of their false faith. This last document, filled with the Monothelite heresy, the emperor called the "Ekthesis," that is, the exposition[7], and he commanded everyone in his realm to believe thus, as a result of which the Church of Christ was torn by strife. Abbot Maximus, seeing the turmoil the churches were undergoing in Constantinople and throughout the East, and how the heretics multiplied and grew strong while Orthodoxy diminished and was shaken by the storm of persecution, grieved in spirit, sighed, and wept much. Hearing,

4. Cyrus occupied the patriarchal see of Alexandria from 630 to 640. Sergius I was Patriarch of Constantinople from 610 to 638.

5. The monastery of Chrysopolis lay on the opposite shore of the Bosporus, today Scutari, near Chalcedon. It was renowned for the pious life of its monks. Here St. Maximus received the tonsure and was then elected abbot. *Abba* is a Syriac word meaning "father"; this title was adopted for the head of a monastery.

6. The psalmist prefers "to lie at the threshold" of the house of God rather than to live in luxury in the palaces of sinners.

7. By this exposition of the faith, issued in the form of an edict or decree binding upon all, all disputes about one or two wills in Christ were forbidden; at the same time, the doctrine of one will was proclaimed as the correct teaching. But even after this, disputes continued to trouble the Eastern Church.

however, that in the West this heresy had found no followers and had been wholly rejected, for Pope Severinus[8] of Rome had not accepted the imperial "Exposition," and his successor on the Roman throne, Pope John[9], had anathematized it in council, Blessed Maximus left his monastery and went to the western lands. He wished to find a refuge in old Rome, since it was impossible to live in Jerusalem on account of the Saracen invasion of Palestine[10]. He went to Rome, preferring to live with the Orthodox who firmly kept the faith. On his way there, he visited the African bishops in the cities that lay along his route, and conversing with them he strengthened them in the faith, taught them how to escape the cunning of their opponents and how to free themselves from their intricate snares[11]; to some who were far away he sent letters, instructing them in right belief and urging them to guard themselves in every way against heresy.

At this time Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople, died, and his place was taken by Pyrrhus, an adherent of the same heresy[12]; likewise Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria, died, and then the emperor himself passed away. Before his death, however, seeing that many great and holy hierarchs and God-wise fathers not only rejected his exposition of the faith but anathematized it, the emperor was greatly ashamed and made it known everywhere that this was not his confession, but that of the former Patriarch Sergius, who had himself written the "Exposition" and had only persuaded the emperor to sign it. When Emperor Heraclius died, his successor was his son Constantine[13], but he too, having

8. Severinus was Pope of Rome from 638 to 640.
9. Pope John IV occupied the Roman see from 640 to 642.
10. At the beginning of the seventh century the Eastern Empire suffered constant attacks from the Avars and especially from the Persians, and was likewise constantly threatened by the Arabs, or Saracens. In 637–640 Syria, Palestine and Egypt fell under the power of the Saracens. The Monothelites contributed greatly to this, for out of hostility to the Orthodox Church they were always ready to surrender themselves into the hands of the enemy. The number of Monophysites in Egypt alone reached six million, whereas there were about 300 thousand Orthodox there. The Emperor Heraclius sought in every way to reconcile the Monophysites with the Orthodox Church. For this purpose he issued the *Ekthesis*.
11. St. Maximus arrived in Africa about 640. Before this he had defended the Orthodox faith from 633 to 640 in Alexandria, Constantinople, Cyprus, Asia Minor and other lands. He lived five years in North Africa, from 640 to 645.
12. Pyrrhus succeeded Sergius in 639. At the council he convened, he approved the "Exposition" (*Ekthesis*) of Sergius and zealously continued the work of defending the heresy.

reigned only four months, died, secretly poisoned by his stepmother Martina, who, with the assistance of the patriarch[14], raised her son Heracleonas to the throne. But six months later all the dignitaries rose against Heracleonas; seizing him, they cut off his nose, as well as that of his mother Martina, and then shamefully exiled them. They raised to the throne the son of Constantine, grandson of Heraclius, named Constans, from whom was later born Constantine, surnamed Pogonatus[15]. When Constans came to power, the then Patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, an associate of Martina, who according to popular opinion had poisoned together with her Constantine, son of Heraclius and father of the newly enthroned Constans, was greatly frightened, and, laying down the patriarchal dignity of his own accord, fled into exile in Africa. After him the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople was occupied by Paul[16], likewise a Monothelite heretic. The emperor too was carried away by the same heresy and became its great champion and propagator.

While the Venerable Maximus remained in the African land, there arrived Pyrrhus, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had fled from his throne and, going from city to city, was seducing the Orthodox into his heresy. He would have done great harm to the Church of Christ there, had he not had an opponent in the Venerable Maximus, with whom he would dispute about the faith for whole hours at a time. The African bishops were obliged to gather at Carthage to hear the disputation of the two concerning the faith, for this was the wish of the patrician[17] Gregory, governor of that land. When the council assembled and the

13. Constantine III was Byzantine emperor in 641.

14. Popular rumor ascribed to Patriarch Pyrrhus complicity with Martina, stepmother of the Emperor Constantine, in the poisoning of the latter. Fearing the people's wrath, he fled to North Africa in 641 and abandoned the patriarchal throne. Until 650 he lived first in Africa and then in Rome.

15. Constans reigned from 641 to 668; Constantine IV Pogonatus from 668 to 685.

16. Paul II occupied the patriarchal see of Constantinople from 641 to 654.

17. In the Greco-Roman Empire the governors of provinces were often called *patricians*; the term was also used generally for men of noble birth. Patrician Gregory was governor of Carthage. Carthage lay to the north-east of Tunis. It was founded by Dido, queen of Tyre, about 860 B.C. In 148 B.C. it was made subject to the Roman Empire. Conquered by the Vandals in 439 A.D., it was returned to the Roman Empire in 533 by Belisarius. In 697 the Arabs finally destroyed it.

disputation began, God-wise Maximus overcame Pyrrhus, refuting his arguments on the basis of the Divine books and the dogmas of the holy fathers[18]. He proved that just as in Christ God there are two natures, so in Him there must be two wills, two volitions and operations, unseparated, however, in the one person. Pyrrhus, defeated in the dispute, joined the Orthodox and was received by the Church with love and honor, with the title of patriarch. It was then that he also composed a book of the Orthodox confession. Afterward he went to Rome to Pope Theodore, who had succeeded John. The pope received him with honor as the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople. When the rumor spread in Constantinople that Pyrrhus had joined the Orthodox, the assembly of heretics was darkened with envy. Composing a false account, they spread among the people the report that the African bishops and the pope had compelled Pyrrhus, against his will, to share their beliefs. This rumor reached the emperor himself. The emperor at once sent to Italy one of his dignitaries, a heretic named Olympius, to turn Pyrrhus back again to the Monothelite confession. Olympius, arriving in Italy, stopped in the city of Ravenna[19], and, summoning Pyrrhus from Rome, persuaded him to return to the former heresy. Pyrrhus, becoming like a dog returning to its vomit, rendered himself worthy of anathema, to which he was afterward subjected by the holy fathers together with his associates.

At this same time Emperor Constans, at the instigation of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the heretic Paul, wrote, like his grandfather Heraclius, who had composed the "Exposition," his own confession of faith, filled with heresy, and, calling it a *typos* (model), sent it everywhere, commanding that people believe thus[20]. This model of faith reached Rome when Pope Theodore was already on his deathbed. After

18. The public disputation of St. Maximus with Pyrrhus took place in July 645.

19. Ravenna, with a harbor on the Adriatic Sea, was built by Thessalian Greeks. Many Roman emperors had their chief residence here, and for this reason the province is sometimes called Romania. Emperor Augustus kept a fleet here.

20. Patriarch Paul, Pyrrhus's successor, following the example of Sergius, persuaded Constans in 648 to issue a new dogmatic edict, the "Type of Faith" (*Typos*). By this edict it was prescribed that concerning the disputed questions – about the wills in Christ – complete silence be kept, and that one be content with what had been confirmed by the first five Ecumenical Councils.

his death, his successor was Blessed Martin. The emperor wished that the newly appointed pope also accept the *typos* of faith he had written, but the pope rejected it, saying:

"Even if the whole world should wish to accept this new teaching, contrary to Orthodoxy, I will not accept it, nor will I depart from the teaching of the Gospel and the Apostles, nor from the traditions of the holy fathers, even though I should have to suffer death."

St. Maximus, abbot of the Chrysopolis monastery, being at this time in Rome[21], advised Blessed Pope Martin to convene a local council and to condemn by council the imperial confession, called the "Typos," as heretical and contrary to the teaching of the Church of Christ. And so it was done[848]. The pope, having assembled his bishops, one hundred and five in number, among whom was Abbot Maximus, put before them for consideration the errors of Cyrus, Sergius, Pyrrhus, and Paul, as well as the emperor's heretical confession; he anathematized the false teachings and wrote to all the faithful everywhere, confirming them in Orthodoxy, explaining the heretical errors, and warning them to guard against these in every way. The emperor, hearing of this, was filled with wrath and extraordinary fury, and sent to Italy his governor Theodore Calliopas, charging him to seize Pope Martin, after bringing against him accusations: that he had entered into an agreement with the Saracens, instructing them to invade the Greco-Roman empire and make war upon the emperor; that he wrongly held the faith handed down by the holy fathers; and also that he blasphemed the Most Pure Mother of God. On arriving in Rome, the imperial governor publicly laid these accusations against the pope. Blessed Martin, being guilty of none of the crimes brought against him, defended himself against the malicious slander.

"I never entered into any agreement with the Saracens," he said, "but only sent alms to the Orthodox brethren who live among the Saracens in extreme poverty and need. As for anyone who does not honor the Most Pure Mother of God, does not confess Her, and does not worship Her, let him be accursed in this age and in the age to come. The

21. St. Maximus arrived in Rome at the end of 645 and lived here for ten years, from 645 to 655.

holy faith, delivered by the holy Apostles and the holy Fathers, is not kept by us, but by those who think otherwise, wrongly."

The imperial governor, not heeding the pope's justifications, found him guilty of everything, adding moreover the charge that he had ascended the throne unlawfully. After this, by night and in secret, he seized the pope with military force and sent him to the emperor. The pope was confined in Cherson, where he also died.[22]

A few days before the seizure of the pope, the Venerable Maximus was arrested in Rome together with his disciple Anastasius, and in chains was sent to Constantinople. This was done by imperial command, for the emperor knew at whose counsel and instigation the council had been convened to condemn the Monothelites and his epistle. When the Venerable Father arrived by water at Byzantium, men sent by the emperor came to him, who already in their very looks revealed strong hostility. They shamelessly seized the Venerable Father, barefoot and without clothing, bound with chains, and dragged him through the streets, accompanied by his grieving disciple. Bringing him into a dark chamber, they locked him in alone, not permitting his disciple to be with him, and shut the disciple up separately in a dungeon. A few days later the Venerable Father was brought for interrogation to the imperial palace, before the full assembly of the Senate, though without the emperor presiding. When he entered, the eyes of all, full of malice and hostility, were turned upon him. The examination was entrusted to one of the dignitaries, the keeper of the treasury.[23] This was a man skilled in abundant speech, eloquent, well able to set forth false accusations and to turn truth into falsehood; in distorting the truth he was more versed than all. What malice and shamelessness he displayed, what reproaches and insults he heaped upon him! He did not shrink

22. St. Pope Martin was taken into custody in 653 and, by the command of the Emperor Constans, was sent to Constantinople. Together with St. Maximus he arrived in Constantinople in September 654. What their fate was during the year-long journey is unknown. St. Martin, accused of treason against the fatherland and of offending the majesty of the emperor, was exiled to Cherson, where he died on September 16, 655, tormented by hunger.

23. Treasurer – in Greek *gazophylax*. This word derives from the Persian *gaza*, meaning property or wealth, and the Greek *phylasso*, to guard. *Gazophylakion* – a public treasury, a royal or church treasury (Mk. 12:41; Jn. 8:20).

from the venerable old age of the Saint, who was then more than seventy years of age, nor was he abashed before the grace shining in his eyes; he spared neither the meek and sober, open and loving character, nor the rank of the Venerable Father. While the unrighteous accuser spoke many things against the innocent man, in no way agreeing with truth or sound sense, and in his verbosity revealed malicious cunning, audacity and the wiliness of his disposition, he thereby displayed in all his speeches the greatest shamelessness and folly. Indeed, he could not answer soundly the convincing replies of the Venerable Father, full of meekness and prudence; he only revealed in his speeches recklessness and confusion, and therefore was defeated. In particular, what was then said and done, what accusations were laid upon the innocent man, how lying men strove to present their untruth under the guise of truth, this was described in detail by the disciple of the Venerable Maximus, another Anastasius, who had been the apocrisiarius of the Roman Church.[24] We shall recount here a few things from his extensive narrative.

As soon as the lawless accuser, the keeper of the treasury by rank, stood before the face of the Saint, he at once began to revile him, the guileless one, with abusive words and to threaten him, calling him shameless, a traitor to the fatherland, an enemy of the emperor, and ascribing to him all that was disgraceful and criminal. When the Saint asked the accuser why he brought such charges against him and of what treason he accused him, the dignitary brought against him an outrageous slander and presented manifestly false witnesses. He charged the Venerable Father with having betrayed many great cities to the barbarians: thus, having torn from their native borders Alexandria, all Egypt and the Pentapolis,[25] he had joined them to the possessions of the Saracens, toward whom he was friendly and well-disposed. The Saint explained that the accusation brought against him was false and deserving of laughter.

24. *Apocrisiarius* – a Greek word meaning an intercessor or advocate for church affairs at the imperial court.

25. The occasion for this accusation was that Gregory, prefect of Africa, who for a time had been favorably disposed toward St. Maximus, broke away from the Empire about 650. – Pentapolis: the western part of Libya, adjoining Egypt.

"What concern is it of mine, a monk," he said, "who conquers cities? And could I, as a Christian, have fellowship with the Saracens? On the contrary, I have always desired only that which is beneficial to the Christian cities."

But the shameless slanderer turned to other forms of falsehood, weaving them together like some dreams, and, raising his voice unseemly, cried out that the Blessed Maximus reviled the Eastern emperor, calling the Western emperors more worthy of honor. In this he appealed to false witnesses. The Venerable Father, heaving a deep sigh, said in reply:

"I thank my God that I have been delivered into your hands and endure torments for unjust charges, that by them I may cleanse my voluntary sins and the failings of my life. But that I may answer briefly your false accusations, I ask you first of all: did you hear from me myself that reproach against the emperor of which you speak, or did someone else tell you of it?"

They answered:

"We heard it from others who had heard it from your lips."

When the Saint asked that they be summoned so that they might bear witness in person, the accusers said that they were no longer alive.

The Saint said in reply:

"If you say that those who heard the reproach from my lips have already died, then why did you not bring me to trial earlier, when they were still alive? Then you would have been relieved of excessive labor, and I would have borne the punishment for a manifest fault. But this one thing is certain: just as your slanders brought against me are false, so those who brought me to judgment did not have before their eyes God, who searches the hearts of men. May I not be worthy to see the coming of the Lord, and may I cease to be called a Christian, if ever I

even conceived that false dream[26] invented by you, or related it before anyone, or heard it from anyone!"

Then they summoned one false witness, by name Gregory, who asserted that he had heard in Rome how the disciple of Maximus, Anastasius, called the emperor a "priest," and that he had learned this from his teacher Maximus. The Saint Maximus, answering Gregory, bravely refuted his false slander. He said:

"When Gregory was in Rome, he held conversation with us only about the unity of will, proposing that we accept a doctrinal writing called the 'Typos.' But to this we replied with a refusal, preferring what is profitable to our souls. As for what you now say, neither do I know of it, nor has my disciple ever said it—God is witness to this! However, I remember what I then said, not to my disciple but to Gregory himself: that to investigate and define the dogmas of faith is the work of the clergy, not of emperors, because to them it is entrusted both to anoint the emperor and to lay hands upon him, and to perform the mystery of the Eucharist, and to stand in the sanctuary, and to perform all the other Divine and greatest mysteries. This is what I said then and say now. Gregory himself will not refuse to recall these my words, and if he should refuse, he would refuse himself. For all this, let anyone either accuse or acquit me before the court."

Not knowing what to do, the accusers, relying on the power of false testimony, led the Venerable Father out of the assembly. Then his disciple Anastasius was brought in. They sought to unsettle the latter with stern words and harsh threats, urging him to confirm the slander against his teacher. They compelled him to bear witness that his teacher had treated Pyrrhus cruelly in Rome when he contended with him about the faith. Anastasius bravely maintained that his teacher had not only done no harm to Pyrrhus, but had even treated him with especial reverence. For such straightforwardness they began to strike Anastasius with their fists on the neck, the face and the head, desiring in this

26. About this dream, which (it was claimed) coincided in time with the uprising of Gregory, prefect of Africa, more is said in detail in the Life below. At one of the subsequent interrogations, Venerable Maximus was again accused of inciting Gregory to rebellion by means of a dream attributed to him.

way to overcome the truth by violence—and then they sent him back to his former dungeon. After this, not content with the former false accusation and partial interrogation, they again summoned Saint Maximus and sought to overcome his steadfastness with a new slander. The slander consisted in this: that the Saint Maximus was a follower of the teaching of Origen[27] and agreed with him in everything. The Saint easily and freely refuted their false accusations as wholly without proof. Of Origen he spoke as one cut off from communion with Christ and with Christians, and he declared that the followers of his teaching were worthy of God's judgment. Then they again questioned the Saint Maximus about Pyrrhus, and about the reasons for which he had separated himself from the Patriarch of Constantinople and did not wish to enter into communion with him. They tested the Saint with other questions as well, proposing to him that he accept the imperial "Typos" and regard the latter with especial reverence, as the most perfect and binding doctrinal statement of the faith. The Saint answered them, and they harassed him with many harsh reproaches. Yet, seeing themselves defeated by the Venerable Maximus in all their disputes and entangled in their own nets, they dismissed the assembly and hastened to the emperor, to bear witness to the invincible courage of the Abba of Chrysopolis.

"Maximus," they said, "is invincible in speech, and no one can persuade him to become our like-minded one—even if someone should torment him!"

After this, the Venerable Maximus was again put into prison. Some time later other interlocutors came to him, supposing that if they often disputed with him and frightened him with stern words, they could much more quickly persuade him to their faith. Those who came declared that they had been sent by the patriarch, and then began to question the saint:

27. Origen was the most celebrated Christian teacher of the third century. In his numerous writings, which even the most eminent Fathers of the Church regarded with deep respect, Origen nevertheless advanced certain opinions of an unorthodox and heretical character, for which they were condemned as heretical, although Origen did not present his unorthodox opinions as indisputable truths. Such was his teaching on the pre-existence of souls, condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553.

"What kind of Church do you belong to: the Byzantine or the Roman, Antiochene, Alexandrian, or Jerusalemite? For all these churches with the regions subject to them are in communion. Therefore, if you too belong to the Catholic Church, then enter into communion with us at once, unless you wish to suffer grievous exile and to experience what you do not expect."

To this the righteous man replied with great good sense:

"Christ the Lord called Catholic the Church that holds the true and saving confession of faith. For this confession he also pronounced Peter blessed, and upon it he promised to found the Universal Church[28]. However, I wish to learn the content of your confession, on the basis of which, as you say, all the churches have entered into communion. If it is not contrary to the truth, I too will not depart from it."

The envoys answered him:

"Although we have not been charged to speak with you about this, nevertheless we will say it. We confess in Christ two actions on account of the difference of natures, and one action by reason of the union of both natures in one Person."

The saint said in reply:

"If you speak of two actions, which have become one action by reason of the union of the natures in one Person, then it follows that, besides those two actions, you acknowledge yet a new, third action, a blended or Godmanly one."

"No," the envoys answered, "we acknowledge two actions, and we speak of one only on account of their union."

The saint objected to this:

"You yourselves create for yourselves an unstable faith, and you confess that God can exist without having being. For if you merge two actions into one on account of the union of natures in one Person, and then divide the single action into two on account of the difference of natures, then there will be neither unity nor duality of actions, since duality is excluded by union and unity by division. Moreover, these subtleties render wholly void that in which the actions abide (that is, the

28. See Mt. 16:17–18.

God-manhood), indeed altogether annul it, as having no manifestation proper to it by nature that could neither be taken away from the nature nor changed. Otherwise the nature, as not manifesting itself in its kindred actions, according to the understanding of the holy Fathers, would have been deprived of all being[29]. But this I cannot admit, and I have not learned from the holy Fathers to believe thus. You, however, as those who have power, do with me as you please."

Not knowing what to answer to this, they said that whoever disobeys them must be subject to anathema and accept the death appointed for him. The saint answered meekly and humbly:

"Let the will of God be accomplished in me, to the glory of His holy name."

Then the envoys went to the patriarch and reported all that the Venerable had said. The emperor, having taken counsel with the patriarch, as once Pilate with the Jews, sentenced the saint to exile in a small town in Thrace called Bizya[30]. Likewise they sent his disciple Anastasius into exile in a distant border region of the Greek empire, to a very harsh place called in the barbarian tongue Pervera[31]. The same was done to another disciple of the Venerable, also named Anastasius, who had once been apocrisiarius at Rome and who afterward wrote the Life of the Venerable Maximus. He was sent to Mesembria[32], a city in Thrace.

At this same time the Blessed Martin, Pope of Rome, was brought to Constantinople and, after many sufferings, exiled to Chersonesus[33].

29. According to the judgment of the holy Fathers, no nature can either exist or be known apart from the manifestation of itself in its proper activities. Therefore, if one will is acknowledged in the Lord Jesus Christ, one of the natures would have to be deprived of its being and cease to exist. Together with it the God-manhood would also disappear. Thus the dogma of the Incarnation was distorted by the Monothelites.

30. Thrace bordered on the Carpathian Mountains to the north, on Illyria; its southern boundaries were Macedonia, the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago) and the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara), and on the east the Black Sea. Thus ancient Thrace included: the eastern part of Hungary, Transylvania, Moldavia, Wallachia, Bulgaria, Serbia and the eastern part of Rumelia. Visia was a town in eastern Thrace, on the Black Sea. It was the capital of a small district called Astic. Its inhabitants plundered all who suffered shipwreck near their towns.

31. Pervera was a town in the gorges of Mount Olympus, between Macedonia and Thessaly.

32. Mesembria was a town in eastern Thrace, on the shore of the Black Sea.

33. This was in the year 655. – Chersonesus was on the eastern side of the Tauric Peninsula.

Even earlier than his exile, while he was still in Constantinople, Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople, died. After him Pyrrhus, mentioned above, was made patriarch[34], but he too died four months later. Then Peter[35], a stubborn adherent of the same Monothelite heresy, ascended the patriarchal throne.

Much time passed, and again honorable men were sent in the name of the emperor and of Patriarch Peter to the Venerable Maximus: Theodosius, Bishop of Caesarea in Bithynia[36], and two consuls, Paul and Theodosius, to bring him to their own way of thinking. They used many different means to convert the saint, now flattering the Venerable, now threatening him, now testing him in the faith, now questioning him. When they appeared together with the Bishop of Bizya and ordered the saint to sit down, Bishop Theodosius addressed him with these words:

"How are you doing, lord, Abba Maximus?"

He answered:

"As the Lord foreknew and predestined from eternity the circumstances of my life, which is preserved by His providence."

Theodosius objected to this:

"How so? Did God foreknow and predestine from eternity the deeds of each of us?"

The saint answered:

"God foreknew our thoughts, words, and deeds, which depend on our will; but what is to happen to us, and what is no longer in our power but in His divine will, He ordained and predestined."

Bishop Theodosius asked:

"What, then, is in our power and what is not?"

Saint Maximus answered:

"All this you know, my lord, and you ask only to test me, your servant."

The bishop said in reply:

34. Paul reposed in the year 655.

35. Peter governed the Patriarchate of Constantinople from 655 to 666.

36. Bithynia bordered on the Black Sea to the north, on Mysia to the west, on Phrygia and Galatia to the south, and on Paphlagonia to the east. It now occupies the northern part of Anatolia.

"Truly I do not know this, and I wish to understand what the difference is between that which is in our power and that which is not, and how the one relates to divine foreknowledge and the other to predestination?"

The Venerable Maximus answered:

"All our good and evil deeds depend on our free choice; but punishments and calamities that befall us, and likewise their opposites, are not in our power. For we have no power over the wasting sickness or over health, but only over the conditions that cause sickness or preserve health. Just as intemperance is the cause of sickness and temperance is the condition of good health, so also the keeping of God's commandments is the condition for attaining the Kingdom of Heaven, and their neglect is the cause of being cast into the fiery Gehenna."

The bishop said to him:

"Why do you torment yourself with this exile, committing what deserves such a calamity?"

"I pray to God," the saint answered, "that by punishing me with that calamity He may forgive me the sins committed by transgressing His holy commandments."

The bishop objected:

"Are not misfortunes often befalling people for the sake of testing?"

"The saints are tempted," the Venerable answered, "so that their hidden virtues may be made manifest to all, as was the case with Job and Joseph. Indeed, Job was tested for the sake of revealing a fortitude in him unknown to anyone, and Joseph underwent misfortune so that his chastity and self-restraint, which make a man holy, might become manifest. And indeed, each of the saints, if he suffered in this world involuntarily, suffered precisely so that by the calamities permitted him by God he might overcome the proud apostate, the devil the serpent; patience itself in each saint was the fruit of temptation."

To this Bishop Theodosius said:

"Truly, you speak well and instructively, and I would wish always to converse with you on such matters. But since I and my companions, honorable patricians, have come to you across an immense distance on

another matter, we ask you: accept what we propose to you, and bring joy to the whole world."

"What exactly, my lord?" asked the saint. "And who am I, and whence, that my consent to your proposal should gladden the whole world?"

The bishop said:

"As unfailing as the truths of my Lord Jesus Christ is what I shall tell you, and likewise what my fellow-workers, the honorable patricians, will tell you: we heard it directly from our patriarch and the pious emperor."

"Speak then, my lords," answered Saint Maximus, "what you want and what you have heard."

Then Theodosius began to speak:

"The emperor and the patriarch first of all wish to learn from you: why do you withdraw from communion with the Constantinopolitan See?"

Saint Maximus answered:

"You know the innovations introduced in the sixth indiction of the past cycle[37]. They began in Alexandria through the promulgation by Cyrus, then patriarch there, of nine chapters, approved and confirmed by the Constantinopolitan See. There were also other changes and additions (the Ekthesis and the Typos) distorting the conciliar definitions. These innovations were made by the first representatives of the Byzantine Church, Sergius, Pyrrhus, and Paul, and are known to all the churches. This is the reason why I, your servant, do not enter into communion with the Constantinopolitan Church. Let these stumbling-blocks introduced by the men mentioned above be removed from the Church, let those who introduced them be removed, and the path of salvation will be cleared of obstacles, and you will then walk the smooth path of the Gospel, cleansed of all heresy! When I see the Constantino-

37. An indiction, according to the Roman calendar, denotes a period or cycle of time of 15 years. The first year of this cycle was called the first indiction, the second year the second indiction, and so on. In the Greek and Slavonic menologies, under the 1st of September there stood the words: "the beginning of the indiction, that is, of the new year." In the passage of the Life of St. Maximus cited here, the words "of the sixth indiction of the completed cycle" should be understood as "nine years earlier," that is, in the year 648.

politan Church such as it was before, then I too shall turn to it, as I was formerly its son, and enter into communion with it without any human exhortation. But so long as there are heretical stumbling-blocks in it and heretics as its hierarchs, no word or deed will persuade me ever to enter into communion with them."

"But what is wrong," asked Bishop Theodosius, "with our confession, that you do not wish to have communion with us?"

Saint Maximus answered:

You confess that there was one operation in the Divinity and the humanity of the Savior. Yet if we trust the holy fathers, who teach that whoever has one operation has also one nature, then you confess the Holy Trinity not as a Trinity but as a quaternity, as though the Incarnation were consubstantial with the Word and had departed from identity with the human nature which we have and which the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos had. For by departing from the identity proper to man, a new essence would seem to have been formed, consubstantial with the Word to the same degree that the Word is consubstantial with the Father and the Spirit; and thus there appears not a Trinity but a quaternity. Likewise, when you deny the operations and affirm that the Divinity and the humanity of Christ had one will, you diminish His free self-determination in doing good. For if neither nature has its own, proper operation, then should He wish to benefit anyone, He would not be able to do so, since the capacity for doing good would have been taken from Him. Indeed, without the capacity to act, and without an operation proper to nature, no thing can produce or do anything at all. On the other hand, in acknowledging the Incarnation of Christ, you confess one will in two natures; but by this you acknowledge that His Flesh too, by its own will, was the creator of all the ages and of all creation together with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, whereas by nature it itself was created. Or rather, to speak more precisely: the flesh, by its will, is without beginning, for the will of God is without beginning, just as the Divinity has no beginning; but by its nature the flesh was created in time. To confess thus is not only senseless but impious, for you do not simply speak of one will in Christ, but you call it Divine; and a Divine will cannot be supposed to have either beginning

or end, any more than the Divinity itself. You also deprive Christ our Lord of all the manifestations and properties by which His Divinity and humanity are known, when by the *ekthesis* and the *typos* you command that we speak neither of one nor of two wills in Him, nor of His operations. This will is not one, for you divide it into two by the very subordination of the human will to the Divine; nor are they two, for you merge them into one.

When the holy Maximus said this and much else, of which his disciple Anastasius gives a detailed account, Theodosius and the patricians began to recognize their error. Yet the bishop said:

Receive the *typos* written by the emperor not as a positive dogma of faith, but as a means of resolving doubtful questions. He wrote it not in the sense of legislation, but in the sense of an interpretation of the faith.

Saint Maximus answered:

If the *typos* is not a positive law affirming the unity of will and operation of our Lord, then why have you exiled me to a land of barbarians and godless pagans? For what am I condemned to remain here in Vizye? For what have my companions been banished, one to Pervera and the other to Mesembria?

Then, recalling the local council convened at Rome by the blessed Pope Martin for the condemnation of the Monothelites, Bishop Theodosius said:

That council has no significance, for it was not convened by imperial command.

The Venerable replied:

If only the decrees of councils convened by imperial command are to be upheld, then there can be no Orthodox faith. Recall the councils convened by imperial command against the consubstantiality, at which blasphemous teaching was established, that the Son of God is not consubstantial with God the Father. Such were: the first at Tyre, the second at Antioch, the third at Seleucia, the fourth at Constantinople under the Arian Eudoxius, the fifth at Nicaea, the sixth at Sirmium, and, long afterward, the seventh at Ephesus under the presidency of Dioscorus. All these councils were convened by imperial decree; yet all

of them have been rejected and anathematized, since impious and God-opposing definitions of faith were drawn up at them. Moreover, why do you not reject that council which condemned Paul of Samosata and anathematized him? For at the head of that council stood Dionysius, Pope of Rome, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Gregory the Wonderworker, who presided over it. That council took place without imperial command; yet it is firm and irrefutable. The Orthodox Church acknowledges as true and holy only those councils at which true and unalterable dogmas were established. And indeed, as your holiness also knows and teaches others, the canons command that in every Christian land local councils be convened twice a year, both to defend our saving faith and to correct what requires correction; yet the church rules say nothing of imperial commands.

After a lengthy conversation and stubborn dispute from both sides, the lips of the Venerable Maximus were filled with Divine wisdom and eloquence, and his tongue, moved by the Holy Spirit, overcame his opponents. These sat for a long time in silence, heads bowed and eyes lowered. Then they were moved to tears, and they rose and bowed to the saint, and he likewise to them. After a common prayer they joyfully agreed with the true teaching of Saint Maximus and received it with love, promising themselves to believe in accordance with it, and hoping to persuade the emperor to the same. To confirm their promise they kissed the Divine Gospel, the precious Cross, and the holy icons of the Savior and of the Most Holy Theotokos. Then, having spoken sufficiently of things profitable to the soul, they exchanged the kiss in the Lord, and, wishing one another peace, returned to Byzantium, Bishop Theodosius and the patricians. When they had related to the emperor all that had been said and done, the emperor was greatly angered. Then Theodosius and the two patricians, fearing the imperial wrath, turned again to the heresy. Afterward the patrician Paul was sent again to Vizye with the charge of bringing the Venerable Maximus to Constantinople, but with honor. When Saint Maximus had been brought, he was ordered to live in the monastery of Saint Theodore[38].

38. This was in the year 655. – The monastery of the Great Martyr Theodore was located in a suburb of Constantinople.

The next morning the emperor sent two patricians, Epiphanius and Troilus, to the Venerable. They came accompanied by many men of rank, with a detachment of soldiers and servants, with pomp and vain grandeur. With them came the aforementioned Bishop Theodosius; Maximus the Venerable awaited him and hoped for the fulfillment of his promise, by which he himself would not only truly believe but would also bring back the emperor and all the other representatives of the people to Orthodoxy. But Theodosius lied, preferring to please the earthly emperor and the vain world rather than to follow the Heavenly King and His holy Church. When all had sat, and they had persuaded the Venerable to sit, the patrician Troilus began the conversation.

The emperor, lord of the universe, he began, has sent us to you to declare what is pleasing to his imperial power, established by God; but first tell us: will you fulfill the will of the sovereign or not?

Saint Maximus answered:

First, my lord, I will hear what the sovereign commands me, and I will answer you accordingly. For how can I answer concerning that which I do not yet know?

But Troilus insisted, saying:

We will not tell you why we have come until you answer us whether you will obey the emperor.

The venerable man, seeing that the envoys were making insistent demands, looking at him with malice, and questioning him in harsh words whether he would obey the imperial will, answered:

Since you will not tell me, your servant, what our lord the emperor desires, I declare to you, before the face of God Himself and of His holy Angels, the following: if the emperor commands me something that has a temporal and transitory significance, and is moreover not opposed to God and not harmful to the eternal salvation of the soul, then I will gladly fulfill it.

When the saint had said this, the patrician Troilus at once rose and made as if to leave, saying:

I am going, because I see that this man will not fulfill the imperial will.

But at once a clamor arose and a great confusion began among the multitude that had come there. Then Bishop Theodosius said:

Declare to him the will of the sovereign and hear his answer, for it is not good to depart without saying anything to him and without hearing his answer.

After this the patrician Epiphanius began to speak to the Venerable:

This is what the emperor commands us to declare to you: since the whole East, and those in the West who have been led into error, look to you, and cause disturbances and unrest, becoming apostates from the faith and plotting, and since they do not wish to have communion with us in matters of faith, may the Lord soften your heart with meekness, so that you enter into communion with us by accepting the *typos* which we have issued. We, receiving you with love, with great honor and glory, will lead you into the church and set you beside us, where the emperors ordinarily stand, and together with you we shall partake of the Most Pure and Life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. Then we shall proclaim you our father, and there will be joy not only throughout our Christ-loving city, but throughout the whole Christian world. For we firmly believe that when you enter into communion with the holy Church of Constantinople, all those who, for your sake and under your guidance, have fallen away from communion with us will also join us.

The holy Abba Maximus, turning to Bishop Theodosius, said with tears:

We all, O master, await the Great Day of Judgment. You remember what was lately said and promised before the holy Gospel, the life-giving Cross, and the holy icons of our Savior Jesus Christ and of His Most Pure Mother, the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

The bishop, with his eyes cast down, said meekly:

"What then can I do, when the pious Emperor desires otherwise?"

Abba Maximus answered him:

"Why, then, did you and those with you touch the Holy Gospel, when you had no firm intention of fulfilling what you promised? Truly, all the heavenly powers will not persuade me to do what you propose. For what answer shall I give, I will not say to God, but to my own con-

science, if for the sake of empty glory and the opinion of men, which is worth nothing, I reject the right faith which saves those who love it?"

When the Saint had said this, at once they all rose up, filled with anger and fury, and, rushing at him, began not only to revile him with abusive words, but also laid hands on him. Seizing him, they beat him with their hands, tore at him, dragged the Man of God back and forth across the floor, shoved him and trampled him under their feet, and each one strove to reach him in order to strike him. They would certainly have killed the Saint, had not Bishop Theodosius restrained their rage and quieted the tumult. When they ceased beating and tearing at the Saint, they began to spit upon him, and they fouled the Man of God from head to foot. A stench rose from their loathsome spittle, with which his whole garment was befouled.

Then the bishop said to them:

"It was not right to do this; it was only necessary to hear his answer and report it to the Emperor, for matters subject to the canons of the Church are judged otherwise."

With difficulty the bishop persuaded them to stop the uproar and sit down again. They sat down, not ceasing to revile the Saint with coarse abuse and insulting reproaches.

Then the patrician Epiphanius, breathing fury, addressed the Saint with anger:

"Tell us, you wicked old man, possessed by a demon! Why do you speak such words? Do you not count us all heretics, and our city, and our Emperor? Know that we are more Christian than you and more Orthodox than you. We acknowledge in Jesus Christ, our Lord, a divine and a human will and a rational soul, for every rational being always has the power of volition by its very nature, and the capacity for activity. In general, motion is proper to a living being, and will is inherent in the mind. We acknowledge that the Lord has the power of willing not according to the Godhead only, but also according to the manhood, and especially we do not deny His two wills and His twofold actions."

Abba Maximus answered:

"If you believe as the Church of God teaches, and as befits a rational being, why do you compel me to accept the *typos*, which wholly denies what you are now saying?"

Epiphanius objected:

"The *typos* was written for the sake of smoothing over truths that are not entirely comprehensible, so that the people should not fall into error through the especial subtlety of their expression."

To this Abba Maximus replied:

"This is contrary to the faith, and yet every man is sanctified by the right confession of the faith."

Then the patrician Troilus objected:

"The *typos* does not deny the two wills in Christ, but only enjoins silence about them for the sake of the peace of the Church."

Abba Maximus said in reply:

"To keep silent about a word is to deny it, as the Holy Spirit says through the prophet: 'There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard' (Ps. 18:4). Therefore, if some word is not spoken, then it is not a word at all."

Then Troilus said:

"Have in your heart whatever faith you wish; no one forbids you."

Saint Maximus objected:

"But full salvation depends not on faith in the heart alone, but also on its confession, for the Lord says: 'Whoever denies Me before men, I will deny him before My Heavenly Father' (Mt. 10:33). Likewise the divine Apostle teaches: 'With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (Rom. 10:10). If, then, God and the divine prophets and apostles command that the mystery of the faith, which brings salvation to the whole world, be confessed in word and tongue, then men must not be compelled to silence concerning the confession, lest the salvation of people be diminished."

To this Epiphanius cried out in a malicious voice:

"Did you sign the decrees of the council that was held in Rome?"

"I signed them," answered the Saint.

Then Epiphanius continued:

"How did you dare to sign and anathematize those who confess the faith as befits rational beings and as the Catholic Church teaches? Truly, by our own authority we shall bring you into the city and set you bound in the public square, gather all the comedians and harlots and the whole people, and make them strike you on the cheeks and spit in your face."

To this the Saint answered:

"Let it be as you have said. But if you maintain that we anathematized those who acknowledge the two natures united in our Lord, and likewise the two wills and the two actions corresponding to each nature in Christ the Lord, who by His divine nature is true God and by His human nature true man, then read, my lord, the book containing the acts of this council, and if you find what you have said, do what you wish. For I and my fellow-workers, and all who signed the acts of the council, anathematized those who, like Arius and Apollinaris[39], acknowledge in the Lord one will and one action, and do not confess our Lord and God as having the two natures in which He abides, and likewise the power of will and of action by which He accomplishes our salvation."

Then the friends of Epiphanius, and the patricians, and all who had come with them began to say among themselves:

"If we listen to him any longer, we shall not have a chance to eat or drink. Let us therefore go and dine, and then report to the Emperor and the Patriarch what we have heard. You see that this wretch has given himself over to Satan."

Then, rising, they went off to dinner. It was on that day the eve of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross, and the time for the All-night Vigil was already approaching. Having dined, they set off for the city, greatly displeased.

39. Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea, taught that the Son of God, having become incarnate, assumed an incomplete human nature, possessing only a human soul and body, while the human mind was replaced in Him by the Godhead. This heresy was condemned by the 2nd Ecumenical Council.

On the following day (September 14), early in the morning, the patrician Theodosius came to the Venerable Maximus, took away all the books the Saint had, and said in the name of the Emperor:

"Since you did not wish for honor, go into the exile that you have deserved."

The holy elder was at once seized by soldiers and led first to Selymbria, where he remained for two days. During this time a soldier from Selymbria, having gone to the army, spread a rumor through the camp, inciting the people against the elder with the words: "A certain monk has come to us who reviles the Most Pure Theotokos." The commander of the army, summoning the most important clergy of the city of Selymbria, as well as presbyters, deacons and the most honored monks, sent them to the Blessed Maximus to learn whether it was true, as they said of him, that he reviles the Mother of God. When they came, the Venerable one rose and bowed down to the ground, paying honor to their rank. They also bowed to the Saint, and then all sat down. Then one of those who had come, a very venerable elder, very meekly and respectfully asked the Venerable Maximus:

"Father, since some have been led into doubt concerning your holiness, maintaining that you do not acknowledge our Lady, the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, as the Mother of God, I adjure you by the Most Holy, consubstantial Trinity to tell us the truth and remove the stumbling-block from our hearts, that we too may not err by thinking wrongly of you."

The Venerable Maximus bowed to the earth in the form of a cross, and then, rising, raised his hands to heaven and solemnly declared with tears:

"Whoever does not confess our Lady, the all-praised, most holy and most pure Virgin, most honored of all rational creatures, as the true Mother of God, Who created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, let him be anathema from the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the consubstantial and supernatural Trinity, and from all the heavenly powers, from the host of the holy Apostles and Prophets, and the countless multitude of Martyrs, and from every righteous soul that has departed in the faith, now, always, and unto the ages of ages!"

Hearing this, all wept, and expressed their good wishes to him in these words:

"May God strengthen you, Father, and grant you to complete your course worthily and without hindrance!"

After this a great multitude of soldiers gathered there to hear the pious words of the Fathers conversing among themselves. Then one of the attendants of the commander of the army, seeing the great crowd of soldiers listening eagerly to the words of the Saint and blaming the government for his exile, ordered that the Saint be taken away at once and led on for two stages[40], until those who were to take him to Pervera for imprisonment should make ready. The clergy, moved by Divine love, walked those two stages on foot, escorting the Saint. When the soldiers came to lead him into exile, the clergy carried the Saint in their arms and set him on a horse. Then they embraced him with tears, and, bidding him farewell, returned to their city. The Saint, however, was led to Pervera and there shut up in a dungeon.

A long time passed[41], and the Emperor again sent for the Venerable Maximus and his two disciples to be brought from exile to Constantinople. When they put in to the city by ship, at sunset, two officers of the guard appeared with ten soldiers, and, leading them out of the ship half-naked and barefoot, separated them and shut each one up apart. After some days they were taken to the imperial palace. The two disciples were left in the courtyard under guard, while the elder was led inside, where the officials and many of the most honored persons were sitting. The Saint was set in the midst of the seated rulers. Then the imperial treasurer, with irritation in his voice, addressed him:

"Are you a Christian?"

The elder answered:

"By the grace of Christ, God of all things, I am a Christian."

The treasurer, filled with anger, said:

"You are speaking untruly."

The Saint answered:

40. A *poprishche* was a measure of distance equal to our 690 sazhens. Two *poprishche* thus make approximately 2⅔ versts.

41. Namely, five years.

– You say that I am not a Christian, but God says that I continually abide as a Christian.

– But if you are a Christian, – objected the treasurer, – then why do you hate the emperor?

– How is this seen? – asked the saint. – For hatred is a hidden feeling of the soul, just as love is.

– From your deeds, – answered the treasurer, – it has become known to all that you are an enemy of the emperor and of his realm. For you alone have betrayed to the Saracens Egypt, Alexandria, the Pentapolis, Tripolis and Africa.

– Where, then, is the reliable proof of this? – asked the saint.

Then there was brought in a certain John, once sakellarios[42] of Peter, at the time when Peter was governor of Numidia in Africa[43]. This John said:

– Twenty-two years ago, the grandfather of our lord the emperor commanded the blessed Peter to lead the armies into Egypt against the Saracens. Peter, trusting you as a servant of God, wrote to you, asking for useful counsel. But you wrote back to him that it was not pleasing to God to help the emperor Heraclius and his heirs.

Then the saint said to him:

– If you speak the truth, and have Peter's letter to me and my letter to Peter, then show them; let them be read, and I will accept the due punishment under the law.

John answered:

– I do not have your letters, and I do not even know whether you wrote to one another, but in the camp at that time everyone spoke of it.

The saint objected:

– If a whole army spoke of it, then why do you alone slander me? Have you ever seen me, or I you?

– No, – John replied. – I have never seen you.

Then the saint, turning to the assembly, said:

– Judge for yourselves: is it just to take such men as witnesses? For it is said: "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with

42. *Sakellarios*, from *saccilus*, a bag, meant the same as treasurer. There were two sakellarioi: the imperial and the patriarchal.

what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mt. 7:2). From God, the righteous Judge of all.

Then Sergius Maguda was brought in. He said:

– Nine years ago the blessed Abba Thomas, who had come from Rome, told me the following: Pope Theodore, he said, sent me to Gregory, prefect of Africa, who at that time had revolted from the Greek empire, to tell him not to fear the Greek armies, for the servant of God, Abba Maximus, had seen a dream in which, in the heavens, in the east and in the west, the hosts of Angels stood. Those in the east cried out: "Constantine Augustus, thou shalt conquer!" But those in the west cried out: "Gregory Augustus, thou shalt conquer!" And the voice of the western host was clearer and louder than that of the eastern.

When Maguda had related this, the treasurer said to the saint:

– God has brought you into this city to be burned with fire.

The saint answered:

– I thank God, who cleanses my voluntary sins by involuntary punishments. But "woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh" (Mt. 18:7). Truly, such things should not be said before Christians, and still less should those be left unpunished who speak and think only what is pleasing to men now living, and tomorrow not existing. All this should have been declared at the time when Gregory was still alive. Then the patrician Peter, Abba Thomas and the blessed Pope Theodore should have been summoned here; in the presence of them all I would have said to the patrician Peter: Tell me, my lord, did you ever write to me about what your sakellarios testifies to, or perhaps I wrote to you? Likewise I would have said to the blessed pope: Tell me, master, did I ever tell you a dream? But even if the pope had convicted me concerning the dream, the fault would have been his, not mine, for a dream-vision is a thing not within our will, whereas the law punishes only those deeds that depend upon the free will of man.

There were also brought against this innocent and holy man other slanders and unjust accusations, especially concerning blasphemy

43. Numidia was located in northern Africa. Today it constitutes the eastern part of Algeria.

against the emperor, namely that he and his disciples had reviled the emperor in Rome. However, the saint, proving his innocence, refuted all these slanders in his meekness, with humble, wise and inspired speeches.

Then his disciple Anastasius was brought in separately. They urged him to say something evil about his teacher, and when he would not speak falsehood against the righteous man, he was beaten with fists, and then he and his teacher were led away, each separately, to their places in the prisons.

On the next day, in the evening, the patrician Troilus and Sergius Euphratas, chief of the imperial table, came to the venerable one in prison. They sat down, and, having made the venerable one sit down too, asked:

– Tell us, Abba, what discussion did you hold in Africa and in Rome with Pyrrhus, and by what arguments did you persuade him to renounce his own dogma and accept yours?

The saint answered:

– If I had with me my books, in which I wrote down the conversations and disputes we had there with Pyrrhus, I would tell you everything in detail; but since my books have been taken from me, I will say what I can recall.

Then the saint related in order all that he could recall, adding at the end the following:

– I have no dogma of my own, but only that common to the whole Catholic Church; I have not introduced into my confession a single new word by which it could be called my own.

Then the messengers asked him:

– Why, then, do you not enter into communion with the Constantinopolitan see?

– No, – answered the saint.

– Why not? – they asked.

– Because, – answered the saint, – the primates of this church have rejected the decrees of the four holy councils, accepting as a rule the "nine chapters" issued in Alexandria, and then they accepted the Ekthesis, composed by Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and finally

the Typos, promulgated in recent times. On the other hand, they rejected in the Typos all that had been confirmed in the Ekthesis, and many times they themselves excommunicated themselves from the Church and convicted themselves of false doctrine. Moreover, having excommunicated themselves from the Church, they were deposed and deprived of the priesthood at the local council recently held in Rome. What mystery, then, can they perform? Or what Spirit will descend upon those who are ordained by them?

– So you alone will be saved, – they objected, – and all the rest will perish?

The saint answered this:

– When all men in Babylon worshipped the golden idol, the three holy youths condemned no one to perdition. They were concerned not with what others did, but only with themselves, that they might not fall away from true piety (Dan. 3). In the same way Daniel, cast into the den, did not condemn any of those who, obeying the decree of Darius, would not pray to God, but kept in mind his own duty, and preferred to die rather than to sin and be tormented before his conscience for transgressing the Law of God (Dan. 14:31). God forbid that I should condemn anyone, or say that I alone shall be saved. Yet I would sooner consent to die than, departing in any way from the right faith, endure the torments of conscience.

– But what will you do, – said the messengers, – when the Romans unite with the Byzantines? For two apocrisiarii came yesterday from Rome, and tomorrow, on the Lord's day, they will receive the Most Pure Mysteries with the patriarch.

The venerable one answered:

– Even if the whole universe begins to commune with the patriarch, I will not commune with him. For I know from the writings of the holy Apostle Paul that the Holy Spirit anathematizes even Angels, should they preach otherwise, introducing anything new (Gal. 1:8).

Then the messengers asked:

– Is it absolutely necessary to confess in Christ two wills and a twofold activity?

– Absolutely necessary, – answered the saint, – if we wish to think piously, for no being is deprived of natural activity. The holy fathers clearly say that no being can either exist or be known without the activity proper to it. If this is absent, and if the nature is not manifested in its activity, then how can one acknowledge Christ as true God by nature and true man?

To this they said:

– We see that this is true, yet do not grieve the emperor, who, for the sake of peace in the Church, composed the Typos not in order to deny any of the properties recognized in Christ, but for the tranquillity of the Church, commanding silence about those things which give rise to dissension.

Then the man of God, prostrating himself on the ground, answered with tears:

– The good and God-loving emperor ought not to be grieved on account of my unworthiness, for I do not wish to anger God by keeping silent about what He has commanded us to acknowledge and confess. For if, according to the word of the divine Apostle, He Himself has set in the Church "first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. 12:28), then it is clear that He Himself speaks through them. From all of Holy Scripture, from the works of the holy teachers and from the decrees of the councils, we learn that the incarnate Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, has the power to will and to act both according to His Divinity and according to His humanity. For He lacks in no way those properties by which He is known as God or as man, except sin. If He is perfect in both natures and deprived of nothing belonging to them, then truly he utterly perverts the mystery of His Incarnation who does not confess in Him the very essence of both natures together with their corresponding properties, the natures through which and in which He abides.

When the saint had set forth this and much else, those present praised his wisdom and found nothing to answer him. Sergius, however, said:

– You alone distress everyone, in that because of you many do not wish to have communion with the Church here.

The venerable Maximus replied:

– But who can affirm that I ever commanded anyone not to have communion with the Byzantine Church? To this Sergius replied:

– The very fact that you do not communicate with this Church is what most strongly turns many away from communion with it. The Man of God answered:

– Nothing is heavier or more grievous than the state in which conscience accuses us of something, and nothing is dearer than the peace and approval of conscience. Then Troilus, drawing attention to the fact that the *Typos* of Emperor Constans had been anathematized throughout the West, said to the Saint:

– Is it right that the interpretation of our pious sovereign should be so dishonored? The Saint replied:

– May God forgive those who instigated the Emperor and allowed him to issue this decree!

Troilus asked:

– Who then instigated it, and who allowed it?

The Saint answered:

– The primates of the Church instructed, and the dignitaries permitted it, and thus the shame of the scandal falls upon the blameless Emperor, who is a stranger to every heresy. Yet advise the sovereign to do what his grandfather of blessed memory, Heraclius, once did. When he learned that many Fathers in the West did not accept the *Ekthesis* of the faith, and likewise denounced and condemned the heresy contained in it, he cleared himself of the reproach by sending his epistles everywhere and affirming in them that the *Ekthesis* did not belong to him but to the former patriarch Sergius. Let the sovereign now reigning do the same, and then he will be freed from all reproach.

They were silent for a long time, shaking their heads, and then said:

– It is not fitting, and indeed impossible, to do all that you advise, Father.

Having conversed sufficiently on various subjects, they took leave of one another and parted in a friendly manner.

A week after this conversation, on the following Saturday, the Saint and his two disciples were again summoned to the imperial palace for

interrogation. The earlier disciple, Anastasius, was brought in first, while the other Anastasius, formerly apocrisiarius of the Roman Church, was kept outside the hall. When the first Anastasius was brought into the chamber where two patriarchs sat among the members of the senate, Thomas, Patriarch of Constantinople, and another, the accusers who had brought false charges against the Venerable Maximus at once entered as well. Those present compelled Anastasius to confirm the slanders brought against his teacher. But he boldly exposed the falsehood, courageously answering before the patriarchs and the senate. When he was asked whether he had anathematized the *Typos*, he replied that he had not only anathematized it but had also written a book against it. Then the dignitaries asked:

– Well then? Do you not admit that you acted wrongly?

– May God not permit me, Anastasius replied, to consider wrong what I have done rightly, in accordance with the canon of the Church. When he was then questioned about many other things, he answered as God helped him. After this he was led out, and the venerable elder Maximus was brought in. The patrician Troilus addressed him:

– Listen, Father, tell the truth, and God will have mercy on you. For if we question you according to the due order and even one of the charges brought against you proves true, you will be executed according to the law. The elder answered:

– I have already told you and I will say again: it is as possible for even one accusation to be just as it is possible for Satan to become God; but since Satan is not God and cannot become Him, being an apostate, so those accusations which are wholly false cannot become true. Therefore, do what you wish; I, piously honoring God, do not fear insult.

To this Troilus objected:

– But did you not anathematize the *Typos*?

The elder answered:

– I have already said several times that I anathematized it.

– But if you anathematized the *Typos*, said Troilus, then you anathematized the emperor as well?

– I did not anathematize the emperor, the Venerable replied, but only the paper that overthrows the Orthodox and ecclesiastical faith.

– Where did you anathematize it? asked Troilus.

– At a local council in Rome, the Saint Maximus answered, in the church of the Savior and of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Then the president addressed him:

– Will you enter into communion with our Church or not?

– No, I will not, the Saint answered.

– Why not? asked the president.

– Because it, the Saint answered, has rejected the decrees of the Orthodox councils.

– But if our Church has rejected the councils, the president objected, how then are they recorded in the monthly diptychs?[44]

– What use, the Saint answered, are the names and the commemoration of them, if their dogmas have been rejected?

– Can you, asked the president, clearly show that the present Church has rejected the dogmas of the holy councils held earlier?

– If you will not be angry and will so command, the elder answered, I can easily show it.

When all fell silent, the treasurer addressed him:

– Why do you so love the Romans and hate the Greeks?

The Saint answered:

– We have from God the commandment not to hate anyone. I love the Romans as those who share my faith, and the Greeks as those who speak the same language as I do.

– And how old are you? asked the treasurer.

– Seventy-five, the Saint answered.

– And how many years, the treasurer continued, has your disciple been with you?

– Thirty-seven, the Saint answered.

At this moment one of the clergy exclaimed:

– May God repay you for all that you did to the blessed Pyrrhus.

The Saint made no reply to this cleric.

44. A *diptych* means a commemoration, a synodikon. These were two tablets folded like tables of the law, on which the names of the living and the dead were written. In the menological diptychs the most important events of Church life were also noted.

During these rather lengthy interrogations, none of the patriarchs present said anything. But when they began to speak of the council held in Rome, a certain Demosthenes declared:

– That council is not valid, because it was convened by Martin, the excommunicated pope.

The Venerable Maximus answered:

– Pope Martin was not excommunicated; he was persecuted.

After this, having sent the Saint out, they deliberated what to do with him. The inhuman tormentors judged that it would be too merciful to let him continue living as before, in confinement, and that it was better to subject him to torments worse than death. Therefore they handed him over to the city prefect. The prefect ordered the Saint Maximus and his disciples to be taken to the praetorium.[45] Here the lawless tormentor, first stripping the holy elder and throwing him to the ground, ordered him to be beaten with sharp oxhide thongs, not shamed by his old age or his venerable appearance, not moved to pity even by the sight of his body wasted by ascetic labors. The Saint was beaten so cruelly that the ground was stained with his blood, and his body was so lacerated that not one unharmed place remained on it. Then the savage beast turned in fury upon the Venerable's disciples and beat them to the same degree. While they were being beaten, a herald proclaimed:

– Those who disobey the imperial commands and remain obstinate deserve to endure such sufferings.

Then they, barely alive, were cast into prison.

The next morning the holy and venerable man was again brought from prison to the court, together with his first disciple Anastasius. The Saint was still alive and covered with wounds, so that one could not look without compassion upon the venerable elder, the holy ascetic, the God-wise teacher and confessor-theologian, all bloodied and ulcerated by deep wounds, without a single unharmed place from head to foot. Yet the hard-hearted tormentors took no pity on him but grew still more enraged. Drawing out his many-worded tongue, which poured forth rivers of wise teaching and drowned heretical sophistries, they

45. The *praetorium* was the place where a trial took place. Floggings often took place before the praetorium.

cut it off deep, at the very root, without any mercy, and thus they sought to impose silence upon the theologizing lips of the Saint. The same was done to his first disciple Anastasius, and then they again shut them up in prison. But the Lord God, who once made infant babes capable of praising His holy name, and who also gave speech to the dumb, granted to His true and faithful servants, the Venerable Maximus the Confessor and Martyr, and likewise to his disciple the Venerable Anastasius, the ability to speak even without a tongue, better and more clearly than before the tongue was cut off. Oh, how the wretched heretics were then ashamed when they learned of this! Kindled with still greater malice, they cut off his right hand and threw it to the ground. In the same way they cut off the hand of his disciple, St. Anastasius. But his other disciple, also named Anastasius, formerly apocrisiarius of the Roman Church, they spared, since he sometimes served as secretary to the sovereigns.

After this the Venerable Maximus and his disciple were led out of the praetorium and dragged through the whole city in shame, displaying their severed tongues and hands to all the people and raising a clamor and mockery with hideous voices. After such inhuman mockery and dishonorable outrage, they exiled all three, each separately, to distant banishment, with no concern for them, without food or clothing, naked and barefoot. They suffered many hardships and afflictions on the way. The Venerable Maximus, because of his grievous wounds, could not keep his seat either on horseback or in a cart. The soldiers wove a basket like a bed, and placing the greatly suffering elder in it, with great difficulty they carried him to the place of confinement. Having conveyed him to a remote Scythian land, which in Europe is called Alania,[46] they shut him up in a prison in the city of Shemari. The Venerable disciple Anastasius, whose tongue and hand had been cut off, departed in death on the way, his laborious and much-suffering body at rest, and his soul passed to God into life immortal.

Venerable Maximus, in his last exile, lived on for three more years amid grievous sufferings. Imprisoned, he received no necessary services

46. Alania was located in Asiatic Sarmatia, in the western part of the Caucasus Mountains, not far from the Black Sea.

from anyone in his old age, nor any humane care. But when the Lord willed to bring his sufferings and sorrows to an end and to lead him out of prison into the eternal spaciousness and joy of the Heavenly Kingdom, He first comforted him with a Divine manifestation on earth, and then announced to him the hour of his death. The blessed sufferer was filled with great joy, and although he had always been ready for death, he now began to prepare for it with diligence. When the hour of death, joyful for him, came, he gladly committed his soul into the hands of Christ God, whom he had loved from his youth and for whom he had suffered so much.

Thus the Confessor and Martyr of Christ completed his course[874] and entered into the joy of his Lord. He was buried in the same city. After the burial of the saint, three wondrous lamps were seen over his grave, shining with a flame of inexpressible brilliance and illuminating that place. The saint, who during his life was a light to the world, did not cease, even after his death, to shine, and now shines upon all people by the example of his virtuous and much-suffering life and his great zeal for God. Those three lamps seen above the saint's tomb were a clear sign that the holy servant of God had taken up his dwelling in the bright mansions of the Most Holy Trinity, which are never dimmed in the Kingdom of God, where he shines with the righteous as the sun and rejoices in the contemplation of the Triune light. After the death of Venerable Maximus, another of his disciples remained alive in separate confinement, the apocrisiary Anastasius, who afterwards described in particular detail the life, struggles and sufferings of his father and teacher. From this account there has been taken here, in abridgement, what suffices for our benefit and for the glorification of God, glorified in the saints, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, to whom let there be honor, glory and worship from us sinners also, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Let us, the faithful, honor in fitting hymns the zealous champion of the Trinity, great Maximus, who taught clearly the divine faith,

proclaiming Christ to be in two natures, wills, and energies, and cry out: Rejoice, preacher of the faith.

Another Kontakion, Tone 6:

The thrice-radiant Light, having dwelt in thy soul, showed thee, O most blessed one, to be a chosen vessel, revealing divine things; thou didst declare things difficult to comprehend, O blessed one, and didst clearly proclaim to all, O Maximus, the Trinity, transcendent and without beginning.

* * *

Passion of Saint Neophytus the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Неофита

In the Bithynian city of Nicaea[47] there lived a man named Theodulus, who had a wife, Florentia. Both were God-fearing Christians and reverently kept the commandments of God. They had a son, whom they named Neophytus. Having enlightened him with holy baptism, they raised him in a Christian manner. As the boy grew in years and understanding, and as he approached ten years of age and began to study at school, the grace of God, which perfects praise to Christ from the mouths of infants (cf. Ps. 8:3; Mt. 21:16), dwelt within him, for the Holy "Spirit breathes where He wills" (Jn. 3:8): the boy became a wonderworker. He had a custom: when the children were dismissed from school to their homes, the blessed boy Neophytus would take the poorest of his fellow-children home with him and divide among them the food which he received from his parents for dinner, while he himself remained hungry. Then he would go to the eastern gate of the city, trace the sign of the Cross there with his finger, and, bowing to it, pray to Christ God, crucified for us on the Cross. His companions, having been fed from his dinner, would come to him while he was praying at the eastern gate. There was a stone in the wall there. Striking this stone with his hand, the blessed Neophytus drew water from it as from

47. Bithynia is a northwestern region of Asia Minor. Nicaea – now Iznik – was in antiquity a rich and flourishing city, now poor and sparsely populated. The 1st and 7th Ecumenical Councils were held in Nicaea.

a spring for his companions, and they drank. The holy boy did this on all days, feeding his peers with dinner and miraculously providing water drawn from the stone. At the same time he forbade them to speak of this to anyone, and they did not tell. Thus no one learned of his miracles that year, not even his parents, but only those poorest boys.

The following year it was revealed by God, in a dream vision, to Neophytus' mother Florentia, a woman filled with a special love for God, that her son was drawing water from a stone, like Moses, and providing it to the thirsty boys. She, awakening from sleep, prayed to God that He would reveal to her in detail everything about her son Neophytus. And behold, a white dove, shining with inexpressible light, flew down from the heights of heaven. Settling on Neophytus' bed, the dove addressed him in human speech:

"I have been sent," it said, "by the Savior to keep your bed undefiled."

Hearing this, his mother fell dead from terror. It was at once made known throughout the city of Nicaea that Florentia, the wife of Theodore, had died suddenly. Immediately a multitude of people gathered in the house of the deceased, men and women, neighbors and acquaintances, and all wondered what had happened to her, that she had died unexpectedly. Theodore, her husband, was at that time in the field. He was immediately informed of his wife's sudden death. Tearing his garments in grief, he hastened home weeping. Neophytus, meeting him at the gate, said:

"Why do you grieve, father? My mother has not died, but has fallen into a deep sleep."

Then, entering the house with his father, he took his mother by the hand and said:

"Arise, my mother; you have fallen into a deep sleep."

She, rising as if from sleep, embraced her son and kissed him with love. Seeing this, all who had gathered in the house glorified God. Florentia then related to her husband, in order, all that had happened to her in the dream vision and while awake. At that time the miracle also became known, that Neophytus had drawn water from the stone. All marveled greatly at this, and many of the pagans present, hearing

of all this and marveling at the grace of God dwelling in the pure and undefiled boy Neophytus, believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile the dove always appeared at the saint's bed and, sitting upon it, spoke with a human voice. Once it said to the saint:

"Go forth, Neophytus, from the house of your father, and follow me."

The holy boy rose, bade farewell to his parents, and went after the dove. The dove, leading him to Mount Olympus[48], flew into a cave found in a cleft of the rock. Neophytus, entering after it, found there an enormous lion, and said to it:

"Go out from here and seek another cave for yourself, for the Lord has commanded me to dwell here."

Hearing this, the lion licked the dust from his feet and departed. The saint remained to dwell in the lion's cave and was fed by an Angel. After one year had passed, the saint, by the command of God, went again to the city of Nicaea to his parents, who were near their end, and, giving them the last kiss, sent them on before to God. Then, distributing the property left after them to the poor, he returned again to Mount Olympus, to his former dwelling. There he remained, until he reached the age of fifteen, like an Angel, glorifying God and receiving food from the hand of an Angel.

At this time the persecutors Diocletian and Maximian reigned in the East and in the West[49], and in the Bithynian region the governor was Decius, with his assistant Varus. The Church of Christ was persecuted throughout the whole world by impious idolaters. At that time Decius came to Nicaea, and his herald proclaimed that all the citizens of the city and the surrounding inhabitants should gather to offer sacrifices to the gods. A day was appointed for this abominable festival. At the same time the emperors were also in the Bithynian region; they too came to Nicaea. When that demonic festival arrived and sacrifices were offered to the idols before all the people, the Angels of God, taking the holy Neophytus from Mount Olympus, set him in the midst of the square of

48. Olympus is a mountain in Asia Minor, on the border between Phrygia and Bithynia.

49. Diocletian was the Roman emperor who reigned over the eastern half of the empire, and Maximian over the western half, from 284 to 305.

Nicaea, with a radiant face, like Moses. The saint cried out in a loud voice:

"I have revealed myself to those who did not seek me, and I appear to those who do not ask for me, that I may expose the errors and deceptions of the impious faith."

The people who were celebrating the festival, together with the governor Decius, seeing suddenly appearing among them a bright youth speaking loudly, were amazed and asked who he was and whence he came. And at once the citizens recognized that this was Neophytus, son of Theodore and Florentia. Then the governor Decius commanded that he too should offer sacrifice with them to their gods. The saint opened his bold lips and began to speak:

"Lawless and bloodthirsty man, what are you doing, leading so many human souls to perdition? Do you not know that for all those whom you lead to the demonic sacrifice you will bear a terrible accountability, and will suffer eternally in the fiery Gehenna?"

The governor Decius was terribly enraged by this rebuke and commanded that the holy youth be stripped, and, seizing him by the hand, be hung upon a tree and beaten without mercy with ox-sinews, and then be placed in vinegar mixed with salt. The saint endured the sufferings with courage and called out in a loud voice to the people standing around:

"Men possessed by godlessness and suffering from blindness, repent and be delivered from this darkness; come to the true Light, Christ God, and be consecrated by holy baptism, that you may be made worthy of eternal life!"

The governor, hearing such words from the holy youth, was filled with still greater fury and commanded that he be hung upon the tree again and that his ribs be scraped with a knife. Tormented in this way, the holy Neophytus said nothing other than the words:

"Son of God, have mercy on me!"

Then one of the governor's attendants came before him and said:

"Why do you rage, Neophytus, resisting the emperor's command? Promise to offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will at once be released from this cruel execution."

But the saint answered him:

"I offer to God of Heaven the sacrifice of praise, and to lifeless idols and the demons that dwell in them I will never bow down."

Then the governor commanded his servants to scrape the saint's whole body yet more cruelly, in turn. The servants, taking turns, scraped him without mercy, so that his bones were laid bare. The saint, strengthened by God, sang during these torments: "Though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (Ps. 22:4), O Lord.

The governor, seeing that he gained nothing, commanded that the torture of the saint cease and that he be taken down from the tree; consoling him, he said:

"Seeing your youth and sparing your health, I do not lay upon you still greater torments, but counsel you to bow down to our gods. Then the most skilled physicians will be sent to you by the emperors, who will soon heal you of these wounds."

The martyr answered him:

"I have another Physician, my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, for whom I suffer; on Him I rely."

Then the governor commanded that he be cast, bound, into prison. In the morning the governor went to the emperors' palace and told the emperors about Neophytus.

"Yesterday," he said, "I tormented a Christian youth, binding him, because he will not bow down to the gods. Yet he disdains the torments and ceaselessly calls upon his Christ."

The emperors commanded that this youth, and all who confess Christ, be burned alive. The governor Decius and the elder Varus came out of the royal palace and went to the place called "the school of Hercules" [50]. Here the imperial images had been set up, and Decius commanded that the youth Neophytus be brought from prison. When the saint was brought, the governor addressed him with these words:

"Neophytus, come forward and offer sacrifice to the god Hercules; then you will be pleasing to the gods, and agreeable to the emperors and to us."

The saint answered him:

"I pray to my God, Jesus Christ, that I may be pleasing and acceptable to Him."

Then, by the tormentor's command, a furnace was heated very hot for the burning of Saint Neophytus. He was cast into the furnace, and its opening was sealed for three days and three nights, so that not even the martyr's bones would remain. But the holy martyr Neophytus, cooled amid the fire by divine dew, rejoiced as in a peaceful place, singing: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall want nothing: He makes me to lie down in green pastures" (Ps. 22:1–2). He remained wholly unharmed, like the three Babylonian youths cast into the furnace (Dan. 3).

After three days the tormentor's servants came to open the furnace and shovel out the ashes; they thought the fire had gone out and the martyr's body had burned. But as soon as they opened the opening, suddenly a great flame burst forth from the furnace and scorched many impious men who had come there, so that scarcely any remained unhurt. The saint, with a loud voice, cried out:

"Blessed art Thou, Lord my God, who preservest me sound and unharmed amid torments, who deliverest me from the malice of the tormentors, who turnest fire into dew for me and hast consumed with flame those worthy of the eternal and unquenchable flame! I pray Thee, O Master, do not put me to shame, Thy servant, to the end, until I accomplish my struggle with Thy help."

After this the saint came out of the furnace unhurt, receiving no harm from the fire. The impious servants who had escaped being burned by the flame took him and led him to the governor. All the pagans marveled at such a miracle and, in their impiety, ascribed it to sor-

50. Heracles or Hercules was a hero of ancient Greek legends, who, according to the beliefs of the ancient Greeks, possessed supernatural strength; he personified physical human strength and was afterwards venerated by them as one of their most beloved gods. As the embodiment of physical strength, Hercules was regarded as the head and patron of all the gymnasia (ancient Greek public schools, in which particular attention was paid to gymnastic exercises) and palaestrae (schools for physical exercises, maintained by private persons, where boys received physical development). These schools were usually dedicated to Hercules and adorned with his statues. Often these exercises and gymnastic and athletic contests were held in the open air, in places specially designated for this and dedicated to Hercules.

cery, being themselves filled with demonic enchantment: malice had blinded them, and they could not comprehend the power of Christ.

Then the saint was condemned to be devoured by beasts. A raised platform was prepared; the naked saint was tied to a post fixed upon it, and a bear was let loose upon him. The beast went toward the saint roaring, but, drawing near, it stopped, looked at him, and then returned to its place. The governor and all who had gathered for this spectacle marveled at this. Then they let loose a most ferocious she-bear, which was released into the arena only twice a year, for she was very savage and had killed many. She, running up, fell at the saint's feet, honoring in him the servant of God, and then withdrew to her place. While this was happening, shepherds brought to the governor an enormous and very fierce lion, which, they said, they had caught in the wilderness five days before and had not given any food at all. The governor, delighted, commanded that this lion be brought into the arena, where the holy martyr was tied naked to the post. All were terrified, looking at this lion, for it was very large and fierce. The lion, approaching the saint, looked at him, stopped, and bowing its head, shed tears from its eyes like rivers from springs, and then began to lick the saint's feet. This was the lion that Saint Neophytus had found on Mount Olympus, in a stone cave, and had sent to another place, himself settling in its cave. Recognizing it, the saint commanded it to return to its first dwelling, on Mount Olympus, which it had yielded to the saint; at the same time the saint forbade it ever to harm people. The lion, bowing to the martyr, went away from him with a terrible roar, broke open the doors of the arena, and passed swiftly through the people. Everyone fled, fearing the beast's fierceness, but it harmed no one and ran into the wilderness, by the saint's command, to its former place. The tormentor, filled with fear and dread, and not knowing what else to do, commanded that the martyr be killed. There stood a certain foreigner, bestial and fierce of temper, holding a spear. He rushed at the saint and, striking him in the chest with the spear, pierced him through. Thus the holy martyr Neophytus, slain like a lamb, gave up his soul into the hands of his Lord on the 21st day of January [51], having lived fifteen years and four months

from his birth. Now, inheriting endless life, he glorifies the Source of life, Christ God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages.

* * *

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyr Agnes the Virgin

Житие и страдание святой мученицы Агнии девы

The holy martyr Agnes was born in ancient Rome and was brought up by her parents in the Christian faith. In her thirteenth year she was freed by a temporal death from eternal death and obtained unending life, for she loved the one Giver of life and clung to Him from her youth. She was young in years but old in perfect understanding; young in body, but the gray hair of her soul was wisdom (Wis. 4:9); beautiful in face, but still more beautiful in the depth of her faith. Kindled with love for the Sweetest Jesus, born of the Most Pure Virgin, she was betrothed to Him by her virginity and would have no other bridegroom but Him. Noble by birth and lovely of face, she so drew to herself the eyes and heart of a certain youth, son of the provincial governor Symphronius, that when he saw her returning from the women's school, he at once was inflamed with love for her; then, having inquired about her and learned the house of her parents, he began to send her abundant gifts, promising yet more and asking that she consent to become his betrothed and be joined to him in marriage. Saint Agnes rejected all these gifts as though they were refuse, valuing them not at all; of herself she said that she was betrothed to a better Bridegroom and had from Him better and more precious gifts: being His betrothed, she could not leave Him or betray her devotion and love for Him. But this youth, from day to day, was kindled with ever greater love for her, and considered himself more honorable and more worthy than all the other noble youths. Supposing, moreover, that the maiden desired better gifts from him, he prepared in greater number and of greater value precious stones and pearls, costly vessels and garments, and brought

51. St. Neophytus suffered and died a martyr's death during the persecution of Diocletian, which took place in the years 303–305.

them himself to her, begging now in person, now through acquaintances, friends and neighbors, that she prefer no one to him. He pointed to his noble birth, his riches, houses, and hereditary lands, which she would possess if she consented to be betrothed to him. Then the saint began to speak more plainly:

Depart from me, kindler of sinful flame, lover of defilement, food prepared for eternal death! Withdraw from me, for another Bridegroom has already forewarned you, One who has bestowed upon me far greater adornments and betrothed me with the ring of His faith. You cannot be compared with Him either in origin or in rank. He has set upon me other distinctions of spiritual beauty. He has encircled my right hand and my neck with precious stones; He has put in my ears earrings of priceless emeralds; He has girded me with bright, shining pearls; He has set a sign upon my face, that I should prefer no other bridegroom to Him; He has clothed me in a garment woven with gold and adorned me with countless necklaces. Moreover, He has shown me an inestimable treasure which He promised to give me if I keep faith in Him. Therefore I cannot look upon anyone else, lest I dishonor my first Bridegroom, nor can I abandon Him to whom I am firmly bound by the covenant of love. His nobility is the most exalted, His power the most mighty, His beauty the most magnificent, His love the sweetest, surpassing every grace; and He has already prepared a bridal chamber for me. His voice is pleasing to me; His lips have already distilled for me honey and milk; by His pure embrace I have already been sincerely drawn to Him; His flesh has already been united with my flesh, and His blood has reddened my face. His Mother is a Virgin, and His Father knew no wife. Angels serve Him; the sun and the moon marvel at His beauty; at His command the dead rise; at the touch of Him the sick are healed; His riches never diminish, and His treasuries never run empty. In Him alone I keep my faith, and to Him alone I entrust myself wholly. Having Him as my husband, I shall remain a virgin; loving Him, I shall be undefiled; touching Him, I shall remain pure; from this marriage there are no children born; childbearing in it is painless, and the fruits of its union increase with each day.

After these words the frenzied youth was kindled still more with ardent love for her, and, suffering in his heart from the wound of love, he fell into a grievous sickness from sorrow and grief. When he lay on his bed of sickness and sighed heavily from the depth of his heart, the physicians came to understand the wound of his heart. His father, hearing of all this and learning from inquiries the cause of the illness, immediately sent to the maiden and to her parents, desiring to betroth her as a bride to his son. But she, as before, refused, saying:

"I will never be unfaithful to my first Bridegroom."

The enraged governor of the province sought to inquire thoroughly who could be equal to his son and could diminish the nobility of his family. Then one of those present explained that Agnes had been a Christian from childhood and had been so beguiled by Christian sorcery that she considered Christ, whom the Christians acknowledge as God, to be her Bridegroom. Learning of this, the governor rejoiced, for as judge he could declare her worthy of death for insulting his gods; moreover, he hoped by his own authority to compel her into marriage with his son. He immediately sent his servants to bring her, and began his impious trial of her. At first he tried by flattery, and then by threats, to turn her away from Christ and from the virginity she had promised to Christ. But the Virgin of Christ was not enticed by flattery, nor did she fear threats; being valiant in spirit, she mocked alike at flattery and at threats. The governor Symphronius, seeing such courage in the maiden, turned to her parents and conversed with them at length about the betrothal; and since they were of noble birth, he did not dare to use force against them, but advised them only to persuade their daughter in every way to marry. But they refused, saying:

"Governor, we will not be able to persuade her, for as far as we have known her will from childhood, she will never do this, and she will never abandon her intention."

Then the governor again commanded that the maiden be brought before him for judgment, speaking to her much about carnal love and marriage; when all his gentle and flattering words proved powerless, he said at last:

"Choose for yourself one of two things: either be joined in marriage with my son, or, if you wish to keep your virginity, dedicate yourself to the perpetual service of the goddess Vesta[52], for she requires such maidens."

To these words the blessed Agnes replied:

"If I have despised your son, though he is corrupted by a raging passion, yet is a living man, moreover one who has reason, able to hear, see, walk, and enjoy the blessings of this world — if I cannot even look upon him, in view of my vow to Christ, then all the more I cannot honor an idol that is deaf and dumb, lifeless and senseless. Lest I cause offense to the almighty God, I will not bow my head before an insensible stone, for I know with certainty that there is no other God except Him who created heaven and earth through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sake became incarnate, suffered and was buried, rose on the third day, and now reigns in heaven with an endless kingdom. Him alone I worship and serve as the True and Living God, while your false goddess and all your vile gods I curse."

Hearing this, the governor Symphronius said:

"Sparing your youth, I forgive you the blasphemies you have uttered against our gods, for I see that you have an imperfect mind; spare yourself too, and do not provoke the gods."

Saint Agnes answered:

"Why do you despise my youth, as though I were unreasoning, and why do you think I seek any favor from you? Know that the worth of faith depends not on years of life nor on bodily age, but on the mind, and the almighty God exalts a man more for his understanding than for his years, and bestows more benefits through reason than through length of days. As for your gods, from whose wrath you warn me, leave them be; let them themselves be angry with me, let them themselves

52. Vesta (among the Greeks, Hestia) was venerated by the ancient Romans as the goddess of the domestic hearth, of domestic harmony, peace and happiness; according to their beliefs she herself was a virgin. In her honor a special sanctuary was built, with her statue and a hearth, in which a fire burned unceasingly, tended by her servants, the so-called Vestals, chosen from pure maidens who vowed perpetual virginity, and who enjoyed great respect and honor among the Romans.

speak, let them themselves command me to honor them and worship them."

The governor of the province said to this:

"Choose for yourself one thing: either, along with other maidens, for the saving of your household's honor, offer sacrifice to the goddess Vesta, or, to the everlasting shame of your family, you will go into a brothel to shameless women."

Saint Agnes boldly answered him:

"If you knew Who my God is, you would not say this. I, knowing the power of my Lord Jesus Christ, attach no importance to your threats, for I am fully assured that I will not bow down to your gods either, and my virginity will remain pure and undefiled. I have a guardian of my body, the Angel of God. And my Lord, Jesus Christ, is the only-begotten Son of God, whom you do not know. He is for me an unshakable fortress, a tireless guardian, a constant defender — not as your gods are, which are either pieces of bronze, fit for making kettles useful in household use, or stones with which streets are paved. The Divinity does not dwell in stone, but has heaven for its throne, and does not dwell in bronze or any more precious thing, but in the heavenly kingdom, being glorified and worshipped by every creature. As for you and those like you, if you do not turn from idol-worship to the True God, then together with your gods, which craftsmen cast in fire and which melt in fire, you will suffer in eternal fire."

The governor was greatly angered, commanded that the saint be stripped and led naked to the brothel, and a herald was to proclaim:

"Agnes, the impious maiden who has blasphemed the gods, is being led to the brothel like a harlot."

But while the holy maiden was stripped for shame, God did not abandon her in her hope, nor allow His bride to be mocked and put to shame. By God's will, her hair immediately grew so long upon her head that it covered her whole body like some thick garment, and no one could see her nakedness. When she entered the house of harlots, she saw an Angel of God, ready to guard her virginal purity, who covered her with such an ineffable, radiant brightness that, because of its intense splendor, the eyes of the shameless and impious youths could not

look upon her. That whole room shone with light like the sun blazing in all its beauty, and when anyone tried to look upon her with a curious eye, his eyes were at once sorely darkened by the saint, invisible because of that light. When the maiden began to pray, she saw before her a white garment, woven not by human but by Angelic hands. Having put it on, and seeing herself clothed in accordance with her age, the saint said:

"I thank Thee, my Lord, Jesus Christ, that by numbering me among Thy handmaidens Thou hast granted me this garment!"

Then the house of sin became a house of prayer, the place of devilish revelry became a dwelling of the glory of God, and the unclean house of harlots became a splendid chamber, where the Bride of Christ, together with the Angel who had appeared to her, glorified and sang praise to God. Many came there, corrupt in mind and inflamed with passion, but fearing the glory that surrounded the maiden and seeing the Divine power that guarded her virginity, they became chaste and, bowing down, departed. There came also, with his companions, that youth, the author of the evil, filled with unclean passion. He wished to commit violence upon the holy maiden, and seeing that others who had entered before him had come out again without any success, he laughed at them, calling them worthless and weak. He entered with a bold intent into the room in which the saint was praying, and, seeing the heavenly radiance, he did not render honor to the glory of the Lord, but shamelessly rushed toward the Bride of Christ. But before he touched her with his hand, a demon instantly seized him, cast him with force to the ground, and, strangling him, left him lifeless. His companions who had come with him, seeing that he had lingered long in the room, thought that he was doing a sinful deed. Then one of his closest friends, wishing to praise him and to congratulate him on the fulfilling and attaining of his desire, entered the room and, finding him lifeless, began to cry out loudly:

"Men of Rome, help! This sorceress has by her witchcraft killed the son of the governor!"

At once a multitude of people gathered. Seeing what had happened, some called her a sorceress, and others declared her innocent of the

youth's death. Learning of this, the father of the dead man hastily appeared in the crowd and, seeing his son lying lifeless, turned with weeping to the saint:

"O inhuman and most cruel of all women! Why have you destroyed my son? Could you not have shown the power of your sorcery on someone else? Woe is me! What have you done? Tell me, how did you kill him?"

The saint answered him meekly:

"He whose will he wished to fulfill—the ancient enemy of the human race, who has power over fornicators and those who do not fear God, and especially over the corrupters of virginity—he killed him. For all who entered here before him remained alive and well, since they rendered honor to God, who sent His Angel to clothe me with this garment of mercy and to keep my virginity unharmed, which from the cradle I vowed to Christ. Seeing the brightness of the Angelic radiance, they all worshipped and went out unharmed. But your son, being shameless and not fearing God, as soon as he entered began to rage and go wild, and when he shamelessly stretched out his hand to touch me, the Angel of God at once delivered him to Satan for this bitter and shameful end which you see. Thus he was put to death not by my sorcery, as you suppose, but by the authority and command of the Angel of God."

To this the governor said:

"Then it will become clear that you did not do this by witchcraft, when you beseech your Angel to raise my son to life."

The saint answered:

"Although you are unworthy of such a miracle because of your unbelief, yet since the time has come for the power of my Lord Jesus Christ to be made manifest and glorified, go out from here, all of you, and I will offer my usual prayers to my God."

And while she prayed, lying prostrate upon the ground, the Angel of God who had appeared to her raised her up weeping and raised the dead youth. He, coming out of the house, began to cry out with a loud voice:

"God is one in heaven and on earth and on the sea, the Christian God; the other gods are nothing, but only deceit and error, bringing eternal perdition to those who believe in them!"

Seeing and hearing this, many of the people believed on that day, to the number of one hundred and sixty persons, and were baptized. After some time the pagans beheaded them and the youth who had been raised.

Greatly disturbed by such a miracle were the pagan priests and sorcerers. Spreading word of the miracle and arousing great agitation among the people, they cried out loudly, addressing the judge:

"Destroy from our midst this sorceress, slay this enchantress, who not only kills bodies but also overturns souls and hearts!"

Symphronius, seeing this miracle, was perplexed: he wished to release the saint, but, fearing an uprising of the priests against himself and even exile from his homeland, he left his deputy, named Aspasius, to quell the popular disturbance, and himself departed, grieved that he could not, once his son was raised, free the holy maiden. Aspasius, taking up authority, ordered a fire to be kindled in the midst of the city and St. Agnes to be thrown into it for burning. When the saint was cast into the fire, at once the flame divided into two parts and gave her within itself a wide and cool space; on the contrary, it rushed upon those standing around and scorched them. The people, seeing the maiden unburned, ascribed this not to the almighty power of God but to the force of sorcery, and, reasoning about it, grew agitated and with blasphemous voices cried out to the clouds. Meanwhile the holy martyr, standing in the midst of the fire with her hands raised up, prayed:

"Glory to Thee, almighty Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, confessed and glorified by all, through whom Thou didst deliver me from the hand of wicked men, preserve my soul from defilement, and keep my body pure! And now, by the heavenly dew of the Holy Spirit, the fire is cooled for me, the flame is divided, and all the force of the fire is turned against the servants who try to burn me. I thank Thee, O God worthy of praise, that even amid the flames Thou givest me a fearless path to Thee. I already see fulfilled what I believed; what I hoped for I now possess, and what I desired I have received. I confess Thee with my

lips and my heart; to Thee I have directed all my senses, and behold, I go to Thee, the Living and True God, together with our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, who lives and reigns unto ages of ages. Amen."

When this prayer had been uttered by the saint, and all the fire of the pyre had gone out completely, Aspasius, fearing the continuation of the popular tumult, ordered a sword to be thrust into the throat of the saint. Thus Agnes, the martyr of Christ, stained with her own blood, went to the wedding of the Immortal Bridegroom[53]. The parents of St. Agnes took with joy the honorable body of their daughter and laid it on their field, not far from the city, beside the road called Nomentana. Here many of the faithful gathered for prayer, especially at night, because of their fear of the pagans, who, lying in wait both there and on the way, inflicted many oppressions upon the believers. Once, attacking unexpectedly, they wounded many with thrown stones and scattered them all; there remained only one maiden, a contemporary of St. Agnes, named Emerentiana. Filled with boldness, she reviled the robbers, saying:

"Why, you hard-hearted men, do you stone innocent people? What fault have you found in those who glorify the one God and by their prayers beseech for you many blessings?"

The pagans, enraged, stoned her. Thus, while praying at the tomb of St. Agnes, she gave up her spirit to the Lord. And at once there began a strong earthquake, lightnings, and terrible thunders; the greater part of the murderers fell dead, struck from on high. From that time the pagans no longer dared to oppress the believers who went to the tomb of the martyr of Christ. The parents of St. Agnes, coming by night with the presbyters, washed the bloodied honorable body of St. Emerentiana and buried it near St. Agnes, while they themselves remained continually at the tomb of their beloved daughter, keeping vigil and weeping by night. One night they saw a company of maidens passing by them, adorned with bright vestments woven with gold and shining with heavenly glory, and among them they saw their daughter,

53. St. Martyr Agnes suffered in the year 304.

St. Agnes, shining like them and having at her right hand the Lamb, whiter than snow. Turning to her companions, that they should stop and wait a little, she said to her parents:

"Do not weep for me as for one dead, but rather rejoice and triumph together with me, for I, together with these virgins, have entered into bright dwellings, and now I am united in heaven with Him whom I loved with all my heart on earth."

Having said this, she became invisible.

Many years later Constantine the Great ascended the throne. His daughter Constantia fell gravely ill. Her whole body was covered with purulent sores, and there was no healthy place on her body from head to foot. The physicians could do nothing to help her. Following a good counsel, she went by night to the tomb of the holy martyr Agnes, and there, having prayed with firm faith and with tears, she fell asleep and saw in a dream vision St. Agnes, who said to her:

"Take courage, Constantia, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by faith in whom you are now being healed of your wounds."

Awaking, Constantia felt herself as healthy as if she had never been ill. Returning home, she told her father and brothers how St. Agnes had healed her. There was great joy in the imperial house; the whole city rejoiced as well, glorifying God for this great miracle. Many began to come to the tomb of the holy martyr and received various healings. After this the princess Constantia begged her father to build a church in the name of the holy martyr Agnes on the place of her burial. There, having made a dwelling for herself, she remained a virgin, together with many other noble and distinguished maidens, until her repose. Thus was founded a monastery of virgins at the church of the maiden and bride of Christ, St. Agnes, to her honor and praise, to the glory of Christ our God, who is glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Valerian, Candidus, Eugene and Acila

Память святых мучеников Валериана, Кандида, Евгения и Акилы

These holy and glorious martyrs suffered under Diocletian and Maximian, at the hands of the governor Lysias. First of all, Valerian, Candidus and Acila were seized in the mountains of Trebizond, for when the grievous persecution arose they had left their homes and all their possessions, and the whole vain world, and wandered in the mountains, preferring to live among the wild beasts rather than among the godless idolaters. The three martyrs who had been seized were first sent by the impious to the land of Lasia, to a small town named Pina, and there cast into grievous imprisonment in the local dungeon; then, after some time, they were brought to Trebizond[54] and presented to the governor Lysias. When the saints, questioned about the faith of Christ and urged to offer sacrifices to the idols, refused to obey, they were first beaten naked with sinews, and then hung up and scraped with iron claws, while being burned with lit candles. The holy sufferers were strengthened by divine power, which dwelt unseen within them amid their torments. It suddenly so terrified the tormentors that they fell prostrate as if dead. Seeing this, Lysias was struck with terror and commanded that the martyrs be led back to prison. Some days later the holy Eugene was also seized and subjected to cruel beating for confessing the name of Jesus Christ. When the governor then went into the temple of the idols, the martyr Eugene was led in after him. Entering the temple, the saint prayed to God, and at once the idols fell down and crumbled to dust. Then, by the command of the tormentor, his servants bound the saint's hands and feet with cords, stretched him out upon the ground, and for a long time beat him with thick clubs. Afterwards they hung him up naked, scraped his body with iron claws, burned him with candles, and poured strong vinegar mixed with salt upon his wounds. After this, all four holy martyrs were cast together into a fiery furnace, and when they came out of it without

54. Trapezus was a city in the eastern part of Pontus, a remote region of Asia Minor, on the seashore.

any harm to themselves, they were beheaded with the sword[55]. Thus were the sufferings of these saints brought to an end.

* * *

NOTES

848. St. Pope Martin had previously been apocrisiarius (that is, representative) of his predecessor Pope Theodore at the Byzantine court, and had lived for a long time in Constantinople. When he ascended the papal throne in May 649, an imperial edict (*Typos*) was sent to him from Constantinople with a command to adhere to it. St. Martin replied with a refusal, and together with St. Maximus began to seek measures for the eradication of the heresy. At the end of 649 he convened in Rome the so-called Lateran Council of 150 bishops, with the participation of St. Maximus. At this council the Orthodox teaching of two wills and two actions in Jesus Christ was confirmed; the champions of the heresy – Theodore of Pharan, Sergius of Constantinople, the patriarchs Pyrrhus and Paul, and finally Cyrus of Alexandria – as well as the *Ekthesis* of Heraclius and the *Typos* of Constans were anathematized; and the acts of the council were sent to the Emperor Constans.

874. The works of St. Maximus did not perish. The Sixth Ecumenical Council (680) worthily honored the Confessor and anathematized the heretics and their teaching. – The best of the works of the Venerable Maximus are those that portray the spiritual life, and especially the following: 1) On love, to the presbyter Elpidius, 400 chapters; 2) The Ascetic Teaching, in questions and answers to the same Elpidius; 3) On virtue and vice, 500 chapters; 4) Epistle to the eparch George on pride; 5) To the chamberlain John, on love and on sorrow according to God. In all his dogmatic writings the Venerable Maximus had in view almost exclusively the Monothelites and Monophysites, with whom in his life he struggled so zealously. Against the Monothelites he wrote: 1) Two tomes of dogmas to Marinus in Cyprus; 2) On the two wills in Christ, on the actions and wills in Christ, to the same Marinus; and a multitude of other, less extensive treatises. Against the Monophysites he wrote: 1) On the correct dogmas of faith, and against Severus; 2) On the two natures in Christ. To him also belong five dialogues on the Holy Trinity and a letter to the presbyter Marinus "On the procession of the Holy Spirit." The Venerable Maximus also devoted considerable effort to the explanation of Holy Scripture. He left several attempts at interpretation of Scripture: 1) answers to obscure passages of Scripture; 2) brief answers on difficult subjects; 3) an explanation of Psalm 59; 4) an interpretation of the Lord's Prayer; 5) an explanation of the Song of Songs. In addition, from the Venerable Maximus there remains a liturgical work – an exposition of the Liturgy,

55. At the beginning of the 4th century.

or the mystagogy – and some other writings: on the soul, on quality, etc. – The writings of the Venerable Maximus are rich in lofty dogmatic and moral thoughts.



THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF JANUARY

January 22

22 января

New Calendar January 22 · Old Calendar February 4 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Apostle Timothy

Житие святого апостола Тимофея

The Holy Apostle Timothy was from the region of Lycaonia[1], and he received his upbringing and education in the famous city of Lystra[2], which was renowned not so much for its abundance of earthly fruits as for this God-planted and fruitful branch. This young shoot, however, sprang from a not altogether sound root: for as a fragrant rose grows from a thorn, so the Holy Timothy descended from an unbelieving Greek, who was known for his pagan impiety and was so mired in vices as his son afterwards surpassed all men in virtue and in lofty morality. The mother and grandmother of the Holy Timothy, however, were of Jewish descent, both holy and righteous, adorned with good works, as the Holy Apostle Paul testifies in the words: "I long to see you, remembering your tears, that I may be filled with joy, calling to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that it is in you also" (2 Tim. 1:4–5).

Still a youth, the Blessed Timothy, nourished by his mother not so much with bodily food as with the word of the Lord, wholly turned away from the pagan and Jewish error, and afterwards attached himself to the Holy Apostle Paul, that God-sounding trumpet of the Church. It happened in this way. The Holy Apostle Paul, together with

1. Lycaonia – a south-eastern region of Asia Minor. Christianity was planted here by the holy Apostle Paul.
2. Lystra – a city in Lycaonia, on its border with Isauria. Today on the site of Lystra is the village of Latik or Ladik.

the disciple and apostle of Christ Barnabas, came to Lystra, as the Divine Luke relates in the Acts of the Apostles: "They fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about" (Acts 14:6). On his arrival there the Holy Apostle Paul performed a great miracle: with a single word he healed a man lame from his mother's womb. Seeing this, the inhabitants of the city were greatly astonished, saying: "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men." But when they learned that these were not gods but men, and were called apostles and preachers of the Living God, and that they were opponents of false gods and had been sent for this very purpose, to turn men from demonic error to the True God, who can not only heal the lame but also raise the dead, then many of them turned from their error to piety (Acts 14:8–18). Among these was the mother of this Blessed Apostle Timothy, who had remained a widow after the death of her husband. She joyfully received the Holy Apostle Paul into her house, cared for his sustenance and the comforts of his life, and at last gave her son, the Holy Timothy, to him for instruction, as a gift for the miracle wrought in their city and for the light of the true faith she had received from him. The Holy Timothy was still very young in years, yet he was most capable and prepared to receive the seed of the word of God. The Holy Paul, having taken the youth, found in him not only meekness and an inclination to good, but also discerned in him the grace of God, on account of which he loved him even more than his parents according to the flesh[3]. But since the Holy Timothy was still very young and could not bear the hardships of travel, the Holy Apostle Paul left him in his mother's house, placing with him skillful teachers who would instruct him in the Divine Scriptures, as he himself recalls in his epistle to Timothy: "From a child you have known the holy Scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15). The Apostle Paul himself, stoned by the people at the instigation of the Jews, was dragged outside the city, after which he went on to other cities.

Some years later, when the Holy Apostle Paul, departing from Antioch, wished to visit the brethren in all the cities in which he had earlier

preached the word of God, he took with him Silas and came to Lystra[4], where the Holy Timothy lived. Seeing that he had attained full age and was progressing in every virtue, and that he enjoyed high esteem among all the Christians there, the Apostle Paul took him into the apostolic ministry and made him his constant companion in all his labors and a fellow-worker in the Lord. When he was about to leave the city, however, for the sake of certain Jews who lived there in great numbers and in the surrounding places, he circumcised Timothy according to the Law of Moses (Acts 16:3) — not because this was necessary for salvation, for a new grace is given in holy baptism in place of circumcision, but so that the Jews would not be offended by him, since they all knew of his descent from a Gentile. Departing from Lystra, the Holy Apostle Paul went through cities and villages, teaching and proclaiming the Kingdom of God and enlightening all with the light of piety. Following him, as a star follows the sun that has shone forth from the third heaven, came the Divine Timothy[888], receiving the unwavering light of piety in the teaching of the Gospel of Christ and learning lofty ascetic labors and a virtuous life, as the Holy Apostle Paul himself bears witness: "You have fully known my teaching, my conduct, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings" (2 Tim. 3:10–11).

Thus the Holy Timothy drew all the virtues from the chosen vessel, the Apostle Paul, and received from him, for Christ's sake, apostolic poverty. Acquiring for himself no riches, neither gold, nor silver, nor any other material goods, he went from place to place, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. He adopted the custom of returning good for evil: reviled, he blessed; persecuted, he endured; slandered, he rejoiced in spirit; and in all things he showed himself a servant of God, being a true imitator of his teacher. The Holy Apostle Paul, seeing his disciple so progressing in virtues, ordained him first as deacon, then as presbyter, and at last as bishop[5], although he was still young in years.

3. This is seen from the fact that the Apostle Paul everywhere calls him his son (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2, 2:1). It is also clear from this that the Apostle Timothy owed his conversion to Christianity to the Apostle Paul.

4. This was during the second apostolic journey of the holy Apostle Paul.

Having become, through the laying on of apostolic hands, a minister of the Mysteries of Christ, the Holy Timothy became a most zealous imitator of the apostolic hardships and labors, not yielding to the other apostles in sufferings and toils during the preaching of the teaching of Christ. Neither youth nor bodily weakness could ever hinder him from fulfilling the task he had undertaken. In all his activity he showed greatness of spirit, as his teacher, the Holy Apostle Paul, testifies in his first epistle to the Corinthians: "If Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear, for he does the work of the Lord, as I do. Let no one despise him" (1 Cor. 16:10–11). A little earlier, praising him, the Holy Apostle Paul wrote: "I have sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ" (1 Cor. 4:17). Similarly, in his other epistles, he calls the Holy Timothy his brother, saying: "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother" (Philem. 1:1); "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother" (2 Cor. 1:1); "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother" (Col. 1:1). And he writes further: "We sent Timothy, our brother and God's servant and our fellow-worker in the Gospel of Christ, to establish and encourage you in your faith" (1 Thess. 3:2). These and many other testimonies in praise of the Holy Timothy are found in the epistles of the Apostle Paul. Yet St. Timothy did not exalt himself on account of them, but, living in humility of mind and in strict guarding of himself from sin, he so wore himself down with constant labors and fasting that his teacher himself, looking upon his exploits and fasts, greatly pitied him. He urged the Holy Timothy not to drink only water, but to use a little wine for the sake of his stomach and his frequent infirmities (1 Tim. 5:23). Although these constantly burdened his body, the purity of his soul remained untouched and free from all corruption. The Holy Timothy, together with his teacher, traversed all the ends of the earth: now in Ephesus, now in Corinth, now in Macedonia, now in Italy, now in Spain;

5. The ordination of St. Apostle Timothy to the pastoral ministry, according to the words of the apostle, was preceded by prophecies concerning him (1 Tim. 1:18), and the ordination itself was performed after a preliminary confession of faith (1 Tim. 6:12), with the laying on of the hands of the priesthood, and he was granted a special gift of God's grace for the worthy fulfillment of the duties to which he was called (1 Tim. 4:12–16).

they proclaimed the word of God, so that it could rightly be said of them: "Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world" (Ps. 18:5). Moreover, the Holy Timothy was discerning in his reasoning, quick in his answers; in preaching the word of God he was a skillful orator; in expounding the Divine Scriptures a compelling interpreter; in Church administration and in defending the truths of the faith, a most worthy pastor. Especially worthy of note is that he received abundant grace, for he drew his teaching from a twofold source: he had as his teacher not only the Holy Paul, but also learned from the Holy John, the beloved disciple of Christ[6]. When the Holy John was exiled by the Roman emperor Domitian[7] to the island of Patmos[8], Timothy was made bishop of the city of Ephesus in his stead, where, a short time afterwards, he suffered for his witness to Jesus Christ in the following manner.

Once at Ephesus there was celebrated a particularly solemn festival called the *katagogium*, at which idolaters, men and women alike, donned the images of various strange creatures, took in hand their idols and clubs, and with shameless dances made the rounds of the city's streets. As they went they sang in discordant voices and fell upon those they met like brigands, and many they even slew. They also committed many other foul iniquities, by which they thought to express reverence for their abominable gods. Seeing this, the blessed Timothy was kindled with the fire of divine zeal, and, appearing at this God-defying spectacle, openly and boldly preached the One true God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He plainly showed the errors and self-delusions of their worship of their gods, and freely set forth much that was useful for persuading them. But they, wandering in the darkness of pagan error, did not understand or grasp the apostle's words. Rather, they rushed upon him together and beat him cruelly with the clubs they held. Mercilessly and inhumanly they dragged him over the ground, trampling him with their

6. In the 60s A.D. the holy Apostle John left Jerusalem, where he had remained until the Dormition of the Mother of God, and preached the word of God in Asia Minor and especially in Ephesus, and thus was able to directly guide the Apostle Timothy in his pastoral ministry.
7. The Roman Emperor Domitian, a cruel persecutor of Christianity, reigned from 81 to 96 A.D.
8. This was in 96 A.D. Patmos—a bare, barren, rocky island of the Aegean Sea (Archipelago), to the south-west of Ephesus, reckoned among the so-called Sporades.

feet, and at last tortured him to death[9]. Christians who came afterward found him barely breathing. They carried him outside the city, and when he had departed this life they buried him on a site called in Greek Pion, that is, "the fat place." Long afterward, by the command of the Emperor Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, the honorable relics of the holy apostle Timothy were transferred from Ephesus to Constantinople by the holy martyr Artemius[10] and laid in the Church of the Holy Apostles together with the relics of the holy apostle Luke and of St. Andrew the First-Called. So it pleased God, for in their lives all things were held in common: their character, their teaching, and their preaching of the Gospel. Therefore it was fitting that they should share a common tomb after death, the more so since their repose in heaven is also common, in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having learned goodness and being sober in all things, thou didst clothe thyself reverently, with a good conscience. From the chosen vessel thou didst draw ineffable things, and keeping the faith thou didst complete a course equal to his. O Apostle Timothy, entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Let us the faithful all sing praise to the divine disciple and fellow-traveler of Paul, Timothy, and with him let us honor the wise Anastasius, who shone forth from Persia like a star and who drives away the passions of our souls and the infirmities of our bodies.

* * *

9. St. Apostle Timothy died a martyr's death about 97 A.D.
10. The memory of the holy Great Martyr Artemius is celebrated by the Church on October 20. The translation of the holy relics of the apostles: the evangelist Luke, Andrew the First-called and Timothy, was accomplished on June 24, 356 A.D.

Life and Passion of the Holy Venerable Martyr Anastasius the Persian

Житие и страдание святого преподобномученика Анастасия Персянина

When the holy city of Jerusalem was taken by the Persian king Chosroes[11], and the holy places where Christ our Lord dwelt, marked by His voluntary sufferings, His crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection, were seized by impious barbarians; when the Life-giving Wood of the Lord's Cross was also taken captive and carried off into Persia together with rich military booty[12], then in that land the glory of the name of Christ began, like the sun, to shine forth in the miracles that issued from the Life-giving Cross. Though itself in captivity, it took captive human souls for God, and like a fishhook, catching men, it drew them to Christ, enlightening them with the knowledge of the truth and kindling their hearts with divine love. It was then that the holy martyr Anastasius, of whom we are about to relate, turned to the knowledge of Christ.

He was by birth a Persian from the village of Rasnuni, situated in the region called Razi. His original Persian name in paganism was Magundat. He was the son of a magician named Vava, a very famous teacher of the magical art in his land, in which he had trained his son to perfection in his early youth. When Magundat reached the age of a mature young man, he entered military service together with many other young men and remained in the capital, serving the Persian king Chosroes. Having heard of the glory and power of the Cross, which astonished all the Persian provinces and terrified them with extraordinary miracles, so that all said, "The Christian God has come into Persia," Magundat began to inquire diligently about it. Suddenly his soul was secretly set aflame with that fire which Christ came "to cast upon the earth" (Lk. 12:49). Without ceasing, this fair youth questioned many, wishing to learn with certainty what this wood was that had such great power to work miracles. When believers explained to him that it was

11. The Persian King Chosroes II reigned from 590 to 628 A.D.

12. This was in 614. The relic of the Wood of the Cross of the Lord remained in the hands of the Persians for 14 years, until 628, when the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, after a successful war with Persia, returned it to Jerusalem.

the very Cross on which Christ, the Son of God, confessed and honored by Christians, had been crucified for the salvation of the human race, then the inner desire in him burned yet more to acquire the most perfect knowledge of the Son of God. He asked question after question, and from the answers he found occasions for further inquiry, burning with eagerness to learn how God had come down from heaven, how He became man, why and by whom He was condemned to the death of the Cross, and when He again ascended to heaven from whence He came. He listened to the Christians' account of the divine mystery of the Incarnation of Christ, and his ears received with love the seed of piety, and his soul gradually nurtured the grain of faith and was stirred to imitate Christ. Magundat had a blood relative, and both of them were in the regiment of a renowned voivode named Sain. When the latter was sent by the Persian king with an army to make war in the regions of Greece and reached the famous Christian city of Chalcedon[13], Magundat also came there, serving in the regiment with his relative. Against the Persians rose the pious Greek emperor Heraclius[14]. Then the Persian voivode Sain hastily returned with his regiment. But Magundat, leaving the regiment and his relative, preferred to live among the Christians in poverty and obscurity rather than in wealth and honor in his own land among those who did not know God. At first he came to Hierapolis[15]. There he found a man, a Persian by birth and a Christian by faith, who was a goldsmith by trade. Settling with him, Magundat learned the goldsmith's craft. His hands were given to labor, and his mind was constantly fixed on Christ God, with whose love he burned. He begged his teacher to prepare him for holy baptism; but his desire could not be fulfilled, for holy baptism was deferred for an indefinite time out of fear of war on the part of the Persians. Meanwhile, often coming with his teacher to church for prayer, he saw on the church walls pictures depicting the sufferings and miracles of the holy martyrs. He asked his teacher what these meant. The teacher told him of the ex-

13. Chalcedon – a city in Asia Minor, on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus strait, opposite Constantinople. In it the IV Ecumenical Council took place in 451.
14. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius reigned from 610 to 641 A.D.
15. Hierapolis – a rich city of Phrygia, a western region of Asia Minor.

ploits and lives of the saints: how they had bravely accepted death for Christ and with zeal had laid down their souls for Him, what they had endured from their tormentors for Christ's sake, and what rewards from Him in heaven they had been granted. Listening to all this attentively, Magundat marveled and was struck with awe; his heart was kindled ever more by divine zeal. After staying some time in Hierapolis, he went to Jerusalem to receive holy baptism there.

Arriving in the holy city of Jerusalem, Magundat, afterward named Anastasius, stopped at the house of a Christ-loving man, also a goldsmith by trade. To him he opened the desire of his heart: to be united with Christ through holy baptism. That man led him to St. Elias, presbyter of the great Church of the Resurrection of Christ. The blessed Elias received him with love and informed the most holy Patriarch Modestus of him, and by his blessing baptized the Persian Magundat, naming him Anastasius in holy baptism; after this he kept him with himself for eight days. St. Elias asked him what manner of life he wished to choose, the worldly or the monastic? The blessed Anastasius not only affirmed in words but also revealed by his gentle disposition that he desired the monastic calling and life. Eight days later, when he had taken off the white garments put on him at baptism, the presbyter sent him to one of the Jerusalem monasteries, in the tenth year of the reign of Heraclius. There he was entrusted to a wise and virtuous elder, who soon became the abbot of that monastery. From him St. Anastasius learned not only the Greek language but also the understanding of the Psalter and the other sacred books, and he likewise received instruction concerning the many ascetic labors befitting the monastic life. For this reason he was loved by all, and especially by his mentor, who, on the basis of his first trials in the ascetic life, foreseeing his further progress in it, tonsured him a monk and made him his spiritual son.

The Blessed Anastasius was a virtuous, humble-minded, meek, and industrious monk. He willingly performed every monastic task—in the kitchen, the bakehouse, the garden, and likewise the other obediences; yet he never neglected the church services or the reading of the appointed prayers. His hands were always occupied with work, and his lips with the glorification of God. Besides this, he read the Divine Scrip-

tures, the lives of the holy fathers, and especially the sufferings of the holy martyrs. As he read them, he watered the book with his tears, and, his heart burning, revealed his inward sympathy with their endurance. He himself, as it were, suffered together with them and inwardly became an imitator of their zeal; he called their end blessed and marveled at their courage, fervently beseeching the Lord Christ to vouchsafe him to endure the same sufferings for Him, to die in the same way, and to be joined to the choir of the martyrs. Meanwhile the enemy of the human soul, indignant that he was becoming established in virtue, began to bring to his memory his former life in Persia, the riches he had left behind, his glory, his father's art of sorcery, military honors, and other vanities, desiring thereby to disturb his inner peace and to turn him away from the monastery and from living with the holy fathers. But by the help of God, in Whom St. Anastasius had firm support against the enemy, and likewise by the prayers and instruction of his teacher and spiritual father, to whom he confessed all his thoughts, he remained unconquered and unshaken amid all the temptations of the enemy.

After the Venerable Anastasius had spent seven years in the monastery and had gathered a rich spiritual treasure of virtues, he was called by the Lord to the crown of martyrdom by the following vision. Just before the approach of the bright feast of the Resurrection of Christ, on the evening of Great Saturday, he lay down to rest a little after the labors of the day, and falling asleep, he saw himself standing on a high mountain. There approached him a certain radiant man, holding a golden cup adorned with precious stones and filled with wine. Handing him the cup, the man said: "Take and drink." He took it and drank. His soul was at once filled with inexpressible joy, and even while asleep he understood that this was for him a sign of the martyr's death he desired, to which the Lord was calling him.[16] Waking, filled with gladness and joy, he hastened to the church for the beginning of the service of

16. The word "cup," in the biblical language and in the understanding of the ancient Christians, is used to express vividly the sufferings or trials appointed to someone by God. Hence St. Anastasius took the cup he saw in a dream as a foreshadowing of the cup of suffering and painful death which he was soon to drink.

the Resurrection of Christ. There, drawing aside into the sacristy his spiritual father and teacher, who was already the abbot, he fell at his feet and, watering them with tears, begged him to pray for him to Christ, the Lord of all, since the day of his departure from this life was near. He said:

"I know, holy father, what labors you have undertaken for my sake, and how often I have abused your fatherly care for me. Thanks to you, my eyes have seen the true light, and through you I have been freed from heavy darkness. Do not cease, then, to pray for me, your servant, to the most merciful Lord."

The spiritual father said to him:

"What is the matter with you, my child? How did you learn that in these days you will pass from us to another life?"

Anastasius told him of the dream-vision with great emotion, and insistently affirmed that in the coming days he would surely die, either by the common death of all or by some other. But of his desire for a martyr's death for Christ he was afraid to speak, lest the elder forbid it, and so the flame of his zeal for Christ be quenched and he be deprived of the crown of the sufferer. The spiritual father consoled him for a long time with gentle words. When the day came, the Venerable Anastasius, during the Divine Liturgy, received the Holy Mysteries and, with the brethren, partook of the common meal. On the following night he slept a little after evening, then rose hastily, for the inexpressible inward desire for martyrdom did not let him sleep. Rising secretly from everyone, he left the monastery, taking nothing with him but the monastic garment in which he was clad.

On leaving the monastery, St. Anastasius went first to Diospolis in Palestine,[17] and from there to the mountain called Charisim, to pray. Passing through many other remarkable places, he came to Caesarea in Palestine[18] and remained two days in the church of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos. Then he went to venerate the church of the holy and

17. Diospolis – a city in Palestine, to the north-west of Jerusalem.

18. Caesarea: a city of Palestine on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, built by Herod, King of the Jews, on the site of the ancient city of Straton, and named in honor of Caesar Augustus (the Roman emperor Octavian Augustus). The city was destroyed many times, and at the present time there are only ruins on its site, overgrown with wild plants.

all-praised Great Martyr Euphemia, which was in the same Caesarea. At this time Palestine was ruled by the Persians, and there were many of them here. It happened that the blessed one, passing by the house of a Persian, saw magical tricks being performed by the Persians. Filled with divine zeal, he approached them and said with indignation:

"Why do you yourselves go astray, and, deceiving others, lead their souls into the same error?" They marveled at his boldness and asked him:

"Who are you, that you speak to us so?"

He answered them:

"I too once held the same error that you hold. I was versed in this same impious science and very skilled in deceptions."

Saying this, the saint long reproved their godlessness, and showed how contrary to God and how harmful to men was their magical cunning and seduction. He set forth to them how he had attained the knowledge of the truth and turned to God, urging them to take him as their example, so that they too might know the truth, and, renouncing sorcery, turn to Christ God in repentance. But they not only would not hear the saint's words, they also insistently urged him not to condemn the magical knowledge so renowned among the Persians, nor to expose it before the people. Then the saint, leaving them, went on his way, hastening to the holy church of the all-praised martyr. As soon as the saint had gone a little distance from them, he was seen by Persian soldiers who were sitting at the gate of the court building. When the saint had passed them, they, speaking among themselves in the Persian tongue, said of him:

"This is a spy."

The saint, understanding their words well, since he himself was a Persian, looked at them angrily and said:

"What are you saying? I am not a spy, but a servant of my Lord Jesus Christ. I am far better than you, for I have been deemed worthy to serve Him Who was pleased to come down from heaven for the sake of sinners. I understand your speech, because I myself once served in the same military service in which you now serve."

Then the soldiers seized him and reported about him to their commander, who was in the court building. The commander, questioning him as to who he was and whence he came, ordered him kept under strict guard in prison. Confined, the saint for three days took neither food nor drink. He would accept nothing from the hands of the impious, but nourished himself only by the expectation of the sufferings for Christ so long desired. At this time a certain Persian prince, named Marzavan, arrived in Caesarea in Palestine. Learning of the Venerable prisoner, he ordered him brought bound to his praetorium for interrogation. When the saint was brought, Marzavan busied himself with various other affairs, while the Venerable Anastasius stood apart, bound. A certain Christian was also there. He, recognizing the saint, having seen him in the church of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, approached him and quietly asked why he had been seized, bound, and brought to trial.

The saint told him of the desire of his heart—namely, that he wished to suffer and die for Christ. Hearing this, the Christian praised the saint for his good intention and comforted him with words of Divine Scripture, urging him not to fear torments nor be afraid of death for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, but to answer Marzavan's questions firmly and boldly, remembering the words spoken by the Lord in the Gospel: "He who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt. 10:22). When then the Venerable Anastasius was set before Marzavan for trial, he did not bow to him nor render him the due honor. Among the Persians there was a custom of kneeling before their princes on account of their rank. The saint did not do this, revealing by his outward non-bowing and fearless gaze his inward courage and greatness of spirit. Marzavan, looking at him intently, asked:

"Who are you, whence are you, and what is your name?"

The saint answered boldly:

"I am a Christian. And if you wish to know my origin, I am a Persian, from the region of Raza, from the village of Rasnuni. I was a magus and a soldier, but I left the darkness and came to the true light. My name was formerly Magundat, but now, as a Christian, I am called Anastasius."

Marzavan said to him:

"Leave this error and return to your former faith. I will give you horses and money and much other property."

The saint, looking at him, said:

"Let it not be so with me, O King Christ, that I should renounce Thee!"

Then Marzavan asked:

"Do you like the garment you are now wearing?"

The blessed one answered:

"This garment is especially pleasing to me, because it is an Angelic one; and it is more honorable to me than your rank is to you."

Marzavan, angered, said:

"A demon sits within you, and you say nothing but what the demon teaches you."

The saint answered:

"When I held to the Persian error and impiety, then I had a raging demon within me; but now there dwells in me Christ my Savior, Who casts out your demons."

To this Marzavan asked him:

"Well, are you not afraid of the king, who, when he learns about you, will order you crucified?"

"Why should I fear a man," the saint replied, "as corruptible as you are? Even if he kills my body, yet by no snares can he entrap my soul."

Unable to endure such words, Marzavan commanded that iron chains be laid upon the saint, one on his neck and another on his feet, and that he be taken to the stonecutters and made to carry stones together with the other prisoners, constantly. There the blessed sufferer endured countless and grievous afflictions. Some of the Persians who were in Caesarea from his own homeland, from the same village of Rasnuni, persons who had once been acquainted with him as friends and neighbors, seeing what had befallen him, were ashamed of him and counted his labors a disgrace to themselves. They reviled the saint, saying:

"What have you done? Why have you dishonored the former nobility of your birth by becoming a Christian, and brought such infamy upon us? You are bound in chains and condemned to death like a criminal, a

sight our eyes cannot bear. Never has anyone from our land been a Christian, and now you have brought this shame upon us."

Speaking such reproachful words, the impious often laid hands upon the innocent saint, beat him without mercy, tore at his beard, and ripped his clothing. They did not merely inflict such insults upon him, but also laid upon his shoulders and neck such heavy stones as four men could scarcely lift. Thus the servant of God labored, bound with chains about his neck and feet and heavily burdened with stones. The saint endured every kind of oppression from his former acquaintances, the Persians, the whole time, but he bore all of it with joy for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ.

After some time, Prince Marzavan again commanded that the saint be brought before him, and asked him:

"If you are truly a magician's son and know the art of sorcery, then tell us something from that realm, so that we too may learn of your abilities."

The saint answered:

"God forbid that anything of the kind should come from my lips! I do not wish to defile my mind with the memory of magical tricks, nor my tongue with speech about them."

Then the prince said to him:

"Why do you remain a Christian? Return to your former faith; otherwise know that I will report you to King Khosrow."

The saint replied to this:

"Do as you wish. I suppose you have already written to him and already received his reply?"

The prince answered:

"I have not yet written, but I intend to write now, and whatever he commands me concerning you, that I shall do." Saint Anastasius answered:

"Write whatever evil you wish about me. I am a Christian, and once again I say that I am a Christian."

Then Marzavan commanded that the saint be stretched out on the ground and beaten until he agreed to do what they demanded of him.

But when the servants wished to bind the martyr's hands and feet in order to beat him, the saint said to them:

"Leave me as I am: there is no need to bind and hold me, for I do not wish to suffer for my Christ under compulsion, but willingly. I desire to suffer for Him as much as another thirsts for cold water on a sweltering day."

Having said this, he signed himself with the sign of the Cross and prostrated himself face down upon the ground, offering himself to the wounds. Then they began to beat him severely with sticks; but the saint addressed those who were beating him: "Wait a little and take from me my monastic garment; let not the monastic calling suffer humiliation! Beat only my naked body, but know that I receive the wounds you inflict upon me as a jest. For even if you should divide me into pieces, I shall never renounce my Lord Jesus Christ."

And though he was beaten while naked, the saint bore the torments bravely, lying motionless and held by no one, only by his own good will to suffer for God, by which he overcame even his own nature. The prince and all who were present marveled at such endurance, for during the prolonged and cruel beating he neither turned, nor cried out, nor groaned. His mind was directed only toward God, for whom he suffered. Then the prince commanded that the beating be stopped and again threatened him with the name of the king.

"I will write," he said, "to the king, and he will command that you be put to death."

The saint answered him:

"Write whatever you wish."

The prince objected to him:

"Do you not fear the king?"

The saint answered:

"Why should I fear your king? Is he not as mortal a man as you? Will he not see corruption just as you will? Why do you urge me to fear him, who is dust of the earth just as you are? Ought I not rather to fear my Lord Jesus Christ, who created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and who is incorruptible forever?"

Marzavan, the proud one, marveling at the martyr's answer, commanded that he be led back into the prison. After a little while he summoned him again and began to speak with him gently, hoping to beguile him with kind words. He said to the saint:

"Remember your magical lore and offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you will not die in torment and be deprived of this visible light."

The Venerable one answered:

"To which god am I to offer sacrifice: the sun, the moon, fire, the sea, the mountains and hills, or all the other elements? God forbid that I should ever bow down to your idols! For all that I have enumerated was created by Christ, the Son of God, for the service and use of us men, rational creatures. But you go astray, serving demons and four-footed animals and every other visible creature, as though they were created for our needs and not we for theirs. Strange and absurd is it that you call them gods! You were created in the image of God, yet you do not know God, your Creator. If you had come to know Christ, who created you, you would turn to the true light and be delivered from the power of demons."

Saying this and much more, the saint astonished Marzavan and all who heard him. Marzavan, seeing that he could not conquer the saint either by flattery or by threats, sent him back to the prison until a directive should come from the king as to what to do with him. Thus at night the martyr was kept in prison, and by day he was led out in chains to labor, carrying stones with the other prisoners.

Meanwhile news of Saint Anastasius reached also the monastery where he had been tonsured. All the fathers and brethren, hearing that he was suffering grievously for Christ, were filled with indescribable joy, especially the abbot, his spiritual father and teacher, who, imagining himself as though bound together with his beloved disciple, thought that he himself was suffering in the disciple's body. But since he could not go to his disciple himself, being the abbot of the monastery, he sent two monks with a letter full of consolation, charging them to visit the martyr secretly and to encourage him to bear his sufferings courageously. He himself, with the other fathers, prayed to God day and night for him, that God would help the martyr to suffer to the end vali-

antly for His name, and to be victorious and crowned among the host of holy martyrs. At the same time the Venerable Martyr Anastasius, while in prison, did not cease day or night to praise almighty God. With him was another prisoner, a youth from among Marzavan's servants, condemned for some crime. He was fettered together with the saint, one chain about his neck and another about his feet. This was very burdensome to the saint, for when he rose at midnight to pray, he was obliged, against his will, to wake his fellow prisoner too. He counted it a sin against his neighbor that he disturbed him, who was exhausted from the same daily toil of carrying stones and had then fallen into sweet sleep. Therefore, although he often wished to perform the midnight prayers, he did not dare to stand up, lest he awaken his companion and disturb his rest. Holding his foot beside the other's foot and bending his neck toward the other's neck, he performed his customary prayers to God. There were also other prisoners who were not shackled. Among them was a Jew of honorable birth and gentle disposition. Seeing Saint Anastasius, who labored all day carrying stones and spent the night in praise of God, he marveled, saying to himself: "What sort of man is this, and what will his end be?"

One night, while the saint was praying to God as was his custom, this Jew, lying on the floor, was not asleep. Suddenly he saw a light in the prison, and he turned his eyes to the saint and noticed men entering through the prison doors, clothed in white, shining garments, who surrounded the holy martyr. The great radiance that came from them lit the whole prison with an indescribable light, which none of the other prisoners saw, for all of them were asleep. Only that wakeful Jew looked on intently and said to himself in great astonishment: "Holy God, these are Angels!"

Looking more closely at those men, he saw omophoria upon them and crosses in their hands. Then he thought: "These are bishops." Then, looking at the holy martyr, he saw a bright youth standing before Anastasius with a golden censer filled with burning coals. Putting incense into the censer, he censed around the martyr. Observing this, the waking prisoner roused with his hand another prisoner, a Christian who had once been a judge in Scythopolis and who was sleeping near

him. He wished that this man too might see so wondrous and manifest a miracle, but he could not wake him quickly, for he had fallen into a deep sleep. When at last he was roused and awoke, asking what was the matter and why he had been awakened, the Jew, pointing to what was taking place, said:

"Look, look!"

But no sooner had he spoken this word than the vision vanished. Then the Jew told the Christian, with particular rapture and tender feeling of heart, all that he had seen, and both together glorified Christ God.

Soon after this, Prince Marzavan, having received a reply from his king Khosrow, sent to the Venerable Martyr Anastasius in the prison, saying:

"The king commands you to say a single word: 'I am not a Christian.' At once you will be released, and then you may go wherever you wish: either to the Christians and the monks, or home to your military service again." The martyr of Christ answered:

"God forbid that it should ever happen to me that I should renounce my Christ, either in mind or in word!"

Then the prince again sent his deputy to the saint, saying:

"I know that you are ashamed before many people, especially your acquaintances, and therefore you do not wish to renounce your Christ before them. But since the royal command must be carried out, for no one can disobey it, then, if you wish, say in private, only before me and my two other counselors, that you renounce Christ, and I will release you at once. Indeed, what loss would it be to you to utter the renunciation only with your lips, while your heart, not agreeing with your lips, continues to believe in its God?"

The martyr answered:

"Let it not be so! Neither before you nor before others will I renounce my Lord, either openly or in secret, nor even in a dream, and no one will ever be able to compel me to this in any way."

When the deputy returned to the prince and reported what he had heard from the martyr, the prince commanded that he be brought before him, and said to him:

"The king has commanded that you be sent to him in Persia, in chains."

The holy martyr Anastasius answered:

"If you are willing to release me, I myself will go to your king without fetters. Why is there any need to put chains upon me, who suffer willingly and desire to endure for my beloved Christ, the Lord?"

The prince, seeing that by no means, neither by kindness nor by threats, could he turn the martyr from the Christian faith to his Persian impiety, appointed that he, together with two other prisoners, also Christians, condemned on some unjust accusation, be sent to Persia for judgment before the king after five days; after this the saint was again led back to prison. At this time the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord was approaching. In that city there lived a respected and distinguished man, a Christian in faith and life. He asked Prince Marzavan to release the monk Anastasius from prison to his house for the feast, so that he might celebrate this great festival together with the Christians. Marzavan, respecting the honorable townsman, commanded that his request be granted, and on that day Saint Anastasius was released to the Christians, though still in iron fetters. Receiving him, this pious man led him to church for the Divine Liturgy. It was a great joy and a double feast for all the faithful to behold the martyr, laden with heavy fetters for the sake of Christ the Lord, who suffered on the Cross. Surrounding him, men and women shed hot tears of joy and reverently kissed his fetters, glorifying his sufferings for Christ. When the Divine Liturgy was completed, the man who had interceded for him led him to his house, together with the two monks who had been sent from the monastery, to secretly comfort the martyr and procure food for him. Having hospitably entertained them, when the time came he again led Saint Anastasius back to prison. Five days later the saint, together with the two other prisoners in chains, was sent to Persia. Many Christians accompanied him with joyful tears. The two monks also escorted him. One of them then returned to the monastery, and the other was ordered by the abbot to go with the Blessed Anastasius, to serve him, to witness his death, and upon re-

turning to tell of the feats of suffering and martyrdom which he had accomplished.

Upon arrival in Persia, the holy Venerable Martyr Anastasius was placed in prison in a city called Vifsalia[19], together with many other prisoners, among whom some had been condemned for some crime, and others were captives, chiefly Christians. The monk who had come with him lodged with a certain Kortakt, son of Esdin, and Esdin was the chief royal steward, a secret Christian. After some days King Khosrow sent one of the judges together with a tribune to interrogate Saint Anastasius. The judge, coming to the saint, asked: who he was, whence he came, and for what reason, having abandoned the Persian faith, he had become a Christian? Anastasius, the martyr of Christ, answered him through an interpreter, since he no longer wished to speak Persian, loathing both the impious faith of the Persians and their very language. The saint said:

"You are in error, honoring demons instead of God. I too once dwelt in this your error, but now I believe in and worship the almighty Lord Jesus Christ, who created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them. I know full well that your faith is a diabolical delusion, leading you to perdition."

The judge said to him in reply:

"O wretch! Did not the Jews crucify that Christ whom you worship? How then have you fallen into error, abandoning your faith and becoming a Christian?"

The saint answered:

"You speak truly that my Jesus was crucified by the Jews, but why do you not also say that by His Divine will He was pleased to deliver Himself to the Cross for our salvation? He is the Creator of all, who came down from heaven to earth and was incarnate of the Most Pure and Most Blessed Virgin Mary by the working of the Holy Spirit. He was crucified of His own accord, to save the human race from the diabolical delusion. But you honor the devil and worship the sun, the moon, fire, and every other creature, rather than your Creator."

19. Otherwise Barselous: Sergiopolis in Assyria, about 8 versts from Dastagerd, where Chosroes was then residing.

The judge said to him:

"Why do you speak so much that is vain? Behold, the king will immediately bestow great honors upon you, give you golden belts, good horses, and much property; you will be one of his distinguished nobles, only return to your former faith."

Saint Anastasius replied to him:

"The gifts of your king, riches, honors, and glory, and all that is pleasing and desirable to you, I long ago despised and hated. All this is repugnant to me, like refuse and dung. Having chosen the monastic life and loved it, I nourish myself with the hope of the eternal good things which, by the grace of Christ my God, I trust to receive. This honorable monastic state and this worn mantle serve me as a sure pledge of this. How then shall I now despise and renounce that in which I hope, and for which I have undertaken all the labor and applied all my zeal? Could I be seduced by the gifts of a temporal king, which are soon to perish?"

Hearing this, the judge reported everything to the king. The king was filled with wrath and commanded that the saint be tortured the next morning. When morning came, the same judge came from the king, and bringing the saint out of prison, first mercilessly beat him with rods, and then, placing his shins between two heavy blocks and commanding strong men to leap upon the two ends of the upper block, he sought to crush them. Having tormented the saint for a long time and seeing his unyielding resolve, the judge commanded that he be thrown back into prison, and himself went to the king to report what had happened. The tribune, the prison commandant, was a secret Christian. He served the prisoners suffering for Christ, showing them every kindness. He and the monk who accompanied the saint, entering his cell, comforted and encouraged the sufferer. Together with them entered other believers in Christ, among them the sons of the aforementioned Esdin, the royal steward, a secret Christian. Falling at the martyr's feet, they kissed his fetters and asked him to pray to the Lord for them. The saint, being humble, sent them away from him, acknowledging himself a sinner, unworthy and in need of the prayers and help of others. Then they took wax and pressed it to his chains, so that their impressions were left in the wax. This they kept among themselves as a

blessing, for the healing of various ailments, and they also sent that wax to one another as a precious gift. A short time later the same judge, sent again by the king, came to the prison to the martyr of Christ, and after questioning him, recognized him as an unyielding opponent of the royal will; then he cruelly beat the saint with rods. The same happened a third time some days later. The same judge, coming into the prison, beat the saint, and then added to this a new and savage torment: suspending him by one hand and tying a huge stone to one foot, he hung the saint up. Thus the holy sufferer hung for two hours. Then, taking the saint down, he threw him back into prison, and himself went to the king to report the invincible courage of the martyr. He also advised the king to put the saint to death quickly, so that the great Persian kingdom should no longer be dishonored and reviled by one Christian. Fifteen days later the king condemned the martyr Anastasius to death, together with many other prisoners who had been with him in prison.

On the eve of his death, the holy martyr Anastasius, sitting in prison and foreseeing his approaching end, said to some of his fellow prisoners:

"Brethren, tomorrow morning I shall die, together with many here present, and pass from this life into eternity. But you will remain alive, and after some days you will be released to freedom, for this impious king will soon be slain."

When morning came, the judge came with soldiers and led out of the prison to death, together with St. Anastasius, some seventy prisoners, most of whom were righteous Christians. Among them were also the two prisoners who had been brought to Persia from Caesarea together with St. Anastasius in chains, likewise Christians. Some of the prisoners, however, were left in the prison, among them those to whom the saint had foretold a speedy deliverance and the death of the King. Those led out of the prison to death were brought beyond the city to the bank of the river, and there each of them in turn was cruelly strangled, a cord being fastened to his throat. After the strangling of each one, the tormentors addressed St. Anastasius with these words:

"Do you really wish to perish now in the same way as they? Would it not be better for you to obey the royal will, and, remaining alive, to receive from the King gifts, honors and glory?"

The saint, raising his eyes to heaven, gave thanks to God, and answered them:

"I would wish to be broken into pieces by you for my Christ. This death is nothing to me, and I thank my Lord that by this small suffering He gives me the opportunity to pass on to the great and ineffable glory of the holy martyrs."

Thus the holy Venerable Martyr Anastasius, after all the prisoners, received death with joy, being strangled on the 22nd day of January[20]. In order to certify to the King the death of Anastasius, the soldiers cut off his holy head and carried it to the King, while his body, together with the corpses of the other strangled men, was cast out to be devoured by dogs. But the dogs, greedily devouring the corpses of the others, not only did not touch the body of the saint, but even began visibly to guard it, so that no one else might touch it. When the tribune, the prison guard, wished to take the honorable body of the holy martyr, the soldiers who stood guard at a distance did not allow him to do so, for many of them were Jews by faith. When night came, a monk of blessed memory, sent from the monastery to see the end of St. Anastasius, took servants from the sons of Esdin, much gold and clean linen, and went to the place where the body of the saint lay unharmed among the other corpses being devoured by dogs. Filling the hands of the guards with gold, he approached the holy body of the martyr of Christ, above which a radiant star was visible, shining down from heaven, and, taking it, carried it to a small monastery of the holy martyr Sergius, not far from there. There he buried with honor the much-suffering body of the passion-bearer of Christ, Anastasius, and he himself remained in that monastery until the murder of King Chosroes. When the King was killed, those prisoners to whom the saint had foretold this in the prison before his death were also set free. Thus the twofold prophecy of the saint was fulfilled: concerning the speedy murder of

20. St. Martyr Anastasius suffered martyrdom and died in the year 528.

King Chosroes and concerning the liberation of the prisoners. When the Greek army entered the Persian lands, the way became open for the monk who had accompanied the saint to return to his monastery. He returned and related in detail everything about the Venerable Martyr Anastasius to the abbot and all the brethren. All glorified God, who had strengthened His servant for the ascetic-martyric struggle. The abbot of the monastery at once sent that same monk and some others with him, and they brought from there with honor the relics of his beloved disciple, the martyr of Christ, to that monastery[21]. From the relics of the holy martyr many miracles were performed and healings of infirmities were granted—to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the holy martyrs Manuel, George, Peter, Leontius, Sionius, Gabriel, John, Leon, Parodus and the others, 377 in number, who suffered with them

Память святых мучеников Мануила, Георгия, Петра, Леонтия, Сиония, Гавриила, Иоанна, Леонта, Пародa и прочих, числом 377, с ними пострадавших

These holy martyrs came from various regions of the Roman Empire and lived in Adrianople[22] under the Emperor Leo the Armenian[23]. At that time the Bulgarian king Krum laid waste Thrace and Macedonia and approached Constantinople itself; then, after a three-month siege, he took Adrianople[24] and led into captivity all its inhabitants who had survived the slaughter, up to forty thousand people; among them was also the local bishop, whom the pagan king ordered to be thrown headlong to the ground and trampled. Krum per-

21. Afterward the relics of St. Anastasius the Persian, the Venerable Martyr, were translated to Palestine, from there to Constantinople, and from Constantinople to Rome, where they are preserved to this day (one part in one of the suburban monasteries, the other in the Church of the Holy Cross).

22. Adrianople: a city in Thrace (European Turkey) at the confluence of the Tundzha and the Maritsa.

23. Leo the Armenian: Byzantine emperor, who reigned from 813 to 820.

24. In the year 814.

ished an evil death; his successor Dukum died soon after him, and over the Bulgarians there reigned Diceng, a ruler terrible and inhuman. He ordered the Bishop of Adrianople, Manuel, to be sawn in two and the hands of the hierarch to be cut off to the shoulders, after which his sacred remains were cast out to be devoured by dogs. The wrath of God struck the monster with blindness, and soon Diceng was killed by his own subjects. He was succeeded by Murtagon, who cruelly persecuted the Christians who would not obey his command to renounce Christ; he tormented the faithful servants of Christ in prison, subjected them to torture and gave them over to death in inhuman sufferings. The holy bishops George of Develtos[25] and Peter, who strengthened their flock in the Christian faith, the inhuman tormentor subjected to the most severe blows with rods, and afterwards cut off their honorable heads with the sword; seven Christians suffered the same execution together with the hierarchs; the Christian commanders John and Leon were also beheaded with the sword; the holy Leontius—a eunuch, Bishop of Nicaea—was pierced in the belly with a sword by the pagans; Gabriel and Sionius likewise received a martyr's death by the sword; Parodus, a most reverent presbyter, was stoned. Many other faithful servants of Christ were also slain and imprisoned at this time. And not only the fierce Murtagon, but also his successors on the Bulgarian throne cruelly persecuted the Christians, who by various tortures and a painful death won for themselves the eternal kingdom.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day the memory of the holy Venerable Martyr Anastasius, Deacon of the Kiev Caves, who died at the end of the twelfth century and rests in the cave of the Venerable Antony.

NOTES

888. From Lystra, St. Timothy accompanied the Apostle Paul in all his subsequent journeys and zealously fulfilled all his commissions. He accompanied him on his second

journey from Lystra to Troas, and from there through the Macedonian cities to Greece —Athens and Corinth. On the third journey of the Apostle Paul, Timothy accompanied him in Ephesus, where the apostle stayed a long time, and from where the apostle sent him to Macedonia to collect alms, and afterwards to Corinth, where the apostle stayed three years; and he accompanied him both in Macedonia and in Greece, and attended him on the return journey as far as Troas and Asia. Afterwards St. Apostle Timothy was with the Apostle Paul in Rome and was imprisoned with him in chains, but was later released. After that he again accompanied the Apostle Paul on the journey undertaken by the latter to visit the churches of Asia Minor and Macedonia; at this time he was ordained bishop of the Church of Ephesus, thus becoming the first bishop of the Church of Ephesus. During the separation from the Apostle Timothy, the holy Apostle Paul wrote to him two epistles of a pastoral character.

✠

25. Develt: now Zagora, on the shore of the Black Sea.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF JANUARY

January 23

23 января

New Calendar January 23 · Old Calendar February 5 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Ancyra, and of the Holy Martyr Agathangelus and the Others with Them

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Климента, епископа Анкирского, и святого мученика Агафангела и прочих с ними

Two hundred and fifty years after the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the reign of Valerian,[1] the capital city of Galatia, Ancyra,[2] brought forth from an honorable family the Holy Martyr Clement, like a juicy young shoot of the vine, richly laden with clusters of many spiritual gifts. But his parents were not of one faith: his father was a pagan who served idolatrous impiety, while his mother was a Christian, born of Christian parents and brought up in Christian piety and good habits. Her name was Euphrosyne. She was married against her own will, and entered into union with an unbelieving husband, for her parents hoped for the fulfillment of the words of the holy Apostle: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife" (1 Cor. 7:14). But things did not turn out as they hoped, for the husband remained sunk in the depths of impiety and wrapped in the darkness of idol-worship. Not only did he refuse to turn to the light of Christ, but he tried in every way to draw his wife Euphrosyne into his impiety. She, too, strove to set him on the path of truth, admonishing him day and night and showing him by her example the saving way of life, but she accomplished nothing in this, for his heart had grown hard. She prayed to Christ to

1. Valerian – Roman emperor, reigned from 253 to 259.
2. Galatia – a small region in the central part of Asia Minor. Ancyra – now Angora – a flourishing, populous city of Galatia, still retaining an important commercial significance for Asia Minor.

send them mercy, that they, joined in bodily union, might be joined also in spirit in the holy faith; and if this were impossible, that they might be separated in body as well, since they had no unity in faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ, hearing the prayers of His servant and having mercy upon her, soon freed her from the yoke of her unbelieving husband: him, as a dissolute man hardened of heart, He utterly rejected and commanded to pass into eternity. The pagan died, leaving to his wife a small firstborn child, a boy, still in the cradle. His blessed mother Euphrosyne nourished him more with piety than with milk, and then brought him to Christ, enlightening him with holy Baptism. She gave him the name Clement, which in the Greek tongue means "a young shoot of the vine."[3] She gave him this name most aptly, foreseeing, like a prophetess, that he would be a branch of the true Vine, Christ, and would bring forth many ripe clusters, souls of men converted to Christ. By the very name she foretold that he would be a famous confessor of the most holy name of Jesus Christ, would shed his blood and lay down his soul for Him, and would become a sufferer and martyr for Christ. She taught her son the reading of the sacred books and good conduct, and likewise instructed him in every virtue. While the boy grew in years and understanding and had already reached the age of twelve, his mother, the holy Euphrosyne, drew near to her blessed end. Foreknowing it, and lying on her bed of sickness, she desired that her son be heir not so much to her meager material possessions as to the immaterial, spiritual riches of her virtues. With maternal solicitude she instructed him, embracing and kissing him:

"My child, my beloved child, child orphaned from the cradle, who learned of your orphanhood before you knew your father! Yet you are not orphaned, my son, for your Father is Christ God, who enriches you with His gifts. I bore you, my son, in the flesh, but Christ God has begotten you anew in the spirit. Therefore know that He is your Father; acknowledge yourself His son, and take care that your adoption by God be not in vain. Serve the One Christ the Lord, and place your hopes in Christ, for He is truly our salvation and the source of immortality. He

3. From the Greek word klēma – a broken-off young branch, a young shoot, a branch of the grapevine.

came down to us from heaven to lift us up with Himself to heaven; He has made us His beloved children and established our communion with God. He who serves this Lord will be freed from all the snares of the devil, will crush serpents and scorpions, and will overcome every hostile power. He will not only put to shame the impious kings, princes, and tyrants who worship idols and demons, but will also crush the heads of the demons themselves, whom they honor.

Shedding abundant tears during this discourse, the saint's mother was filled with divine grace and began to foretell prophetically what was to befall him.

"I beseech you, beloved son," she said, "I beseech you to repay me with one gift for all my sicknesses and cares for you, for a grievous time is coming. The persecution is already near, breathing dreadful fury and threats. Therefore be ready, as our Lord says, that they will lead you before governors and kings for His sake (Mt. 10:18). Son, do me this honor: stand for Christ boldly and courageously, and keep firmly and unshakably the confession of His name. As for me, I trust in my Christ, O my child! Soon the crown of martyrdom will flourish upon you, in my honor and for the salvation of many souls. Prepare your heart, then, for the ascetic struggle of suffering, lest the time of struggles find you unprepared. Know that it is profitable to be tested by calamities, as gold is tested in the furnace. But do not fear: the suffering will be temporary, and the reward for it eternal; soon sorrow will pass and joy will last forever; the dishonor here is brief, but eternal glory awaits you with God. The snares and wounds of the tormentors last only a single day, while the wrath of earthly kings is mocked by the martyrs, their glory fades, and the fire prepared by them for Christ's martyrs is quenched. Rust devours their sword, and their strength perishes. Therefore there is nothing that could separate you from Christ the Lord; look up to heaven and from there await from God a great, rich, and eternal reward. Fear His majesty, dread His judgment, tremble before His all-seeing eye, for those who reject Him will inherit the unquenchable fire prepared for them and the torments of the worm that never sleeps. But those who, having known the glory of His Divinity, never fall away from Him, await ineffable joy, gladness, and

consolation with the holy confessors. Let it be my reward from you, most beloved son, for the sicknesses I bore at your birth and the labors of your upbringing, that you, who came forth from my womb, shall become a confessor of the Lord, and I shall be called the mother of a martyr and be glorified through a son who suffered for Christ. Therefore strive to endure for the sake of Him who suffered for us, and you will be granted many blessings from Him, and I, for your sake, will be granted communion with the saints. Behold, my son, I stand at the door of my death; for me this visible light will not shine tomorrow, but you are my light in Christ and my life in the Lord! Therefore I beg you, my son, do not shame me in the hopes I have, but may I be saved, as the Apostle says, through childbearing (1 Tim. 2:15). I bore you, my son, that I might suffer in you as in my own body. Shed the blood I gave you without sparing it, that I too may receive honor because of it. Give your body to wounds, that I may rejoice in them before our Lord, as though I myself had suffered for Him.

A certain Jewish woman once offered seven sons to God as martyrs for piety, and suffering with one soul in the seven bodies of her sons, she remained unconquered.[4] You alone are enough for me for glory before my Lord, if you zealously labor for piety. Now I depart from you and shall appear before God ahead of you. I depart in body, but I shall remain with you in spirit, that I may be vouchsafed to fall down together with you before the throne of Christ, to boast before Him of your sufferings and to be crowned with your struggles, for the root of a tree hidden under the earth is watered by the same dew that waters the branches clearly visible above the ground.

Thus throughout the whole day, before her holy death, the blessed mother instructed her beloved son, embracing and kissing his head, face, eyes, lips, breast, and hands.

"Oh, blessed am I now," she said, "for I kiss the members of a martyr's body!"

After such abundant words of instruction, she bowed her head, commended her soul into the hands of her Lord, and fell asleep in peace.

4. Here is meant Solomonia, mother of the holy Maccabean martyrs: Anima, Antoninus, Gurias, Eleazar, Eusebonus, Alinus and Marcellus. Their memory is celebrated on August 1.

After Clement's natural mother had died a blessed death and been buried, the boy Clement was left completely orphaned, having God alone as his Father. God, the common provider for all, who cares for orphans and the poor, gave the blessed Clement, who was still a child, another mother. In the same city there lived a noble, honorable, and wealthy woman named Sophia, a friend of Clement's mother, the blessed Euphrosyne. Sophia lived in a God-pleasing manner, spending day and night in prayer. Being childless, she took this blessed boy, the holy Clement, in place of a son, loved him as her own child, and cared for him in every way. At this time there was a great famine in Galatia. The impious pagans cast out their children by the roadsides, since they had nothing to feed them with and were themselves dying of hunger. Then the holy Clement gathered those children into the house of Sophia, his second mother, and fed them from her means, clothed them, taught them, and brought them to holy Baptism. Thus he made Sophia's house a foundling home and school, and she herself became a mother in God to many children, far better than their mothers according to the flesh, for she bore them spiritually, raising them in the Christian faith.

Saint Clement, though still very young in years, had already acquired the understanding of a perfect man. From his youth he began to mortify his flesh by fasting and abstinence, living like a monk. He abstained from meat, and fed only on bread and grains; his drink was water. In this he was like the three holy youths, whose bodies remained unharmed by the double fire through their fasting: the inner fire of natural desire, and the outer fire of the burning furnace.[5] For the few Christians who lived in that country at that time, Blessed Clement was as a divine luminary, enlightening all with the light of the knowledge of God. But the time had already come for this shining lamp to be set upon the lampstand: for St. Clement, shining with virtues, to ascend to the step of consecration, so that by enlightening the greatest number of people he might guide them on the path of salvation. By the providence and will of God, and by the unanimous election of all the Christians

5. Here are meant the three Hebrew youths: Ananias, Azarias and Misael, who were not burned in the heated Babylonian furnace. See Dan. 1:3.

who were in Galatia, he was first appointed reader, then deacon and presbyter. Two years later he was raised to the episcopal rank, though he was still young in years: he was then not more than twenty years old. He became a second Daniel, who, being young, surpassed the elders in understanding and virtue, and showed that old age is determined not by the number of years but by a virtuous life and wisdom. Having received the episcopal rank, St. Clement became the teacher not only of children, whom he gathered in great numbers and taught from books, but also of the elders: bringing pagans to the Christian faith and baptizing them, he increased the Church of Christ more and more.

Then the prophecy of his blessed mother Euphrosyne began to be fulfilled, and the martyr's crown began to be woven for him. The persecutor of Christians, Diocletian, having ascended the Roman throne, in the first year of his reign sent his decrees to all the regions of the Roman Empire, to the princes and commanders, his governors, to the hegemons, voivodes and city prefects, ordering that all who confessed the name of Christ be killed and destroyed by many different kinds of death. In these dispatches he threatened punishments to all those rulers and princes who dared not to carry out his decree for the extermination of Christians with full zeal, and he appointed for them the same torments and executions as for the Christians; but to those more zealous in persecution he promised riches and honors. Then throughout all the regions and cities the imperial governors and rulers, some from fear of the emperor's wrath, and others from a desire to please him and receive honors from him, began to make every effort to eradicate the very name of Christians from the state. At this time the imperial governor Domitian arrived in Galatia and zealously searched for Christians by the emperor's command, with the aim of destroying them. The pagans slandered St. Clement, Bishop of Ancyra, claiming that he forbade many to worship the great gods and led people to his Christ. Domitian at once ordered him seized and brought before him. At first he tried, with gentle and flattering words, to draw the saint to his impiety. He said:

"The slander brought against you I do not at all consider to be true, for your face, your honest gaze and your gentle disposition reveal in you

a man worthy, noble, wise and sensible, and all that has been said about you exposes the childish madness of your slanderers. Tell us yourself about yourself: we will rather learn the truth from you yourself, if you say to us even a little from your wisdom."

The holy bishop answered him:

"Our wisdom and understanding is Christ, the Son of God the Father, by whose Word all things were made. From Him we have the gift of speech and understanding."

"See, you have already," the tormentor interrupted, "unnoticed insulted us beyond all expectation, by beginning with empty talk right at the outset. But I advise you: leave off all these useless discourses and offer sacrifice to our gods. Know that whoever disparages the gods awaits torments, while whoever honors and worships them awaits honors. You see an example of this in us: by honoring these gods we have attained so high a rank, and we give thanks to the gods for their benefactions, rendering honors to those who honor them and punishing those who are unwilling to worship them."

At these words of the governor the saint laughed and said:

"We, ruler, think exactly the opposite of your words. Your gifts we regard as nothing, your honor as dishonor, and your high rank as the servitude of a captive. On the contrary, dishonor, threats and torments bring us joy and consolation, and above all unite us to God. Knowing this, do not hope to turn us away from piety, either with the promise of honors and gifts, or with threats of torment."

Such words of the saint provoked Domitian's anger. Gazing intently at the saint, he said:

"As I see, I have stirred up pride in you by speaking gently with you, and this is no wonder, for, as I have heard, you, constantly remaining with children, have become like them and have a childish mind. But know that if you do not appease the gods with sacrifices, you will be executed by death, and not by the death by which you hope to die soon, but first you will endure many and various torments, and then in suffering you will die the most grievous execution. Thus, being impious, you will suffer greatly and serve as an example to others, so that they too may take a lesson for themselves from your dreadful ruin."

St. Clement answered:

"Since you have reminded me of children, know that I have taken pains to teach children that wisdom which the oldest and wisest men among you do not know, for the true wisdom of God is hidden from the wise and understanding of this world and revealed to infants. I, for my part, proudly affirm that I offer to my God reasonable and verbal sacrifices, and not as your priests offer streams of blood, smoke and every abomination, by which you indeed gratify the gods you honor. When I shed my blood for my God and offer it to Him in sacrifice, then, if not fully, at least in part I will repay my Lord for His shedding of blood for me, for Christ, my King, redeemed me with His precious blood."

When the martyr had spoken this speech with great boldness, the governor laid aside his feigned gentleness and clearly revealed his natural ferocity and madness. He ordered the saint to be hung naked on a tree, and then his body to be planed and cut with sharp iron instruments. Carrying out the command, the servants shouted to the martyr not to disregard the imperial order. They dug deep furrows into the saint's body, as on a field, so that his flesh fell off in pieces; already his entrails were clearly visible, and the tormentors themselves could not look upon this without distress. Yet he did not waver in mind at all, did not change the expression of his face, did not utter a single sound from the unbearable pain, did not speak a single word of complaint, did not even groan under such grievous torments. He was stronger and more manly than those who watched his torments. He seemed to suffer less than his tormentors. He calmly gave thanks to Christ God, the Author of the contest, gazing at heaven with a joyful face and saying: "Glory to Thee, Christ, my light and life, my breath and joy! I thank Thee, Giver of life, that Thou hast deemed me worthy of such salvation. My soul has rejoiced on the way of fulfilling Thy commandments. Every suffering is pleasant to me for Thy love. Glory to Thee that Thou strengthenest me with patience! Thou hast stretched out Thy almighty hand to me, sinner that I am, delivering me from the wrath of the ruler and from the hands of my tormentors, for Thou Thyself art the refuge of all who sorrow."

When the saint prayed thus, his tormentors grew weak and ceased the torments. Seeing the servants' inaction, the governor said to the martyr:

"Do you not think that I am already conquered by your patience, if my servants have tired in a single hour?"

The saint answered:

"I do not think so, but I believe in and hope in Christ who dwells in me, for He has conquered, conquers, and will conquer every enemy."

Then the governor ordered other servants to approach the saint and to tear his body more violently than the first. They tormented the invincible sufferer for a long time as well, until they too were exhausted and became like the dead. The governor, looking at this, both marveled and was ashamed at the weakness of his servants, and ordered the martyr to be taken down from the tree. The saint was in such a state that it was frightful to look at him, and impossible even to touch him with one's hands. He was stripped of flesh completely, as of any garment; only his bones showed, in blood, and one could scarcely recognize in him a man. The governor, seeing that nothing would be gained by torments, again began to speak to the martyr with gentle words. But he, answering the tormentor boldly, as befitted a manly soldier of Christ, again roused him to fury. Then Domitian cried out loudly:

"Truly this man is bold! Strike him on the face and on the lips, for these parts of his body are still whole; that is why they answer so boldly. Let them be made like the whole body. Strike them without mercy."

Then the servants began to strike the saint vigorously with their palms on the face and on the lips, so that he fell to the ground from the strong blows; but even after that, on the ground, they pitilessly struck his lips with stones and broke his teeth. The martyr, rejoicing, said:

"You, ruler, do me more honor than torment, for my Lord Jesus Christ was struck on the mouth and buffeted on the cheeks, and I, unworthy as I am, have now been counted worthy of the same. Stephen the First-martyr was stoned, and I have been adorned with the same. What comforts me in my torments is that I see myself as an imitator of the sufferings of my Christ. It also eases all my pains that I am counted

worthy of an honor as great as that of those greater and better than I, being a partaker in the same sufferings."

The tormentor, marveling at such greatness of spirit in the martyr, ordered him taken to prison. Supposing that he would not be able to walk on his own, since his whole body was one continuous wound, he commanded the servants to carry him by the hands and feet. But the saint pushed away those who wished to take him, stood up, and walked by himself, strengthened by the power of Christ, singing the words of the psalm: "It is the best oil, which shall not injure my head" (Ps. 140:5). Seeing this, the governor said to those around him:

"O what patience and what courage this man has! Such should the soldiers of the emperor be, that they might rise above every calamity. It is not fitting for me to judge him again; I will send him to the emperor Diocletian, for perhaps only he will be able to overcome him, since he is very skilled in torment. He always devises such tortures and executions that the whole city of Rome trembles at his judgment."

After some days the saint, while in prison, was healed of his wounds by the grace of Christ and became whole. Then the governor sent him to Rome, to the emperor Diocletian, writing about him in detail. As the saint was leaving the city, led by soldiers, he prayed to God thus: "O God, King of heaven and earth and of the whole universe, the One who fills all things and leaves no place without providence! Into Thy hands I commit this city; preserve it and the souls of all who believe in Thee. Preserve also Thy Church unharmed, so that dogs and wolves may not scatter Thy little flock in this city. Do not allow the number of Thy rational sheep to perish or diminish, but rather multiply them still more for the glory of Thy holy name. Do not separate me utterly from this city, but, remaining with me on the way and during my sufferings, bring me back here again, as Thou once returned Jacob to his father's house and delivered him from the hand of Esau, and as Thou once commanded Thy people to carry the bones of Joseph out of Egypt and lay them in his father's tomb (Gen. 36; Ex. 13:19), that Thy name may be glorified forever and ever."

After this prayer the saint was sent on his way. When he was brought to Rome and set before the impious emperor, the emperor

greatly marveled, seeing the radiance on the martyr's face and his bodily strength. He did not want to believe the letter of Domitian, which reported what sufferings this Christian had endured. He saw that the saint was healthy in body and cheerful in countenance, as though he had never endured any calamities. He asked:

"Are you indeed the renowned Clement, who endured such great torments?"

Then he ordered that many and various things be set before the saint on two sides, mutually opposed: on one side, much gold and silver, imperial decrees bestowing high honors upon the great martyr, precious garments, all kinds of riches and distinctions; and on the other side, instruments of torture: iron pincers and claws, iron beds with nails, sharp razors, burning coals, cauldrons and helmets heated red-hot, pointed stakes, wheels, heavy chains, and countless other instruments of torment. When this was presented to the martyr, the emperor, looking at him and pointing his hand toward the gold and the rich gifts, said:

"These our gods give to you, if you turn to them and begin to honor them with worship and sacrifices."

The saint turned his eyes away from these gifts, as things worthless, defiled, and foul-smelling, not even worthy of looking upon, and said with a sigh:

"Let these gifts of your gods be to your destruction!"

Then the emperor, looking sternly, pointed his hand toward the instruments of torture and said to the saint:

"These are prepared for those who do not believe in our gods."

To this the valiant martyr of Christ answered him:

"If you think the torments you have devised are terrible, why do you disdain those torments which God has prepared for those who do not believe in Him? Likewise, if your gifts appear enticing, worthy of wonder, and honorable to those who seek earthly goods, how much more worthy are the gifts bestowed in heaven, which God has prepared for those who love Him: 'which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man' (1 Cor. 2:9). Gold and silver are barren earth, and are mined by men for outward adornment. They are changed

by fire and iron, eaten by rust, destroyed by wear; they are taken by robbers and stolen by thieves. Bright garments are the work of the worm (the silkworm) and food for the moth; they are made from wool, which is necessarily taken from unreasoning animals. One ought to marvel more at those who make the garments than at you who adorn yourselves with them, for by some art they create a thing, turning the worse into the better; yet such craftsmen are despised as simple and insignificant people. On the contrary, those who adorn themselves with their products are proud and exalted, though they borrow their splendor from insignificant unreasoning animals. But the gifts of our good God are not borrowed from anyone; they are His own and unchanging possessions, abiding in Him by His will and not through human skill. They have boundless glory and eternal worth; they do not fear any change from the passage of time; the moth does not consume them, and corruption does not spoil them, and even in endless ages they cannot grow old." Diocletian said to him in reply:

"You speak well, but you understand poorly. I am trying to bring you to the knowledge of the gods, and for that reason I speak with you gently, persuading you not to rely on a mortal man, for He whom you worship as Christ, having suffered many torments from the Jews, was at last killed and died, while our gods are always immortal and have never suffered."

The saint answered:

"You speak rightly, O king, that your gods are immortal and impassible, for how could they die if they never lived? How could they suffer if they are without feeling? Do you not know that after being beaten and forged, cut and rubbed, they came out of human hands? Indeed, your stone gods were struck out with an axe and a drawknife, the wooden ones were carved with a knife and a saw, and the bronze and iron ones were forged with a hammer; and they have received no small amount of other dishonors, blows, and insults, yet they remained without feeling. Truly they are immortal, because they never lived, and they are broken as though they had never existed before. But my Lord and God, Jesus Christ, according to His human nature was pleased to die in the flesh, in order to save the world and to destroy death itself by

His divine power. Having done this, He rose on the third day and gave us Himself for eternal life."

Diocletian, hearing this free and bold speech of the saint, was greatly enraged and ordered him bound naked to a wheel, the wheel turned, and the saint beaten with iron rods. As the wheel turned, when the saint was on top he was beaten with rods, and when he came to the bottom, where a deliberately narrow space had been made, there he was sorely tormented with a sharp stake, so that his bones were broken and his body, which had regrown after the first torments, was torn away. Tormented for many hours, the martyr of Christ prayed thus: "Lord Jesus Christ! Help me and lighten my sufferings, remove the fierce pain, for, trusting in Thee, I have given myself to wounds. Help me, as Thou once helped Thy holy apostle Paul, and look upon my flesh, grievously wounded! I desire to be unharmed and whole, for the glory and confession of Thy holy name, and to receive great torments for Thee, to the shame and dishonor of the impious. Strengthen me for Thy name's sake, for I have placed my hope in Thee, the Giver of life!"

While the saint prayed in this way, the wheel stopped motionless, and those who turned it grew tired and exhausted. The saint, untied by an invisible hand, again became unharmed and healthy in his whole body. Many who had gathered there, seeing this, cried out in amazement:

"Great is the God of the Christians!"

And the holy Clement, that true vine of Christ's vineyard, understanding in spirit that from his suffering struggles many clusters might arise, sang praise to God aloud, crying: "I thank Thee, O God, Father in heaven, that Thou hast counted me worthy to suffer in this great city for Thine Only-begotten Son, who suffered for us and shed His precious blood for our redemption, whom here Saint Peter preached, Paul proclaimed, Clement, my namesake, glorified, and Onesimus likewise confessed. (Here are meant the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and from the seventy apostles: Clement, Pope of Rome (commemorated November 25) and Onesimus (commemorated February 15).) They suffered for Him and died, and now are glorified in heaven, are honored by many on earth, and by a yet greater number of people will soon be glorified

above the earthly kings. The faithful kings themselves will bow down before them."

The saint spoke these things, proclaiming the coming time when the worship of idols would vanish like darkness and the faith of Christ would shine like the sun and enlighten the whole universe. These words of the saint burned the heart of the tyrant Diocletian like a flame and aroused in him still greater fury. Paying no attention to the miracle wrought by God's power, and blinded by malice, he was inflamed to yet greater cruelty in his tortures. He ordered that the saint be struck on the mouth with thick iron rods and that his teeth be broken. The saint, even during this torture, did not cease to speak, provoking the tyrant, although the servants forbade him and ordered him to be silent. But like bronze, which gives a clearer sound the harder it is struck, so the martyr of Christ, the more he was forbidden to speak, as his mouth and teeth were crushed with iron, cried out all the louder, saying that which served to the glory of God and to the shame of the proud tyrant. When at last Diocletian himself grew weary and exhausted from rage, he ordered the martyr to be bound with iron chains and cast into the public prison.

While the saint sat in the prison, in the evening there came to him a multitude of people, men and sensible women with children, who had been in the square during the execution and had seen the courage of the saint. They with one accord fell at his holy feet and asked for holy baptism. The saint gave thanks to God that under so grievous a persecution the number of His confessors was increasing. He at once set about teaching them the holy faith in Christ and baptized them all, from the least to the greatest, for there was enough water in that prison. As he did so, he sang joyfully: “Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” (Ps. 31:1). When midnight came, a great light from heaven illumined the prison, and all who looked up saw a beautiful youth, shining with lightning-like raiment and with outspread wings, descending to the holy martyr. Approaching him, the youth placed in his hands pure bread and a cup of wine, and at once became invisible. St. Clement, understanding that this was the Body and Blood of Christ, offered the customary prayers and gave Communion of the

Divine Mysteries to all the newly baptized when dawn was already breaking. The faithful came to him in the days that followed as well, bringing with them many who desired holy baptism. Thus the flock of Christ increased, and the prison became as it were a church, in which praises were offered to God. Seeing this, the guards reported it to the emperor. And so, when a multitude of believers had gathered with the saint by night, soldiers came by order of the emperor, seized them all, and led them outside the city like sheep to the slaughter. Before the beheading of each one, they asked:

"Do you renounce Christ, so that you may remain alive?"

And not one was found who feared death; on the contrary, all preferred to die for their Lord. Then there were beheaded for Christ a great multitude of men, women, and children. Only one youth escaped the hands of the executioners, not out of fear of death, but from a desire to endure greater torments for the true God. The name of this youth, of whom we shall speak below, was Agathangelus.

After this Diocletian again summoned the saint to judgment and subjected him to prolonged and savage tortures: first, stripping him and stretching him on the ground, he beat him long and hard with ox sinews, and then, hanging him up, he scraped him with iron claws until the bones were laid bare and the whole body was flayed. The saint said to the tyrant:

“This body which you are scraping is not the one that came forth from my mother's womb; that one was long ago and completely stripped from the bones by the governor Domitian. Into this new body Christ, my Creator, clothed me. And since you strive to scrape it from my bones, I believe in my Christ that by His almighty power He will clothe me again in the same flesh; for indeed, will there be a lack of clay for the potter? On the contrary, will there not be an abundance of material for him?”

Then the tyrant ordered that his sides be scorched with candles, but the saint endured all with joy for the sake of Jesus, the Most Sweet. Diocletian, marveling at the patience and courage of the martyr, said to those about him:

"I have tortured many wretched Christians and have not yet seen one so invincible. I will now send him to Nicomedia to Maximian, as something new, never before seen or heard of. Let him too marvel at the invincibility of this body in torments! I think he has never met one so firm in mind and so strong in body."

He ordered the saint to be bound and, placing him on a ship, sent him to Nicomedia to the other emperor, Maximian[6], writing to him about everything that St. Clement had suffered from him at Rome, and earlier from Domitian at Ancyra. When the saint was about to board the ship, the aforementioned Agathangelus, who had escaped by night from the hands of the soldiers who were slaying the flock of Christ with swords outside the city, had secretly boarded the ship before him and was waiting for St. Clement. When the saint had been brought aboard, he fell at his feet and, telling him that he had been baptized by the saint, related to him everything about the destruction of the faithful and about his own flight, explaining that he had come to the saint in order to suffer with him all manner of torments for Christ the Lord and to die together with him. St. Clement rejoiced over the blessed Agathangelus, seeing his zeal and love for Christ God, and regarded his arrival as though it were the coming of an Angel of God. He gave thanks to the Lord of all and asked Him for strength and help, that He might give the young man courage and power to endure to the end and be counted worthy of the crown of martyrdom.

During the voyage the saints remained in prayer day and night and did not take food at all. St. Clement did not concern himself with this in the least and said:

"I have bread in my heart, Jesus Christ Himself, and therefore I shall not hunger; I have living water, the grace of Christ, and therefore I shall never thirst."

The soldiers, seeing that Clement and Agathangelus did not eat or drink for many days, took pity on them and offered them bread and water. They praised the soldiers for this good deed, but did not accept food or drink from them, saying that they were nourished by God, the

6. Maximian II Galerius, son-in-law and co-ruler of the Emperor Diocletian until 305, thereafter reigning independently until 311.

Provider of all: an Angel of the Lord brought them food from heaven at night and strengthened them. After a long voyage they put in at the island of Rhodes[7]. While many went ashore into the city to buy food, the saints begged the remaining soldiers to let them go to a Christian church in order to receive the Divine Mysteries, the life-giving Body and Blood of Christ, for it was Sunday. The bishop of that island, the God-loving Photinus, having heard of St. Clement, came with his clergy and the other Christians and asked the commander of the soldiers to free Clement from his fetters and release him to them for a short time, together with his disciple Agathangelus. He promised to bring them back to the ship without delay. St. Clement was released at the bishop's request. The saints were led into a small church, for there were then few Christians on that island. When the bishop ordered the reading of the Divine Gospel, the cleric opened the book and began to read the words that first presented themselves: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Mt. 10:28). Hearing this, the saints raised their eyes upward with a sigh, and the Christians standing in the church, looking at them, began to weep, so that the whole church was filled with lamentation and cries. Then the bishop asked St. Clement to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. As the saint celebrated, some of the clergy and even some of the common people who were worthy saw on the diskos a great coal, intensely glowing and burning. From it there came an indescribable radiance, which illumined the saint and those standing near, and above the sanctuary holy Angels were visible, hovering in the air. Those who saw this miracle fell prostrate to the ground and did not dare to look at the saint. When the service was over, Bishop Photinus took the saints and the other Christians to his house and set out a meal. Many sick people were brought and carried to St. Clement, not only from among the faithful but also from among the pagans. All of them the martyr of Christ healed by prayer and the sign of the Cross. Therefore a multitude of pagans began openly to confess that Christ is the True God, and asked for baptism. The soldiers, seeing that a great crowd was gathering about St. Clement, grew afraid

7. Rhodes – a large island in the south-western part of the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago), separated from the southern shore of the Asia Minor region of Caria only by a fairly narrow strait.

that the people might take the prisoner from them and attack them. So, taking the saint, they led him to the ship and again put chains upon him. The faithful accompanied him with tears and sobs, unwilling to part from him. At last, bidding farewell to the saint and kissing Clement's bonds, they returned, since the soldiers urged them to set sail quickly from there. With the help of a fair wind they crossed the Aegean Sea and reached Nicomedia.

The impious emperor Maximian, who lived in Nicomedia, having received the letter of Diocletian and seeing the martyr, marveled at his great patience and at his courage, which was invincible under any torments.

But he himself was afraid to torture him, lest he be shamed, and therefore he handed him over for torture to the voivode Agrippinus; he himself pretended to be much occupied with other affairs of state. Agrippinus, summoning the saints to judgment, addressed Clement:

"Are you Clement?"

"I am a servant of Christ," the martyr replied.

The voivode ordered him to be struck on the mouth with fists, saying:

"Why do you not call yourself a servant of the emperor, but of Christ?"

The saint, being beaten, answered:

"Your emperors too ought to be servants of Christ; then their reign would be peaceful, and Christ my Lord would subject all peoples to their power."

Then the voivode, looking at St. Agathangelus, asked:

"And who are you? Nothing about you is written in Diocletian's letter."

Agathangelus, looking up to heaven, said:

"I am a Christian, and I was given the name of Christian through this servant of God, Clement."

The voivode said in reply:

"Then he is the author of your error and of the cruel death that awaits you."

Then he commanded that St. Clement be hung up naked and his body cut with razors, and that St. Agathangelus, likewise naked, be severely beaten with sinews. During the torments St. Clement prayed to God that He would strengthen Agathangelus in his sufferings. After these tortures the voivode ordered both sufferers cast into a dungeon. In the dungeon there were many other prisoners, condemned for various offenses. Seeing the fervent prayers of the saints to God, and beholding that the Angels of God visited and comforted the servants of Christ, they were moved in heart, and falling at their feet, they begged them to lead them to their God. By God's providence it happened that there was enough water there for baptism. Having instructed them in the Christian faith, St. Clement baptized them all; then, by prayer, he opened the dungeon and released them, saying:

"Go forth, children, and be saved from the hands of the impious. May the Lord Jesus Christ preserve you!"

The next morning the voivode Agrippinus, learning of the release of the prisoners, was greatly angered against the saints. Erecting a high platform, he gave them over to be devoured by beasts. But the beasts did no harm to the saints; on the contrary, they fawned upon them as household dogs upon their masters. Then the tormentor commanded that each finger of the martyrs' hands be turned on red-hot iron spits up to the elbow. Seeing this, the people could not endure such torture, and with threats they demanded of the voivode that he release the innocent. But the voivode was angered still more and commanded that their arms be turned with other sharp-pointed red-hot instruments up to the shoulders. Then the indignant people, seizing stones, threw them at the voivode and cried out with a loud voice:

"Great is the God of the Christians!"

The voivode, fearing the uproar and murmuring of the people, fled and hid himself in his house, while the holy martyrs went quite unhindered up the mountain called Pyramis, on which the pagans were accustomed to offer sacrifices to their gods. There they entered the pagan shrine and by prayer shattered the idols and drove out the demons. Some days later the voivode learned where the saints were and went there with priests and his soldiers. There he severely beat the holy

martyrs with thick clubs, and, breaking their bones, commanded that each be sewn into a sack separately with stones placed inside, and cast from the mountain into the sea. The saints, rolling down the mountain slope in their sacks, fell into the sea and sank into its deep abyss. Everyone already considered them lost. Some of the faithful, learning of the drowning of the saints, walked along the shore in the hope that the sea, which commonly casts up the dead, would cast up the bodies of the holy martyrs too. Soon they noticed two sacks floating on the sea, and, getting into boats, they sailed out to them. Untying the sacks, they found the saints in no way harmed, and they glorified God. That night the saints rested on the shore. The Angels of God, visiting them, strengthened them with food. When morning came, Sts. Clement and Agathangelus went into the city, and, standing in the square, they spoke to the people of the greatness of God; then, stretching their hands toward heaven, they began to pray: "We thank Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast not forsaken us who hope in Thee, but hast delivered us from cruel torments, and hast not made our enemies rejoice over us, but hast glorified Thy holy name in us."

Two blind men were there; besides them, one man with a withered hand and one paralytic. The saints healed them at once by the laying on of their hands. Seeing this, the people began to bring to them their sick and those possessed by unclean spirits. All were healed through the prayers and the touch of the martyrs' hands. The name of the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified aloud by the people. Hearing of this, the voivode Agrippinus was struck with fear, and, in bewilderment, went to report everything that had happened to the emperor. The emperor, too, was greatly astonished that the saints, thought to have perished in the sea, were found alive. Learning that St. Clement was a native of Ancyra, he commanded that he be sent with his disciple to Ancyra, saying:

"Let the city that produced and raised him take him for itself and put him to death as it wishes."

Then he wrote about St. Clement to the prince of Ancyra, Curicius; and the soldiers led both saints, bound, to Ancyra.

Entering his native city, the holy martyr Clement said with joy:

"Glory to Thee, O God, that Thou hast heard my humility! Glory to Thee, O Christ, that Thou hast made me worthy to see my native city!"

Both saints were presented to Prince Curicius. He, having interrogated them, began to torment them. First he commanded that the sides of St. Clement be scorched with iron plates strongly heated, and then, binding him to a pillar, he beat him without mercy, so that his body fell away in pieces. St. Agathangelus he commanded to be hung up and scraped with iron claws. While doing this, he asked them with a smile:

"Do you not feel pain in your bodies?"

St. Clement answered with the words of the Apostle: "Though our outward man is wasting away, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).

Then the tormentor commanded that an iron helmet be heated red-hot and placed on St. Clement's head. When this was done, thick smoke began to pour from the saint's nostrils, ears and mouth. Enduring unspeakable torment, he cried out to his Lord: "Inexhaustible spring, living water, saving rain! Heal me with the dew of Thy grace. Thou didst lead us out of the water; deliver also Thy servants from fire."

While the saint was praying thus, the iron helmet on his head at once cooled. Seeing this, Prince Curicius was seized with terror, and, uncertain what else to do with them, he sent them to prison, and wrote in detail of what had happened to Emperor Maximian. In the night the blessed Sophia, the second mother of Clement, came to the prison. She kissed him with great joy and tears, rejoicing over her adopted son, who had proved worthy to be a suffering servant of Christ and a glorious conqueror over torments. She kissed the wounds and chains of the saints; then she washed and wiped their blood and bound their wounds with clean cloths. Meanwhile she questioned St. Clement in detail: how he had suffered, where, and at whose hands. She brought them food and strengthened them. On all the following days she came and served the prisoners of Christ.

After some time an order came from the emperor to Prince Curicius to send the holy martyrs to another city, called Amisia[8], to another,

8. A city in Pontus, in the north of Asia Minor.

more cruel tormentor, the imperial governor named Domitius. The blessed Sophia accompanied the holy martyrs a long way, together with those children whom St. Clement had gathered during the famine, who had been brought up in her house and had come to be as her own children. Some of them did not wish to part from the holy passion-bearers and followed them, bound to them by heartfelt love. On the way, by the emperor's command, they were stabbed to death by soldiers, and this was immediately reported to the emperor. In Amisia the holy passion-bearers were thrown by Domitius into boiling lime on Friday, at the second hour of the day, and on Saturday, at the third hour, they were found alive and well. Seeing this, two soldiers believed in Christ and publicly declared themselves Christians, for which, the same Saturday, the seventh day of September, they were crucified by the impious. Their names were Phengon and Eucarpius. And to Sts. Clement and Agathangelus the tormentor commanded that the skin be stripped from their shoulders, and that they be beaten with a stick for a long time. Then he commanded that they be laid on red-hot iron beds and severely burned, pouring sulphur and pitch upon them. But the saints, resting without any harm, as on a soft royal bed, fell asleep a sweet sleep, and in a dream vision saw Christ the Lord with a multitude of His holy Angels. The Lord came down to them from on high and said:

"Do not fear. I am with you."

Awaking, they joyfully told one another of this vision. The saints were tormented on the red-hot iron beds for a long time. When Domitian saw that the fire did them no harm at all, he was at a loss what to do with them: he commanded that they be taken down and led to a dungeon. The saints remained in this dungeon a long time, and then were sent again to Emperor Domitian, who was living at that time in Tarsus. On their way there they suffered from thirst, and especially the soldiers who led them were exhausted, for that country was desert and waterless. By their prayer the saints brought forth a spring of living water from the dry ground. All drank and were refreshed; the soldiers also took with them on the journey as much water as they needed. During this journey St. Clement prayed fervently to Christ God that God would make him worthy, all the days of his life, to endure torments for His

holy name. Then he received a revelation from God that, after the years already passed, he must live twenty-eight more years amid unceasing sufferings before the full completion of his martyric ascetic feat. The saint rejoiced greatly at this, for he was wholly absorbed by an unspeakable love for Christ his God. He desired to remain in cruel torments for Christ for a long time, and to die many times over all the days of his life.

When the holy men were presented to the Emperor Maximian, he was greatly astonished that they had remained alive and unconquered after so many tortures. Questioning them again and finding them unyielding, he ordered a fiery furnace to be heated, as Nebuchadnezzar once did in Babylon, and cast the warriors of Christ into it. The saints remained in this furnace day and night, and were found alive and unharmed. Seeing this miracle, many of the people believed in Christ. Then the saints were thrown into prison, where they remained for four years. The impious emperor hoped that the saints, wearied by the long imprisonment and having endured many calamities in the dungeon, would sooner turn to the pagan faith.

After four years of imprisonment, the emperor, deeming them as it were unworthy of his royal judgment, yet at the same time ashamed of the invincible greatness of spirit which they had displayed by their very deeds, entrusted them to a most cruel governor named Sacerdon, who had destroyed countless Christians with cruel tortures and a dreadful death. He was to compel the holy prisoners to worship the pagan gods. Unable to persuade the holy martyrs Clement and Agathangelus either by flattering words or by threats, he ordered them to be bound naked to a tree and beaten cruelly, and their flesh scraped so forcefully that the shoulders and backs of the saints were stripped down to the bone. The bare bones and joints were already visible, and the flesh had wholly fallen away. The tormentor, supposing that they would die at once, ordered them to be untied and carried to the prison. But seeing that the saints stood on their feet and felt strong, and that they walked to the prison of their own accord, he was greatly shamed, and from rage and shame his body grew faint. He was barely alive, so that he was carried home from the court in the arms of his servants. From the bodies of the

saints as they walked to the prison, the flesh fell away in pieces together with blood. The faithful gathered it up along the way together with the sand and kept it as a great and precious treasure. When the emperor learned of Sacerdon's bodily weakness, he laughed and said:

"Behold, glorious Sacerdon, who conquered many Christians, is himself conquered by two!"

At this time there stood before the emperor a prince named Maximus. He implored the emperor to give the holy martyrs into his hands, boasting that he would either compel them to sacrifice or torment them to death. When the emperor permitted this, he took the saints into his own keeping, and did not begin to torment them at once, but for many days first conversed with them in a friendly manner, urging them to worship the gods. Then one day he summoned them and said:

"Rejoice, my good men! The immortal gods love you as their true sons, and care for you. They have spoken to me of you many times in dreams, and in answer to my questions they plainly told me that you would turn to them. For this reason they have restrained your tormentors, lest they destroy you, for the gods await your conversion, which is already near. Only last night the great Bacchus[9], among the gods, appeared to me and said: 'Bring those two men to me.' Now, good men, the temple of Bacchus is open, the altar is adorned, the sacrifices are prepared; come and offer sacrifice to him."

The saints answered him:

"You lie shamelessly, judge! For your gods, as is well known, are mute; likewise in dreams they can say nothing. Moreover, which Bacchus spoke to you? For you have here two idols of Bacchus: one of stone and one of bronze. If the stone Bacchus spoke, then we prophesy to him that the time will soon come when he will be broken into pieces, or be laid with other stones into a wall built of stone, or finally be cast into the fire and turned to sand. But if the bronze Bacchus spoke to you, then soon he will be remade into pitchers and other worthless vessels."

Unable to bear these words, Maximus began to torment them cruelly. The torment was as follows: he ordered various sharp iron in-

struments to be fixed in the ground: spikes, knives, nails, tridents, and other most sharp objects such as he could devise, with the points upward and set close together. The points rose to the height of the length of one foot. He ordered the holy Clement to be laid naked upon the points, face upward, and beaten with thick sticks, and he ordered holy Agathangelus to have molten tin poured upon his head. While holy Clement was beaten with sticks on his chest and over his whole body, from head to feet, his whole body from below was pierced and cut by those sharp instruments; some iron points went through to the heart, some to the breast, some to the inner parts of the stomach, and some, finally, went right through and could plainly be seen above. When, after a long beating, the tormentor ordered the martyr to be taken from that place, scarcely a few men with great effort could free him from there. Maximus was perplexed and amazed at such great endurance, the more so since no tortures could either turn the martyrs to the gods or put them to death. The Most High God Himself preserved their souls, which had not parted from the body, for the great glorification of His holy name and for the shame of the impious. The saints were again cast into prison.

Learning of this, Emperor Maximian condemned the saints to perpetual imprisonment, in which they were to die a natural death. Then another nobleman named Aphrodisius, a Persian by birth, a skilled inventor of every kind of most savage torture for Christians, asked the emperor to permit him to take these martyrs, hoping to destroy them. Having obtained consent, he took them to his house, and, offering them a rich feast, hoped to regale them. He urged them to eat and drink and make merry with him. But they answered him:

"We feed on heavenly food and drink. Whoever eats and drinks of it shall never hunger or thirst, and shall abide forever in joy."

Aphrodisius, considering their refusal a dishonor to himself, said:

"Tomorrow I will prepare for you another supper, the one you seek: the most cruel death."

9. Bacchus (among the Greeks, Dionysus) was regarded by the ancient Greeks and Romans as the god of the grape and of winemaking, the gift of wine that gladdens the heart of men and dispels sorrow and care.

When morning came, Aphrodisius ordered two millstones to be brought and, hanging them around the necks of the saints, to be dragged through the whole city for their mockery. As the saints were dragged through the city, many frenzied men from among the people took up stones and struck those being dragged; others, marveling at such prolonged and grievous sufferings, considered them immortal and turned to Christ. After this, by the emperor's decree, the saints were imprisoned for life, on the reasoning that they would perish, worn out by the long confinement. The saints remained in prison bonds for many years, until the end of their twenty-eight years of suffering drew near, which had been revealed to St. Clement by God in a vision while he was still at Tarsus, when he was being led to the emperor. Already many of the holy confessors of Christ who had begun their ascetic sufferings had completed their course, but these two sufferers continued their martyric course and performed their feats.

After Emperor Maximian, Maximin[10] came to the throne. At this time much Christian blood was shed without mercy. The prison guards, weary of keeping watch over Clement and Agathangelus, who had been held in prison far too long, came to the emperor Maximin and said:

"What do you command concerning these two prisoners, who for many years have been tormented by many emperors and governors, and moreover with all the most perfected instruments of the most cruel tortures, and yet have not died? They are still alive and remain in chains. Although they receive no care or attention necessary for life, yet they are healthy and bright of countenance. We think they are immortal."

In answer to this, Emperor Maximin first reviled his gods with many shameful words, for being unable to take away the temporal life of those prisoners. Then he inquired about them: who they were and whence they came? Learning that they were from Galatia, from the city of Ancyra, he ordered them to be sent at once there to the prince Lucius, who at that time commanded in Ancyra. The saints, learning of this, rejoiced greatly, for holy Clement very much desired to end the course of his ascetic life in his native city. He prayed to the Lord Christ

10. Emperor Maximin Daza reigned in the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 305 to 313, at first simultaneously with Maximian II Galerius, who died in 311.

about this and received what he asked. When the saints were brought to the city of Ancyra and presented for examination before the prince Lucius, he did not at once begin to question them, but first cast them into severe imprisonment; he ordered their feet to be fastened in the stocks, iron fetters to be placed on their necks, their hands, and their whole bodies, and also hung heavy stones upon them, so that they had no possibility of moving their bodies or stretching out their legs. On the following day he ordered the holy martyr Agathangelus alone to be brought to trial. At first he long tried to win the saint with flatteries, seeking to draw him to his false faith; but seeing the steadfastness of his convictions, he began to torment him: he pierced his ears with iron rings heated in the fire, burned his ribs with burning candles, and finally severed his holy head with a sword. The honorable body of the martyr was taken by the blessed Sophia, the mother of Clement mentioned above; she wrapped it in clean linen, anointed it with fragrances, and placed it in a cave in which there was a small Christian church. Because of the severe persecution by the impious, the faithful could not have a church of their own, but made for themselves a small church in a cave and there performed services to God. Thus the holy martyr Agathangelus suffered from various tormentors: from two emperors, Diocletian and Maximian, and from governors: Agrippinus, Curicius, Domitius, Sacerdon, Maximus, Aphrodisius, and Lucius. He completed the course of his suffering on the fifth of November.

Saint Clement, learning of the death of his disciple and co-sufferer, the holy martyr Agathangelus, was filled with inexpressible joy, since he had sent him on before himself to God as an intercessor. Lying prostrate on the ground and burdened with the weight of his chains, he offered deep thanksgiving to God for Saint Agathangelus, because God had granted him to complete his earthly course, to keep the faith, to endure all tortures with courage, and to be numbered among the holy martyrs who triumph in heaven. He also prayed for himself, that God would grant him to endure to the end, to crush the head of the enemy full of many snares, and to pass in triumph into the desired heavenly mansions.

After the execution of Saint Agathangelus, the tormentor Lucius commanded that Saint Clement be tormented daily in the prison. The torment was as follows: they struck the martyr on the face and on the head with rods studded with sharp knots, inflicting on the saint's body one hundred and fifty wounds each day. The saint was tormented in this way from the fifth of November to the fifth of January. Although during the day the saint was grievously wounded, so that his whole prison was stained with his blood, at night the grace of God, sent to him through the holy Angels, healed his wounds. The pagans were greatly perplexed: coming daily and finding him whole, they marvelled and beat him still more cruelly; they wounded his head and face with hard and deep blows, up to one hundred and fifty. When the feast of the Theophany of the Lord was drawing near, another voevode named Alexander arrived at the city of Ancyra from the emperor, in place of Lucius, who had been recalled to the emperor. As night fell, when the All-night Vigil for the feast of the Theophany was to be celebrated, the blessed Sophia gathered the Christians together, along with her servants and the boys and girls she had raised, and went with them to the prison to Saint Clement. God, who aids the intentions of those who believe in Him, brought a deep sleep upon the guards. Only one guard did not sleep; he was a secret Christian, and he opened the prison for those who had come. The believers, entering with the wise Sophia, freed the saint from his fetters and led him to the church that was in the cave. There they celebrated with joy, giving thanks to God. At daybreak Saint Clement celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and all received the Holy Mysteries from the holy hands of their shepherd. The hierarch of God delivered to those gathered a lengthy discourse, in which he foretold his own death. He foretold that he would soon be slain, and he comforted them with words:

"Fear not, brethren; none of you shall perish or suffer. Not one of you shall be snatched away by wolves; only I, with two clerics, shall lay down my soul for the great High Priest Christ, who laid down His soul for us."

He also foretold that the persecution would soon cease, that idolatry would disappear, and that the holy faith would flourish, for the Heav-

enly King would raise up on earth such a king who, himself enlightened by holy baptism, would enlighten all the provinces of the Roman state and would found a new Rome, after which piety would shine everywhere. Having foretold this to his rational flock, the hieromartyr Clement gladdened the souls of his hearers. Then he went to the house of his adoptive mother Sophia, who invited all the people who had been in the church to her house and set before them a lavish feast. Saint Clement remained in her house until the twenty-third of January. During all this time the voevode Alexander was occupied with various affairs concerning the people and the administration. At last he was informed that the Christian bishop Clement had left the prison during the night. Then they began to search for him. When Sunday came, the hierarch of God, Saint Clement, went to the cave church to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. The impious learned of this and informed the voevode. The latter at once set out himself with soldiers, and entering the church he found Saint Clement standing before the Holy Table and offering the unbloody sacrifice. The voevode commanded one of the soldiers to draw his sword and strike the hierarch from behind on the neck. When the soldier struck with the sword, the head of the holy hieromartyr Clement fell upon the Holy Table and upon the prepared Gifts.[11] Thus the Unbloody Sacrifice and the whole holy sanctuary were stained with his blood. All the believers were in great fear and terror: they expected death for themselves as well; yet they grieved not for themselves but for their shepherd, and so they began to weep aloud. The voevode immediately went out, doing no harm to those gathered, and only the two clerics were beheaded in the sanctuary together with Saint Clement. Their names were Christopher and Chariton, both of them deacons. The blessed Sophia, with tears and joy, prepared for burial the honorable body of her beloved adoptive son, who was in truth her spiritual father and shepherd. She wept that she had lost him on earth, and rejoiced that, having zealously completed the course of sufferings, he had gone to Christ the Lord. The saint was buried with honor, together

11. St. Clement died on January 23, 312. His relics remained for a long time in Constantinople, where there were two churches in his name. Stephen of Novgorod (in 1342) and the hierodeacon Zosimas (in 1420) saw his relics in the monastery of Constantine in Constantinople.

with both deacons, by the diligence of Sophia and all the Christian population there, near the tomb of the holy martyr Agathangelus, in the cave church, on the twenty-third of January.

Thus the holy hieromartyr Clement completed the lengthy ascetic labor of his suffering, enduring countless and inexpressible tortures for Christ over the course of twenty-eight years. The Greek historian Nicephorus[12] speaks of him thus: "From the very creation of the world, of all those who suffered for God by any kind of torment, namely by fire, iron, stones, hanging on a tree, and likewise of those who fought with beasts in the circuses or were tormented by long imprisonment in chains, or died by various deaths in water, in earth, and in air, or were destroyed by severe frost or heat, or lost their lives by any other kinds of torment and execution, all such martyrs Saint Clement together with Agathangelus greatly surpassed in their sufferings. He suffered in various cities under eleven tormentors: in Ancyra under the governor of Galatia Domitian, in Rome under the emperor Diocletian, in Nicomedia under the voevode Agrippinus, again in Ancyra under the prince Curicius; in Amisus under the imperial governor Domitius, in Tarsus under the emperor Maximian, there also under the ruler Sacerdon, and then under the prince Maximus and the nobleman Aphrodisius, again in Ancyra under the prince Lucius, and finally under the voevode Alexander. All the tormentors of that time sent him to one another as a wonder never before seen, for during so many years and through so many different cruel torments he could not be overcome or shaken, together with his disciple Agathangelus." For the glory of His holy Name, God, our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthened him, to Whom, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, glory, honor, and worship befit from every creature. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

The vine of piety and the stem of suffering, a most holy flower and a fruit given by God, thou wast bestowed upon the faithful, all-holy one, ever blooming; and as a fellow-sufferer of the martyrs and

12. Nicephorus Callistus – a Greek church historian of the fourteenth century.

chief hierarch of those who share thy throne, pray to Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou wast the honorable branch of Christ's vine, most suffering and all-praised Clement; having appeared, thou didst cry out with those who suffer: "Thou art, O Christ, the bright joy of the martyrs."

* * *

Life of Saint Paulinus the Merciful, Bishop of Nola

Житие святого Павлина Милостивого, епископа Ноланского

The servant of God Paulinus was a native of Aquitaine.[13] During his worldly life he was one of the senior senators under the Roman emperor. He lived a pious life and feared God.[14] His wife, named Tarasia, in her faith and virtues was like her husband and was likewise pious. Having no children of their own, they took in poor orphans and cared for them as their own children, feeding them and teaching them the fear of God. Day by day they advanced in every virtue and generously gave alms to the beggars. At last they themselves desired, for the sake of pleasing God, to become poor. They sold their large estate and, distributing everything to those in need, lived themselves in voluntary poverty, like people of humble condition, and placed their hope in the providence of God. Once, when they had become greatly impoverished, a beggar came to them asking for alms; but they had nothing except one loaf of bread. The blessed Paulinus advised his wife to give even this last loaf to the beggar.

"God will help us," he said, "and we shall not begrudge giving to the one who asks for the sake of God."

Tarasia, however, did not give it, but kept the bread for their own need, since on that day there was nothing at all for their own dinner. At this time a messenger from one of his wealthy friends came to the

13. Aquitaine – the western part of ancient Gaul (present-day France).
14. St. Paulinus received holy baptism in his 26th year, in 389.

blessed Paulinus with the news that this friend had sent a great quantity of provisions to him by sea, and that the last ship, the one carrying the food, had sunk and perished in the waves. Hearing this, Paulinus said to his wife:

"See, if you had given the beggar the last loaf, the last ship with food would not have sunk in the sea. It is only because of the stinginess of many that God destroys their possessions."

Having left behind, together with their property, the glory of the world and all its interests, they departed from Rome into the land of Campania[15], since they had kept for their own sustenance one modest estate there. They settled in the city called Nola[16], near the tomb of the holy martyr Felicitas, and there they labored for the Lord, hidden from the world. But the virtue of Paulinus could not remain hidden for long. On account of it he was taken by compulsion to the episcopal throne of the Church of Nola, and against his will he accepted the episcopal dignity[17]. He governed his flock holily and vigilantly, as a faithful and wise steward "whom his lord hath made ruler over his household" (Lk. 12:42)[18]. He nourished his sheep not only with spiritual food, teaching and instructing them and bringing sinners to repentance and turning each one onto the path of truth, but he also cared for their bodily food and for all their needs: he fed and clothed the poor and the destitute, the orphans and the widows, and he ransomed the captives to freedom.

In those years, by the permission of God, the Vandals[19] invaded Italy and conquered all of it. They came also into the region of Campania, in which the city of Nola was situated. Laying waste many villages and cities, they penetrated also into the diocese of Paulinus, where they did the same: they took a multitude of people captive and led them away overseas, to their African land. Then the blessed Bishop

15. Campania – an ancient region of central Italy, south of Rome, near the Tyrrhenian Sea.
16. Nola – one of the most ancient cities of Campania; it exists to this day.
17. This was in 409. Previously he had been a presbyter (from 393) in Barcelona, in Spain.
18. The comparison is taken from the Savior's parable of the faithful and wise steward, who takes care of the servants and is always ready to give an account before his lord.
19. The Vandals – a people of the Germanic tribe; they first dwelt in central Germany, later in southern Spain, and then in northern Africa, from where they made devastating raids upon the neighboring coastal countries.

Paulinus gave away everything he had in the episcopal see to ransom the captives and to sustain those impoverished by the invasion of the barbarians, so that in the end nothing at all remained to him. When the Vandal soldiers, being savage and inhuman, tormented the Christians, demanding that they reveal the treasures hidden in the earth, Saint Paulinus sympathized with the believers in his heart and cried out to God: "Lord, grant that I be tormented on account of gold and silver. For Thou knowest where I have hidden my wealth: in the hands of Thy poor and destitute servants."

Once a poor widow came to him, saying with tears:

"My son has been taken captive by the Vandals, and I have learned that he is with the son-in-law of the Vandal king Riga, in Africa. I beg your holiness: give me something with which to ransom my son, the only hope of my livelihood and the support of my old age."

The man of God, searching carefully about him in the hope of finding something to give the petitioner, and finding nothing but himself, said to the poor widow:

"Woman, I have absolutely nothing to give you except myself. Take me; I surrender myself into your power as a slave. Sell me and ransom your son; go and give me into slavery in exchange for your son."

The woman, hearing these words from such a man, thought they were more a mockery than a kindness. But he, being eloquent and wise, by his reasoning convinced the doubting woman that he was not speaking in mockery but in complete truth. He persuaded her to believe his words and not to fear selling the bishop into slavery for the freedom of her son. Then they both went to Africa, and coming to the Vandals they stopped at the gate of that prince, the king's son-in-law, in whose house the widow's son was living. When the prince went out of the house somewhere, the widow fell at his feet and begged him with tears to release her son. But the barbarian, being proud, not only did not wish to release her son, but did not even hear her request. Then the widow, pointing to the servant of God Paulinus, said:

"I give this man in place of my son; only show mercy and release my son to me, for he is my only one."

The prince, looking attentively at the man of God, asked him:

"What trade do you know?"

Saint Paulinus answered him:

"I know no trade at all, but I am skilled at tending gardens."

Hearing this, the prince rejoiced, for he was in need of just such a man, and he gave the son to the widow. She returned home with her son, and Saint Paulinus, remaining to work, took charge of the gardens and labored zealously. His master began often to come into the garden and to converse with his gardener about various matters. Noticing his wise and wide learning, he talked with him about everything, many times leaving his household and friends in order to take delight in the reasonings of his servant. The blessed Paulinus each day brought him for dinner various vegetables from the garden, and receiving bread from his hands he returned to his work.

Once, when his master was speaking with him, Saint Paulinus said to him:

"Look, you are preparing to go away somewhere. Yet you must take up the kingdom of the Vandals, for this king, your father-in-law, will suddenly die an unexpected death. If you go away, another will seize the royal power in your absence."

The prince, hearing these words from his gardener, did not keep silent about them, but went and told the king, for he was wholly faithful to him and on account of this was loved by him more than all others. The king doubted and said:

"I wish to see that man of whom you speak."

The king's son-in-law said to this:

"I will command him this very day to bring vegetables from the garden for your dinner, and you will see him."

When the king sat down to dinner, Paulinus entered bringing, by the command of his master, vegetables for the royal table. When the king saw him, he at once trembled, and calling his son-in-law, his master, he disclosed to him the secret which he had wished to conceal from him.

"What you have heard from this man is true," he said, "for in the night, in a dream vision, I saw various princes seated on thrones, who held judgment over me. He too sat among those judges. By their judg-

ment there were taken from me the scepter and the power which I had once received. Ask him who he is. I do not think this man is a simple man, for I saw him in great dignity."

Then the king's son-in-law led the blessed Paulinus aside and asked him:

"Who are you?"

The man of God answered him:

"I am your slave, whom you took in place of the widow's son."

But the prince insistently questioned him, demanding that he explain not what he had now become, but what he had been in his own country. He adjured the saint and required on oath that he not conceal his secret from him, but reveal to him the whole truth. The man of God, troubled by the questioning and unable to transgress the oath, said that he was a bishop. His master, hearing this, was greatly frightened and said to him with humility:

"Ask of me whatever you wish, and then return to your country with rich gifts."

The servant of God Paulinus said to him:

"The only kindness that you can do I will ask of you: release to their native land all the captives of my city and country who have been brought here."

At once, through the zeal of this prince, the Christians taken captive from the region of Campania were sought out throughout the whole African land and brought to Saint Paulinus. The holy shepherd was dismissed with honor, together with all the rational sheep of his flock, with many rich gifts and provisions in abundance. They returned to their land on ships with merriment and joy. Several days later, according to the prophecy of the saint, Riga, king of the Vandals, died, and in his place his son-in-law ascended the throne.

Thus Saint Paulinus, giving himself alone into slavery, led many people out of slavery into freedom, following Christ the Lord, who took the form of a servant and delivered the human race from bondage to the devil. After his departure from slavery among the Vandals, Saint Paulinus lived many years, and as a good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, he valiantly governed the flock entrusted to him and,

sparing not himself, showed many kindnesses to the poor brethren. Then he passed to Christ, the Chief Shepherd, his Lord[929], from whom he now receives his reward a hundredfold and inherits eternal life, glorifying Him forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Gennadius of Kostroma[20]

Житие преподобного отца нашего Геннадия Костромского

The Venerable Gennadius, named Gregory at his holy baptism, was the only son of a boyar named John and his wife Helen, who lived in the land of Lithuania[21]. Gregory from childhood loved to attend the church of God and constantly remained among the church clergy, attending all the services. His parents were displeased with their son's conduct and said to him:

"Why do you act this way? Are you a church watchman? You shame us before people. It is enough for you to go to church with us, and the rest of the time to be at home and in the company of your peers; especially you must not deprive yourself of rest at night."

But Gregory answered:

"Dear parents, do not burden me with such words: I do not wish to occupy myself with childish games. God does what He wills, and man what he can; and the Holy Spirit guides every man onto the true path."

From then on Gregory began to think about how he might go away into the Russian land and settle there in some holy monastery and labor in a good ascetic struggle.

20. The Life of the Venerable Gennadius and the service to him were written by the monk Alexis, a disciple of the Venerable and abbot of the monastery founded by Gennadius. The Life has survived in many manuscripts; in some of them is found the scribe's request that his work be submitted for review to Tsar Theodore and Metropolitan Dionysius, so the Life was written between 1584 and 1587. The service, akathist and Life, together with the farewell instruction, have been published more than once in the Synodal typographies of St. Petersburg and Moscow in Church Slavonic type, for example Moscow, 1888. The Life, the description of miracles, the instruction and the narrative of the uncovering of the relics were published in full from manuscripts in the Yaroslavl Diocesan Gazette for 1873, and separately as a brochure in Yaroslavl in the same year, 1873.

21. The narrative of the uncovering of the relics of the Venerable Gennadius in 1644 states that he was a native of the city of Mogilev.

And so, seizing a favorable time, he left his parents, took off his bright clothing and gave it to the poor, and from them he took a rough garment and clothed himself in it.

Passing through the Lithuanian land, its deserts, villages and cities as a wanderer and a stranger, he endured many sorrows and afflictions from wicked men. Yet, preserved by God, he reached the Russian land, came to the great and glorious royal city of Moscow, and went around it, hastening to the shrines of the holy wonderworkers, entering the holy monasteries and considering where he might be tonsured and give himself to prayer.

In Moscow he found a friend named Theodore, a young man, but God-fearing and likewise seeking tonsure. From Moscow they went together to Great Novgorod and there went around the holy places and churches and monasteries.

From Novgorod they set out for the River Svir, to the desert of the ascetic Venerable Alexander, and began earnestly to beseech him:

"We desire, holy father, to pray to the Lord God. Clothe us, for Christ's sake, in the monastic habit."

Venerable Alexander first turned to Theodore, Gregory's friend, and said:

"You, child Theodore, will lead the white-headed beast."

To Gregory he said:

"And you, child Gregory, will yourself be a shepherd to the rational sheep and a guide to a multitude of monks. Go, child, to the Komel Forest, to the Venerable Cornelius, and he will teach you how to pray to God and how to shepherd the rational flock of monks, for in our desert young lads cannot live. Yet rest here, my children, as many days as you wish."

They spent fourteen days in the desert with Venerable Alexander, and, having received his blessing, they went into the bounds of the city of Vologda, to the Komel Forest. They came into the interior of the desert to Venerable Cornelius of Komel,[22] and knocked at the gate with the Jesus Prayer.

22. The Venerable Cornelius of Komel died in 1537; his memory is celebrated on May 19.

Venerable Cornelius, opening his doors, said to them:

"Children, how did you pass through impassable places, and why have you entered this poor desert? What do you seek?"

They answered him:

"Our master, Venerable Father Cornelius, a great desire has taken hold of us to be clothed in the monastic habit. For Christ's sake, reckon us among your God-chosen flock."

Venerable Cornelius said to Gregory:

"You, child Gregory, enter my poor dwelling. And you, child Theodore, will remain in the life of the world, take a wife, and bear children."

Venerable Cornelius imposed upon Gregory the monastic probation according to the tradition of the holy fathers. Gregory spent a considerable time in this probation, after which Venerable Cornelius, entering the church, tonsured Gregory into the monastic order and spoke to him a word from the Holy Gospel: "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Mt. 19:29–30). Then the elder spoke to the newly tonsured according to the paternal questions and answers, and gave him in place of Gregory the name Gennadius. Finally he said:

"Make your own, child, the understanding of the ancient holy fathers: patience, love, and humility, and especially common or communal prayer as well as prayer in the cell; and labor in unfeigned ascetic deeds."

Gennadius's friend Theodore, according to the prophecy of the Venerable Fathers Alexander and Cornelius, passed his life in the world, and in deep old age he reposed in Moscow.

Venerable Gennady, by the blessing of Cornelius, zealously labored in prayers and works, and especially in the monastery's household services in the kitchen, the bakery, and the rest. Many of the brethren were indignant at Gennady for such his exploits and murmured.

Hearing this murmuring, Venerable Cornelius strengthened the saint, saying:

"Child Gennady, do not grieve over the brethren in this, for they speak so under the demonic prompting."

Afterwards the enemy of good, the devil, stirred up a disturbance among the brethren, even against Cornelius himself. Seeing this, the venerable one gave place to wrath, and, taking with him his disciple Gennady, left his newly founded monastery and went into the lands of Kostroma, into a wild forest by Lake Sura, sixty versts from his first monastery. A little more than a verst from there lived royal peasants, obrok-paying beekeepers. These peasants greatly rejoiced at the coming of Cornelius and Gennady, built them a cell, and brought them bread, honey, and whatever else was necessary, since nearby was a beekeeping estate, an apiary.

Venerable Cornelius and Gennady labored in prayer and fasting, adding labors to labors: they felled the forest, plowed the land, and dug four ponds.

Once it pleased the Orthodox Grand Prince Basil Ivanovich to undertake the labor of a journey to the White Lake, to pray, in fulfillment of his vow, for the blessing of children. When the Grand Prince reached the hermitage of Venerable Cornelius and saw that he had withdrawn from there to another place, he was greatly grieved with the brethren and said to them:

"Because of your murmuring and disobedience, Father Cornelius does not dwell in his hermitage."

And at once he sent his servants to beg the venerable one to return to his first undertaking. Venerable Cornelius came before Grand Prince Basil,[23] fell at his feet, and asked forgiveness for his departure from the desert. The Right-believing Prince raised him up and said:

"My beloved Cornelius, pray for us to the merciful God, that the Lord God may grant us the fruit of children as an inheritance to our race, for the building up of the honorable monasteries, for the establishment of the Russian kingdom, and for the confirmation of the Christian faith."

Then the Grand Prince said to Venerable Cornelius:

23. Grand Prince Basil IV Ivanovich reigned from 1505 to 1533.

"Remain here, Father, in your first undertaking and labors; and, by our command, bless the disciple whom you wish with the hermitage you have left."

When the Grand Prince had withdrawn, Venerable Cornelius blessed his disciple Gennady with the new hermitage, and commanded him to erect there a church in the name of the glorious Transfiguration of the Lord.

Venerable Gennady, by the blessing of Father Cornelius and by the command of the Grand Prince, arranged everything in the hermitage: he built the church of God and adorned it with icons, books, and every churchly splendor.

When the brethren in the hermitage began to multiply, he built a second church, a warm one, in the name of the Venerable Sergius, Wonderworker of Radonezh, and adorned it as he had the first.

The venerable one himself, labouring constantly, set the brethren an example of humility and patience; he arranged convenient dwellings for the brethren; by day he cut wood, and by night carried it on his shoulders to the brethren's cells; he labored in the kitchen and bakery, washed the brethren's hair shirts, made candles, cooked kutya, baked prosphora—and above all he excelled in the church services, in fasting and prayer. Besides this, he wore on his body iron chains and crosses and heavy fetters. Such a great burden the venerable one bore for the subduing of the flesh.

As a result, the grace of the Holy Trinity rested upon him; having been granted it, the venerable one strove for greater and greater labors, setting an example to his disciples in all customs and manners, for he taught them not so much by word as by deed, showing what has been set forth above.

"Who is able to depict all the details of his life and of all his exploits and patience, or who can enumerate his sicknesses and labors and his care for the brethren!" So exclaims the compiler of his Life, his disciple Alexis, who further, in praise of Venerable Gennady, and still more to the glory of God, relates his miracles, performed by the grace of God during his life and after his death.

Here are some of these miracles. Once it happened that Venerable Gennady came to the royal city of Moscow with his disciples Serapion and Uar. He was received with honor by the boyaress Juliana Feodorovna, wife of Roman Yuryevich. Juliana asked Gennady to bless her sons Daniel and Nikita and her daughter Anastasia. When the saint blessed Anastasia, he said:

"You are a beautiful vine and a fruitful branch; you will be for us a pious sovereign tsarina."

Hearing these words, the boyaress Juliana, together with her children and all the people present, marveled at what incomprehensible speech Gennady uttered and whence it was revealed to him.

The boyaress Juliana generously provided for Gennady, and for more than one year.

Everything the elder prophesied came to pass: Anastasia Romanovna became tsarina, the first wife of Ivan Vasilyevich the Terrible.[24] She cherished a deep faith and reverence for the house of the All-merciful Savior and for Venerable Gennady, and sent him honorable icons and vestments and other objects necessary for the church services.

Once the boyar Boris Paletsky, stricken with illness, came to the monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord to pray. Venerable Gennady greatly rejoiced at the prince's arrival, gathered the brethren, met the visitor at the holy gates with a fitting prayer, and placed in his hands his staff. From that hour the prince became well and glorified God, and all rejoiced at the prince's recovery. Having given a generous alms to the venerable one and the brethren, the prince returned to his house with all his people. The staff, the elder's blessing, the prince entrusted to be carried by the priest Basil, who was with him. This priest, for some reason, grew angry with the prince, and, blaspheming the blessing of the saint, threw the staff into the river Kostroma. The prince was greatly grieved at losing the elder's blessing. When the said priest arrived at his house, he found his wife dead there, and after some time he himself fell into a grave illness. Then he began to repent of his sin, that he had mocked the prince and the venerable elder over the

24. The first Russian tsar; he governed the state from 1533 to 1584 (in 1547 he assumed the royal title).

staff, and vowed to be tonsured at the house of the Savior, with Elder Gennady.

After a little time this priest came to the monastery of the Savior, fell before the venerable one, and, having told what had happened, asked forgiveness for his audacity and entreated the saint to reckon him among his God-chosen flock. The venerable one, blessing him, said: "Brother, Christ said: 'him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out' (Jn. 6:37)."

Then he commanded that he be tonsured into the monastic order, and gave him the name Barlaam. Barlaam labored for a rather long time in the monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord, and afterwards, by the blessing of the holy elder Gennady, was abbot of the Theophany monastery in the city of Kostroma.

The aforementioned prince Boris Paletsky donated to the house of the Savior, to Gennady's monastery, a valuable bell.

It once befell the Bishop of Vologda and Great Perm, Cyprian, to fall into a grievous illness. Having zeal for the monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord, and cherishing spiritual love for the Venerable Elder Gennady, he sent one of his servants to fetch Elder Gennady, asking him to visit him on account of his sickness. The Venerable came to the city of Vologda with his disciples, the hieromonks Misael and Alexis, and asked the blessing of Bishop Cyprian. The bishop rejoiced at the coming of the holy elder; although until that time he had been wholly unable to rise from his bed, he rose to meet the saint, blessed him and his disciples with the sign of the Cross, and, taking the Venerable by the hand, led him into the inner cell. For a long time the hierarch conversed with the Venerable Elder. The people, seeing the bishop's relief from his illness through the visit of the Venerable, were greatly astonished and glorified God, who works through His saints marvelous wonders. After the conversation, both partook of the blessed bread. On the following day, the bishop, before all the people, besought the Venerable:

"Desert teacher, Venerable Father Gennady, pray to the merciful God for us, that He may ease my bodily sickness and heal the infirmity of my leg."

The Venerable said to the hierarch:

"God, the Lover of mankind, helps in sorrow, heals the infirmities of the soul and the diseases of the body, and eases the weakness of suffering people; and this is not our great work. My lord, hierarch, all things are possible with God, but with men nothing. You, my lord, are now already healed of the general bodily affliction; but let your leg remind you of your last hour, and let it not be healed until your last breath. Peace be with you, my lord, holy father!"

After this the bishop lived five more years and departed to the Lord.

The author of the Life of the Venerable Gennady, his disciple and successor as abbot, Alexis, relates the following about himself. Having been offended by the brethren of Gennady's monastery of the All-Merciful Savior, Alexis withdrew from there to the city of Kostroma and settled in the monastery of the Epiphany of the Lord. But soon he fell seriously ill and could not stand in church. For this reason he moved from Kostroma to the Hermitage of Adrian near Poshekhonye. But the illness did not cease. By divine revelation he returned to Gennady's monastery of the All-Merciful Savior, and, coming with supplication to the tomb of Gennady, asked forgiveness for his faint-heartedness and received healing.

Of the numerous posthumous miracles of the Venerable Gennady, let us mention the following.

A certain boyar's son, Ivan Likharev, had donated one of his villages to the monastery of the Savior of Gennady, but afterwards changed his mind and transferred this village to the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius. Soon after this his son Alexis died suddenly, and his wife fell into a grievous illness. Neighbors and acquaintances began to say that her husband had acted badly in leaving the monastery of the Savior and giving the village to another monastery, and they advised her to write a letter to her husband, who was in Pereyaslavl-Zalessky. The wife wrote, and at once felt relief. Meanwhile, in Pereyaslavl, Ivan also fell ill: a certain fear seized him and his face became distorted. Those around him also reproached him for having left the monastery of the Savior. Then Ivan heeded his wife's letter and the advice of those close to him, returned the village to the monastery of the Venerable

Gennady, and promised never to depart from it. Soon he received healing from his illness. Those who prayed at the tomb of Gennady with faith and zeal received healing from various ailments: from toothache, from diseases of the eyes, from paralysis, and especially from derangement of mind and demonic possession.

There was also this miracle. A certain hierodeacon of Gennady's monastery stole church books and tablecloths, and, having gone only a few versts toward the river Andoma, felt weakness and could move neither his hands nor his feet. The abbot was informed, and he sent for the deacon, who was brought to the monastery together with the books. The deacon confessed his sin, fell down before the tomb of the Venerable Gennady, asking forgiveness and the healing of his hands and feet. And, through the prayers of the Venerable Gennady, God had mercy on him and restored his health.

A townsman of the city of Kostroma, Luka Gustyshov, had no faith in the miracles of the Venerable Gennady and resolved not to visit the monastery of the Savior nor the tomb of the Venerable.

Having been chosen as a *tselovalnik* in the customs house (that is, a sworn collector of customs duties), he set out with his comrades to collect the sovereign's money. But suddenly he was struck by a grievous illness: his cheeks swelled, his head ached unbearably, and he fell into a frenzy. His relatives brought him home, where he lay at the point of death. Coming to his senses, he remembered his sin, vowed to go to the monastery of the Savior and to the tomb of the Venerable Gennady. Having served a moleben there, he received healing through the prayers of the Venerable Gennady.

A noblewoman of the Galich district, of the Korezhskaya volost, of the family of the Laptevs, had four sons, one of whom, named Cyril, wished to be tonsured in Gennady's monastery and wished to give his share of his father's estate as a donation to the monastery. His mother, learning of this, began to curse her son and would not allow him to give his share to the monastery. Suddenly she was seized by a grievous and unbearable headache. Tormented by this affliction, she remembered her sin, made a vow to go to the monastery of the Savior to pray at the tomb of the Venerable Gennady and to bring her son's share. At that

same moment she felt relief from her illness, and soon she fulfilled her vow. Her son was tonsured under the name Cornelius, and she glorified God for the healing granted to her.

Before his repose, the Venerable Gennady left an instruction in which he set forth his thoughts and counsels concerning the monastic life, both for his disciples and for all Orthodox Christians. Here is this simple and edifying instruction.

«To the brother in Christ and ever-present shepherd of the rational sheep, Hegumen Vassian, of the Great Lavra of the Life-Originating Trinity and the Ipatiev monastery of the Most Pure Theotokos, and to the builder Joseph, shepherd of the flock of our Saviour's monastery, and to all our brotherhood. I say to you, my spiritual brothers and fellow-ascetics: for me the day is already at evening and the axe is laid at the root, for I am already departing to the judgment-seat of Christ. For the sake of the holy commandment of the Lord, do not forget me when you pray; but, seeing my grave, remember my love and pray to Christ that He may settle my spirit with the righteous. As for you, my children, fear God and obey your teachers in all things, according to the Apostle. Honour the Orthodox Tsar and bless the hierarchs, to whom all hegumens are obedient in conscience. And you, my children who live in the Saviour's monastery, obey the hegumen to whom our flock shall be entrusted, and submit to him in all things with obedience. Above all, I beg you and charge you not to leave this place without the blessing of your superior. Do not start quarrels brother with brother; strive toward the light and leave darkness behind. Let your life be according to the tradition of the holy fathers, and in accord with what the Venerable Cornelius[25] wrote to us, and with the monastic life established in our monastery. And you, pious Hegumen Vassian, I beg you: do not abandon this monastery in your faithfulness. And you, brethren and my children, do not overturn our common tradition, and do not turn aside from the church assembly, for the first abomination for monks is not to go to church; and when you come to church, stand without mockery, and

25. The Venerable Cornelius of Komel wrote a coenobitic rule for his monastery, from which the Venerable Gennadius came. This rule was printed in the *History of the Russian Hierarchy* and separately in 1812.

above all do not judge one another; and do not grow slack in private prayer, lest your flesh together with your soul grow weak, and lest your labour perish, for by stirring up sloth the cunning Satan wishes to lead the monk alive into hell. I beg you, my brethren and fellow-ascetics, be unslothful in all the monastery's services; do not grieve or lose heart in your labours, for your labours are so that you may have the means to eat and drink. In no case murmur against the shepherd, for the murmuring monk prepares his own perdition. Likewise, listen attentively to the teaching word and do good and virtuous deeds; rouse the lazy to service and to prayer; do not be absent from the holy things of God: if a monk does not partake of the Holy Mysteries for six weeks, he is not a monk. I beg you further, my brethren, do not steal the monastery's tools, nor bread, nor vegetables, and do not carry them outside the monastery for your whims. Have all the same clothing; do not keep any food in the cells; do not carry bread out of the refectory, except in extreme need and sickness. Let your nourishment take place in the refectory and be equal for all; let food and drink be at the proper time; and at table do not overeat or drink to excess, for this is abominable before God, and for the flesh it is a burden and a sickness. It is also unseemly for you to be at enmity among yourselves, for those who sow enmity and revilers shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; and so too those crafty hypocrites who send their brethren here and there, while they themselves do not lift a finger to the work. Woe! The abyss of bitter hell is filled with negligent monks, while the righteous, having endured a little and kept God's commandments, will rejoice for ever. Christ settles in His house those of one mind. So also you, my children, strive to pass through the narrow gate and the sorrowful way, that you may obtain eternal life. To the servants and the other workers I charge: do not be angry or be at enmity with one another; obey the superior in all things and be obedient; do not offend the brethren by word or deed, do not commit unseemly rudenesses, but strive to be pleasing to all men. Monastery tools and household goods must be kept, so that none of them perish. Do not touch another's property and by no means steal anything, for gathering one's own possessions does great harm to a monk and delivers the soul to unquenchable fire and eternal torments.

And you, my children, beware of such evil and madness, and remind other people of these our words. Monastery affairs must be carried out without murmuring, without sloth and without rebellion, that you not be hypocrites and men-pleasers, doing only before the eyes; but strive to be God-pleasing, working in faith and truth when no one sees. Do not wrong the peasants by violence; among guests do not exalt yourselves, but take the lowest places; and above all, be at enmity with no one, and do not speak false words about the brethren to the hegumen. Be, my brethren, quick to good, and learn the word of God in the holy Gospel and in the Apostolic writings. Keep in the Saviour's house the books we have acquired; you should, my children, study them and apply your mind to understanding them: here are the labours of the holy fathers. If anyone keeps God's commandments and the faith of Christ, he shall rejoice for ever.»

The Venerable Gennadius reposed on 23 January 1565; his quiet and peaceful death followed a brief illness.

The disciple of the Venerable Gennadius and his successor, Hegumen Alexis, in a eulogy to the saint enumerates his virtues and notes that for them he was honoured even in the tsar's family: he was sponsor of the daughter of Tsar John Vasilievich the Terrible by his first wife Anastasia Romanovna, to whom he had earlier foretold marriage to the tsar and childbearing. On the word of Elder Antonius, a tonsured monk of the Joseph-Volokolamsk Monastery, Alexis relates yet another circumstance about the Venerable Gennadius. Once, when Gennadius was in Moscow at the services in a church where the tsar's servants and boyars' wives were standing, a poor and destitute woman entered with children, some of whom were crying in her arms, others beside her. Looking at her, the noble boyar wives, sighing to the Lord and the Most Holy Theotokos, thought to themselves: "The Lord has given children to such beggars, who have nothing to feed them, while to us, who have the means from the tsar's bounty to raise children, the Lord has not given childbearing, surely for our sins." The Venerable Gennadius perceived their thoughts and said to them:

"Do not grieve, ladies: if you live piously in your station, then, by God's command, from this time you will bear children."

By the prophecy of the Venerable it came to pass not with one but with many noble wives. And in other cities the Venerable Gennadius also foretold childbearing to many pious women.

The uncovering of the relics of the Venerable Gennadius was accomplished in 1644, in the days of the pious Tsar Michael Feodorovich and under Patriarch Joseph, when the old wooden church of the Transfiguration of the Lord was dismantled and they began to build a stone church; while digging the trenches they found a coffin with the incorrupt body and vestments of the Venerable.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Mavsima the Syrian

Память преподобного Мавсимы Сирина

The Venerable Mavsima was a Syrian, from the vicinity of the city of Kyrrhos[26]; having received a simple upbringing in the countryside, the saint showed progress in all the virtues. Having become renowned in his private life, he received spiritual leadership in a village near the city. Performing the sacred services and tending the sheep of God's flock, he both said and did what the divine Law commands. He had only one garment; when it tore from age, the Venerable sewed on new and new patches and thus covered his nakedness. St. Mavsima so zealously cared for the shelter of wanderers and the poor that the door of his dwelling was always open to all who came. The Venerable, it is said, had two vessels: one with grain seed and the other with oil, from which the saint gave to all in need. The merciful Lord, who blessed the widow of Sarepta, sent the same blessing upon the vessels of the Venerable Mavsima: "Good and merciful and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Him" (Ps. 85:5); by commanding that the meal in the barrel not be exhausted and the oil in the jug not fail, from which the widow nourished the great prophet[27], the Lord also gave to the wondrous Mavsima abundance equal to his care for the

26. Syria is a country to the north of Palestine; in its northern part, bordering on Asia Minor, lay the province of Kyrrhestica, with its chief city Cyrrhus.

poor. Having lived piously and God-pleasingly to deep old age, the saint peacefully departed to the Lord[28].

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Salaman the Silent

Память преподобного Саламана Молчальника

This our Venerable Father Salaman was a native of the village of Kapersan, situated on the western bank of the Euphrates.[29] Loving solitude, he found on the opposite bank of the river a small hut and shut himself up within it, barring the door and the window fast; once a year he came out through a passage dug beneath the wall and provided himself with food. The local bishop, learning of the virtuous life of the Venerable, desired to honor him with the priesthood. Arriving at the dwelling of the saint for this purpose, the archpastor ordered part of its wall to be taken down, after which he entered the cell. Having ordained the Venerable Salaman to the presbyterate, the bishop instructed him concerning the grace of the priesthood; throughout the whole of his stay in the cell the hierarch did not hear a single word from the Venerable, who kept silence, and he withdrew, ordering the dismantled part of the wall to be closed up again. The inhabitants of the village from which the Venerable Salaman came, wishing to have a man of God in their midst, one night crossed the river by a ford, took the saint, who neither disputed nor resisted but also gave no sign of consent, and brought him to their side. There the villagers built for the

27. Coming, by the command of God, to the gates of Sidonian Sarepta, the holy Prophet Elijah asked a widow who was gathering sticks to bring him a piece of bread. She answered that she had left only a handful of flour in the jar and a little oil in the cruse. "I am going," she said, "to prepare this for myself and my son; we shall eat it and die." At that time, because of the lack of rain, there was famine in the land of Israel. The holy Prophet said to the widow: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: the flour in the jar shall not be spent, and the oil in the cruse shall not fail, until the day when the Lord gives rain upon the earth." The woman fed the man of God, and her stores of flour and oil did not run out during the whole time of the famine (3 Kgdms. 17:8–16).

28. At the end of the fourth century.

29. The Euphrates flows from the mountains of Armenia; in its lower course it joins the Tigris, after which, under the name Shatt al-Arab, it empties into the Persian Gulf. Caper(s)ana (Persa or Persana) lay not far from Samosata (now Samsat), the chief city of the Syrian province of Commagene.

Venerable a hut like the former one and shut him up in it; St. Salaman continued to keep silence, and no one heard from him a single word. Soon the inhabitants of the village on the other bank, where the Venerable had formerly dwelt, came by night to his new dwelling and heard him offering this prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me and upon all who serve Thy name and worship Thee, the True God of ours."

The villagers took apart the cell and brought the saint to their own place; the blessed silent one, on this occasion as well, in no way opposed it or demanded that he be left alone. Having thus made himself dead to this life, he could in the most exact sense repeat the apostolic word: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). In a degree so high as no other had attained, having mortified in himself the carnal man, the blessed Salaman brought his ascetic labor to its end and, rejoicing, passed over into the heavenly mansions.[30]

* * *

Commemoration of the Sixth Ecumenical Council

Воспоминание VI Вселенского собора

The Sixth Ecumenical Council took place in 680, under the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus,[31] in Constantinople, against the Monothelites, who, in order to reconcile the Monophysite teaching with the Orthodox, acknowledged in Jesus Christ two natures, as the Orthodox did, but, like the Monophysites, admitted in Him only one will, the Divine.[32] The spread of this teaching caused great disturbances in the Church and called forth from zealous Orthodox defenders

30. About the year 400.

31. The Byzantine Emperor Constantine IV Pogonatus reigned from 688 to 695.

32. In Alexandria, where Monophysitism was especially strong, the representative of this non-Orthodox teaching was Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria (who held the patriarchate from 630 to 640). The Patriarch of Constantinople Sergius (610–638) and Pope Honorius of Rome (625–638) likewise found nothing non-Orthodox in the teaching of the Monothelites and became its followers, although, to prevent new disturbances in the Church, they resolved to refrain from any decisive pronouncement on this subject, which the Church had not yet defined.

of the faith, who openly came out against Monothelitism, seeing in it nothing but a veiled Monophysitism.[33] Imperial edicts which openly acknowledged one will in Christ, yet at the same time, to put an end to the disturbances, prescribed avoiding expressions both of "one" and of "two wills" in Christ,[34] and even most strictly commanded that all disputation on the contested question be altogether ceased, under the threat of civil prosecution of the disobedient,[35] only gave occasion for still greater irritation and brought forth, on the part of the valiant defenders of Orthodoxy, even martyrs.[36] At the same time the Eastern and Western fathers and representatives of the churches were divided, for among the former there were many Monothelites, while the Western Church openly declared itself against the heresy and came forward in defense of the Orthodox teaching. This at last moved the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus to convoke an Ecumenical Council, which was opened in 680 after preliminary communication with Rome. There were present at the council 170 fathers, among whom two Eastern patriarchs were personally present: George of Constantinople[37] and Macarius of Antioch,[38] both Monothelites; Pope Agatho of Rome, however, sent legates in his place. The Emperor himself attended the sessions of the council, which lasted about a year. The fanaticism of the Monothelites reached such a pitch of frenzy that one of the Thracian monks, named Polychronius, offered before the council, to prove the orthodoxy of the Monothelites, to raise a dead man; but when he was allowed to make the trial before all the people, he was severely put to shame. After many heated debates the council determined to confess two wills in Jesus Christ, the Divine and the human, corresponding to the two

33. At their head stood St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (634–644), and the Venerable Maximus the Confessor, concerning whom see more fully in the Life of the latter on January 20.
34. Such was the *ekthesis*, that is, the exposition of faith, of the Emperor Heraclius, in which at the same time it was affirmed as an unconditional truth that in Christ there is one will.
35. Meaning the so-called *Typos* of the faith, issued by the successor of Heraclius, the Emperor Constans.
36. Among them particularly notable were the Venerable Maximus the Confessor and Pope Martin I of Rome (who occupied the see from 649 to 653). See more about this in the Life of the Venerable Maximus on January 20.
37. George I, Patriarch of Constantinople, held the see from 678 to 683.
38. Macarius of Antioch held the patriarchate from 653 to 680.

natures. George, Patriarch of Constantinople, acknowledged his error and was received into communion with the Church. But the Antiochene Patriarch Macarius remained obstinately in the Monothelite heresy, on account of which he was anathematized together with the preceding Monothelites. The council, which began on November 7, 680, ended on September 16, 681.

* * *

NOTES

929. St. Paulinus died on June 22, 431. His relics are in the church of the Apostle Bartholomew in Rome. He remained known as a writer and teacher of the Church, chiefly as a Christian poet. There remain from him 35 hymns and some 50 letters, especially important for their profound piety. In them are vividly depicted the height of Christian perfection, and it is told how one must guard one's heart; the excellences of evangelical humility and of love for God and neighbor are described; the duties of spouses and the sweet consolations for the unfortunate are set forth. Three hymns are beautiful prayers to God; three others are paraphrases of three psalms: Ps. 1, Ps. 2 and Ps. 136. Besides this, in the letters and hymns of St. Paulinus there is discussion of Providence, of original sin, of the Holy Eucharist, of the intercession of the saints for the world, of prayer for the dead, and of the veneration of icons. St. Paulinus was also known for his love of adorning the churches he built with holy icons; tradition likewise ascribes to him the invention of church bells, dated approximately to 400.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 24

24 января

New Calendar January 24 · Old Calendar February 6 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Mother Xenia, in the World Eusebia

Житие преподобной матери нашей Ксении, в мире Евсевии

There lived in Rome a certain noble and honorable man, of the rank of the senior senators, a Christian in faith and deeply pious, who had one child, dear to him as the apple of his eye: a daughter named Eusebia. When she reached marriageable age, a nobleman, likewise of the senatorial rank, asked her parents to give their daughter in marriage to his son. Eusebia's parents, after consulting between themselves, betrothed her to a noble youth equal to them in honor and wealth, and the day was already set on which the lawful marriage was to take place. But the maiden, filled with love for God, desired to remain the eternal bride of the incorruptible Bridegroom, the Most Fair in His perfections above all the sons of men, Christ the Lord Himself, and to preserve her virginity forever. Yet she concealed her desire from her parents, for she knew that if they had guessed her intention, they would not have wished to hear of it. They would have hindered her in every way, and by flattery and caresses, or by commands, would have compelled her to marriage, all the more since she was the sole heiress of all their riches; they would have wished to be consoled by her wedded life and her children.

The blessed Eusebia had two maidservants faithful to her, who had grown up with her from childhood and served her with all zeal and devotion. Withdrawing with them, she said:

"I wish to reveal to you one secret, but first I adjure you by the Lord God that you tell no one what you hear from me. I desire to tell you the

hidden thought and the longing of my heart. See to it that no mortal learns my secret; it would be better still if you yourselves agree with me. Then you too will save your souls, and help my unworthiness."

The maidservants answered her:

"Whatever you command us, our mistress, we will fulfill, all the more since our souls will profit from your purpose. We are ready to die for you sooner than to say to anyone what you have to reveal to us."

Then the maiden said to them:

"You know that my parents wish to give me in marriage; but it has never once entered my mind even to think of marriage. This matter which my parents counsel me to accomplish is far too hard for me. What is such a life to me? Only a phantom, a mist and a dream. Listen to me, then: let us resolve together upon a pure manner of life, and if the will of the Lord blesses my intention, and you follow my counsel and keep in secret what I have told you, then we shall consider together all that we must do. Believe me, that even if my parents should learn of this and wish to force me into marriage, with God's help they will never be able to change my purpose, even if they were to deliver me to fire, to the sword, or to wild beasts."

Having heard this, both maidservants said:

"May the will of the Lord be done! We agree with your intention and strive for the same thing you do, our mistress. We would rather die with you than reign without you."

Hearing such words from her maidservants, the blessed Eusebia glorified God. After this all three maidens, who had the same love for Christ, pondered continually what they should do so that their desire might be fulfilled. And they prayed to God to grant them a good counsel.

From the day when they gave themselves lovingly to the Lord, resolving upon a celibate life, Eusebia secretly from her parents distributed to the needy, by the hands of her young maidservants, all that she possessed: gold, silver and all precious things. The maidservants also gave away whatever property they had, preparing for poverty for the love of Christ. When the day of the marriage was already drawing near and everyone was making ready for it, the blessed Eusebia, having

taken counsel with her maidservants, changed her clothes together with them into men's garments, and taking a little of what was necessary from her possessions, went out secretly from the house with them, since the doors were found unlocked. Making the sign of the Cross, they turned to Christ God in prayer:

"Abide with us, Son of God, and show us the way we must go, for for the love of Thee we leave the house and all that is in it, and resolve rather to wander and to live in sorrows, striving toward Thee and desiring to find Thee."

So they prayed with tears as they went out of the house, and then they went on, weeping and rejoicing at the same time.

During the journey the holy Eusebia addressed her maidservants:

"From this time on be my sisters and my mistresses; I would rather serve you all the days of my life. Only, my mistresses, let us leave everything for God's sake and seek nothing else on earth but the salvation of our souls. Let us avoid all vain worldly cares, harmful to the soul; let us believe the Lord, who commanded: 'Everyone who has left houses, or father, or mother, or lands for My name's sake shall receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life' (Mt. 19:29). Yes, my sisters, let us care for the salvation of our souls."

While the saint was thus conversing with them, they came to the sea, and finding a ship ready to sail for the regions of Alexandria, they paid the fare and took their places on board. Since a favorable wind was blowing, after a few days they reached Alexandria. Leaving the ship, they arrived at an island called Kos, lying fifteen thousand paces from the Carian city of Halicarnassus.[1] They moved from place to place, wishing to find a locality unknown to anyone, so as not to be found by their parents. Remaining on this island without fear of pursuit, they changed their male dress again to female, and taking on lease a small solitary house, they lived in it, thanking God, to Whom they prayed unceasingly that He would send them a man in holy orders who could clothe them in the monastic rank and care for their souls. The holy Eusebia exhorted her companions, saying:

1. Caria is the southwestern part of the Asia Minor peninsula. Halicarnassus was one of the most important cities of Caria.

"I beg you, my sisters, for the Lord's sake: let us keep our secret and tell no one of our homeland and of the purpose for which we left our house, and likewise of my name, so that by my name, by which I am called, and by the homeland from which we departed, my parents may not find me. I adjure you by God to keep all this secret until the end of my life and to say nothing to anyone of what has happened to us or may yet happen. And if anyone asks you about my name, say that I am called Xenia, which means 'stranger'[2]; for, as you see, I am a wanderer, having left home and parents for God's sake. From now on call me not Eusebia but Xenia, since I have no permanent dwelling here, but, wandering with you in this life, I seek the future."

In answer to this speech of the holy Eusebia to her companions, they promised to keep secret all she had said, and from that time the holy bride of Christ came to be called Xenia instead of Eusebia.

Once, kneeling with her companions, she began to weep and to say:

"O God, show upon us, strangers and poor, Thy great mercy, as Thou hast shown it upon all Thy saints. Send us, O Master, a man well-pleasing to Thee, through whom we, the humble, may also be saved."

Having prayed thus, the holy Xenia went out with her sisters from the house in which they lived, and behold, they saw a venerable gray-haired elder coming from the landing, clothed in monastic fashion, whose face was like the face of an Angel. Coming up to him, the holy maiden fell at his feet and, weeping, began to speak:

"Man of God, do not despise a woman wandering in a foreign land; do not reject a poor beggar; do not disdain the prayer of a sinner, but be like the holy Apostle Paul and be our guide and teacher, as he was for the holy Thecla. Remember the recompense prepared by God for the righteous, and save me together with these two sisters."

Hearing this, the servant of God felt pity, and looking upon their tears, asked:

"What do you want, and what must I do for you?"

She answered:

2. From the Greek word meaning "foreign," "of a stranger."

"Be our father in God and our teacher. Lead us to where we might be saved; we are strangers and do not know where to go; we are ashamed to show ourselves to people."

He then asked:

"Where are you from, and what is the cause that you are so alone?"

The saint answered:

"We are from a very distant land, servant of Christ. We agreed together to leave our homeland and came to this region. We prayed to God day and night that He would send us a man who would help us to be saved. And now God has pointed you out to us, a spiritual father able to bear our infirmities."

The holy elder said to this:

"Believe me, sisters, I too am a wanderer here, as you see. I am coming from the holy places; having venerated them, I am returning to my fatherland."

The handmaid of Christ asked:

"From what country are you, spiritual father, my lord?"

He answered:

"I am from the land of Caria, from the city of Milas."

Then the handmaid of Christ again addressed him:

"I beseech your holiness: tell us what your rank is, for I think you are a bishop."

The elder said to her in reply:

"Forgive me, sister! I am a sinful man and unworthy of the monastic rank. By the mercy of God, I am a presbyter and abbot of a small brotherhood, in the monastery of the holy and glorious Apostle Andrew; my name is Paul."

Hearing this, the handmaid of Christ glorified God, saying:

"Glory to Thee, O God, that Thou hast heard me, the poor one, and hast sent me, as once to the holy Thecla, the holy Paul with these two sisters."

Then she turned to the elder:

"I beseech you, servant of God, reject us not, strangers, but be our father in God."

The blessed Paul answered them:

I have told you that I too am a wanderer, and I do not know what good I could do for you here. But if you wish to go to my city, I hope that the Lord will show His mercy upon you, and I, to the best of my strength, will look after you.

The virgins, weeping and bowing down before the elder, said:

"Yes, servant of God! Take us with you. We will go wherever you bid us, but only show mercy to us wanderers and be our guide to eternal life."

The man of God took the holy virgins with him and went with them to the city of Milas. There he found them lodgings in a secluded place near a church. The holy maiden bought them with money taken from home, and then built a small church in the name of the holy First-Martyr Stephen, and before long established a women's monastery, gathering several maidens and dedicating them to Christ. The abbot, St. Paul, looked after them. He also tonsured St. Xenia with her two servants into the monastic rank. No one ever learned, until her repose, from where this holy maiden had come, for what reason she had left her homeland, or what her true name was, since she called herself Xenia, that is, *stranger*. The Venerable Paul, when those who asked about these maidens inquired, would say:

"I took them from the island of Koa and brought them here."

And so everyone thought they had come from there. Therefore that monastery was also called after the island of Koa.

After a short time, Cyril, the bishop of that city, fell asleep in the Lord, and in his place was chosen the Venerable Paul, abbot of the monastery of St. Andrew. Upon receiving the episcopal dignity, he came to the women's monastery and, against her will, ordained Xenia a deaconess, as one fully worthy of that rank. For she, while still living in the flesh, led an angelic life. Although, as the daughter of a senator, she had been brought up in luxury and amid every comfort, she nevertheless set her heart upon so difficult and ascetic a life, and she visibly displayed entirely new, unusual and arduous paths toward perfection in ascetic labor. Even the demons feared her abstinence; overcome by her fasting and her exploits, they fled, not daring to approach her. She took food either every second or every third day, and many times she re-

mained without food for a whole week. When the time came for her to take food, she did not eat greens, beans, wine, oil, garden vegetables, or anything else of nourishing fare, but only a little bread moistened with her own tears. She took ash from the censer and sprinkled it on the bread. She did this throughout all the years of her life, fulfilling the prophetic word: "I eat ashes as bread, and mingle my drink with weeping" (Ps. 101:10). Yet she took every care to conceal such abstinence from the other sisters, and only her two servants, who lived with her, secretly observed what she did, and themselves imitated her virtuous life. Moreover, she always maintained such great vigilance that from evening until Matins she would stand the whole night in prayer, her hands stretched upward. In this way the sisters secretly watched her all the days of her life. Sometimes, kneeling from evening, she would pray until morning, shedding abundant tears. Thus she always served the Lord, and did so with such humility as though she considered herself worse than all men.

But who can enumerate all her other virtues? What word would suffice to depict all her exploits! What shall be said, first of all, of her meekness? No one ever saw her angry; no vanity or haughtiness ever clouded her life. Her face was always humble, her mind free of all pride, her countenance without adornment, her body wasted by ascetic labors, her heart calm, untroubled by any doubts. What virtue did she not possess! There were in her: constant watchfulness, extraordinary abstinence, unspeakable humility, boundless love. She helped the poor, showed compassion to the suffering, was merciful to sinners, and those who had fallen into temptation she guided onto the path of repentance. Of her garments there is nothing to say: she wore very worn-out clothing, a dress and a shirt, and even those she considered herself unworthy of. Her whole life passed in heartfelt tenderness and constant shedding of tears. One would sooner see abundant springs of water dried up in the summer heat than her eyes ceasing to weep. Always gazing upon her beloved Bridegroom, Christ, her eyes poured forth streams of tears. She desired to see Him face to face, and to say with David: "When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" before

the face of my sweetest Bridegroom? "My tears have been my bread day and night" (Ps. 41:3–4).

When the time drew near for this ever-memorable maiden, the undefiled bride of Christ, to depart from this earthly life, there came the feast in memory of St. Ephraim, who had once been bishop in that city. The blessed bishop Paul set out with all his clergy to a village called Levkin. There stood the church of the holy bishop Ephraim, and in it his honorable relics rested. On that day the Venerable Xenia summoned all her sisters into the monastery church and began to speak to them:

"My ladies and sisters! I know what love you have shown toward me — how you bore with my infirmities and helped me, a wanderer. Now I beseech you: extend to the end your love for me, your servant; remember me, the poor, sinful and wandering one, in your prayers, appeasing God on my behalf, so that my sins may not hinder me, but that by your prayers I may pass unhindered to my Christ. My death is already drawing near; my soul suffers greatly and grieves, since I am leaving my body without proper preparation. Now our father and lord, Bishop Paul, is not here. Therefore, you say to him in my place when he comes: thus said the poor Xenia: 'For God's sake, honorable father, remember me the wanderer: you set me on the path and led me into this life — pray then for me, that the Lord may not put me to shame in my hope.'"

Hearing this, all the sisters began to weep and to say:

"Our lady and guide of our souls! You leave us orphaned and to sorrows. Who will guide us onto the true path of life? Who will instruct us? Who will pray for us in our despondency? No, our lady. Do not abandon us at this time. Remember how you yourself gathered us within this enclosure. Take care, lady, for our souls, and beseech God that He may prolong for you some further time for our sake, the poor, so that you may guide us on the path of salvation."

Her two servants also began to bow down at her feet and weep bitterly, saying:

"You are already leaving us, our lady, and going from here without us. What shall we do without you, poor things? What shall we do, wanderers, in a foreign land? Woe to us, poor, wretched and wandering

ones. We have not cared for ourselves, and therefore you wish to leave only us, our lady. Remember our sorrows, which we grieved together with you. Remember our common wandering, in which we were your companions. Remember how always we diligently served you. Remember us and pray to God for us; take us with you as well, so that we may not be separated from you, our lady."

When then loud weeping arose and confusion ensued, Xenia herself began to speak, with tears:

"You know, my sisters, how long before this the holy Apostle Peter proclaimed: 'The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night' (2 Pet. 3:9–10). Knowing this, my sisters, let us not be slothful during this short time, but let us be watchful. Let us light our lamps, fill our vessels with oil, and prepare ourselves to meet the Bridegroom, for we do not know at what hour the Lord will call us: for behold, the harvest is at hand and the laborers are ready, but are only waiting for the command of the Master."

When the saint had said this, and all were weeping and had fallen at her feet, she raised her hands to heaven and, shedding abundant tears, began to pray thus:

"O God, who hast cared for my earthly wandering until this day! Hear me, Thy poor and sinful servant: be merciful to these Thy handmaids, my sisters. Preserve them and save them from all the snares of the devil, for the glory and majesty of Thy holy Name. I pray to Thee, my God: remember also these two sisters of mine, who wandered with me for the sake of Thy love. As in this temporal life they were not separated from me, so do not separate us in Thy Kingdom, but grant all of us together to be worthy of Thy chamber."

Having prayed thus, she asked all the sisters to go out for a time and leave her alone for prayerful reflection. When all had gone out of the church, she shut herself in there alone, while her two servants, remaining before the door, watched inside through a crevice. They saw her praying, her knees bent to the ground, and then in the midst of her prayer she prostrated herself face down upon the earth in the form of a

cross. When she had lain thus for quite a long time, suddenly a light shone in the church, like lightning in appearance; at the same time a strong fragrance began to issue from the church. The sisters hastily entered and wished to raise her from the ground, but found her already fallen asleep in the Lord. This was on the 24th of January[3], on a Saturday, at the sixth hour of the day. These two sisters, weeping, went out of the church and summoned the others, saying:

Mothers and sisters! Let us go and weep together over our common orphanhood. Let us go and mourn the passing of her who was our pillar. We have lost our honored mother. Our instructress has departed from us, and we are left alone. Saint Xenia, our mother, has fallen asleep.

Entering the church, all saw her having passed from this life into the other world. Then began lamentation and great weeping. But God, the Lover of mankind, desiring to show all what treasure had been hidden from everyone on earth, revealed in heaven a great and most holy sign. At the very hour when the Venerable Xenia gave up her holy soul into the hands of the Lord, after noon, in perfectly clear and bright weather, there appeared in the heavens, above the convent of virgins, a very bright crown of stars, having in its midst a cross, which shone more brightly than the sun. This sign was visible to all. The citizens of Milas, who were together with their bishop, the Venerable Paul, in the village of Levkiia, seeing the sign in the heavens, marveled and asked one another in perplexity what this could mean. The Blessed Bishop Paul, perceiving in spirit the meaning of the sign, said to the whole assembly of the people:

"Our lady Xenia has died, and on this occasion the sign of the crown has appeared."

Immediately after the end of the Divine Liturgy he returned to the city with all the people who had been at the feast, and there the citizens found, as the bishop had said, that Saint Xenia had fallen asleep.

3. The repose of St. Xenia took place in the second half of the fifth century.

At once a great multitude of people gathered at the convent of virgins, many men and women with children, drawn by the sign visible in heaven. They cried out loudly:

"Glory to Thee, O Christ God, that Thou hast many saints who secretly please Thee! Glory to Thee, incarnate Son of God, who of Thy will wast crucified for us sinners, in that Thou hast shown to all Thy great treasure, which until now lay hidden here! Glory to Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast vouchsafed the poor city of Milas to be the dwelling place and the keeper of this Thy treasure. Thou didst keep within it until now a precious pearl, a costly bead, Thy holy bride! Having received her into Thy heavenly chamber, Thou hast left her pure and holy body for the keeping of Thy city."

Thus all, weeping, cried out and gazed upon the crown and the cross visible in heaven. Then also the whole Christ-loving people, and especially the women, stirred by zeal, cried out in a loud voice to the holy bishop Paul:

"Do not hide the glory of our city, Venerable bishop! Do not keep silent about our glory, do not conceal the pearl which God has revealed to us. Show to all the bright candle which until now has stood under a bushel and shone in secret. Show it to all, that even our adversaries may see and know what Lord we serve. Let the pagans see and be ashamed; let the Jews also see the mystery of the cross, and let them know that He whom they crucified is God. Let all who fight against the Cross of Christ see this and weep. Let them see how even after death the Lord of the Angels glorifies His servants. Let them see with what glory from Christ God His bride Xenia is crowned, whom people considered a wholly unknown wanderer and captive. Let all see what gift and grace our poor city has been made worthy to receive!"

As the people with zeal thus cried out to the bishop, he with the presbyters approached the honorable body of Saint Xenia. Having laid it as is fitting upon a funeral bier, and having lit many candles and burned incense, the bishop bowed his neck and, together with the presbyters, lifted the bier upon his shoulders; after this they carried it with singing to the middle of the city. All marveled at the glorious miracle that was taking place, for as the bier with the holy body was borne

along, the crown with the cross appeared over the bier as well and moved on. When the bier was set down in the middle of the city, the crown also stopped above the bier. Then there gathered from the surrounding villages also an innumerable multitude of people, who had seen the wondrous sign in heaven. The whole city was filled by the crowding of many people, and there was great crush in it. The Blessed Bishop Paul, together with the people, remained by the saint all that Sunday night, keeping vigil and performing hymns until morning. There were also many healings from her relics: everyone who suffered from any infirmity, as soon as he touched the bier of the saint, at once received healing.

When the Lord's day came, the honorable body of the Venerable Xenia was covered with clean coverings and, with the singing of funeral hymns, carried to a place situated at the entrance to the city on the south side, called the sycaminum (the place of the fig tree): there, before her death, the saint had bidden that her body be buried. All the people again saw that while her body was being carried on the bier, the crown with the cross of stars, visible in heaven, went along behind the bier. And again, when the bier was set down, the crown also stopped above. When the burial was being performed, the people standing nearest divided the coverings that had been on the honorable relics into small pieces and kept them with faith, for the healing of various diseases. The bishop, having anointed the holy body of the Venerable Xenia with myrrh according to custom, laid it in a new tomb. As soon as the honorable burial was completed, at once the starry crown with the cross shining in heaven became invisible. At the same time many healings were granted from the holy tomb to all who came to it with faith.

Not long after, one of the servants of the Venerable Xenia died; then, fairly soon, another passed to eternal life. Both were buried at the feet of their holy mistress. When the other servant was departing, all the nuns came to her and, adjuring her, begged her to tell them about all the deeds of her mistress Xenia. She, seeing herself already on the deathbed, told them in detail everything about the saint: where she came from, who her parents were, for what reason she fled from her

home and her homeland with two of her servants — how she concealed her name; for her true name was Eusebia, and she called herself Xenia because she wandered for the love of God. Thus all learned the previously unknown life of the bride of Christ, Xenia.

Thus the Venerable pleased God: for the world she was a stranger, but for heaven a citizen; she was seen in the flesh, yet she was made equal to the incorporeal Angels; she freed herself from the body as from a garment, and trampled the devil as a serpent; she counted all worldly things as dross, but kept her undefiled virginity as an unfathomable treasure; by her love she became the bride of Christ, she was crowned with faith, and what she hoped for, that she received, and now she rejoices in the chamber of her immortal Bridegroom. By her prayers she greatly helps the faithful, for death did not destroy her power, nor limit the scope of her beneficence to any boundaries of place. Since she did many virtues for Christ's sake, for her sake Christ also shows us many mercies, receiving the holy prayers of His beloved bride.

Some years after the repose of Saint Xenia, the Venerable Bishop Paul, her spiritual father, also fell asleep. He too pleased God to the end, for by his prayers demons were driven out and all manner of diseases were healed. He was buried in the church of the holy Apostle Andrew, where he had earlier been abbot, and his holy soul stood before God in the glory of the saints. By his warm intercession for us before God, by the prayers of the Venerable Eusebia, who took the name Xenia, and by the supplication of her two holy servants, may the Lord grant us His mercy, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Celebrating thy strange-mannered memory, O Xenia, we who honor thee with love sing unto Christ, who in all things giveth thee the strength of healings, and do thou ever pray to Him for us all.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Babylas of Sicily and his disciples Timothy and Agapius

Память святых мучеников Вавилы Сицилийского и учеников его Тимофея и Агапия

Saint Babylas came from the East, from the glorious city of Antioch[4]; his parents were noble and pious people.

In his native city he received an education and instruction in the commandments of the Lord, quickly and diligently studying the Holy Scripture, which always leads to God. From his youth the saint loved Christ and renounced the world; early he left his parental home, gave his possessions to the poor, the orphans and the widows, and, renouncing all worldly vanity, settled on the summit of a mountain, where he dwelt in silence; with him were two disciples, Agapius and Timothy; the blessed silent one was deemed worthy of the presbyterial rank and reverently honored the grace of the priesthood that rested upon him. When the obstinate and bloodthirsty pagans intended to hand him over to the governor of the province, the Saint with his disciples left Rome and withdrew to Sicily[5], where he lived one year. Here, by the grace of God, he enlightened many and brought them to understanding of the truth of Christ.

"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Mt. 4:14), and the blessed Babylas became known to the governor of Sicily; he ordered the saint seized together with both disciples. Hearing with what boldness the valiant servant confessed Christ, the governor subjected him, together with his disciples, to scourging and other tortures; the martyrs, stained with blood, were led through the cities of Sicily, and they were mocked in every way with inhuman derision; by this the tormentor wished both to terrify the citizens and to assuage his own rage. The holy passion-bearers, however, were strengthened in their powers, contemplating the eternal blessings to come. At last the executioners pierced the blessed martyrs with swords and cast their bodies into the fire; but the flame did not touch the sacred remains, and some of the

4. Antioch lies on the river Orontes and was formerly the chief city of Syria.
5. Sicily is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, south of the Apennine Peninsula.

faithful took them and gave them an honorable burial on the same island of Sicily[6].

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Macedonius the Desert-dweller

Память преподобного Македония Пустынника

The Venerable Macedonius chose the mountain heights as the place and field of his ascetic labors, never remaining in any one place for long, but constantly moving from one spot to another within Phoenicia, Syria and Cilicia[7], so as to avoid conversations with visitors. For forty-five years the blessed man lived in this manner, having neither hut nor tent, but dwelling in a deep cave. When the Venerable Macedonius grew old, he asked the pilgrims who visited him to build him a small cell, in which he lived for twenty-five years, going out neither to the brethren who had settled around him nor to outsiders. In all, the Venerable Macedonius labored for seventy years; for more than forty years he fed on one kind of seed, ground and moistened with water; afterwards, owing to weakness, he began to take a little bread with water. The Lord glorified him with the gift of wonderworking: the Venerable One cast out demons, healed various diseases and performed other miracles. Once a woman who suffered from an affliction manifested in excessive eating was brought to the Venerable Macedonius: she would eat thirty hens in a day. Her relatives tearfully besought the Venerable One to help the sufferer. Through the prayers of the saint, this woman was healed, and afterwards she could not eat even a quarter of a hen in a day. Having lived angelically on earth, having been granted the gift of prophecy and counted worthy of the grace of the priesthood, the Venerable Macedonius peacefully reposed in the Lord[8].

6. At the end of the third century.
7. These countries lie along the northeastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea; they are traversed along the seashore by the mountain ranges of Lebanon in the south and Amanus (Alma-Dag) in the north.
8. About the year 420.

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THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 25

25 января

New Calendar January 25 · Old Calendar February 7 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Gregory the Theologian, Patriarch of Constantinople

Житие святого отца нашего Григория Богослова, патриарха Константинопольского

The homeland of St. Gregory the Theologian was Second, or Southern, Cappadocia, the city of Nazianzus[1], from which he is called Nazianzen. His parents were noble and honorable people: his father, likewise named Gregory, and his mother Nonna. But his father had at first been an unbeliever, for he descended from unbelieving parents, a pagan father and a Jewish mother. In his faith he followed both of them, adhering both to pagan error and to Jewish unbelief. In this consists the so-called Hypsistarian heresy[2]. The mother of St. Gregory, the blessed Nonna, was descended from Christian parents and was herself a pious Christian woman. From earliest childhood she had been brought up in piety and most perfectly taught the fear of God, which is the beginning of all wisdom. By the providence of God she was joined in lawful wedlock to an unbelieving husband, so that she might

1. Second or Greater Cappadocia was a very extensive region in the middle of the eastern part of Asia Minor, to the west of the upper course of the Euphrates River. Cappadocia was once one of the significant states of Asia, but later it lost its independence and became part of the Roman Empire as one of its provinces (in the year 17 or 18 A.D.). Nazianzus was a small town in the southwestern part of Cappadocia; today on the site of Nazianzus there are only ruins in a barren locality filled with quarries.

2. The Hypsistarians received their name because they worshipped God as the "Most High" (from the Greek word meaning highest, supreme). They considered themselves enlightened from above, and into Christian views they mingled pagan (Persian) and Jewish false doctrines. Rejecting idols and sacrifices, the Hypsistarians worshipped God under the symbols of light and fire. They dedicated and observed the seventh day instead of the first, and they adopted Jewish rules concerning clean and unclean food. In general very little information about this sect has been preserved.

also bring him to the holy faith: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified," in the words of the Apostle, "by the believing wife" (1 Cor. 7:14). So it came to pass. Nonna, constantly persuading her husband with God-wise words and with all diligence praying to God for him, led him, by the help of God, to the Christian faith. Her husband was granted by God a vision in a dream: it seemed to him that he was singing words from a psalm of David, words which he had never had upon his lips, but had only heard at some time from his wife, who often prayed. He himself had never prayed; he did not know how to pray, and did not wish to. The words which he sang in the dream-vision were these: "I rejoiced when they said unto me: Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 121:1). While he sang, he felt in his heart a special sweetness, and, awaking, he rejoiced, and afterwards told this to his wife. She understood that God Himself was calling her husband to His holy Church; she began yet more diligently to instruct him in the Christian faith, and led him onto the path of salvation. At this time it happened that St. Leontius, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, travelling to the First Ecumenical Council convened at Nicaea[3], stopped in the city of Nazianzus. To him the blessed Nonna brought her husband, and Gregory was baptized by the hands of the hierarch. After receiving holy Baptism he began a righteous and God-pleasing life, befitting a true and perfect Christian. In this he so advanced in preaching and good works that he was afterwards chosen for the episcopal throne in that same city of Nazianzus (of which more will be said below).

Living in such a husband's honorable wedlock, the blessed Nonna desired to become the mother of a male child. She offered fervent prayers to the Giver of all good things that He would grant her a son, and even before his conception she vowed, as Hannah once vowed Samuel[4], to dedicate him to the service of God. The Lord, who fulfills the will of those who fear Him and hearkens to their prayers, granted the petition of the pious wife's heart, and by revelation in a nocturnal dream foretold to her the youth who was to be born of her. And before the son's birth the blessed Nonna saw what his face would be like, and foreknew

3. In 325.
4. 1 Kgdms., ch. 1.

his name. When she then bore a male child[5], she named him Gregory after his father, as had been foretold to her in the dream-vision. She offered great thanksgiving to God and entrusted the child born to her to His providence; with full diligence she offered to God as a gift what she had received from Him through prayer. Nevertheless, the infant was not baptized at once. In those times many Christians had a voluntary custom of deferring Baptism until mature age, and until the year at which Christ our Lord was baptized by John in the Jordan — most often until thirty-three and a half years[6]. Later this custom was set aside, for weighty reasons, by this same St. Gregory the Theologian, by Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa and other great fathers. Thus St. Gregory was not baptized immediately after his birth, but, according to the ancient custom accepted among Christians, his Baptism was deferred to the age of the years of Christ.

The boy was brought up according to Christian customs. When he reached school age, they at once began teaching him from books. As he grew in years, Gregory grew also in understanding. In keeping with his name[7], he was discerning, bold of spirit, diligent in study, and surpassed his peers in intellect. Even his boyish years did not hinder him from comprehending what is taught to those who have attained perfect age and reason. Even in childhood he displayed conduct characteristic of elders. Children's games, idle amusements and every sort of spectacle he detested, and he occupied himself with far better things, spending his time in learning rather than in idleness. When he reached youthful age, his pious mother instructed him in piety by many motherly admonitions. She told him that he was the fruit of her prayer, that by fervent prayers she had obtained him from God, and that even before his conception she had dedicated him to the service of God. The good youth laid his mother's words in his heart and was enlightened in soul in faith, hope and love toward Christ, the true God. Above all he loved

5. St. Gregory the Theologian was born around 329, in Arianzus, the estate of his parents, lying not far from Nazianzus to the south.

6. In the fourth century it was generally customary to postpone baptism until mature age, sometimes even until the deathbed, as was the case with Constantine the Great, because the fear of dying unbaptized seemed less than the fear of falling into mortal sin after baptism.

7. Gregory, from the Greek word meaning "to be wakeful," signifies: watchful, vigilant.

purity of soul and chastity of body, and he made it his rule to keep his virginity carefully until his death. To this he was led partly by his mother's frequent and heartfelt admonitions, and partly by a dream-vision that came to him in his youth. Of this he himself, many years later, told as follows: once, during sleep, it seemed to him that near him stood two maidens, clothed in white garments. Both were beautiful of face, alike in stature and years. They had no outward adornments: no gold, no silver, no pearls, no precious stones, no costly necklaces; they were not adorned with soft silken garments or golden girdles; they did not take pride in beauty of face, in luxuriant brows, in loosened hair, or in any other features by which worldly maidens seek to please and to ensnare the hearts of youths. Simply clothed in pure white garments and modestly girded, they had not only their heads but their faces covered with thin veils. Their eyes were cast down; their cheeks flushed with maidenly shyness and bore witness to chastity; their lips were like the colour of a bright-red rose; by their silence they showed the greatest modesty. St. Gregory, looking upon them, felt great joy in his heart and thought that these were not earthly beings, but higher ones, surpassing human nature. They, seeing that he was greatly pleased by the sight of them, loved him and embraced him as their child. Then he asked them: who are they, and whence have they come? The first said that she was Purity, and the other called herself Chastity. They explained further that they stood before the throne of Christ, King of Glory, and rejoiced in the beauty of the heavenly maidens. They said:

"Be, child, of one mind with us; join your mind with our mind, and make your face like ours. Then we shall lift you up, shining with the greatest brightness, to the heavens, and set you near the immortal Light of the Trinity."

Having said this, they began to rise toward heaven and, like birds, soared upward. The youth Gregory followed them with a joyful gaze until they vanished in the heavens. Awaking, he felt an unspeakable joy, and his heart was filled with gladness. From this time he was kindled with zeal to keep his virginity carefully. He strove to preserve it by complete abstinence, avoiding all delicious food, drunkenness and satiety.

After the birth of St. Gregory, the blessed Nonna bore another son, named Caesarius, and a daughter, Gorgonia. She brought them up in piety and in the learning of books. Meanwhile the blessed Gregory, desiring to perfect himself in oratorical eloquence, in school wisdom and in all worldly Hellenic learning, set out first for Caesarea in Palestine[8], which at that time was renowned for its schools and its learning. There he had as his teacher the rhetor Thespesius. Then he passed on to Alexandria[965], gathering treasures of wisdom from many men and enriching his mind. After this he wished to go to Athens[9], and he embarked upon an Aeginetan[10] ship together with pagans. When they were sailing past the island of Samos[11], a violent storm arose upon the sea. All despaired of saving their lives and wept in view of bodily death. Gregory, however, wept, fearing spiritual death, since he was not yet baptized but only a catechumen. He recalled the wonders of God formerly wrought in the waters: the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea and the deliverance of Jonah from the belly of the whale. With cries he prayed to God, asking deliverance from perishing in the waves. These perils of his sea voyage were revealed to his parents in a dream-vision. They at once knelt in prayer and poured out before God hot tears, asking help for their son who was in peril upon the sea. God, who preserved His servant Gregory for the benefit of many and was preparing him to be a pillar of the Church, calmed the fierce storm and

8. Caesarea (on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean) was then one of the most significant cities of Palestine and the seat of a bishop. There was located the famous Christian school founded by the well-known church writer and scholar of the third century, Origen, and after him it was under the direction of such eminent Christian theologians as the well-known church historian Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, and the presbyter Pamphilus, renowned for his learning and holy life, who ended his days as a martyr (his memory is kept on February 16). Besides the school, through the labors of the latter a vast library of thirty thousand volumes was assembled, thanks to which many fathers and teachers of the Church acquired their learning. But before his education in Palestinian Caesarea, St. Gregory Nazianzen studied the sciences in Caesarea of Cappadocia.

9. Although Athens, the ancient famous capital of Greece, at that time was only a shadow of its former greatness, nevertheless there still flourished schools of pagan sophists and rhetoricians, which gave the city some semblance of its former glory.

10. Aegina is an island in the Saronic Gulf, east of Greece, between central and southern Greece.

11. Samos is one of the principal islands of the Aegean Sea (Archipelago), near the western shore of Asia Minor, opposite the promontory of Mycale, from which it is separated by a narrow strait.

commanded the winds; a perfect stillness came upon the sea. All who were on the ship, seeing themselves, beyond expectation, saved from destruction and as it were snatched from the bonds of death, glorified Christ God. They knew that only by the invocation of His all-powerful name in the prayer of Gregory had the sea been stilled. Moreover, a young man, a fellow traveler of the saint, saw in a dream at night, during the surging and the storm, that Gregory's mother, the blessed Nonna, came quickly over the sea, took hold of the sinking ship and brought it to shore. When the tempest had subsided, he told everyone of the vision, and all confessed the God of Gregory as a great Helper, gave thanks to Him and believed in Him. In addition, the father of Gregory, who had prayed with tears in Nazianzus for his son and had then fallen asleep after his prayer, had another vision. He saw a furious demon, Erinnys, who sought to destroy Gregory at sea, but Gregory seized him with his hands and overcame him. From this vision the father of Gregory learned of his son's deliverance from destruction, and he with his wife offered thanksgiving to God.

The subsequent sea voyage the holy Gregory accomplished safely and arrived at Athens. There, studying the secular sciences, he was an object of wonder to all on account of the extraordinary keenness of his mind and his chaste life. Some time later St. Basil also arrived at Athens for the sake of perfecting himself in secular wisdom. The two of them, Gregory and Basil, became sincere friends and companions. They had one house, one food, one spirit, one wisdom, one disposition, as if they were brothers of one womb. Both became famous and esteemed in Athens, for within a short time they surpassed their teachers; though they themselves were pupils, they became teachers of their teachers. At this same time, when Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, reigned over the Greeks and Romans, Julian, who afterwards became emperor and an apostate from God, was studying philosophy at Athens. Gregory often spoke of him:

"What a great evil the Greek and Roman land is nurturing!"

He already foresaw what was bound to happen.

Gregory and Basil lived in Athens for many years, studied all the sciences[12] and advanced in them to such a degree that they themselves rose above all the wisdom of Athens. Then Basil set out for Egypt to learn spiritual wisdom from God-inspired men, as is related in his life; and the Athenians, by their entreaties, persuaded Gregory to accept the office of teacher. Having lived there not long after Basil's departure, Gregory heard that his father had been ordained bishop at Nazianzus. He at once returned home to his father, already thirty years of age, and received holy baptism from his father's hands. He wished immediately to renounce the world and go into the desert, but, being restrained by his father, he remained at home with him. He set for himself the rule never to use an oath and never to invoke the name of God in vain, and he kept this rule to the end of his life. He constantly occupied himself with reading the Divine Books and spent days and nights in contemplation of God; many times he beheld Christ in visions. Against his will his father ordained him presbyter, and then wished to consecrate him also as bishop, but St. Gregory, shrinking from such rank and honors and also striving for the silence of monastic life, secretly fled from the house and came to Pontus, to his friend St. Basil. The latter was also already a presbyter and had established a monastery in Pontus, to which many monks had gathered. He wrote to Gregory from Pontus, insistently inviting him to come to him. Thus they again began to live together, as before at Athens, each having in the other a model of virtue and imitating one another. Together they also wrote rules of ascetic life for the monks. So the holy Gregory lived with the holy Basil for a considerable time.

Meanwhile Gregory's brother Caesarius died. The parents wept much over him. At this time the father wrote to Gregory, tearfully urging him to return home and help him in his old age. The blessed Gregory, partly fearing to disobey his father and partly seeing the needs of the Church, which was then sorely troubled by the heresy of

12. They studied grammar, history, geometry, astronomy, arithmetic and mathematics, the rudiments of medicine, philosophy and logic. Much time was devoted to the study of classical (Roman and Greek) literature. Many Christians regarded the reading of the great pagan writers with contempt, but St. Gregory Nazianzen and Basil the Great stood above such narrow prejudice.

Arius, into which the father of Gregory too had been partly seduced, as one who had not received theological education, returned from Pontus to Nazianzus. Here he helped his aged father in the administration of the Church and in household cares, explained to him the harm of the Arian heresy, and confirmed him in Orthodoxy.

After the death of the Emperor Constantius, son of Constantine,[13] Julian ascended the throne, and then the prophecy concerning him made by Gregory was fulfilled: this lawless man brought great evil; he openly renounced Christ and raised persecution against the Church of Christ. St. Gregory contended against him with many of his God-inspired writings, exposing his errors, his pernicious pagan enthusiasms and his false Hellenic fables. This transgressor of the law reigned briefly and perished in disgrace.[14] After him the pious Emperor Jovian ascended the throne,[15] and the Christian faith again began to flourish. After Jovian the Arian Valens came to the throne,[16] and the Arian heresy again began to spread; the Orthodox were oppressed everywhere. At that time also in Caesarea in Cappadocia, Arianism had led many astray into error and had brought turmoil into the Church of Christ. Even Bishop Eusebius,[17] insufficiently learned in Holy Scripture, began to waver and to deviate from the true faith. Learning of this, St. Gregory wrote to him, advising him to entreat Father Basil to return to Caesarea to contend against the errors. He also wrote to St. Basil himself, kindly advising and asking him that, forgetting Eusebius' former anger against him, he should go to Caesarea to aid the Orthodox and again establish the Church, which was being shaken by the Arians. Thus St. Gregory, by his letters, brought about peace between Bishop Eusebius and St. Basil, and made it possible for St. Basil to return to Caesarea in Cappadocia. Immediately upon his return the Arians were

13. This was in 361.
14. In 363.
15. Reigned 363–364.
16. Valens reigned 364–378.
17. Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Caesarea, was renowned for his learning; he wrote an ecclesiastical history, a book on the Palestinian martyrs, and described the life of Constantine the Great; but, for all his learning, he unfortunately deviated from Orthodoxy and was inclined toward Arianism, although he did not openly break away from the Orthodox Church.

put to shame, and some of them fell silent while others fled. Bishop Eusebius rejoiced at St. Basil. Having lived with him in friendship for some time, he died, and in his place St. Basil the Great was raised to the throne by the Orthodox, against his will. The heretics, indignant at this and filled with malice, arranged the separation of the city of Tyana from Caesarea. In Tyana[18] there was at that time a bishop, Anthimus, who feigned to be Orthodox but was in truth a heretic. Together with bishops of like mind he separated from Basil and became Metropolitan of Tyana. Thus he brought about the division of the Cappadocian region into two parts, as a result of which lengthy disputes arose concerning the boundaries of the diocese. St. Basil, seeing that some cities and villages were being detached from his diocese, resolved to arrange the matter thus: between Caesarea and Tyana there was one insignificant and little-known town, Sasima.[19] In it St. Basil determined to establish a new episcopal see and to place there as bishop a pious man; he hoped by this both to end the dispute and to preserve many people for piety. Not having in view for this purpose an experienced man, he wrote to his friend, St. Gregory, asking him to accept consecration as bishop of the see at Sasima, for no one else would be so capable of establishing piety there as he. St. Gregory firmly refused in his letters. Basil wrote to him many times, but not attaining his desire, he went himself to the city of Nazianzus and there, after consulting with the aged Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzus, the father of Gregory, began together with him to persuade his friend Gregory to accept consecration to the episcopal rank. Thus Gregory was compelled to occupy the episcopal see in the city of Sasima. When Anthimus, Metropolitan of Tyana, who counted Sasima among the bounds of his diocese, learned of this, he brought an army there with the aim of not allowing Gregory to take up the see; he lay in wait for Gregory along his route. St. Gregory, learning on the way of Anthimus' schemes and of the troops he had brought, withdrew to a certain monastery and there tended the sick, and then settled in the desert, seeking the stillness he desired.

18. Tyana was an ancient city of Cappadocia, at the foot of the Taurus, near the Cilician Gates.
19. Sasima was situated on the borders of two newly formed dioceses, resulting from the division of provinces, about fifty versts from Tyana and thirty-six from Nazianzus.

After a short time he returned again to Nazianzus at the request of his parents. His parents had grown very old and, by reason of their advanced years, needed his help, all the more since they had no other children besides him alone. Caesarius, their other son, had already died, as has been said, and likewise their daughter Gorgonia had already passed into eternity.[20] Their brother, this St. Gregory, honored both with funeral orations. Then he remained alone with his parents, as the apple of their eye, and there was no possibility for him not to fulfil the requests of his parents. He had to serve their old age and, after their death, perform the customary burial for them.

When St. Gregory returned from the desert to Nazianzus, his father Gregory, already weakened by age, wished, while still alive, to establish his son on the episcopal see of Nazianzus. To this end he urged his son not only by persuasions and entreaties but also by oath. He did not refuse the cares for the good ordering of the Church, nor did he wish to disobey his father's command, but by no means desired to accept the episcopal throne.

"It is impossible for me, Father," he said, "while you are still alive and have not passed into eternity, to accept your throne."

The father, no longer insisting that his son accept the throne, but only laying on him the care of the Church, said:

"While I live, my son, be the support of my old age, and after my death do as shall seem good to you."

Soon the father of St. Gregory, the aged Bishop of Nazianzus, reposed,[21] having remained on the episcopal throne forty-five years. He had lived only a hundred years. He was buried with great solemnity, with the participation of St. Basil the Great, who came to the burial. Nonna, the mother of St. Gregory, Basil's friend, was still alive, but she too, in a short time, fell asleep in the Lord, likewise having reached the age of a hundred years.[22] St. Gregory, having buried his pious parents,

20. This was in 368.

21. Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzus, father of St. Gregory the Theologian, died in 374. Having honored his memory with a funeral oration, Gregory the Theologian, in fulfillment of the promise given to his father, for some time governed the flock of Nazianzus.

22. The righteous mother of Gregory the Theologian died, like her husband, in the same year, 374. She has been numbered among the saints; her memory is celebrated on August 5.

became free of cares for them; but he wished to be free also of glory, all the more since the inhabitants of his native city pressed him to take the episcopal throne after his father. He went secretly to Seleucia[23] and remained there at the church of the holy first martyr Thecla. From there he was summoned by the friendly entreaties of Basil the Great, and, returning, took upon himself the care of almshouses and hospitals. St. Basil, in order to give shelter to those who had nowhere to lay their head, built spacious buildings and, gathering there the poor and the sick, widows, orphans and wayfarers, cared for their daily food, and entrusted the care of them to his beloved friend. Thus St. Gregory was the provider for the poor, the servant of the sick, the comforter of wayfarers.

At this time, from the Arian heresy, which had for many years troubled the Church of God, there sprang up, like a new head from some hydra[24], a new heresy that seduced many. This was the heresy of Macedonius, who blasphemed the Holy Spirit. The Arians confessed that the Father is the uncreated, eternal God, and that the Son was created, and moreover was neither consubstantial nor coeternal with the Father; the Macedonians, however, acknowledged the Son as equal to the Father, but blasphemed the Holy Spirit, some saying that He is a creature and not God, and others acknowledging Him neither as God nor as a creature. St. Gregory called them semi-Arians, since they honored the Son but debased the Holy Spirit. This heresy spread especially strongly in Byzantium. By the conviction of St. Basil the Great, and by the common counsel of many other Orthodox bishops who had gathered at a council, St. Gregory, as a man of profound understanding and mighty in eloquence, was to go to Byzantium to refute the heretical teaching and to defend the right dogmas of the holy faith. But before he set out for Byzantium, St. Basil, after a brief illness, died[25]. Thus the universal lamp of the faith was extinguished. St. Gregory wept much over him, and, having honored him with a funeral oration, set out upon

23. Seleucia was the name of many cities, mostly founded by Seleucus I. Here one must understand Seleucia in Isauria, in a mountainous country in the southeast of Asia Minor.
24. The Hydra, according to the mythology of the ancient Greeks, was a serpent-like monster with nine heads, which grew back again when they were cut off.
25. St. Basil died in 379.

the road that lay before him. When he reached the royal city of Byzantium, he was received with joy by the pious Christians. He found the Church of Christ reduced to extreme weakness. The number of believers could easily be counted, for the greater part of the city had gone over to the heresies. All the churches of God, majestic and richly adorned, were in the hands of the heretics. Only one small and dilapidated church, that of St. Anastasia, rejected by the heretics, was left to the Orthodox. St. Gregory at once, like David, who once armed himself with a sling against the Philistines, armed himself with the word of God against the heretics, defeated them in disputations, and destroyed their dogmatic errors as a spider's web. Daily he converted many from error to Orthodoxy by his God-wise and God-inspired discourses, and in a short time he so increased the number of believing members of the Church of Christ that it cannot be reckoned; the number of heretics, on the other hand, diminished from day to day, so that there came to pass what is said in Holy Scripture of the house of David and the house of Saul: "The house of David grew stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker" (2 Kgdms. 3:1). The evil caused to the Church by the Arians and Macedonians had not yet passed when there appeared a new heretic from Syria, Apollinarius, who held false opinions concerning the Incarnation of the Lord. He maintained that the Incarnation was not real: Christ, it was said, had no soul, and in place of a soul had the Godhead. Being eloquent and skilled in Hellenic wisdom, he drew many into his heresy, and his disciples scattered everywhere, ensnaring those unlearned in theological science and drawing them, as with a hook, into perdition. Then again the good ascetic of piety, St. Gregory, undertook a great labor, entered into the struggle with the heretics, rebuked, entreated, and forbade those who had fallen away from the true faith, confirming some in the faith and restoring others from their fall. At this same time the disciples of Apollinarius, moving among the people, slandered St. Gregory, saying that he divided Christ into two persons. Zealously spreading such falsehood everywhere, they aroused the anger and malice of the people against the saint, for even a drop of water, by frequent falling, pierces a stone. The people, unable to understand the intricate heretical discourses and

to grasp the depth of the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ, honored the heretics as true shepherds and acknowledged them as Orthodox teachers; the true shepherd, who taught the Gospel, was accounted a heretic. Stirring up the crowd, they threw stones at the saint, as the Jews once did at the holy first martyr Stephen; yet they could not kill him, for God preserved His servant. Unable to satisfy their malice, they fiercely assailed him and brought him before the city governor as some rebel, the author of disorder and disturbance. The saint, being innocent of any crime, and moreover distinguished by meekness and humility, amid this calamity and the groundless attack of the people, prayed only to God, to Christ his Lord: "In Thy name, O Christ, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (Ps. 22:4). The governor, knowing his innocence and seeing the unrighteous human malice, released him. Thus he became a martyr without wounds or tortures, a crown-bearer without sores, and his only desire was to suffer for Christ.

Having shone forth by such labors and by his unyielding struggle with the heretics, St. Gregory became known to all; his wisdom was glorified everywhere, and for it he received from the whole holy Orthodox Church a new name, the name of Theologian, like the first theologian, St. John the Virgin, the beloved disciple of Christ. This name of Theologian, though it belongs also to all the great teachers and hierarchs, since all of them theologized, worthily glorifying the Holy Trinity, was nonetheless ascribed to St. Gregory in a special way and became his additional name. It was given by the Church in token of his triumph and victory over many and great heretics. From this time on, all also began to call him the Theologian. He was deeply loved by the Orthodox. The whole host of pious people desired to see him on the patriarchal throne. Moreover, Peter, the Patriarch of Alexandria[26], who had succeeded Athanasius the Great, wrote to St. Gregory the Theologian, entrusting to him the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople, as most worthy and as one who had borne many labors for the benefit of

26. Peter II, Patriarch of Alexandria, governed the Church from 373 to 380.

the Church of Christ. But at once an obstacle to this arose from malicious people.

There was in Constantinople a Greek philosopher of the school of the Cynics[27], named Maximus, a native of Egypt. He was distinguished by cunning, guile, hypocrisy, and evil intentions. Coming to the holy pastor Gregory the Theologian, he renounced Hellenic godlessness and, after baptism, entered the bosom of the holy Church. However, he lived in the vanity of the world and hypocritically covered himself with reverence, as with a sheep's garment, remaining in his soul a wolf, which did not long fail to become manifest. The Godly hierarch Gregory, not suspecting his deceit, and considering his conversion from paganism to Christianity a great deed, took him into his house as a companion and friend, made him his table-companion, and then a member of the clergy. But he followed the example of Judas: he resolved to abandon his teacher and spiritual father and began a struggle against him. To carry out his plan he found an assistant in a certain presbyter, who did not fear God and was skilled in treacherous undertakings. In league with him, Maximus began to act cunningly and secretly, with the aim of seizing the patriarchal throne in Constantinople. But since for the success of such an undertaking much money was necessary, to win over the majority to their side by bribery and gifts, they first of all began to concern themselves with money. With satanic help they soon found what they desired in the following manner. A certain presbyter came to Byzantium from the island of Thasos[28] with a large sum of money to buy marble slabs brought from Proconnesus[29] for a church building. By enticing him with various groundless promises, the conspirators took away the money, which was enough for the achievement of their wicked

27. This man, unknown in Alexandria, belonged in fact to the worst class of adventurers from among the clergy. He represented a base mixture of a vain layman, a hypocritical Christian, and a pretentious philosopher. Outwardly he presented himself as an ascetic and wore the cloak of the Cynics (philosophers who displayed complete contempt for earthly goods and set as their aim the greatest possible reduction of bodily needs, for which reason, falling into extremes, they wore shabby clothing and renounced all worldly comforts, though often hypocritically).

28. Phasos, now Thasos, is an island of the Aegean Sea (Archipelago), not far from the Thracian shore.

29. Proconnesus is an island of considerable importance in the Propontis (Sea of Marmara), known for its marble quarries.

design, and secretly sent many rich gifts to Patriarch Peter of Alexandria, as well as to his bishops and clergy, and earnestly asked that bishops be sent to Byzantium who would raise Maximus to the patriarchal throne. Peter, seduced by the gifts and as if forgetting his former letter to St. Gregory, at once yielded to their request. He sent to Constantinople the Egyptian bishops, who arrived there without delay. Showing themselves to no one, neither to the pastor Gregory, nor to the clergy, nor to any of the authorities, they came with Maximus into the church during the celebration of Matins and had already proceeded to the ordination, desiring to consecrate Maximus as archbishop. St. Gregory the Theologian was ill. At once this became known to all. Presbyters, members of the clergy, and a multitude of people immediately gathered in the church, both Orthodox and heretics. All, marveling at such subtle cunning and the unlawful consecration, were inflamed with wrath and began to shout at the arriving bishops, trying in every way to prevent them from this utterly unlawful act. Expelled from the church in disgrace, they went to the house of a flute-player and there completed the irregular ordination, and then proclaimed Maximus Patriarch of Constantinople with the help of accomplices, both clerical and lay. Some of them had been excommunicated for their sins, others were hired for payment, and others were won over by promises of gifts and honors; all such were partisans of Maximus and supported him. The majority, however, and especially the most honorable citizens, were inflamed with wrath and rebuked Maximus with sharp reproaches and accusations; they also expressed displeasure toward St. Gregory the Theologian himself for having taken such a man as a companion and having honored him with his friendship.

The saint answered them:

"Do not be angry with me, brethren, that I have shown kindness to this man without foreseeing his malice. Are we to blame that we cannot foresee anyone's malice? Only God knows the secret of a man's inner life. Moreover, has not the law itself commanded us to open our bosom to all who come to us, as a father would, and in love? 'Him that cometh to Me,' says the Saviour, 'I will in no wise cast out' (Jn. 6:37). It was already important to me that Maximus had come from the error of the

Greeks to holy Baptism, and that instead of serving Hercules[30] he had begun to serve the Holy Trinity. Besides, he seemed virtuous, though hypocritically; but his hypocrisy and malice have only now become plainly manifest. We are not given to search into such matters; we do not penetrate human thoughts, and we do not know the future, except when God reveals it to us. We look only upon the face, but God sees the heart."

By these words the people were calmed, and afterwards they regarded holy Gregory the Theologian with still greater love. Maximus, however, set out together with the council of Egyptian bishops who had ordained him to the episcopate, to the pious Emperor Theodosius the Great[31], who was then with his armies at Thessalonica[32], and asked him to confirm his rights to the See of Constantinople. He, a rejected man, could not obtain confirmation on the basis of the Church canons, and therefore he wished to obtain authority over the Church by imperial command, intending rather to tyrannize than to serve as a hierarch. The pious emperor was greatly angered and with threats drove Maximus and the bishops who had come with him from his presence. Then they all went to Alexandria, and there Maximus began to devise similar schemes. Having bribed the clergy of the Alexandrian Church with a considerable sum of money, Maximus boldly and shamelessly approached Patriarch Peter: "Either obtain for me the See of Constantinople, or I will not depart from yours." Using treacherous means, he dug a pit for the patriarch, and would certainly have carried out his malicious intent had the governor of the city not learned of it soon. Fearing that unrest might break out among the people, he expelled Maximus from Alexandria in disgrace.

Meanwhile holy Gregory the Theologian was so burdened in Constantinople by bodily infirmities that he was obliged to renounce the cares of governing the Church of Constantinople, and wished to return

30. Hercules is a hero of ancient Greek tradition, who, according to the beliefs of the ancient Greeks, possessed supernatural strength, personified physical power in man, and was afterwards venerated by them as one of their most beloved gods.

31. Reigned 379–395.

32. Thessalonica, otherwise Solun, was a very important ancient city of Macedonia, lying at the head of the large Thessalonian or Thracian Gulf on the Aegean Sea (Archipelago).

to his homeland, Nazianzus. He resolved to speak a final word to the people, in which he urged them to keep the faith zealously and to do good works. The people understood that he intended to leave Constantinople. Cries and loud weeping were heard in the church. All began to say with one voice:

"Father! In departing from us you take with you also the teaching of the Holy Trinity. Without you there will be no right confession of the Holy Trinity in this city. Together with you Orthodoxy and piety will leave the city."

Hearing these cries and the people's weeping, holy Gregory set aside his intention and promised to remain with them until the next council was convened. At that time it was expected that bishops would soon assemble and elect a worthy man to the patriarchate. This too was what holy Gregory awaited: only when he saw a worthy shepherd on the patriarchal throne did he intend to return to his homeland. Meanwhile the pious Emperor Theodosius had been waging war with the barbarians, and after his victory over them he returned to Constantinople in triumph. The Arians still held the cathedral patriarchal church and had as their patriarch the Arian Demophilus; the Orthodox had only the small and dilapidated church of holy Anastasia. The emperor summoned Demophilus and urged him either to accept the Orthodox confession or to yield his place to another. Demophilus, hardened in heart, preferred to lose the throne rather than abandon his errors. Then the emperor gave holy Gregory the Theologian and the whole assembly of the Orthodox the cathedral church, which the Arians had held for forty years, as well as all the other churches. When the man of God, Bishop Gregory, with the clergy and people, wished to enter the church, a crowd of Arians, armed as if for war, stood around the church, barring the entrance to the Orthodox, and threatened the saint with death. The Arians hired a young man, bold and reckless, so that he might approach Gregory unnoticed and thrust a sword into his belly; but God saved His faithful servant. Then a cry, tumult and clamor arose among the Arians. They would certainly have done violence and harm to the Orthodox had the emperor himself not appeared and led the holy bishop into the church. The Orthodox, with great joy and glad-

ness, cried out glorifying God, shedding tears of rapture and raising their hands on high. Indeed, after so many years they had again received their sanctuary! At the same time they all cried out together to the emperor, asking that Gregory the Theologian be raised to the patriarchal throne. Holy Gregory, being too weakened by his constant bodily ailments and having no strength to address the people in the face of the general outcry, declared through one of his clergy:

"Children! Now is the time of thanksgiving and glorification of the One God in the Trinity, who has granted us again to receive His holy Church. Let us therefore now glorify His great mercies, and let us think about the patriarchal throne later, at another time."

The people, hearing this answer of the hierarch, ceased crying out. Then, when the Divine Liturgy was completed, all departed glorifying God; the Arians fell silent, put to shame.

The right-believing Emperor Theodosius greatly revered holy Gregory the Theologian as his father, but Gregory did not often come to the emperor, keeping well in mind the words of Solomon: "Do not often enter your friend's house, lest he grow weary of you and hate you" (Prov. 25:17). The saint had great zeal always to teach the people, to visit and heal the sick, to help the wronged, to defend the weak and to cleanse his flock of heretical errors. He withdrew at times even to the villages, loving silence and seeking to heal his frequent illnesses by rest, and thus to make his body fit for further labours. Though he had charge of great church property, he appropriated not a single silver coin to himself, nor did he question the church stewards as to how much had been collected and how much spent. The latter he considered the business not of a bishop but of a secular ruler. He taught everyone to keep a clear conscience. Exhausted by unceasing labours and by his venerable age, he once fell ill and lay in bed. The people, learning of this, came to visit him. He sat up in bed and began to ask:

"What do you want, children? Why have you come to me?"

Those who came bowed to him and thanked him for all his labours: for having cleansed the city of heresy, for having returned the holy churches, which for many years had been in the hands of the Arians, to

the Orthodox, and for having greatly benefited all by his teaching as well as by his pastoral care.

"And now, Father," they said, "if you are departing to God, pray for your flock, for the pious emperor, and for the whole Church."

The saint declared that his illness was not unto death, and then, having taught them according to custom, dismissed them. When they began to disperse, one young man remained, who, seizing the saint's feet, with tears and sobbing begged him to forgive his sin. The saint asked what his sin consisted of, but the youth made no answer, only wept and begged forgiveness. One of those present said to the hierarch:

"This is your murderer, Father! At the instigation of the heretics he wished to thrust a sword into your belly, but Christ protected you. See, he now repents and begs forgiveness."

The saint said to the youth:

"May our Lord Jesus Christ be merciful to you, beloved son, and forgive you your sins. Only from this time be ours; abandon heresy, turn to Christ God and serve Him faithfully."

Thus he dismissed the youth, forgiving him. The whole city, learning of this, marvelled at his meekness and was kindled to still greater love for him. Soon afterwards bishops began to assemble in Byzantium, partly to ordain a patriarch for the imperial city, and partly to anathematize the heresies at the Second Ecumenical Council[33]. When one hundred and fifty Orthodox bishops had gathered, holy Meletius of Antioch was chosen as president of the council. Then holy Gregory the Theologian, against his will, and with sorrow, though ill, accepted the patriarchal throne, consenting to the entreaties of the emperor and of the whole people. A few days later holy Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch, fell ill and departed to the Lord. Thereupon bishops came from Egypt and Macedonia and began to express displeasure at Gregory's appointment as patriarch, all the more so because he had been elected in their absence. They maintained that this appointment was irregular, since Gregory had been ordained by the Patriarch of Antioch and not by the Patriarch of Alexandria; yet the Alexandrian patriarchal throne was

33. The Second Ecumenical Council began in 381 and lasted three years.

the first after the Roman, and the appointment of the Patriarch of Constantinople ought to proceed from it. Great disagreements, disorders and dissensions arose among the bishops: some said that Gregory's ordination had been lawful, others objected; and the bishops quarrelled among themselves. Holy Gregory the Theologian, seeing the dissensions and quarrels that had arisen among the bishops on his account, addressed them all in the council with a word:

"I, holy and honored pastors," he said, "did not seek to obtain authority over the Church of Constantinople. If it has grown and been firmly established through my sweat and labors, it is enough for me to please God in this and to expect from Him my recompense. Only the love of my rational flock and the common judgment of the hierarchs compelled me to accept the throne. Now, however, I see the enmity of many toward me. Know, then, that I seek neither wealth nor high position and honors; I do not desire to bear the title of Patriarch of Constantinople, and I relinquish the episcopate without grief. As for you, consult among yourselves and do as seems good to you. The desert has long been pleasant to me, and those who deprive us of the throne cannot deprive us of God."

Having said this, he went out and left the patriarchal residence. He settled in a small house far from the church, avoiding the conversations and disputes of the people who came to him. Nevertheless, many of the people, coming to him, begged him to show mercy to his flock and not to abandon it, after he had nurtured and increased it with so much labor and sweat.

"Show, Father," they said, "your affection for your children, for whose sake you have labored so much. Devote to them also the remainder of your days, so that we, enlightened by your teaching, may have your body after your repose."

St. Gregory, as a loving father, softened in heart, and, not knowing what to do, asked God to show him the way of life.

When the number of the assembled bishops had increased, and the discord and dissension among them still continued, the blessed Gregory, standing in the midst of the council, addressed them with a speech:

"Men and fellow pastors of mine in the governance of Christ's holy flock! It is shameful for you, who teach others to keep peace, to fall into discord among yourselves! How can you persuade others to concord and unanimity if you cannot agree with one another? But I beseech you, before the consubstantial and Most Holy Trinity, to establish peace and to show mutual love toward one another, so that in full accord you may order the affairs of the Church. If I am the cause of disagreement and division among you, then I am in no way more worthy than the Prophet Jonah. Cast me overboard from the ship, and then the tumult will cease for you. Although I am not guilty of this storm, I prefer to suffer, if you so wish. Only be reconciled with one another and be of one mind; cast me down from the throne, drive me out of the city, but truth and peace, I say with the Prophet Zechariah (Zech. 8:19), love. I wish you health, holy pastors! Do not forget my labors either!"

When he had spoken this speech, all his opponents were put to shame and were moved to tenderness by his words. The saint, however, having left the council, resolved to return to his homeland, and went to ask the emperor to release him to go home.

He said to the emperor:

"O Emperor! May Christ repay you on the day of judgment for all your benefactions shown to the Church. But do not refuse me, sovereign lord, the mercy for which I now ask you: I do not ask you for estates or for kinsmen; I do not seek costly coverings for the holy altars, but I desire only relief from my labors. Let this put an end to the envy of many; let the bishops, by your diligence, attain concord! You, who have put down the audacity of the barbarians, put down also the dissensions of the hierarchs. Adorn your victorious realm with this one thing: that the bishops may attain peace and concord among themselves. This will be accomplished if you release me to my homeland. This is the mercy I ask of you; grant me this last kindness."

The emperor was struck by the saint's words and wept. The courtiers present also wept. All felt a strong love for the saint and did not wish to let him go. He, now citing his old age and constant infirmities, now pointing to the discords among the bishops that had arisen because of him, continued to beg the emperor, and at last persuaded him

not to detain him, but to release him wherever he wished, so that he might spend the remainder of his days in peace and rest from his many labors. Released by the emperor, he took leave of everyone and gave his rational sheep his wishes for peace. As he departed from the city, the whole people accompanied him and wept bitter tears. Immediately some of the bishops who loved St. Gregory and mourned him also left the city, and, leaving the council, each returned to the place of his ministry. Such were Gregory of Nyssa, brother of Basil the Great, Amphilochius of Iconium, Eulogius of Edessa, Helladius of Caesarea, Otrius of Melitene, and many others. The bishops who remained at the council elected as patriarch the senator Nectarius.[34]

St. Gregory the Theologian withdrew to the region of Cappadocia and settled in his homeland, in the village of Arianzus. There he rested, being very weak. Yet he did not cease his labors for the glory of God: he found his native city of Nazianzus infected with the Apollinarian heresy, and he strove to cleanse it both by personal exhortations and by his epistles. When the citizens asked him to accept his father's throne, he refused, and instead appointed as bishop for them a presbyter named Eulalius, a man zealous in the faith and pious. He himself remained in complete seclusion in the village of Arianzus. There, having lived for some time and having left behind many edifying writings,[992] he, in deep old age, departed to the unaging life on January 25.[35] He was buried with honor in the city of Nazianzus. Many years later, the pious emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus transferred his honorable relics from Nazianzus to Constantinople and laid them in the Church of the Holy Apostles, for the help and protection of the city and to the glory of Christ God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

34. St. Nectarius was Patriarch from 381 to 397.

35. St. Gregory the Theologian reposed in 389. In Constantinople a church was built in his honor by a certain Patricius under Theodosius the Younger in the first half of the fifth century. The relics of St. Gregory, translated to Constantinople in 960 under the Emperor Constantine VI Porphyrogenitus, were divided: one part of them was laid in the Church of the Holy Apostles, the other in the Church of St. Anastasia. His relics are also now in Rome, in the cathedral of the holy Apostle Peter.

The pastoral pipe of thy theology hath vanquished the trumpets of the rhetoricians; for when the depths of the Spirit were searched out, the beauties of thy discourse were added unto thee. But pray Christ God, O Father Gregory, that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

With thy theological tongue, O glorious one, thou didst destroy the intricacies of rhetoric, and didst adorn the Church with the garment of Orthodoxy, woven from on high; and she, bearing it, calls with us thy children: Rejoice, Father, supreme intellect of theology.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Felicitas and her Seven Sons

Память святой мученицы Фелицаты и семи сыновей ее

St. Gregory, Pope of Rome,[36] teaches us about this holy martyr Felicitas in his commentary on the Gospel in the following words.[37]

"When the Jews said to the Lord, 'Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee' (Mt. 12:47), the Lord called brethren and sisters and mother His believers in His Name who do the will of His Heavenly Father, not by fleshly kinship but by unity of spirit. This holy Felicitas was a Roman woman, from a wealthy family; she had seven sons. Loving Christ, she distributed all her possessions to the poor and confessed before the pagan emperor and judges that she was a Christian.[38] Enduring the burden of persecution, she strengthened the hearts of her children in love for the heavenly fatherland. She was by faith a servant of Christ, and her sons were named brethren of Christ by unity of faith and by manly endurance."

36. St. Gregory the Dialogist; memory: March 12.
37. Here is meant Homily III, delivered to the people in the Church of St. Felicitas on the day of her martyrdom.
38. The priests accused St. Felicitas before the emperor of offending the gods by spreading Christianity. The emperor handed the holy mother, together with her children, over to the prefect Publius.

"We have seen," the holy father continues, "manly courage in a woman's breast: she stood fearlessly before death, teaching thereby the true knowledge of God. Thus I have called this woman not only a martyr, but more than a martyr, because she gazed upon the tortures of her seven sons, and herself, subjected to torments, desired only that the children should enter the Kingdom of Heaven before her and not turn aside from the way to it; the holy mother-martyr feared for her living children, rejoiced for those who were dying, and was exalted in that seven sons entered the Kingdom of Heaven before her, whither she too followed them as the eighth, having received with her children a martyr's death for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."[39]

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Poplius

Память преподобного Поплия

The Venerable Poplius belonged to the senatorial class[40] and came from the city of Zeugma,[41] on the Euphrates. Choosing a place on a high mountain, thirty versts from the city, St. Poplius built a small hut and then distributed to the poor all the property he had received from his parents; he himself began to dwell in a virtuous and ascetic life, of which the fame spread widely. To the venerable one there began to gather in great numbers those who wished to share his labors; for them he commanded that narrow cells be built, and he visited his disciples very often, strictly watching that there was nothing in their cells except what was most necessary. The bread that was found with the monks the Venerable Poplius weighed on scales, and if anyone had more than the prescribed amount of bread, he called him a glutton, excessively concerned for his body; and those in whom he found prepared

39. The sons of St. Felicitas bore the names: Januarius, Felix, Philip, Silvanus, Alexander, Vitalis and Martial. The sufferings of these holy martyrs belong to the time of the emperor Antoninus, who reigned from 138 to 161. The first of the sons was cruelly scourged and cast into prison; the second was beaten with leaden rods; the third and fourth were killed with clubs, the fifth was thrown down from a high place; the sixth and seventh were beheaded with the sword, after which their mother was also beheaded.

40. Senators: members of the highest state institution in the Roman Empire.

41. In Syria, in the Roman province of Euphratesia.

food he called partakers of defilement. At night the holy father did not seek rest for himself, but went round the cells of his disciples, stopping outside the door of each. If he found the occupant at prayer, the venerable one would withdraw in silence; but if the man was asleep, St. Poplius would strike the door with his hand and sternly reprove the slothful monk. Owing to the venerable one's constant association with his disciples, many of them became like the saint in ascetic labor; two of these, Theotecnus and Aufonius, after the repose of the Venerable Poplius, bore the care of the brethren and the leadership of the monastery founded by the holy ascetic. The blessed Poplius peacefully completed his great labor and departed to the Lord.[42]

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Mar the Singer

Память преподобного Мара Певца

Venerable Mar in his youth was of comely appearance and had a good voice; during the feasts in honor of the holy martyrs he performed the duties of a chanter to perfection. Above all he loved God and kept His commandments in holiness. Surrounded by many temptations, St. Mar preserved his body in virginal innocence and his soul in purity and chastity. Turning his soul away from worldly allurements, the youth withdrew to the village of Omiru[43] and built for himself there a small hut, in which he spent thirty-seven years. The Venerable suffered much in this hut from the dampness, which harmed his health, but he would not leave his hut and lived in it to the end of his life. Venerable Mar was simple and could not abide guile, and he counted poverty the greatest blessedness. Having lived ninety years, he was content with garments of goat's hair, and to sustain his bodily strength he ate a little bread with salt. For a long time the saint cherished in his soul a fervent desire to be present at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. When at last a priest celebrated for him this great and saving Mystery, Venerable Mar said that his soul was filled with ineffable

42. About 380.
43. Not far from the city of Cyrrhus, in the Syrian province of Cyrrhestica.

sweetness, and he long gave himself over to contemplation, in deep confusion not daring to raise his eyes to heaven. Having completed his long and saving ascetic labor, the saint peacefully yielded up his spirit to God, and now he rejoices in the eternal mansions.

* * *

NOTES

965. In Alexandria, the center of pagan learning, there had long been a famous museum of literary, mathematical, and philosophical sciences. But at the same time, in opposition to paganism, a Christian institution, the so-called "Catechetical" school, had arisen already in apostolic times, whose influence on the future of Christianity was many-sided and immeasurable. Tradition reverently ascribed the founding of this school to the apostle and evangelist Mark himself. In the early period only the first instructions were taught in it to those desiring baptism, as the very name of the Alexandrian school, "Catechetical," indicates, and at the same time catechists were prepared there. But later the Alexandrian Catechetical School, by its position at the center of world education and learning, took on the character of a theological-scholarly educational institution that reached a brilliant state, chiefly thanks to the labors of the famous Pantaenus, and of his no less remarkable pupil and successor, Clement of Alexandria, and still more of Origen.

992. The writings of St. Gregory the Theologian enjoyed the highest esteem in the Church of Christ. They were the object of the most attentive study and of very many interpretations. The writings of St. Gregory consist of orations, letters and verses. The Five Theological Orations best show what kind of theologian Gregory was. In his oration for Pentecost St. Gregory depicts the actions of the Holy Spirit and, from His actions, shows the true God. In other writings Gregory explains the dogma of the Holy Trinity, and in part speaks of other objects of faith. In general, the orations of Gregory are unexampled in many respects. Both in form and in tone, Gregory's orations are not conversations; they are, in the full sense, oratorical speeches. Of his 45 orations, 5 are panegyrics, 9 are for feasts, and others are apologetic and polemical. Among the festal orations of St. Gregory, the following are now known: on the Nativity of Christ, on the Baptism or Day of Lights, on Pascha, on Pentecost, on Antipascha, on St. Mamas, on the Maccabees, and on the holy martyrs for the Sunday of All Saints. Some words from his sermons entered into the composition of the paschal canon of St. John of Damascus, and from them were formed one of the paschal stichera, which now resounds throughout the Church, and several troparia of the canon. Some words from his sermons also entered into the composition of the Church services for the Nativity of Christ, Pentecost and Antipascha. Of the apologetic and polemical orations of St. Gregory the Theologian, his so-called "Monument" to Julian is known: two orations in which the impiety of Julian is indelibly depicted for posterity. The letters of Gregory belong to the best productions of literature. They are for the most part brief, but Gregory held that the merit of a letter lay in this. The hymns of St. Gregory are divided into three categories: dogmatic,

moral and historical; among the last, he for the most part sings of himself, of his infirmities and sorrows. Also remarkable are his prayer hymns, for example the morning and evening ones, and verses on life, virtue, and the vanity of life; all of them must take first place among the best productions of his creative work. The Church has honored St. Gregory with the name by which she honored John, one eminent among the apostles and evangelists. This appellation was given to him because, following the first Theologian, St. Gregory comprehended the depths of the Divinity with thoughts as lofty and at the same time as exact as a man can comprehend them by the light of Revelation; and especially his whole mind, as with the first Theologian, was turned toward the Eternal Word. The loftiness of thoughts ascending into the inner sanctuary of the Divine nature (as far as it is accessible) is such a peculiarity of St. Gregory that no one possessed it to an equal degree with him.



THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 26

26 января

New Calendar January 26 · Old Calendar February 8 (civil dates)

Life of the Venerable Xenophon and Mary, and of Their Sons John and Arcadius

Житие преподобных Ксенофонта и Марии и сыновей их Иоанна и Аркадия

St. Xenophon was one of the most distinguished dignitaries in Constantinople. He was rich in worldly goods, but richer still in inner treasures: in faith, piety, and diligent observance of all the commandments of God. Though he was eminent by his rank and noble birth, he was yet more eminent by his piety and virtuous life. As high as he stood in honors, so humble of mind was he; he did not exalt his heart above other men, nor boast of his temporal worldly glory. He gathered for himself treasures in heaven, sending his riches ahead thither through the hands of the poor. He had a life companion named Mary, who imitated him in all good works and in everything was of one character with him. Xenophon lived with her virtuously, pleasing God by keeping all the commandments blamelessly and observing the righteousness of God. When they had two sons, John and Arcadius, they brought them up with good instruction and taught them not only book learning but also the fear of God, which is the beginning of all wisdom, and likewise instructed them in every virtue. They desired to see in their children not only heirs of their wealthy estates but chiefly imitators of their God-pleasing life. They sent them to study Hellenic wisdom in the Phoenician city of Berytus[1], which at that time was famed for its

1. Berytus, present-day Beirut, an ancient city of Phoenicia on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; in the fifth century it flourished and was renowned for its high school of rhetoric, poetics and law; today it is the chief administrative city of Asiatic Turkish Syria and the most important trading port of the Syrian coast.

schools. While they lived there for some time for the sake of learning, Xenophon fell seriously ill and already expected death. Mary, not hoping for her husband's recovery, wrote to her sons in Berytus about their father's grievous illness and asked them to return home quickly, before their father passed into eternity. She wished the children to receive their father's last blessing and to take part in his burial. They hastened to return home. Their father, seeing them, rejoiced, and from joy his sickness abated. He bade them sit by his bed and began to instruct them thus:

"As it seems to me, my children, I am drawing near to the end of my life; and you, if you love me, your father, do what I bid you. First, fear God and order your life according to His holy commandments. Then, what I shall say to you further I say not out of vanity, but with the aim of setting you on the path of virtue: if you will have my life as an example for yourselves, I think you will need no other teacher, for teaching in the home, expressed in word and deed, is far more useful than any other teaching. Know, then, that I have lived until now preserving constant reverence and simplicity of heart. I was esteemed and loved by all, not for my high rank but for my meekness and good disposition: I never wronged anyone or in anything, never reproached anyone, never slandered, never envied, never grew angry without cause, never quarreled with anyone. I loved all and lived in peace with all; I did not neglect attendance at the church of God, either in the evening or in the morning; I did not despise the beggar, the wayfarer, or the grieving, but comforted each one by word and deed; I often visited those in prison and ransomed many captives and set them free. As I set a guard upon my lips, so that I should say nothing evil or deceitful, so likewise I made a covenant with my eyes not to look upon another's beauty nor to have desire for it. God preserved me, and I knew no wife but your mother, and even with her I lived in fleshly union until you were born; after that we agreed to remain strangers to each other in the flesh, and we have kept bodily purity for the Lord until now. Follow, then, children, the life of your parents; imitate our faith, patience, and meekness, and live so as to please God; then God will send you a long life. Give alms to the needy, defend widows and orphans, visit the sick and those

in prison, deliver the wronged and the unjustly condemned from calamity, keep peace with all. Be faithful to your friends, do good to your enemies, not repaying evil for evil; toward all be kind, gentle, amiable, humble. Keep your soul and body in purity; and if God blesses you with marriage, let your bed be undefiled. Do good to the churches of God and to the monasteries; honor priests and monks, for for their sake God shows mercy to the whole world. Do not forget especially those who wander for God's sake in the deserts, in the mountains, in caves and chasms of the earth, but supply them with what is necessary for life. Feed the poor abundantly, and you will not become poor. You know that my house never ran short, despite the frequent meals offered to the needy. Pray often and heed the teachings of holy men. Give your mother the honor due her and hearken to her with the fear of the Lord, always fulfilling her will and never departing from her commands. Be merciful to your servants, loving them as members of your household and as your own children; set the aged free and provide them with food and all they need until their death. In short, I repeat to you: what you have seen me doing, do yourselves as well, and you will be counted worthy of the honor and glory of the saints. Remember always also that this world will soon pass away and its glory will vanish. Children, keep the commandments of the Lord and my instructions, and may the God of peace be with you!"

Hearing this speech, John and Arcadius wept and said:

"Do not leave us, father, but beseech God to grant you yet some time to live with us. We believe that you will entreat God, if you will: God will hearken to you. For us, young as we are, your life here is very necessary, so that you may most perfectly guide us to good deeds and yourself order our life as it should be."

The father heaved a heavy sigh and, shedding tears, said:

"Ever since God visited me with this sickness and I lay down upon my bed, I have prayed much and still pray to God that, for the sake of your youth, He would grant me a little more time to live on earth, until I might see you perfected in all things."

On the very next night St. Xenophon had a revelation in a dream that God commanded him to remain yet in this life. He announced this

to his wife and children, and all of them rejoiced and glorified God. The sick man little by little began to recover from his ailment. He said to his sons:

"Children, go and finish your studies, and upon completing them return at once: I will arrange your lawful marriages."

Then he put them on a ship and, providing them with all that was necessary, sent them off again to Berytus.

When they set out to sea, the voyage was at first favorable, for a fair wind blew. But then suddenly a contrary wind arose, and an unexpected storm and a violent swell came upon the sea. The sailors soon abandoned the helm, and the ship was carried by the tempest no one knew whither, sinking more and more amid the waves. All who were on the ship despaired of saving their lives and, under the influence of the calamity and the fear of death, wept bitterly. The two brothers, John and Arcadius, also wept, lifting up prayers to God.

"O most merciful Lord and Providence over every creature!" they prayed. "Do not despise Your creation; remember the good deeds of our parents, and for their sake do not forsake us: do not let us die before our time in the early years of our blooming youth. May the storm of the waters spare us, and may the depth of the sea not swallow us. Remember Your mercies and Your kindnesses, look down from the height of Your holy glory and behold our calamity. Hear our groaning and our lamentation! With contrite heart and humble spirit we pray to You: stretch forth to us Your all-powerful right hand and deliver us from deadly ruin; do not give us over to death for the sake of Your name, but deal with us according to Your mercy and the multitude of Your compassion. Deliver us from drowning for the glory of Your name, for it is not the dead who will praise You, nor those who go down into hell (cf. Ps. 113:25), but we, the living, who will glorify Your majestic name."

The sailors, seeing that the great swell did not subside but grew still greater, so that it was no longer possible for the ship to escape sinking, desired as it were to help the imperiled vessel; they went down into a small boat, specially built, covered above and safe from sinking, and hastened to put off from the ship, sailing wherever the waves carried them. They hoped the waves would cast them up somewhere on the

shore. The young men, John and Arcadius, remaining on the ship with their servants, saw both the flight of the sailors and the inevitable destruction of the ship, since the latter was already breaking apart and, filling with water, sinking in the waves. They wholly despaired of saving their lives, and they stripped off their garments for greater ease in swimming, so as not to sink at once and perish in the deep. Awaiting final parting and death, they called out with weeping and tender voices to their parents, who remained far away at home, speaking to them as though they were present here.

"We wish you well," they said, "dearest father! Be well also, dearest mother! You will not see us again, just as we shall not see you; we shall no longer enjoy together with you the earthly blessings of the home."

Then they began to say to one another:

Woe is us, beloved brother! Woe, light of my eyes! Oh, how grievous it is to be parted! Where now are our parents' prayers? Where are their benefactions to the poor? Where are their alms given to the monks and the respect they showed them? Has not one of their prayers for us reached God, or, if it has reached Him, has it nonetheless proved powerless, overwhelmed by the multitude of our sins, for which we are no longer worthy to live? Woe to us, who lately wept over our father's expected death, and who are now to be the cause of inconsolable weeping and endless lamentation for our parents! O father! You who so zealously cared for our upbringing and the ordering of our lives, you will not see us even dead. O mother, who hoped to see your sons' marriages and were preparing fine chambers ahead of time! You will not even see the coffins of your children. Truly it is hard for parents to see their children dying and to bury them; but for you, dear parents, how much more grievous will be the suffering at the loss of your children, when you have not seen their death, nor can you even receive word of their unexpected and bitter end! You hoped that we would bury you in deep old age, and now we shall not even be granted to be buried by your hands.

Then they embraced, and taking leave of one another, they said:

"Be saved, brother, and forgive me!"

At this they once more cried out to God:

"O King and Lord of all! What a death Thou hast permitted for us! If by Thy unspeakable judgments it is impossible for us to escape it, then at least do not part us in dying. Let one wave cover us, and let the belly of one sea-beast be our tomb!"

They also addressed their servants:

"Be saved, good brothers and friends, and forgive us."

When the ship had finally broken apart, each of them seized the first plank he came upon, and in this way the waves carried them in different directions, apart from one another. But by the grace of God all were saved from drowning and destruction, only scattered to different places: the servants were cast by the waves onto the shore at Tyre[2], John was thrown up at a place called Malmefetan[3], and Arcadius at Tetrapyrgia[4]. Each of them, knowing nothing of his brother's deliverance from death, rejoiced not so much in his own life as he grieved over his brother's death.

Having come ashore, John reasoned with himself: "Where shall I go now? I am ashamed to appear naked before people's eyes. I will go instead to a monastery where pious monks live, and there I will labour for God, who saved me from death, in poverty and humility, rather than in the riches of this world. I think God did not hear us when we prayed to Him on the ship, because our parents wished to join us in marriage and leave us wealth and great possessions. We would have perished in the vanity of this world sooner than at sea. All-seeing God, arranging a better life for us, permitted this calamity for our sake, and as it pleased Him, so it has come to pass. He, the Good One, knows all that is for our benefit, and we know nothing of what must befall us. He knows all and does as He wills, preparing salvation for each soul."

Then, raising his hands to God, he prayed thus: "My Lord, my Lord, who saved me from the waves of the sea and from deadly destruction! Save also Thy servant, my brother Arcadius. Deliver him from a bitter death, as Thou in Thy mercy didst deliver me; and if Thou hast kept

2. Tyre, the ancient capital of Phoenicia, was situated on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Palestine.
3. Malmefetan: a locality in Mesopotamia.
4. Tetrapyrgia: a city in Mesopotamia, near the river Euphrates.

him alive and brought him to dry land, then open his mind, that he may consider and desire the monastic life, and grant him to be pleasing to Thee. Save also the servants who were with us, that none of them may perish in the sea, but that through the salvation of them all Thy most holy name may be glorified!"

Walking along the shore, he continued to pray: "Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son of God! Bow Thine ear to the prayer of Thy servant and direct my steps to the fulfilment of Thy commandments; guide me according to Thy holy will, for Thou knowest, O Master, that I have no other helper at this hour but Thee."

Having gone a considerable distance, he found a monastery and knocked at the gate. The doorkeeper unbolted it and saw him naked. He took off his own outer garment, gave it to him to put on, and leading him into his cell, set bread and pottage before him. When they had risen from the meal, the doorkeeper, a black-robed monk, asked:

"Where are you from, brother?"

He answered:

"I am a stranger, my lord, and a poor man, saved from destruction at sea. When the ship broke apart and sank into the water, I seized hold of the planks and was borne by the waves. God, through your prayers, has kept me alive, and I have been cast upon your land."

The black-robed doorkeeper, hearing this, was moved to tenderness and glorified God, who saves those who hope in Him. Then he asked John:

"Where do you wish to go, brother?"

John answered him:

"Wherever God shows. I would wish to become a monk, if the merciful Lord, overlooking my sins, would grant me to take up His good yoke."

The monk said to him:

"Truly, child, you desire a good work, and you will be blessed if you labour for God with all diligence."

Then John made the following request of him:

"I beg you, father, tell me: may I remain here with you?"

The monk answered:

"Wait a little; I will report about you to our father the abbot. Perhaps God will reveal something to him concerning you. Then whatever he commands you, do it, and you will be saved."

The doorkeeper went to the abbot and related to him everything about the youth in detail. The abbot ordered that he be brought to him, and on seeing him he understood God's calling in his destiny. Foreseeing his good life, he said:

"Blessed be God, the God of your father and mother, who saved you from death in the sea and brought you here!"

Then, giving him detailed instruction in the saving monastic life, he signed him with the sign of the cross and ordered him to remain in the monastery. Before long he tonsured John into the angelic monastic rank. Thus the blessed John laboured in prayer and fasting and in all the monastery's labours, fulfilling his obediences. But he constantly grieved over his brother Arcadius, thinking that he had perished in the waves of the sea.

Arcadius also, by God's providence, remained alive; and having come out of the sea onto dry land at Tetrapyrgia, he fell prostrate and prayed to God thus: "Lord God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of my father! I thank Thee that Thou hast delivered me from the turmoil and the storm, and brought me out of death into a life I no longer expected, and set my feet upon dry land. But as Thou, most merciful, hast saved me from drowning, so save also Thy servant, my brother John. I pray to Thee, my Lord, my Lord: keep him by Thy mercy, that the waves and the storm may not overwhelm him, and the abyss may not swallow him. Hear me, O Lord, for great are Thy mercies, and grant me to see my brother. Remember the deeds of our father, and do not bring John down into the depths of the sea. Do not deliver the young lad to untimely and sudden death. Grant me first to see him, and then to die."

Praying thus, he wept bitterly and even grew faint from weeping; then, rising, he went to a village not far off, where a Christ-loving man met him and gave him an old garment. He dressed, and asking for a little bread, he strengthened his exhausted body. After this he went to a church that stood there, and once more prayed with tears for his

brother; then he leaned against a pillar standing by the church and fell asleep. At once, in a dream vision, he saw his brother John, who said to him:

"Brother Arcadius! Why do you weep so bitterly for me and break your heart? By the grace of Christ I remain alive; therefore do not grieve for me."

Arcadius, waking, believed that the dream was true; he was filled with great joy and gave thanks to God. At the same time he pondered within himself what he should do.

"Shall I go," he thought, "to our parents? Not seeing my brother with me, they will grieve at my return. If I go back to school and, after completing the study of philosophy, return to our parents, I shall not gladden them either. Seeing me alone, they will begin to weep bitterly. I do not know what to do. I remember how my father always praised the monastic life, bound to silence and drawing near to God. So I will go to a monastery and become a monk."

Having reasoned thus within himself, Arcadius offered a prayer and went to Jerusalem. Having venerated there the holy places in which the Lord wrought salvation for the world, he left the city and intended to go to whatever monastery he should come upon on the way. Continuing on, he met a venerable monk, adorned with grey hair, a man of holy life and a seer. Approaching him, the youth fell at his feet, kissed them, and said:

"Pray to the Lord for me, holy father, for I am in great despondency and suffering."

The elder said to him:

"Do not grieve, child! Your brother, over whom you grieve, is as alive as you are. All the others who were with you on the ship, kept by God, were saved from destruction and went to monasteries for the sake of the monastic life. Your brother John has already received the first monastic consecration. There will come a time when you will see your brother with your own eyes, for your prayer has been heard."

Arcadius, hearing these words of the great elder, stood amazed and wondered at the holy man's foresight; then, once more falling at his feet, he said:

"Since God has hidden nothing from you of what has happened to me, do not reject me either, I beg you. In whatever way you know, save my wretched soul and bring me into the monastic life."

The elder said to him:

"Blessed be God! Follow me, my child."

The elder led him to the Lavra of St. Chariton, which in Syriac was called Sukiya[5]. There he tonsured the youth as a monk and gave him a cell in which one of the great fathers had formerly labored for fifty years. Arcadius spent one year with this same far-seeing elder, who instructed him in the rules of monastic life and taught him how to contend with and resist the unseen enemies. At the end of the year the elder withdrew into the desert, leaving Arcadius alone in the cell, and promising to see him again after three years. Arcadius, having received the elder's instructions, diligently fulfilled them, working for God day and night.

Two years after the loss of the ship, Xenophon, not knowing what had happened to his children at sea, sent one of his slaves to Berytus, charging him to seek out John and Arcadius and to learn everything about them in detail: whether they were well, and whether they would soon finish their studies. The father and mother were greatly surprised that for so long a time the children had never let them know of themselves and had not sent a single letter to their parents. The slave, arriving at Berytus and learning that the children of his master Xenophon had not come to that city, thought: have they changed their intention, and gone on to Athens? And so he went to Athens to look for them. Not finding them there either, and being unable to gather any information about them anywhere, he returned to Byzantium troubled. While he was resting on the road at an inn, a wandering monk stopped there to rest as well. In the course of conversation he said that he was on his way to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places. Xenophon's slave, looking at the monk attentively, gradually recognized in him his former comrade, one of the slaves whom the master had sent with the children to Berytus. The slave asked the monk:

5. The memory of the Venerable Chariton is observed on September 28. The Lavra of Souka, founded by him, was in Palestine, south of Bethlehem.

– Is not that your name? – and, naming him, said:

– You are the slave of our master Xenophon who set out with John and Arcadius for Berytus.

The monk answered:

– Indeed it is I, and you are my comrade, for we are slaves of one master.

Then the slave asked:

– What has happened to you that you have taken the form of a monk? And where are our masters John and Arcadius? Tell me, I beg you, for I have endured many hardships in seeking them and have found them nowhere.

The monk heaved a heavy sigh, and with eyes full of tears began to tell him everything in detail.

– You must know, friend, that our masters perished at sea, and all who were with them as well. As I think, I alone escaped destruction. I resolved to hide myself in the monastic habit rather than return home and bring the dreadful news to our master and mistress and all the household. Thus I became a monk, and I am going to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places.

The slave, hearing this, began to cry out loudly and to weep bitterly. He began to wail with pity, beat his breast, and said:

– Woe is me, my masters! What has befallen you? What am I hearing about you! How you have suffered! What a bitter end has overtaken you! Who will announce to the father and mother your dreadful death? Whose eyes will be able to look upon a father's tears and a mother's grief? Can one hear without trembling their weeping, sobbing and lamentation! Alas for me, my good masters! You have perished, our hope! We hoped that you, becoming heirs after your parents, would bring happiness to us slaves, would shower your benefactions upon the needy, comfort strangers, do good to the poor, adorn God's churches, and supply what was needful to the monasteries; and now, woe to us! All our hopes are dashed. I do not know what to do. If I return home to my master, I shall not dare to tell him such grievous news. Indeed, how shall I announce to the father and mother that their sons have perished at sea? Will they not, on hearing it, fall dead at once, overcome by bit-

ter grief of heart? Therefore I shall not go home, lest because of such a bad report which I bring, my masters should die before their time, and I should become the cause of their death.

While the slave was speaking and weeping in this way, not wishing to return to his master Xenophon, the travelers and inhabitants of the village who were there urged him to stop weeping and advised him to go home and tell his masters everything, so that they would not curse him.

– If you do not announce to the masters the grief that is theirs, – they said, – and you yourself suddenly vanish, there will be no salvation for you.

The slave heeded their advice and returned to Constantinople. Entering his master's house, he sat down with his head bowed and his face drawn, and in confusion he was silent.

His mistress Maria, hearing that their slave sent to the children had returned, at once summoned him and began to question him:

– How are our children?

– They are well, quite healthy, – the slave answered.

The mistress went on asking:

– But where are their letters?

– I lost them on the way, – the slave answered.

Then her heart began to be troubled, and she addressed the slave:

– I adjure you by God, tell me the truth. My soul is greatly troubled, and my strength has left me.

Then he cried out loudly, wept bitterly, and began to tell the truth.

– Woe is me, my mistress! – he said. – Both your lights have been extinguished at sea: the ship was wrecked, and all drowned.

O how steadfast, beyond expectation, the mistress proved to be on hearing this news! Firmly believing in God, instead of falling to the ground from weakness and grief and weeping in despair, she was silent for some time in astonishment, and then said:

– Blessed be God who has ordained all this! As it pleased the Lord, so has He done. Let the name of the Lord be blessed from now and forever!

To the slave who had brought her the news she said:

– Be silent and tell no one of this: the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; He Himself knows what is for our benefit.

When about three hours had passed and the day was drawing toward evening, Xenophon returned home from the imperial palace. He returned in solemn procession, preceded and accompanied by many. Entering the house and dismissing the people who had come with him, he sat down to dine. He took food only once a day, and that in the evening. When he reclined at table, his wife Maria addressed him:

– Do you know, my master, that our slave has come back from Berytus?

Xenophon answered this:

– Blessed be God! Where is the slave who has returned?

The mistress said to him:

– He is ill and is resting.

Then Xenophon asked:

– Has he brought us letters from the children?

She answered:

– Leave it for today, master! Now let us take food, and tomorrow you shall see the letters. The slave has much to tell us of them by word of mouth.

But Xenophon insisted:

– Let the letters be brought today and at once. I will read them and learn whether our children are well. And whatever he has to say by word of mouth, let him tell tomorrow.

Then Maria, unable to restrain her heart's grief, dissolved in tears and could not answer for her sobs. Xenophon, seeing that she wept so bitterly, was astonished and began to ask:

– What is this, my lady Maria? Why do you weep so? Are our children ill?

She could scarcely bring herself to say:

– It would be better if they were ill, but they have perished at sea, our dear children.

Xenophon groaned aloud and, shedding tears, said:

– Blessed be the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, forever, amen! Do not grieve, my lady. I believe that God will not

permit our children to perish utterly, and I hope that His merciful providence will not bring sorrow to my gray hairs, just as I never dared to offend His goodness. Let us pray for His great mercy throughout this whole night, and let us hope that God will reveal to us about our children: whether they are alive or not.

Then they at once rose, shut themselves in the prayer room, and spent that whole night in prayer, turning to God with abundant tears and firm faith. When it began to grow light, they lay down to rest, each apart, on rough hair shirts. And both of them had the same dream. It seemed to them that they saw their two sons standing before Christ the Lord in great glory: John had a throne prepared for him, a scepter and a royal crown adorned with costly pearls and precious stones; and Arcadius had a crown of stars, a cross in his right hand, and a bright bed prepared for his rest. When they arose from sleep and told each other of their vision, they understood that their sons were alive and preserved by the mercy of the Lord. They were greatly gladdened, and Xenophon said to his wife:

– Maria, I think our children are in Jerusalem. Let us go there and venerate the holy places. Perhaps somehow we shall find our children there too.

Having thus consulted together, Xenophon and Maria prepared for the journey, gave instructions to their stewards concerning everything touching the house and property, gave much alms, and took with them as much gold as was needful for almsgiving and for offerings at the holy places, and set out for Jerusalem. Arriving there, they visited all the holy places, praying and distributing alms. Then they began to go round all the monasteries in the vicinity of Jerusalem, seeking their children, but they found them nowhere. It happened that on the way in one place they met one of their slaves who had been with their children on the ship, now already become a monk. They embraced him, kissed him, and bowed to the ground before him. The monk in turn bowed to the ground before them and said:

– I beg you, for the Lord's sake, do not bow down to me: it is not fitting for you, my masters, to bow thus to me, your slave.

Xenophon said to him:

– We venerate the holy monastic habit, and therefore we bow to it. Do not grieve over this, but rather tell us, we beg you, where are our sons? Tell us, for the Lord's sake, tell us!

The monk wept and said:

– When the ship was wrecked at sea, we each seized whatever plank we could and swam apart from one another, carried about by the storm. I know nothing more. I do not know whether anyone escaped destruction or not. Only I was cast ashore on the coast of the land of Tyre.

Having learned this, Xenophon and Maria released the monk to continue his journey, generously giving him alms, so that he would pray for them and for their children. They set out for the lands of the Jordan, to pray there also and to distribute the gold that remained. As they walked the appointed way, by God's providence they met that holy elder, the seer, who had clothed their son Arcadius in the monastic habit. Falling at the feet of the holy father, they asked him for his prayers before God. All things concerning them were revealed to the holy elder by God. Having offered prayer, he said to them:

– Who led Xenophon and Maria to Jerusalem?

No one, except love for their children.

But do not grieve: your children are alive, and God has revealed to you in a dream the glory prepared for them in heaven. Go, then, laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, to the place where you are now going, and when you have finished your prayers there, on your return to the holy city you will see your children.

Having conversed thus, they parted: Xenophon with Maria went to the Jordan, and the prophetic elder went to the holy city, and, having visited the church of the Resurrection of Christ, he sat down on the ground near Holy Golgotha and rested. As the holy elder sat there, the young monk John, son of Xenophon, who had come to Jerusalem from the Malmefetan monastery for veneration, saw the holy elder and bowed to him to the ground. The elder greeted him with love and, blessing him, asked:

– Where have you been until now, my lord John? Your father and your mother are seeking you, and you have come seeking your brother.

John marveled that this great elder knew everything. Understanding that he was a seer, he fell at the feet of the saint and said:

– I beg you, father, tell me, for the Lord's sake, where my brother is. My soul is greatly faint with desire to see him. I have labored much, praying to God that He would reveal to me whether my brother is alive or not. But the Lord has not been pleased to reveal it to me until now—unless now through you, holy father!

The elder said to him:

– Sit beside me; you will soon see your brother.

When they had sat a little while, another monk approached, the young Arcadius, with a wasted body and a dried-up face. His eyes had sunk deep from excessive fasting and abstinence. Bowing to the holy places, he soon saw the seated elder, and running to him, he fell at his feet, saying:

– Father, you have left your field and for the third year you have not visited it; many thorns and weeds have grown up in your absence, and you will have much labor before you clear it.

The elder said to him:

– Know, my child, that I have visited my field every day, and I believe in the Lord that there have grown up on it not thorns and not weeds, but ripe wheat, worthy of the table of the King of kings. Sit beside me.

Arcadius sat down. The elder was silent for some time and then turned to John:

– Where are you from, brother John?

John answered:

– I am, my father, a poor man and a wanderer. I ask only for the fulfillment of one desire of my heart, through the mercy of the Lord and your holy prayer.

The elder said to him:

– Yes, that is so. But tell me of what family you are, and what city is your homeland, and likewise what your life has been, so that the name of the Lord may be glorified.

John began to recount everything in order: that he was a native of Constantinople, the son of a dignitary, that he had a brother Arcadius,

with whom he had been sent to Berytus to study, and that on the sea, during a violent storm, the ship had been wrecked and all had drowned except him.

Arcadius, listening to this account, looked intently at the monk and at last recognized in him his brother. Moved by the spirit of fraternal love, he could listen no longer to the story being told by the monk and cried out:

– Truly, father, this is my brother John!

The elder said in reply:

– I know it too, but I was silent so that you yourselves might recognize one another.

They hastened to throw themselves into each other's arms, embracing and kissing one another with joy and tears, and then, rising, they glorified God, who had granted them to see each other alive, in the holy monastic habit and in such a virtuous life dedicated to God.

Two days later Xenophon and Maria came from the Jordan. After praying on Golgotha and venerating the life-giving Tomb of our Lord, they distributed much gold in that holy place to the glory of God. Seeing there also the holy seer elder, they recognized him and, falling at his feet, asked for his prayer. After the prayer they said to the elder:

– For the Lord's sake, father, fulfill your promise and show us our children.

Both of their sons, John and Arcadius, were standing near the elder, but he commanded them not to say a word and not even to raise their eyes, but to look downward, so that they would not be recognized. The children recognized their parents and rejoiced in their hearts, but the parents could not recognize their children, partly because they were in monastic garments, and partly because from prolonged abstinence the beauty of their faces had faded. Then the holy elder said to the saints Xenophon and Maria:

– Go to your lodging and prepare a meal for us. I will come with my disciples, and, having eaten food with you, I will tell you where your children are.

The parents were greatly gladdened, since the holy father had promised to show them their children, and, going off, they quickly prepared an abundant meal. The holy elder said to his disciples:

– Let us go to the place where your parents are staying, but take care to say nothing until I tell you.

Both brothers said to him:

– As you command, father, so it shall be.

Then the elder continued:

– Let us share with them the meal and the conversation. This will not harm your salvation. Believe me that whatever labor you undertake for the sake of virtue, you will not attain the measure of perfection of your father and mother.

Then they came to the lodging that had received Xenophon, and sat down at the meal set before them. They ate together and conversed about edifying things. After this the blessed Xenophon and Maria addressed the elder:

– Holy father, how do our children live?

The saint answered:

– They labor valiantly for their salvation.

The parents said in reply:

– May God, who orders the salvation of all people, grant that they be true workers in the vineyard of Christ!

Then Xenophon again addressed the elder:

– Oh, how good are these disciples of yours, father! Oh, if only our children were such! Our souls have greatly loved these young monks. As soon as we saw them, our hearts rejoiced, as though we had seen our own children.

Then the elder said to Arcadius:

– Tell us, child, where you were born, how you were raised, how you came here?

Arcadius began to tell it thus:

– Father, my brother and I are natives of Byzantium, sons of one of the foremost dignitaries in the imperial palace. We were raised in piety. Our parents sent us to Berytus to study Hellenic wisdom. As we were sailing, our ship was wrecked by the waves and the storm, and each of

us, seizing a plank from the broken ship, floated wherever the waves carried him. By God's mercy we remained alive and were cast by the sea onto the shore.

While he was still speaking, the parents recognized that these were their children, and at once they cried out:

– Here are our children! Here is the fruit of our womb! Here are the lights of our eyes!

Throwing themselves on their necks, they kissed them with love and wept for joy. The elder also wept. Then all rose, offered glory and thanksgiving to God, and rejoiced, glorifying the great and wondrous providence of God.

After this Xenophon and his companion asked the holy elder to tonsure them also into the monastic order. By the hand of the seer father Xenophon and Maria were tonsured, and by him they were taught the monastic rules. The elder commanded them that they should not live together but each apart. After a little time they all separated. Maria went to a monastery of women monastics, and John and Arcadius, bidding farewell to their parents, went with the elder into the desert. Xenophon, sending to Byzantium, ordered his house and all his property sold, distributed everything to the needy, freed his slaves, and, finding a cell in the desert, gave himself over to silence.

All of them served God to the end and were granted great gifts from Him: John and Arcadius shone among the desert-dwellers like lights, and, having lived many years, foreknew their death and departed to the Lord. The Venerable Maria worked many miracles, healed the blind, cast out demons, and after her blessed repose passed from earth to heaven. The Venerable Xenophon also received from God the gift of working miracles and of prophecy: he foretold the future and was a beholder of great mysteries, and then departed to behold what the human eye had not seen and to enjoy the vision of the Face of God. Thus the Venerable Xenophon, the blessed Maria, and their holy children, John and Arcadius, who zealously loved God, fervently served the Lord by a righteous and God-pleasing life[6], and were numbered among the saints

6. The Venerable Xenophon and Mary, and their sons John and Arcadius, lived and labored in the fifth century.

by the Most Holy Master, Christ our Savior, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, honor, and worship forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having escaped the sea of this life, the righteous Xenophon and his honorable spouse rejoice together in heaven with their children, magnifying Christ.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Simeon the Elder

Память преподобного Симеона Ветхого

Venerable Simeon, called "the Elder"[7], from his youth lived the life of the desert, settling in a small cave in Syria, in complete solitude. His life passed in strict fasting, unceasing prayer and contemplation of God. His only food was the herbs that grew around the cave. Thus he struggled for many years. But when people began to gather about him, desiring to see him, and by this broke his silence, he left the cave and removed to Mount Aman[8]; yet here too he found no rest from the many who came to him. Then he withdrew to Mount Sinai[9]. But God did not will that the Venerable remain on Sinai, for it was necessary that he serve the salvation of others in the place of his former labors. Therefore Simeon returned to Aman. Under his direction, within a short time, two monasteries were established there: one on the summit of the mountain, the other below, at its foot. Governing the monasteries, the Venerable Simeon watched over the ascetics entrusted to his guidance, encouraged and strengthened them in the labors of piety, warned them of the assaults and snares of the enemy of

7. He is called "the Elder" or "the Ancient" in comparison with the Venerable Simeon the Stylite, who also labored in Syria after him.

8. Aman: a peak of the Antilebanon mountains, in the north of Palestine, east of the Mediterranean Sea.

9. Mount Sinai is properly a group of mountains consisting of granite cliffs cut through and surrounded by steep valleys; the Arabs now call it Mount Tur or Jebel Tur Sina; it lies nearly in the middle of the known arms of the Red Sea, which form the Sinai Peninsula. It consists of three mountain ridges. The mountain Sinai proper, at which the Israelites entered into covenant with God, is the highest peak of the middle ridge.

our salvation, and led them in the struggle against him; he roused them to inner watchfulness, disposed them to meekness, to forbearance toward their neighbors, and to magnanimity toward their enemies. For his tireless labors the Venerable received from God the grace to command even savage beasts. Having lived well-pleasing to God, the Venerable, in deep old age, fell asleep peacefully in the Lord[10].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Ananias the Presbyter, Peter the Keeper of the Prison, and with him seven soldiers

Память святых мучеников Анании пресвитера, Петра темничного ключаря и с ним семи воинов

Saint Ananias was distinguished for piety from infancy. Given over to instruction in letters, he applied himself in boyhood to the reading of the Divine Books. Therefore, when he had grown up, he was made deacon by the people, though against his will, and afterward presbyter, despite his youthful years. In the persecution of Diocletian, Ananias, as a Christian, was brought before the court. Despite persuasions and threats he remained unbending and openly confessed Christ before the people; he mocked the pagan gods in their temple, overthrew the idols with a single breath, and destroyed the temple itself. After this Ananias was cast into prison, where on the seventh day he was granted a vision of Christ, and on the twelfth day a vision of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. After these visions, the prison guard, by name Peter, believed in Christ, and both of them were brought before the new governor, who commanded that Ananias be laid on a red-hot griddle, after which his body was to be scraped and sprinkled with salt, and Peter was to be placed on hot coals; then they were shut into a heavily heated bath, but after three days were found unharmed. At this miracle seven soldiers turned to Christ, and for this they were cruelly beaten with scourges. Then all nine were cast into the fire, but after the Holy Spirit appeared to them in the form of a dove, they remained un-

10. The Venerable Simeon the Elder reposed about 390.

hurt. Ananias was given over to wild beasts, but remained whole. At last they were all drowned in the sea. On the way, Ananias baptized the seven soldiers who had come to faith. The bodies of the holy martyrs were cast up on the shore by the waves, were honorably buried by Christians, and gave forth many kinds of healing[11].

* * *

Commemoration of Saint Joseph of Thessalonica

Память святого Иосифа Солунского

Saint Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica, brother of the Venerable Theodore the Studite, labored together with him from youth under the direction of their uncle, the Venerable Plato, who had founded a monastery at Sakudion[12]. Together with his brother, Saint Joseph denounced the unlawful marriage of the Emperor Constantine[13]. Brought to Constantinople, he was tormented by hunger and at last sent into exile on a barren island, where he was cast into a prison. The Emperor Michael Kouropalates[14] permitted Joseph to return from exile. Under Leo the Armenian[15], Saint Joseph suffered persecution for the veneration of icons. Leo subjected him, together with his brother Theodore the Studite, to torture, and afterward shut him in prison; after some time the emperor demanded that they subscribe to the iconoclastic confession of faith. Joseph refused, and he was cast into another foul prison. Afterward Michael the Stammerer[16] released Joseph, together with the other monks who had suffered for the veneration of icons. Saint Joseph died peacefully in the Studite monastery, where he spent the last years of his life[1018].

* * *

11. The sufferings of the holy martyrs Ananias, Peter, and with them the seven soldiers took place in Phoenicia. Their death followed at the beginning of the fourth century.
12. Sakudion: the later famous monastery in Bithynia, a northwestern region of Asia Minor.
13. The Emperor Constantine VI Porphyrogenitus reigned from 780 to 797. Giving himself over to excess in passions and adultery, he forcibly tonsured his wife Mary into monasticism and, in her place, took for himself another wife, Theodota, who was a relative of his father.
14. Michael I Kouropalates, or Rangabe, reigned from 811 to 813.
15. Leo V the Armenian, an iconoclast, reigned from 813 to 820.
16. Michael II the Stammerer reigned from 820 to 829.

NOTES

1018. Saint Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica, died in 830. There remain after him several discourses, of which the homily on the Elevation of the Precious Cross of the Lord is especially notable. Joseph is better known as a hymnographer. According to manuscripts of the Triodion of the eleventh century, the name of Joseph stands over those of the two daily three-ode canons of the Lenten Triodion which occupy the first place, excluding the three-ode canons of Holy Week; to him also belong some stichera for these days. The three-ode canons and stichera of Saint Joseph partly contain tender prayers to the Angels, the Forerunner, the Theotokos, the Apostles and Saint Nicholas, and partly portray the spirit of fasting and a penitential prayer to the Judge who knows the hearts. The hymns of Joseph, and especially the canon for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, fully befit the days of fasting, breathing deep contrition for sins.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 27

27 января

New Calendar January 27 · Old Calendar February 9 (civil dates)

Translation of the Relics of Our Holy Father John Chrysostom

Перенесение мощей святого отца нашего Иоанна Златоуста

Some thirty years and more after the repose[1] of the great universal teacher, St. John Chrysostom, in the city of Comana[2], St. Proclus, who had once been his disciple and afterwards his successor on the throne[3], celebrated the divine service in memory of him in the summer, in the Great Church of Constantinople, and delivered an address to the people, glorifying the servant of God with many praises.

"No one," he said, "can praise St. John as he deserves, unless another John such as he should appear today. Like a river full of waters, his memory, made up of the recollection of his countless labors, exploits and instructions, refreshes the souls of the faithful. In him shine the rays of the grace of God; in them one sees with clarity the sun of the Divinity, another is shown the purification of Orthodoxy from heresies, for another the ruin of idols is revealed, for another the falsehood of error is made manifest, another sees the establishment of the faith and the correction of morals, and for another the heavenly crowns gleam. O

1. St. John Chrysostom reposed in the year 407, about 60 years of age. He was Archbishop of Constantinople for six and a half years, and spent three years and three months in confinement. (For the sake of the feast of the Elevation of the Cross of the Lord, the Church commemorates St. John Chrysostom not on the 14th day of September, when the hierarch reposed, but on the 13th day of November. Besides this, the memory of Chrysostom is also honored on January 30 together with Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian (see concerning this under the 30th of this month).

2. Comana—a city in the province of Pontus, in the northeast of Asia Minor; today only ruins remain of the city.

3. From 437 to 445 – his memory is celebrated by the Church on November 20.

hierarch, whose memory is like air filled with fragrance! O name of John, corresponding to his deeds! O surname of Chrysostom, clearly showing what he was in the preaching of the word of God! O tongue higher than the heavens! O teacher, who spreads the thunders of the Gospel! This is John, like John the Forerunner of the Lord, who preached repentance. That one was a preacher, this one a God-voiced trumpet. That one was unshaken, this one invincible. That one was a virgin, this one a defender of purity. That one baptized in the wilderness, this one in the city spread out the spiritual nets. That one rebuked the adulterer, this one sternly rebuked the plunderers. That one was cast into prison, this one was banished into exile. That one was beheaded by the sword, and this one desired to receive the same death for the truth. Many were his exploits on earth; many crowns are prepared for him in heaven. John now cries out together with the holy Apostle Paul: I am the fragrance of Christ (2 Cor. 2:15), for I have cleansed all places of error as of a stench: in Ephesus I removed the deceits of Midas; in Phrygia I made the mother of false gods childless; in Caesarea I destroyed the public brothels; in Syria I abolished the assemblies opposed to God; in Persia I sowed the seed of piety. Everywhere I planted the roots of the Orthodox faith; through my teaching I enlightened the whole world with the knowledge of God. By composing books, I spread the nets of salvation everywhere. With John the Theologian I theologized about the Word of the Father. Together with the fishermen I cast into the world the nets of Orthodoxy. O John! Your life was indeed full of sorrow, but your death is honorable, your tomb is glorious, your reward is great!"

While St. Proclus was speaking thus in the church, the people, burning with love for St. John Chrysostom, could not wait for the end of the address, but with one voice, as though with one mouth, all cried out loudly to St. Proclus, asking him to hasten the return of the holy relics of John from Comana to Constantinople. The loud acclamations resounded in the church for so long that the patriarch could not finish his address. Immediately after the dismissal of the service, St. Proclus went to Emperor Theodosius[4], son of Arcadius and grandson of

Theodosius the Great, and asked him for the translation of the honorable relics of John Chrysostom, saying:

"Restore, O emperor, him who begot you in the Gospel through holy Baptism and who brought you into the Church with hierarchical hands, as the elder Simeon once did the Lord. The Church calls to you: my beauty has faded, my lips are closed, my splendor is darkened. A wild boar has torn the shepherds of John's flock, and savage beasts have destroyed the fruits of my lips.

Envy has defiled the holiness of my servant; as in a forest grove with axes, they cut him off from me and shut him up in the tomb of silence. The friends of the heretics said among themselves: let us stop the mouth that spoke much against us. Let us shame his words, for no one will be able to teach like that any longer, and no one will contradict us any more. How long, O emperor, shall the enemy revile me on account of Chrysostom? Restore to me him who was the likeness of my Bridegroom Christ. Grant to me, your mother, your spiritual father. Although your fleshly mother has removed him from me, do not follow her unmerciful heart and evil intent, but be zealous for the holiness of the spirit, without which no one shall see the Lord. The glory of Eudoxia[5] has passed away, but the Church abides forever. I am your mother for everlasting ages. Grant me the opportunity to spread joy everywhere by the return of Chrysostom, and you will have in me an intercessor for you before God. Acquire the soul of Chrysostom as an intercessor for you. Be a son of righteousness, established by a father's prayer!"

Having said much in the name of the Church, he inclined the emperor to agreement. The most honorable men were sent to Comana with a silver reliquary, to transfer the holy relics of John Chrysostom with great honor. When they arrived there and showed the imperial letter to the bishop of Comana and to the whole people, great sorrow arose among the people, grief and weeping at the loss of such a great treasure. The people did not want to give up the holy relics. They deliber-

4. Emperor Theodosius II the Younger reigned from 408 to 450.

5. Eudoxia – wife of Emperor Arcadius; she was especially hostile to John Chrysostom and hated him for his denunciatory sermons. Through her efforts and intrigues St. John was deprived of the archiepiscopal throne and exiled to Comana.

ated much on this matter; yet they could not oppose the imperial command. But when the men sent by the emperor wished to take the holy relics from the tomb, they at once became heavier than stone and any other weight, so that despite all efforts it was impossible to move them from their place. The envoys labored much, but accomplished nothing. Understanding from this that the saint did not consent that his relics be taken from there, they at once informed the emperor in writing. The emperor, having consulted with the most holy patriarch and other holy men, understood his error — namely, that he had sent to take the relics of St. John from Comana not with prayer but with command. He resolved to write to him as to one living, asking forgiveness for his presumption and begging him to deign to return to his throne and to console his flock. He wrote with his own hand the following:

"To the universal teacher and my spiritual father, St. John Chrysostom, Theodosius the Emperor: Your honorable body, most honorable father, I regarded as lifeless, like the bodies of the other dead, and I commanded that it be brought to us at once, but I did not receive what I desired because of my unworthiness. Now, to you as to one living, I send this petition written with my own hand, and with faith I ask forgiveness for myself and your people. Forgive the bold undertaking I have begun, covering it with the depth of your wisdom. You who taught all men repentance, forgive the penitent. As to children who love their father, return to us our father, and gladden by your coming those who love you. Beyond great necessity, I earnestly beseech you to come to us; I do not command you. Do not shame me a second time, most honorable father! Grant yourself to those who desire to see you: return in peace to your own place, and your own people will receive you with love."

Having written this letter, the emperor gave it to the couriers and commanded that the saint's tomb be opened, that the letter be placed on the breast of the saint, and that an all-night vigil then be served. When the imperial letter sent to Comana was placed on the breast of St. John, and when afterwards, after the all-night vigil, the imperial men touched the honorable relics, the saint at once yielded himself to them: he became as light as he had been naturally. The envoys rejoiced, and taking the honorable relics from the tomb, placed them in the imperial

reliquary. There was a poor man there, who had a lame leg from a snake bite and who lived at the churches, begging alms. He took a small cloth from the saint's tomb and wiped his leg with it. At once his leg became strong, like the other, and he began to walk, glorifying God. The whole people gathered with candles to venerate the honorable relics of the saint and accompanied them during the translation with abundant tears and weeping. The imperial men set out on the journey and, having traveled without hindrance a great distance, reached the harbor of Chalcedon[6]. To meet the holy relics went out the emperor with the whole senate, the patriarch with the clergy, and an innumerable multitude of people who boarded ships. A special imperial ship had been prepared to receive the honorable relics of John, and the reliquary with the relics was placed on it. When they were returning to Constantinople, a storm suddenly arose on the sea by God's permission. All the ships were scattered here and there; but the ship on which the reliquary with the relics of the saint was, having lost its rudder, drifted of its own accord, invisibly guided not by a human hand but by the power of God. It came to shore at the place where there was the vineyard of a widow, on account of which St. John Chrysostom had endured so many afflictions and even exile. Thus even after death he showed zeal for righteousness and exposed the injury unjustly inflicted. At once the sea grew calm, the ships came together in one place unharmed, and no one suffered from the sea's turbulence.

When the reliquary with the relics had been carried from the ship to the shore, the whole city rose up and came out with candles, censers and hymns. The clergy, taking the reliquary, first carried it into the church of the holy Apostle Thomas, and then into the church of Irene, otherwise called the church of the Peace of Christ. Here the emperor and the patriarch opened the reliquary and found the body of St. John like a vine in bloom, flourishing with beauty and incorruption and giving forth a great fragrance. The emperor, taking off his purple robe, spread it over the relics, and then, falling upon the breast of the saint, spoke with tears:

6. Chalcedon was situated opposite Constantinople, on the Asian shore of the Bosporus.

Forgive, Father, the offence done to you through envy. Do not count me an accomplice in my mother's sin, nor suffer me to bear the bitterness of my parents' intemperance. Although I am the son of your persecutor, I am nonetheless guiltless of the calamity inflicted upon you. Forgive her transgression, that I too may be free from the reproach that weighs upon her. I bow my rank before your feet and submit all my power to your intercession. Pardon her who wronged you by her senseless violence, for she has repented of what she did to you and asks forgiveness, addressing you humbly through my lips, saying: remember, Father, your teaching on bearing no malice, and yourself forget my malice. I wish to rise from my fall, but give me your hand, you who did say: if anyone has fallen once, let him arise, and he shall be saved. I cannot bear your displeasure with me; even my tomb quakes, shaking my bones. I fear both eternal punishment and being deprived of standing at the right hand at the Last Judgment of Christ. Many you have saved by your teachings; let me not alone be deprived of the same salvation. Do not abandon me, who call after you, but avenge me upon my enemy, the devil, for it was he who taught me to offend you, as he once taught Eve to sin against God. Be not angry with me, you who were without malice; as you did bear no malice in mortal life, bear none in the immortal. If in living a temporal life I have done you harm, then, living the eternal life, be profitable to my soul. My glory has passed away, and nothing has helped me; help me then, Father, in your glory, which you have received from God, and before I am condemned at the Last Judgment of Christ, forgive me, who cannot answer.

Speaking these words in the name of his mother, the emperor did not cease weeping, but bathed the body of the saint with tears and kissed it in fear. Likewise the most holy Proclus, kissing the body of the saint with love, cried out:

– Rejoice, Christ-loving Father, sweetest teacher! I am your child, nourished at your spiritual milk. As you were my shepherd before, so you are shepherd now: my sheep are yours; upon your pasture your flock still feeds, and, striving toward you, it does not wish to follow other shepherds. Show us your face once more and make us hear your voice again.

All the people strove to touch even the honorable reliquary of the saint and did not leave it day or night. In the morning the relics of the saint were placed upon the imperial chariot and carried with great honor and glory to the great cathedral church of the Holy Apostles. When the reliquary was carried inside and set upon the patriarchal throne, the whole people cried out as if with one voice:

– Take your throne, Father!

Then Patriarch Proclus and with him many of the most worthy men saw that St. John, as if alive, parted his dead lips and pronounced the archiepiscopal greeting:

– Peace be to all!

During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, many miraculous healings were granted to the sick from the holy relics of Chrysostom, and likewise the coffin of Empress Eudoxia ceased its long-standing quaking. The presbyters laid the holy body of John in the sanctuary beneath the table of oblation, glorifying with joy and gladness Christ God, praised with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

Grace shining forth from thy lips like the radiance of fire hath illumined the universe: thou didst not acquire for the world treasures of love of money, but didst show us the height of humility. Instructing us by thy words, O Father John Chrysostom, entreat the Word, Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

The honorable Church rejoices mysteriously at the return of thy honorable relics, and having hidden them as precious gold, she grants to those who sing thee, through thy prayers, an inexhaustible grace of healings, John Chrysostom.

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THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 28

28 января

New Calendar January 28 · Old Calendar February 10 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Ephraim the Syrian[1]

Житие преподобного отца нашего Ефрема Сирина

St. Ephraim was a native of Mesopotamia, from the city of Nisibis[2]. He was born in the reign of Constantine the Great to Christian parents[3], and lived on into the reign of Theodosius the Great[4]. Already in his youth St. Ephraim renounced the world and withdrew into the desert, where he became a monk[1029]. He received from God the gift of wisdom; grace flowed from his lips, like a sweet river, softening with compunction the souls of all who heard his teaching. This was foretold to him even at the earliest age. When he was still a child, his parents saw the following dream concerning him: a vine grew out of the boy's tongue and, growing, filled all that is under heaven with its branches and clusters. The birds of heaven gathered and ate the berries of the vine, and the more they ate, the more the vine increased. Later, when St. Ephraim was living the ascetic life on a desert mountain, filled with great compunction and contrition of heart, one of the God-bearing fathers saw in a dream a bright man, shining like the Angels. He held in his hand a written scroll and asked:

"Who can receive and keep this scroll?"

1. Venerable Ephraim is called "the Syrian," that is, the Syrian, because Mesopotamia, in which he was born, was in antiquity counted as part of Syria.
2. Nisibis (or Nisibida) – a large and populous city in the province of Magdonia in Mesopotamia, on the borders of the Roman empire and the Persian kingdom.
3. Concerning his parents, the Venerable Ephraim writes the following. "Those who begot me according to the flesh instilled in me the fear of the Lord. My ancestors confessed Christ before the judge; I am a kinsman of martyrs. My grandfathers, who prospered in life, were farmers. My parents were engaged in the same."
4. Emperor Theodosius the Great reigned from 379 to 395.

A voice from on high answered him:

"No one other than Ephraim, My servant."

Before the man who had appeared stood Ephraim. He opened his mouth, and the man placed the scroll into his mouth. The Venerable Ephraim ate the scroll, and soon after this he began to speak and to write edifying discourses, which brought compunction to everyone who read or heard them. They could arouse in each the fear of the Lord and guide him onto the path of repentance, as is clear from his God-inspired books. Likewise, another great and holy elder had a similar vision in a dream about St. Ephraim. He saw hosts of Angels descending from heaven at God's command, holding a scroll written within and without. They said to one another:

"Who can receive this scroll?"

In reply, some named one name, others recalled another, and some said:

"Truly holy and righteous are the men mentioned, but none of them can receive this scroll, except Ephraim, meek and humble of heart."

Then the elder saw the scroll given to Ephraim. Rising in the morning, he heard the blessed Ephraim offering instructive admonitions to the brethren. It was as if a spring flowed from his lips! From them issued words full of great benefit. He believed that everything coming from the lips of St. Ephraim was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and he glorified God, who grants such grace to His servants.

In 363 Nisibis passed under Persian rule, and many Christians left Nisibis. Then the Venerable Ephraim also resolved to go from there to the city of Edessa[5]. He addressed God with this prayer:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Grant that I may see Thy city, and when I enter it, send to meet me such a man as may converse with me from the Holy Scripture to my profit."

5. Edessa – a city in Mesopotamia; it lies on the border between a rocky desert and the fertile land of southern Mesopotamia. This city, as Saint Ephraim says, "was blessed by the living lips of the Savior through His disciple Thaddeus"; here was the image of the Savior not made by hands and the holy relics of the Apostle Thaddeus.

When, having so prayed, he approached the city and entered the gate, a woman met him. Seeing her, the servant of God was grieved and turned his thoughts to God:

"Lord, Thou hast disregarded the prayer of Thy servant. For how can she converse with me about the wisdom of books?"

The woman stood and looked at him. St. Ephraim addressed her with a question:

"Tell me, woman, why do you stand and look at me?"

The woman answered:

"I look at you because woman was taken from man, but you should look not at me but at the earth from which you were taken."

Hearing this, Ephraim marveled at her answer and glorified God, who had given the woman such understanding. He understood that the Lord had not disregarded his prayer. Having entered the city, he lived in it for a long time[1031].

By chance, near the house in which the saint lodged, there lived another woman, a harlot, who was his neighbor. Incited by demonic cunning, she wished to insult the elder. Opening a little window from which the dwelling of the saint could be seen, she saw that Ephraim was standing and cooking his food. The woman called out loudly to him:

"Bless me, sir!"

The Venerable looked at the window and, noticing that she was watching, said to her:

"May the Lord bless you."

Then the woman continued:

"What is lacking for your food?"

The saint answered:

"Three stones and a little sand are needed to close the window from which you look here."

The woman said to him shamelessly in reply:

"I spoke to you first, and you answered me. I wish to lie with you, and you refuse from the very first word."

The servant of God answered her:

"If you wish to lie with me, go to the place that I will show you."

The harlot said:

"Show me this place, and I will come."

Then the saint said:

"If you have chosen me, you can lie with me in no other place than in the midst of the city."

The harlot was astonished:

"Will we not be ashamed before people?"

The saint answered:

"If we are ashamed before people, how much more ought we to be ashamed, and at the same time to fear God, who knows all human secrets! For He will judge the whole world and render to each according to his deeds."

Hearing this, the harlot was moved by the words of St. Ephraim. She came and fell at his feet, weeping and saying:

"Servant of God! Set me on the path of salvation, so that I may be delivered from my many evil deeds."

The Venerable Ephraim, having given her many instructions from the Holy Scripture, established her in repentance, and, placing her in a women's monastery, saved her soul from lawlessness and sin.

Then another harlot, approaching the Venerable Ephraim as he was going somewhere, tried to seduce him into sin, so that at least she might anger him, since no one had ever seen him angry.

The Venerable said to her:

"Follow me."

The woman followed him. When they came to a crowded place, the saint said to her:

"Let us lie down here and commit the sin."

But she, seeing the people, said to him:

"How can we stop here, when there are so many people all around! Are you not ashamed?"

The Venerable answered her:

"If you are ashamed before people, how much more should we be ashamed before God, who knows hidden secrets?"

Thus the woman departed from him put to shame, being unable either to entice the saint into sin or to arouse anger in him, for he was truly a man without malice and meek, entirely incapable of anger.

Concerning his kindness of heart they tell the following. When he was fasting in the desert, his disciple at the usual time brought him food. Once, while carrying the food, he accidentally broke on the way the vessel in which the food was. He feared the elder's anger, but the elder, seeing the disciple in confusion, said:

"Do not grieve, brother. If the food did not want to come to us, then we will go to it."

Then, going over, he sat down by the broken vessel, and gathering the food, began to eat. So meek was he! It was related of him that, from the time he became a monk, he never once grew angry with anyone.

Once the Venerable Ephraim had a revelation concerning St. Basil the Great. In a dream he saw a pillar of fire reaching to heaven and heard a voice:

"Ephraim, Ephraim! As this pillar of fire is what you see, so is Basil."

Then Ephraim desired to see St. Basil. Taking with him an interpreter, for he did not know how to speak Greek, St. Ephraim went to Caesarea in Cappadocia[6]. He found St. Basil in church teaching the people, and began to glorify him in a loud voice, saying:

"Truly great is Basil! Truly he is a pillar of fire! Truly the Holy Spirit speaks through his lips!"

Then some of the people began to say:

"Who is this stranger who so praises the archbishop? Is he not flattering him, in order to receive something from his hands?"

After the dismissal of the church service, when the Venerable Ephraim entered into friendly conversation with St. Basil, the latter asked him:

"Why did you praise me so?"

The Venerable Ephraim answered:

6. Cappadocia – a province of the Roman empire, located in the east of Asia Minor. Caesarea is the chief city of Cappadocia.

"Because I saw a white dove sitting on your right shoulder and speaking into your ear what you were teaching the people. Moreover, a tongue of fire spoke through your lips."

To this St. Basil said to him:

"Truly now I see what I have heard about you, dweller of the desert and lover of silence! So it is written also in the prophet David: 'Ephraim is the strength of My head' (Ps. 59:9). Truly these prophetic words apply to you, for you have instructed many on the path of virtue and strengthened them in it. Your meekness and the guilelessness of your heart shine for all like light."

After that Basil the Great said:

"Why, honored father, do you not accept ordination to the rank of presbyter, being worthy of it?"

"Because I am a sinner, vladyka!" Ephraim answered him through the interpreter.

"Oh, if only I had your sins!" said Basil, and added: "Let us make a prostration to the earth."

When they had prostrated themselves on the ground, St. Basil laid his hand on the head of the Venerable Ephraim and recited the prayer prescribed at the ordination of a deacon. The Venerable Ephraim then spent three days with St. Basil in spiritual joy. Basil ordained him a deacon and his interpreter a presbyter, and afterwards dismissed them in peace.

The Venerable Ephraim had a great love for the Venerable Abraham the Recluse, whose memory is celebrated on October 29. They often visited one another and were mutually moved by edifying friendly conversations. And when the blessed Mary, Abraham's niece, fell into the enticement of the enemy, the Venerable Ephraim by his prayers greatly contributed to her salvation. He grieved much in his heart over those who sinned, and took great care for their correction.

Venerable Ephraim at one time dwelt in the desert[7], laboring in silence before God and gathering there a multitude of disciples; at anoth-

er time, by the command of God, he lived in the city of Edessa, leading many people to repentance and winning for God lost souls by his teachings. So abundant was he in words profitable to the soul, and so filled with the grace of God, that many times his throat grew weary from the strain of his voice and his tongue from the utterance of words; yet his discourses did not grow shorter, all the more since his mind was filled with the depth of wisdom and understanding[1034]. Moreover, he was full of profound humility and in every way avoided human honor and temporal glory. Once the people wished to seize him and forcibly make him a bishop. Ephraim, learning of this, feigned to be a fool and began to run about the square, dragging his garment behind him like a madman; he snatched up bread and vegetables that were on sale and ate them. Seeing this, the people considered him deranged, and he fled from the city and hid himself, until another bishop was appointed to the see to which they had wished to appoint him. He remained unceasingly in holy prayer, by day and by night. Possessing the gift of compunction and tears, he wept always, remembering the day of judgment, of which he wrote and spoke much. He slept little and ate little, only so as not to grow faint and die of hunger and lack of sleep. He was wholly without covetousness and loved poverty more than riches, as he himself says of himself in his testament:

"Ephraim has never possessed gold or silver, or any store of goods, fulfilling the will of the good Teacher Christ, who commanded: Acquire nothing upon earth (cf. Mt. 6:25 ff.)."

In those years there lived the heretic Apollinarius, who taught falsely concerning the Incarnation of the Lord. He was ready in speech and skilled in Hellenic wisdom, by reason of which he greatly disturbed the Church of God and drew many into his heresy. This heretic devoted all his labor and all his zeal, from his very youth to his old age, to corrupting the Orthodox and drawing them into his error. He wrote many books against the Orthodox, of which two are especially notable, since

7. The Venerable was, among other places, also in the Egyptian deserts; thus he spent some time on Mount Nitria. The Syriac biographer says that Ephraim met here with the God-chosen monk Paisius, "great among the Syrian ascetics, a father." "There was among us here a man of God, a Syrian, a great elder among the fathers, enlightened in mind and heart," so says John Kolov.

in them his whole soul-destroying teaching is most fully expressed. These he used as weapons, waging his struggle against the Orthodox by means of verbal disputations. These books of his had been entrusted for safekeeping to a woman, his concubine. Venerable Ephraim, learning of these books, devised against the heretical cunning a counter-stratagem still more marvelous: he came secretly to that woman and greatly praised Apollinarius, calling himself at the same time a disciple of the latter. As if desiring to learn a wisdom unknown to him, he asked the woman to give him for a short time the books of Apollinarius which she kept, that he might copy out from them the most notable passages in brief. The woman, being convinced that this was indeed a disciple of her friend, gave him both books on condition that he return them quickly and speak of them to no one. Saint Ephraim, taking the books, carried them to his monastery and, preparing glue, glued together all the leaves in them, separating them one by one, until at last he had glued them all together so that the books became as though one piece of wood or stone, and not a single leaf could be separated from another. Then he carried the books back to the woman. She, taking them and not looking inside, placed them in their accustomed place. Afterward there arose a dispute between the Orthodox and the heretic Apollinarius, who was by then grown old. No longer possessing his former readiness in disputation, and having a weak memory by reason of his age, he wished to gain the victory over the Orthodox by means of those books; but, taking them up, he could not open them, for the leaves were firmly glued together and had hardened. He was filled with great shame and came out from the council defeated and put to confusion, and soon afterward, from grief and great shame, he lost his life, casting out his accursed soul in disgrace.

Our Venerable Father Ephraim, having lived a God-pleasing life for many years and brought many to salvation, foresaw his end in advance and wrote an edifying testament for his disciples. After a brief illness, in deep old age, he departed to the Lord[8]. His honorable body was buried in his monastery, which was situated in the desert within the

8. St. Ephraim died peacefully in the city of Edessa in the year 373.

bounds of Edessa, in Syria; and his holy soul now stands before the throne of the Master, interceding for us, that we may obtain forgiveness of our sins through his prayers, by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

With the streams of thy tears thou didst cultivate the barren desert, and from the depths of thy sighs thou didst bring forth a hundredfold fruit of labors, and wast a lamp to the universe, shining with wonders, O Ephraim our Father. Pray to Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Ever foreseeing the hour of judgment, thou didst weep bitterly, O Ephraim, as one who loved silence, yet wast a diligent teacher in deeds, O venerable one. Wherefore, O Father of the world, thou stirrest the slothful to repentance.

* * *

Life of Saint Ephraim of the Kiev Caves, Bishop of Pereyaslavl

Житие святого Ефрема Печерского, епископа Переяславского

After the blessed Barlaam, a boyar's son, the blessed Ephraim, a eunuch, a man of noble lineage and high birth, very much beloved by Prince Izyaslav[9] and who managed all his household, came from the prince's house to our Venerable Father Anthony and asked him, instead of serving the prince, to join him to the servants of the Heavenly King and to place upon him the holy angelic image of the monastic rank. Venerable Anthony, having given him instruction concerning the salvation of his soul, charged the blessed Nikon to tonsure him. In accordance with this command, Nikon tonsured the blessed Ephraim and clothed him in the monastic garment. But the enemy who hates good, the devil, brought great sorrow upon the venerable ones on

9. Iziaslav Yaroslavich was Grand Prince of Kiev; he reigned from 1054 to 1068.

account of the tonsuring of this blessed Ephraim, as also on account of the tonsuring of the blessed Barlaam, as is recorded in the lives of the Venerables Anthony and Nikon. Indeed, the prince of darkness, seeing that he was being defeated by that holy assembly which gathered in the dark cave, and understanding that from this time that place would be glorified, grieved over his own ruin. He began, by his hostile machinations, to inflame the heart of Prince Izyaslav against the venerable ones, urging him to disperse the holy assembly. Yet he could not accomplish this, and he himself was driven off by the prayers of the venerable ones; he fell into the pit which he had prepared. True, the Venerable Nikon, who had tonsured the blessed Ephraim, was brought before the prince and sharply rebuked; and the head of the brotherhood himself, the Venerable Anthony with the brethren, by the prince's wrath was driven out of the cave; but soon afterward, through the intercession of the princess before Prince Izyaslav—or rather, through the prayers of the Queen of Heaven, the Most Holy Theotokos, before the King of glory, Christ God—the monks returned to their cave like brave warriors from the field of battle, having vanquished their adversary, the devil. After this they always remained in the cave, glorifying and blessing God.

After all that had taken place, our Venerable Father Ephraim, seeing what sorrow the enemy had caused to the whole holy assembly, armed himself strongly against him by a God-pleasing life in the cave, by constant prayer, fasting and all-night vigil. Obeying in all things the counsels of his father and teacher, the Venerable Anthony, he showed great zeal in imitating all his virtues. Therefore, following the example of the Venerable Anthony, who had made journeys from Russia to the holy Mount Athos, this Venerable Father Ephraim also burned in spirit, striving toward the holy places. He desired to be an eyewitness of the angel-like life of the holy Athonite fathers, that he might be inspired with love for their virtuous labors. Therefore he besought the Venerable Anthony to give him a blessing for a journey to the Greek land. The Venerable Anthony, not wishing to deprive him of the reward for wandering, dismissed him with a blessing and prayer, just as Noah of old sent forth the dove from the ark, that it might bring back an olive

branch. Then our Venerable Father Ephraim, receiving the blessing and prayer as two dove's wings, set out upon the path before him and reached Constantinople. Everywhere along the way he observed the life of holy people, visited the dwellings of hermits, earthly angels, and was satisfied in abundance with spiritual food, with soul-saving conversations and the instructions of the holy fathers. In consequence of this he somewhat delayed in his journey. When love for his homeland drew him back, he, so as not to return to his spiritual ark without some olive branch, copied out the rule of the holy Studite monastery[10] and brought it to the Kiev Caves Monastery, on account of which the blessed Abbot Theodosius, while Ephraim was in Greece, had sent to him in the name of the Venerable Anthony. Upon his return from the holy places he lived in the Kiev Caves Monastery only a short while, but nevertheless served as an example of many virtues for the spiritual benefit of the monks, so that all gave thanks to God on his account. At this time the blessed Bishop Peter of Pereyaslavl departed this life. By the good pleasure of God, by the counsel of all, and by the desire of the Grand Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich[11], our Venerable Father Ephraim was appointed Bishop of Pereyaslavl by the Most Reverend Metropolitan John of Kiev.

Having received the great rank of hierarch, he began to show great zeal for the building of churches in his eparchy. He regarded this as the most honorable and most cherished work for himself, with the aim of increasing the glorification of the all-holy Name of God. God aided him in this work: within only a few years he built a large and majestic stone church of St. Archangel Michael, which he made the cathedral church of the Pereyaslavl eparchy; then above the gates of this he set up a church of St. Theodore, and finally, in front of the gates of the stone

10. The Studite Typikon was composed by the Venerable Theodore the Studite, founder of the monastery in Constantinople at the beginning of the ninth century. At the end of the eleventh century it was introduced as the guide of the Russian Church, and it held sway there until the middle of the fourteenth century, when it begins to yield to the Jerusalem Typikon; but in places it remained in force much longer, and in some Russian monasteries it was even in use until quite recent times.

11. Vsevolod-Andrew Yaroslavich was Prince of Pereiaslavl (of Pereiaslavl-South; the Pereiaslavl principality bordered on that of Kiev), later Grand Prince of Kiev (1078–1093).

church, he built a church of St. Andrew the First-called. He also adorned the city of Pereyaslavl with various church buildings, moreover of stone, which had not existed before[12]. All of this, not long afterward, was destroyed when, by God's permission, as punishment for our sins, the wicked Tatar prince Batu made an invasion into the Russian land[13]. Then the lot fell also upon the glorious city of Pereyaslavl.

Our Venerable Father Ephraim, during his episcopate, was present also at the translation of the honorable relics of our Venerable Father Theodosius of the Kiev Caves. Having lived virtuously and pleasing to God, he departed from temporal life, and in soul ascended to the not-made-by-hands throne of the Lord[14]. His honorable body was laid with honor in the church he had built, in which he established the throne of the Pereyaslavl eparchy. May we too be counted worthy to stand before the throne of the Master, the Heavenly King, like sheep gathered by the voice of the prayers of our Venerable Father Ephraim, that together with him we may glorify the Shepherd-Chief Jesus, and in Him and with Him God the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Ephraim of Novotorzhsk

Память преподобного Ефрема Новоторжского

In the days of the Right-believing Great Princes, the holy Passion-bearers of Russia Boris and Gleb, there were in Russia three brothers of one mother: Ephraim, whose memory is celebrated on January 28, George, and Moses. All of them came from the Hungarian land[15], and all of them, in the rank of boyars, served the Great Princes Boris and Gleb. When St. Boris was slain on the river Alta[16], the boyar

12. Besides this, in the remote Suzdal, which was subject to the Prince of Pereiaslavl, St. Ephraim also built two churches.
13. The Tatar khan Batu was a grandson of Genghis Khan. The invasion of Batu began in 1237 and ended in 1240 with the capture of Kiev and the subjugation of the Russian land.
14. St. Ephraim of Pereiaslavl died in 1096. His relics rest in the caves of St. Anthony.
15. The Hungarian land, otherwise Hungary, a vast country along the middle Danube at the Carpathian Mountains; it now forms part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
16. The murder of the holy right-believing Prince Boris took place in 1015.

Ephraim happened not to be there with Prince Boris. Therefore he was saved from being killed, but his brother George was slain together with St. Boris: he fell beside his lord, and the murderers cut off his head for the sake of the golden ornament which St. Boris had placed upon him. The third brother, Moses[17], who was with the prince at the time of the murder, escaped death by flight, and afterward suffered for his chastity at the hands of a Polish woman more than Joseph once suffered from Potiphar's wife. At last he became a holy monk in the Kiev Caves Monastery, as is written in his Life. – This blessed Ephraim, after the murder of the Right-believing Prince Boris, came to the place where the lawless murder had been committed, and, weeping and sobbing, sought the body of his brother, but found only the head, which he kept until his death. Leaving his boyar rank and house, he came to the city of Torzhok[18], and finding a very beautiful place near the city, on the bank of the river Tvertsa, he built there a church in the name of his sovereigns, the Great Princes, the holy Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, and, gathering many monks, founded a monastery, and himself became an archimandrite[19]. Having labored valiantly in fasting and prayer, he was well-pleasing to God and reposed in 1053. After his repose, many miracles occurred at his tomb[20], and healings were granted to the sick; they are granted even now to those who come with faith, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Palladius the Hermit

Память преподобного Палладия Пустынника

Venerable Palladius pleased God by seclusion. Having built for himself a small hut on a certain mountain and enclosed himself in

17. The Venerable Moses the Hungarian, Wonderworker of the Kiev Caves; his memory is celebrated on 26 July.
18. Torzhok is now a district town of the Tver Province.
19. The Borisoglebsk Monastery of Novotorzhok was founded by the Venerable in 1038.
20. The relics of the Venerable Ephraim now rest in the Borisoglebsk Monastery of Novotorzhok, in a rich silver reliquary; and with them is the head of his brother George, placed in his coffin in accordance with his testament.

it, he struggled in unceasing vigil, prayer, and fasting. For his labors God glorified him with the gift of working miracles. Once a certain merchant who carried much gold with him was slain, and his murderers threw his body at night before the door of the Venerable's hut. When it dawned and the crime was discovered, everyone began to accuse the Venerable of the merchant's murder. Pressed by the crowd of people, the saint prayed, and by his prayer raised the dead man. Rising, he named his murderers and proved the saint's innocence of the murder. And the Venerable performed many other miracles. Advancing in virtues, Venerable Palladius departed in peace to God, leaving to the Church of God writings profitable to the soul[21].

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of Venerable Theodosius of Totma

NOTES

1029. The years of Ephraim's youth did not pass without some stumbling-blocks. Fiery by nature, he was, as he himself says, irritable: "over trifling matters he fell into quarrels, acted rashly, indulged in evil designs and carnal thoughts... My youth nearly convinced me that what happens to us in life happens by chance. But God's Providence corrected my fiery youth." Ephraim was falsely accused of stealing sheep and thrown into prison; after him two others were also imprisoned, and innocently, like Ephraim. "Having spent seven days, on the eighth I see in a dream," Saint Ephraim later recounted, "someone saying to me: Be pious, and you will understand Providence; recall in your thoughts what you thought and what you did, and you will recognize from your own case that these men are not suffering unjustly, but that even the guilty will not escape punishment." – All this Ephraim saw, as he recounts in detail in one of his writings. – These events so struck Ephraim that he soon left the world and withdrew to the mountains to the hermits, where he became a disciple of St. James, Bishop of Nisibis (his memory is January 13).

1031. For his sustenance in Edessa, the Venerable Ephraim hired himself out to work for the keeper of a bathhouse, and used his free time to preach the word of God to pagans; then, on the counsel of the holy elder Julian, he withdrew to the desert mountain

21. The Venerable Palladius the Hermit practiced asceticism in Antioch of Syria at the end of the fourth century.

of Edessa for ascetic labors. Soon a vision revealed to the elder that in Ephraim was a man to whom alone, of all his contemporary countrymen, a book had been entrusted for the instruction of men. Ephraim began to write an interpretation of the Pentateuch. This first attempt at interpretation in the Syriac language drew many Edessenes to Ephraim, and Ephraim wished to flee from people. "Ephraim! Where are you running?" asked the Angel who appeared. "I want to live in silence, and I flee from the talk and the seductions of the world," answered Ephraim. The Angel said: "Beware lest the word of Scripture be fulfilled in you: Ephraim is like a young ox that wants to free its neck from the yoke" (Hos. 10:11). After that Ephraim returned to the service to which he had been called. From this time he began to teach the faith and piety both orally and in writing. To succeed in his pious work, he opened a school in Edessa, from which later came the famous teachers of the Syrian Church.

1034. St. Ephraim left behind a very great number of writings. In some of them he is an interpreter of Holy Scripture (St. Ephraim, according to the words of St. Gregory, wrote a commentary beginning from the creation of the world down to the last of the gracious books); in others he is a denouncer of heresies and a hymnographer of the Church; in still others he is a teacher of the Christian life, and in particular a preacher of contrition of heart. The writings of this last kind constitute, as it were, the seal of the soul of the Venerable Ephraim and at the same time his glory for all ages. St. Gregory of Nyssa says that for Ephraim weeping was the same as breathing air is for others: day and night tears flowed from him; yet Ephraim's face bloomed and shone with joy, while streams of tears flowed from his eyes. But even where Ephraim speaks of contrition, he rises in thought to the goodness of God and pours out thanksgiving and praise to the Most High. All his moral exhortations are fragrant with heartfelt tenderness. In more than one of his admonitions Ephraim begins thus: "Be contrite, O my soul; be contrite over the good things that thou hast received from God and lost. Be contrite over the evil deeds done by thee. Be contrite over all that in which God has shown His long-suffering toward thee. Come, my brethren, come, servants of Christ, let us be contrite in heart and weep before Him day and night. Come, let us ponder that fearful and dreadful judgment and the condemnation that follows it for us." In this spirit of contrition are the usual subjects of St. Ephraim's discourses: repentance, remembrance of death and judgment, the fear of God, attention to oneself, humility, against pride, and so forth. For his lofty teachings St. Ephraim was called by his compatriots the Syrian Prophet. The Blessed Jerome writes: "Ephraim, deacon of Edessa, attained such glory that in some churches his writings are read publicly after the Holy Scripture." "I must extol him," says Gregory of Nyssa, "who is on the lips of all Christians, Ephraim the Syrian, that Ephraim whose life and teachings shine throughout the whole world." St. Ephraim also left behind many dogmatic writings. All of them were written against the errors of that time. Such are: a) 80 homilies against bold investigators, that is, against the Aetians and Eunomians; b) 56 instructions against heresies, with denunciations and exhortations addressed to the Bardesanites (followers of the heretic Bardesanes), the Marcionites and the Messalians; c) On the Pearl, or on the fact that two natures are united in the one Person of Jesus Christ, against Marcion and Manes; d) three homilies on faith and against the Jews; e) on freedom, against the defenders of blind fate; on repentance,

where, against the Novatians, he speaks of the power of the Church to forgive sins and refutes the millennial kingdom; on the priesthood; on Paradise and judgment. A strict zealot of the faith and of piety, St. Ephraim could not remain indifferent to the disturbances that the sects of Bardesanes and Arius had caused in Edessa and Mesopotamia. Opposing the heretics, who set forth their errors in the poetic form of songs, and who, attracting the inexperienced by the elegance of verse, easily and lastingly fixed their heretical content in them, St. Ephraim himself began to set forth, on the basis of Holy Scripture, the true teaching about God and His relation to us, in the same poetic form. The people listened with eagerness to the hymns of the holy hermit and forgot the heretical songs. The heretics were so irritated by St. Ephraim's successes that once they attacked him with stones and weapons and nearly killed him; but this in no way diminished his zeal for the faith. All these writings were composed by St. Ephraim in the form of reverent reflections. They were intended by him for the people's use, and in part for singing in the church, and are written in verse. St. Ephraim also left many tender prayers and prayer hymns. Such are his hymns for the Nativity of Christ, distinguished by a special solemnity; to him also belong the deeply moving stichera sung at funerals; among the prayers composed by him, the most widely known is the tenderly moving prayer read in the days of the Great Lent: "O Lord and Master of my life! Do not give me the spirit of sloth, lust for power, and idle talk. But grant to me, Thy servant, the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen."



THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JANUARY

January 29

29 января

New Calendar January 29 · Old Calendar February 11 (civil dates)

Translation of the Relics of the Holy Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-Bearer

Перенесение мощей святого священномученика Игнатия Богоносца

After Saint Ignatius the God-Bearer had been torn to pieces by wild beasts at Rome for Christ,[1] by the command of Emperor Trajan, as is related in his Life, some of his larger bones remained. The faithful who were in Rome at that time gathered them and laid them reverently in a place of honor in that same city; then, in the reign of the same Trajan, they were transferred to Antioch, as a protection for the city, for the healing of the sick, for the consolation of all his rational flock, and to the glory of Christ God, for whose Name he had zealously suffered.[2] More detailed information about this is set forth in his Life, under December 20.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Lawrence, Recluse of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного отца нашего Лаврентия, затворника Печерского

After the temptation that befell the Venerable Recluses of the Kiev Caves, Isaac and Nikita, the Blessed Lawrence became renowned; he too was ascetic in the same holy Monastery of the Kiev Caves, and he too, as a good soldier of Christ, took courage to wage the

1. In 107, December 20.
2. The first translation of the relics of St. Ignatius the God-Bearer was in 108; the second, from the suburb into Antioch itself, in 438. Later (in the 7th century) his relics were transferred to Rome, where they now rest in the church of St. Clement.

struggle alone, by his own strength alone, against the destroyer of souls, the devil, the adversary of ascetics. He desired to dedicate himself to prayer in strict seclusion, firmly convinced that it is of the life of seclusion that the Lord speaks in the words: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who sees in secret shall reward thee openly" (Mt. 6:6). But the Venerable Fathers firmly advised him not to do this in the holy Monastery of the Kiev Caves, where the devil most plotted against the Fathers striving for salvation. They recalled how the enemy had here overcome Isaac and Nikita, who had struggled with him alone, in seclusion; both of them were brought back to their senses only after many prayers. Then Lawrence, bidding farewell to the brethren, withdrew to the monastery of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius, built by Prince Izyaslav,[3] and there he lived in seclusion. He began to live the most austere life and to show the greatest zeal for his salvation, undertaking greater labors each day, mortifying all passionate desires by fasting and hunger, uprooting them with the spiritual sword, that is, by the power of prayer, and quenching the enemy's kindled arrows with the water of his tears. Thus, by the grace of God, he not only escaped the arrows of the demons himself, but also received from the all-bountiful Lord the gift of miraculously healing various wounds and infirmities of men, and likewise of casting out demons.

Once, among many others, a man possessed by a demon was brought to the Venerable Lawrence for healing from Kiev; the demon was so fierce and strong that he alone could lift easily and cast far a tree which ten men could scarcely carry. The Blessed Recluse, wishing to bring glory through grace to his spiritual homeland, the holy Monastery of the Kiev Caves, ordered this man to be led there. Then the demoniac began to cry out:

"To whom are you sending me? I dare not even approach the cave, for many saints rest in it. In the monastery itself there are thirty holy monks, whom I fear; with the others I wage war."

When the demoniac declared this concerning the grace resting upon the holy Monastery of the Kiev Caves, the Blessed one again ordered

him to be taken there by force, so as to be better assured of all that he had said. Those who led the demoniac, knowing that he had never been in the Monastery of the Kiev Caves and knew no one there, asked him:

"Who are these ascetics whom you fear?"

At that time there were one hundred and eighteen brethren in the Monastery of the Kiev Caves.

The demoniac named thirty of them by name and said:

"They can all drive me out with a single word."

Then those who led him said to him again:

"We wish to shut you up in a cave."

He answered them:

"What use is it to me to wage war with the dead? For they have far greater boldness to pray to God for their monks and for all who come to them. But if you wish to see my power to wage war, lead me into the monastery: besides the thirty men named, I can contend with all the rest."

Then he began to show his powers, uttering speeches in Hebrew, in Latin, in Greek, in short, in all languages, which he had never heard. Those who escorted him were struck with fear and much amazed at the change in his speech and at his ability to speak in various tongues. After this, before they entered the monastery, the unclean spirit left the demoniac; the one who had been healed began to reason sensibly, and those who were with him rejoiced. Then all together they entered the holy, wonderworking church of the Kiev Caves to offer praise to God. When the abbot learned of this, he came with the whole brotherhood to the church. The one who had been healed knew neither the abbot nor any of those thirty men whose names he had named during his possession. Then they began to ask him:

"Who healed you?"

Looking at the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, he answered:

"With her, thirty holy men met us, and I was healed."

3. The monastery of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica was near the Kiev Caves Monastery. In 1128 it was attached to the Kiev Caves Monastery.

He remembered the names of all of them, but did not know any of them by sight.

Then they all together offered praise to God, to His Most Pure Mother, and to His holy saints.

Thus the holy place of the Kiev Caves monastery was glorified by the providence of God, proclaimed by the Blessed Recluse Lawrence, who after some time left the Kiev Caves monastery and was raised to the episcopal see of Turov.[4] After the blessed repose of Saint Lawrence,[5] his body was transferred to the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery and honorably laid in the caves, where his wonderworking relics remain incorrupt to this day, in honor of God, who sees in secret but rewards the recluses openly, and is glorified in the Trinity; to Him be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Silvanus the Bishop, Luke the Deacon, and Mokius the Reader

Память святых мучеников Сильвана епископа, Луки диакона и Мокия чтеца

In the reign of the Roman emperor Numerian,[6] there was a great persecution of Christians. A denunciation was then lodged with the governor of the city of Emesa,[7] against the local bishop, the Holy Silvanus; the hierarch, together with the deacon Luke and the reader Mokius, bound, were brought before the judge. Having ascertained that they confessed Christ as the true God, did not honor the idols, but reviled them, the governor fell into a rage; unable to persuade the confessors of Christ to idolatry by flattering speeches, the judge subjected them to scourging, and then cast them into prison. The saints languished there for a long time, until the governor summoned them before him a second time. He commanded that the passion-bearers be tormen-

4. Turov is a city in the present-day Minsk Governorate. St. Lawrence was Bishop of Turov from 1182.

5. He reposed at the end of the 12th century.

6. Numerian and Carinus reigned in 283 and 284.

7. Emesa is the present-day Homs (Hems), located in Phoenicia on the bank of the Orontes, in the coastal part of modern Syria (Asiatic Turkey).

ted with hunger and thirst, and then sentenced them to be thrown to the wild beasts. When the holy martyrs were brought to the place of execution and various beasts were loosed upon them, the soldiers of Christ prayed that the Lord would grant them death there. Their prayer was heard, and the Lord received their holy souls; the beasts approached their honorable remains but did not touch them. The Christians, secretly, at night, took the relics of the holy martyrs and gave them burial, giving thanks to God.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Romanus, James, Philotheus, Hyperichius, Avivus, Julian, and Parigorius

Память святых мучеников Романа, Иакова, Филофея, Иперихия, Авива, Иулиана и Паригория

All these holy martyrs, warring for Christ, publicly exposed the pagan errors, for which they were subjected to cruel tortures: their shoulders and knees were crushed; then their bodies were pitilessly scraped, heavy iron fetters were put on their necks, and they were thrown into prison; then they were again led out of prison, their bodies were scraped once more, they were hung up, and their heads were nailed to a cross. In such torments they gave up their souls to God.[8]

* * *

8. They suffered in 297 under Emperor Diocletian in the city of Samosata (in Syria, on the Euphrates).

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF JANUARY

January 30

30 января

New Calendar January 30 · Old Calendar February 12 (civil dates)

Synaxis of the Three Great Ecumenical Teachers: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom

Собор трех великих вселенских учителей Василия Великого, Григория Богослова и Иоанна Златоуста

In the reign of the right-believing and Christ-loving Emperor Alexis Comnenus,[1] who took the imperial power after Nicephorus Botaniates,[2] there arose at Constantinople a great dispute about these three hierarchs among the most skilled teachers of wisdom in eloquence. Some placed St. Basil the Great above the other hierarchs, calling him the most exalted orator, since he surpassed all others in word and in deeds, and they saw in him a man little inferior to the Angels, firm of character, not quick to forgive transgressions, and a stranger to everything earthly. Below him they placed the Divine John Chrysostom, who had qualities different from those mentioned: he was inclined to show mercy to sinners and quickly admitted them to repentance. Others, on the contrary, exalted the Divine Chrysostom as the most loving of men, who understood the weakness of human nature, and as an eloquent orator who taught all to repent through his many honey-flowing discourses; for this reason they esteemed him above Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian. Still others, finally, stood for St. Gregory the Theologian, asserting that by the persuasiveness of his speech, his skillful interpretation of Holy Scripture, and the elegance of his composition, he surpassed all the most renowned representatives of

1. The Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus reigned from 1081 to 1108.
2. Nicephorus III Botaniates reigned from 1078 to 1081.

Hellenic wisdom, both those who had lived earlier and those who were his contemporaries. Thus some exalted the glory of St. Gregory while others diminished his significance. From this arose discord among many, so that some were called Johannites, others Basilians, and still others Gregorians. Men most skilled in eloquence and wisdom argued about these names.

Some time after these disputes arose, these great saints appeared, first each separately and then all three together—and not in a dream but in waking reality—to John, Bishop of Euchaita, a most learned man, well versed in Hellenic wisdom (as his writings also attest), and renowned for his virtuous life.[1059] They spoke to him with one voice:

"We are equal before God, as you see; there is among us neither division nor any opposition to one another. Each of us separately, in his own time, stirred by the Divine Spirit, wrote suitable teachings for the salvation of men. What we learned in secret, we have transmitted openly to men. Among us there is neither first nor second. If you appeal to one, the other two agree in the same. Therefore command those who quarrel about us to cease their disputes, for both during life and after death we have a care to bring the ends of the universe to peace and unanimity. In view of this, unite in one day the commemoration of us, and, as is fitting for you, compose a festal service for us; and tell the others that we have equal dignity before God. And we shall be co-workers toward salvation for those who celebrate our memory, since we hope that we have some merit before God."

Having said this to the bishop, they began to ascend into heaven, shining with ineffable light and calling one another by name. The blessed Bishop John immediately, by his efforts, restored peace among those who were at enmity, for he was a man great in virtue and renowned for his love of wisdom. He established the feast of the three hierarchs, as the saints had instructed him, and bequeathed that it be celebrated by the churches with due solemnity.[3] In this the wisdom of this great man was clearly revealed: observing that in the month of January the memory of all three hierarchs is kept—namely, on the first

3. The feast in honor of the three Ecumenical Teachers and Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.

day Basil the Great, on the twenty-fifth Gregory the Divine, and on the twenty-seventh St. Chrysostom—he united them on the thirtieth day of the same month, adorning the celebration of their memory with canons, troparia, and praises, as was fitting.

It is necessary to add the following about them. St. Basil the Great surpassed in book-learning not only the teachers of his own time but also those of antiquity: he went through the whole science of eloquence to its last word, and he studied philosophy well, and likewise attained that science which teaches true Christian conduct. Then, leading a virtuous life marked by detachment from possessions and chastity, and rising in mind to the vision of God, he was raised to the episcopal throne at the age of forty, and for more than eight years was the presiding hierarch of the Church.

St. Gregory the Theologian was so great that if one could create a human image and pillar, composed part by part from all the virtues, he would be like the great Gregory. Shining by his holy life, he attained such height in the realm of theology that he conquered all by his wisdom, both in verbal disputes and in the interpretation of the dogmas of faith. For this reason he was called the Theologian. He was hierarch at Constantinople for twelve years, affirming Orthodoxy. Having then lived a short time on the patriarchal throne (as is written in his life), he left the throne because of advanced age, and at the age of sixty withdrew to mountain monasteries.

Of the Divine Chrysostom it may rightly be said that he surpassed all Hellenic sages in reason, in the persuasiveness of his word, and in the elegance of his speech; he expounded and interpreted Divine Scripture inimitably; likewise, in virtuous life and in the vision of God, he far surpassed all. He was a source of mercy and love, and was filled with zeal for teaching. He lived sixty years in all; he was a shepherd of the Church of Christ for six years. By the prayers of these three hierarchs, may Christ our God dissolve heretical dissensions, preserve us in peace and unanimity, and vouchsafe us His heavenly Kingdom, for He is blessed unto the ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

As equals of the Apostles and teachers of the universe, entreat the Lord of all to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

The holy and God-inspired preachers, the summit of teachers, O Lord, Thou didst receive into the delight and repose of Thy good things; for Thou didst accept their labors and death as more fruitful than all fruitfulness, O Only One, who glorifiest Thy saints.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Theophilus the New

Память святого мученика Феофила Нового

St. Theophilus was born and raised at Constantinople under the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his mother, St. Irene.[4]

During the invasion of the Arabs[5] he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Greek forces; by his personal valor and military skill, he sank many enemy ships and more than once inflicted defeats upon the Arabs. By God's permission, once his fleet was surrounded by more numerous enemy vessels, and St. Theophilus was taken captive. When he was brought before the Arab sovereign, the latter, struck by the beauty and courage of St. Theophilus, began to urge him to renounce the Christian faith; but neither promises of every honor nor threats from the victors had any effect upon the valiant Christian commander. When he saw that his soldiers had been slain, he rebuked the barbarians for their cruelty and denounced their impious faith. Taken into their land, St. Theophilus was cast into prison there; after four years, on the occasion of some religious festival the Arabs were celebrating, the holy passion-bearer was led out of the prison and forced to take part in the fest-

4. They reigned together from 780 to 797.

5. At this time the Arabs formed a powerful state, which included all of Arabia, Syria, Egypt and North Africa.

ival; when St. Theophilus refused to obey, his head was cut off, and thus the soldier of Christ received the martyr's crown.[6]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Hippolytus, Censorinus, Savinus, the Maiden Chrysia, and the Other Twenty Martyrs

Память святых мучеников Ипполита, Кенсорина, Савина, Хрисии девицы и прочих двадцати мучеников

The Hieromartyrs Hippolytus, Censorinus, Savinus, and Chrysia lived in the reign of Claudius,[7] when Ulpius the Roman held the office of hegemon, as governor. Censorinus was the first counselor in the senate, with the rank of magister.[8] Subjected to interrogation on the basis of an informer's denunciation, he confessed Christ and for this was cast into prison. There he performed many miracles by the power of Christ, and even questioned a dead man. Soldiers present there, seeing the miracles, came to believe in Christ, and for this, to the number of twenty, they were beheaded. The blessed maiden Chrysia was also subjected to interrogation as a Christian. The soldiers, hanging her up, beat her with ox sinews and burned her ribs with fire, and then cast her into prison. After some days they again brought her out of prison, crushed her jaws with a stone, and beat her shoulders with a tin hammer, and then, tying a stone to her neck, cast her into the depths of the sea. Thus the holy maiden completed her suffering for Christ. The blessed Savinus was also beaten about the body with a heavy hammer and, hanged on a tree, was burned with candles. Enduring such torments and giving thanks to God, he yielded up his spirit to Him. Learning of all this, the great Hippolytus, hierarch of the Church of Rome, came to the hegemon and denounced his cruelty and inhumanity, calling him a bloodsucker. In doing so he boldly confessed Christ God, Creator of the world. For this he was beaten on the eyes by the hegemon's

6. On the island of Cyprus (near Asia Minor) in 784.
7. Claudius II, Roman emperor, reigned from 268 to 270.
8. *Magister*, properly speaking, means teacher. But the title of magister at the Byzantine imperial court denoted one of the highest court offices.

servants; the impious subjected him to other tortures and finally, binding his hands and feet, cast him into the sea. Having endured these sufferings, St. Hippolytus became an heir of the Kingdom of God.[1066]

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Zeno

Память преподобного Зинона

This blessed Father of ours, Zeno, came from Pontus[9]. Leaving behind a great fortune there, he drank deeply of the springs of the teaching of St. Basil the Great[10], which watered Cappadocia, and bore fruit worthy of that teaching. He served at the court of the Emperor Valens[11] among the soldiers who were dispatched with the imperial letters. After the death of that sovereign, St. Zeno rejected wealth and honorable rank and settled in a tomb[12] located in the mountain near Antioch, where he lived in solitude, cleansing his soul. The holy hermit possessed no property at all apart from a tattered garment in which he clothed himself. St. Zeno received his food from one of his acquaintances, who brought him a small loaf of bread for two days, while he himself carried water from afar. Presenting an example of the deepest humility, the Venerable Zeno attained a high degree of perfection in the performance of the monastic labors. For forty years he lived in fasting, coming every Sunday to the holy church, where he listened to the Word of God, inclined his ear to the teachings of the preachers, and partook of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. Afterward the Venerable returned to his refuge, which had neither lock nor watchman, because it was inaccessible to evildoers and entirely secure. Some time after his departure from the world, the Venerable sent one of his acquaintances to his native land to sell the property left by his parents and to give to his broth-

9. Pontus was a province in the northeast of Asia Minor, bordering Armenia on the east and Cappadocia on the south.

10. His memory is on January 1.

11. Valens reigned from 364 to 378.

12. In antiquity tombs in the south were hewn into the mountains and had the form of caves; during enemy invasions they were subject to plunder, and robbers seeking treasure in the tombs also disturbed the resting places of the dead. The Venerable Zeno settled in one of the desolate tombs.

er the portion that belonged to him. Having carried this out, the messenger brought the saint his share; from it the Venerable Zeno began to do good to the needy. When he felt the approach of his death, he summoned to himself Alexander, Bishop of Antioch[13] and said to him:

"Since I am being called to depart from this life, I bequeath to you this: what I could, I distributed myself, as seemed best to me. That which remains, I have not had time to distribute, and I appoint you to dispose of it, calling God to witness."

After that, having kissed the hierarch, the blessed one commended his soul to God.

* * *

NOTES

1059. John, Metropolitan of Euchaita, one of the outstanding church writers and hymnographers of the Eastern Church in the eleventh century (he died at the end of the eleventh century). He wrote a very great number of works. Among his known works are: 1) panegyrics, up to fifteen in number, among which are notable: two discourses for the day of remembrance of the victory over Sviatoslav, Prince of Rus'; three discourses in memory of the Great Martyr Theodore Tiro; panegyric discourses to the three Hierarchs; 2) verses and church hymns: among the latter, the complete service to the three Hierarchs and the canon to the Guardian Angel, and two canons to St. Theodore Tiro, still remain in the church services. In the services are included: from among his 27 canons to the Savior, one canon to Sweetest Jesus; from among his 67 canons to the Mother of God, six; from among his 11 canons to the Forerunner, two. His canons to Sweetest Jesus and to the Guardian Angel are particularly excellent.

1066. The holy martyrs Hippolytus, Censorinus, Savinus and Chrysia suffered in 269. The Hieromartyr Hippolytus was Bishop of the port of Ostia, near Rome, in which he was also drowned. His relics are now in Rome, in the church of Hieromartyr Lawrence and Pope Damasus. Hippolytus was the most learned of the Christian theologians and a prolific, many-sided writer. The greater part of his works is devoted to polemics against the ancient heretics: the Noetians, Theodotians, Alogi, Montanists, Marcionites and others. Of his works now known are: a Paschal Canon, Against the Jews, Against Plato, Against Heresies, Against Beron and Helix, and a work on Christ and Antichrist. Another group of Hippolytus's works consists of his numerous commentaries on Holy Scripture, of which only fragments have mostly survived. Thus he wrote commentaries on the books of Genesis and Exodus, on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, on the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John, on the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and

13. He was Bishop of Antioch from 413 to 420.

Zechariah, on the Psalms and the Apocalypse. His sermons are also notable as models of ancient church teaching; of these, only the sermon on the Theophany and on the prophet Daniel have survived in complete form.



THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF JANUARY

January 31

31 января

New Calendar January 31 · Old Calendar February 13 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cyrus and John, and of the Holy Martyr Athanasia and Her Three Daughters Theoktista, Theodotia and Eudoxia

Страдание святых чудотворцев и бессребреников Кира и Иоанна и святой мученицы Афанасии и трех дочерей ее Феоктисты, Феодотии и Евдоксии

The holy servant of God Cyrus was born and brought up in the land of Egypt, in the city of Alexandria, which was founded by Alexander the Great. By his learning he was a famous physician, and he healed bodily sicknesses wholly without payment; and by his God-inspired discourses and the example of his virtuous life he healed the spiritual infirmities of men. Coming to the sick, he set before them not the counsels of Galen or Hippocrates[1], but the instructions of the holy Apostles and Prophets on how to keep oneself from the sinful infirmities which are the causes of bodily sickness: the diseases of the soul are graver ailments than all the diseases of the body; when the soul suffers grievously from sins, it often happens that the body also falls into a grievous sickness, permitted by God as a chastisement for sins. Thus instructing the sick, and likewise preaching to them the Divine teaching, St. Cyrus brought many pagans to the knowledge of the true God

1. Galen was a famous Greek scholar and physician, born in A.D. 131 and dying at the very beginning of the third century; he was physician at the court of the Roman emperors of his time. Galen had an enormous influence on physicians throughout the world, and his authority was unshaken in their eyes until the sixteenth century. – Hippocrates was another famous Greek physician, who lived much earlier than Galen (460 to 356 B.C.); several of his writings survive, and Galen was schooled on them.

and made them Christians, healing both their souls and their bodies by his remarkable skill.

At this time the impious emperor Diocletian was reigning, and he had raised a persecution against the Christians. The holy Cyrus, the renowned physician of Alexandria, was denounced before the governor of the city for being a Christian and for instructing many in the Christian faith; the governor ordered that he be seized at once. St. Cyrus, learning of this, fled from the city and from the land of Egypt and came to Arabia. He did this not out of fear of torments or death for Christ, but partly following the words of Christ: "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another" (Mt. 10:23), partly out of a desire to continue his help to his neighbours, and partly desiring to prepare himself better for suffering for his Lord in the monastic state. Accordingly, on his arrival in Arabia, he immediately took the monastic, angelic habit. His very coming into Arabia came about by a special providence of God, so that he might there too bring many to Christ, deliver them from the sinful service of idols, and set them on the path of salvation. There he also laid aside his medical skill, for he had received from God the gift of working miracles, and he now healed every kind of sickness not by treatments and herbs, but by prayers and the word. Through these miracles the name of Christ was glorified, and a great multitude of idolaters, abandoning their errors, turned to Christ, the True God.

At this time there lived in Edessa[2] the holy John, a pious Christian who held an honourable military rank. When Diocletian's persecution of the Christians began, he left his military rank and the glory of this world, his fatherland, his house and kin, and his wealth, counting all these as vanity, and came to Jerusalem; there, after some time, he heard of the holy Cyrus and of the miracles he performed, whose fame had spread everywhere. He conceived a strong desire to see St. Cyrus and to live together with so great a servant of God. To this end John first set out for Alexandria, seeking Cyrus; but not finding him there, he diligently inquired where he was. Then, learning that St. Cyrus was living in Arabia, John hastened there, and having found him, he at-

2. Edessa – a city in Cilicia, the southeastern region of Asia Minor.

tached himself to him with his whole soul, becoming both an eyewitness of his miracles and a zealous imitator of his virtuous life.

At the same time a God-loving woman named Athanasia was seized for torture for the name of Christ, together with her three daughters, Theoktista, Theodotia and Eudoxia, and was taken to the city of Canopus[3], where the pagan priest Cassian lived and the governor was Sirian. Hearing of this, the holy Cyrus and John feared lest the young maidens should fall away from Christ, both through fear of the threatened tortures and through the temptation of flattering promises, all the more since they were very young: the eldest of them, Theoktista, was fifteen years old, the second, Theodotia, thirteen, and the youngest, Eudoxia, eleven. St. Cyrus was also uncertain of the steadfastness of their mother Athanasia, fearing that she, for the sake of her daughters —so that they should not be subjected to grievous tortures and their blood pitilessly shed before her eyes—might incline to pagan impiety; for it is known that mothers, obeying natural feeling, grieve in their hearts for their children. Therefore he set out for that city to strengthen the maidens and their mother in confessing the faith of Christ and to prepare them for fearless and courageous endurance of torments. St. John followed St. Cyrus, and both of them went to the city of Canopus. Coming to Athanasia and her daughters, who were in custody, they confirmed them by lengthy inspired discourses in love for the Lord Jesus Christ and urged them zealously to give up their souls for Him. This was at once reported to the governor Sirian. One of the pagans came to him and said:

"In our city there have appeared some new men, unknown to anyone: one in monastic dress and the other in military dress. They urge the maidens now taken not to worship our gods, but to remain in their impious faith, and likewise not to obey the imperial commands. They urge them to honour one certain Jesus alone and to offer to Him divine worship, disregarding death."

Hearing this, Sirian was filled with fury and ordered that both men be seized at once and brought before him. The holy Cyrus and John

3. Canopus – a city in Lower (northern) Egypt.

were immediately arrested and presented for interrogation to the impious judge Sirian. Looking at them, he asked:

"Are you truly, wretched enemies of our gods, seeking to beguile the maidens and by every artifice to increase the number of Christians, to the dishonour of our emperor? If until now you have been mad, at least now abandon your false faith, full of every sorcery, and strive to appease the gods with prayers and sacrifices, so that you may not only escape the torments prepared for you but also win honours from us. But if you do not do this, you will know the fury and implacable wrath not only of Sirian or Diocletian, but of the very gods you revile—you will know the gods, even if they were the most merciful avengers of their dishonour."

To this the holy Cyrus and John answered:

"We have no custom of speaking at length. Know well that we will never desire your empty honours, nor will we renounce Christ, even if we must suffer for Him."

Then Sirian was kindled with still greater fury, gnashed his teeth and said:

"You impious men ought to be grateful to the judge for his humanity. If you have any sense at all, renounce your error, that you may escape the dread punishment. But since I see in you nothing but pride, obstinacy and vain haughtiness, there is no need to waste many words; we must quickly turn to deeds. Then you will receive the reward you desire and submit, though against your will, to the imperial command."

Having said this, he ordered the maidens to be brought with their mother, and began to torture the holy martyrs Cyrus and John before them in various ways: he beat them with scourges, broke their bones with thick clubs, scorched them with candles, poured vinegar and sprinkled salt on their burned limbs, and then rubbed them with the sharp ridges of a hair shirt; their feet he doused with boiling pitch. Using on them every instrument of torture that his fury could devise, he left none untried, partly to avenge their boldness and break their courage, and partly to terrify the young maidens and their mother, who were watching the cruel torments. But the abominable tormentor achieved nothing: he could not shake the courage of the holy passion-

bearers, nor could he frighten the maidens and their mother. Then he ordered the saints to be unbound and began to torment the holy Athanasia and her daughters. After long torments he was filled with great shame, for the feeble female sex showed in the courageous endurance of sufferings no difference from the steadfast and unyielding-spirited holy men Cyrus and John. They had the same faith and love for Christ, endured the same torments for Him, and by God's help displayed the same courage. They suffered as though in another's body, paying no heed to the tortures. They turned their gaze to their beloved Bridegroom, Christ God, Who from the height of His glory looked upon the sufferings of His brides and gave them His help. The tormentor, ordering the holy martyrs to be unbound from the instruments of suffering, condemned them to beheading by the sword. They went to death with joy, as to a wedding. All of them—the blessed mother Athanasia and her three blessed daughters, Theoktista, Theodotia and Eudoxia—had their honourable heads cut off by the sword.

After the execution of the holy martyresses, the holy Cyrus and John were again brought for interrogation. The tormentor addressed them at length, as though showing concern for their health, displayed gifts, promised new torments, and at last threatened them with the death penalty. When he saw that he had laboured in vain, he pronounced this final decision:

"Cyrus, follower of the Galilean Teacher, and John, his co-religionist, who have scorned the imperial command and refused to offer sacrifice to the great gods, we order to have their heads cut off according to the imperial law."

The soldiers, having taken the martyrs, struck off their heads in the very place where the holy maidens with their mother laid down their souls for their Lord, on the 31st day of January.[4] Secret Christians, taking their holy bodies, buried them with honor in the church of the holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark, in separate tombs: in one the holy martyrs Cyrus and John, and in the other Saint Athanasia with her daughters. Many years later, in the reign of the pious Emperor

4. The martyric death of St. Cyrus and St. John took place in 311.

Theodosius the Younger,[5] Saint Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, by the command of God delivered through an Angel, translated the relics of the holy martyrs Cyrus and John to the village called Menouthis,[6] to drive out from there a multitude of demons, to the glory of Christ our God, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is glorified unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 5:

The miracles of Thy holy martyrs Thou hast given us as an unassailable wall, O Christ God: through their prayers, scatter the counsels of the nations, establish the sceptres of kingdoms, for Thou alone art Good and Lover of mankind.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Having received from divine grace the gift of miracles, ye saints work wonders without cease, invisibly cutting down all our passions by your working, O God-wise Cyrus with glorious John; for ye are divine physicians.

* * *

Life of Saint Nikita, Bishop of Novgorod

Житие святого Никиты, епископа Новгородского

Worthy of greater honor than others are those valiant warriors who are accustomed to wage battle with the enemy not in a common formation, but who rush upon the foe singly. The Lord permits them to fall many times for a time, lest they become proud; yet He never forsakes them to the end without His gracious help, but restores them and makes them invincible. One of such valiant warriors of Christ, namely the blessed Nikita, acquired particular fame after the Venerable Isaac the Recluse. Concerning him the most laudable Polycarp reports the following, from the words of Saint Simon.

5. Emperor Theodosius II, or the Younger, reigned from 408 to 450.
6. Manuphin, or Manuf, was situated not far from Canopus. – Subsequently the relics of Sts. Cyrus and John were translated to Rome, and from there to Munich.

When the Venerable Nikon was abbot, a brother of the Holy Monastery of the Caves, named Nikita, began to ask the abbot to bless him to labor in solitude and to withdraw into seclusion.

"My son! It will be of no profit to you, in your youth, to sit idle. It will be much better if you remain with the brotherhood and, working together, do not lose your reward. You yourself have seen how our brother Isaac the Cave-dweller was tempted by demons in his seclusion and would have perished, had not the great grace of God saved him through the prayers of our venerable fathers Anthony and Theodosius."

Nikita answered:

"Never, Father, shall I be seduced by any temptation. I intend to stand firm against the temptations of demons, and I will beseech the Lover of mankind God to grant me too the gift of working miracles, as once He did for Isaac the Recluse, who even now works many miracles."

Then the abbot said to him more insistently:

"Your desire is beyond your strength. Beware, my son, lest you fall through your pride. I command you to serve the brethren better, and for your obedience you will be crowned by God."

However, Nikita did not wish to heed the abbot's instruction: he could not overcome in himself the strong zeal for the life of a recluse. Therefore he did what he had desired: he enclosed himself in a cave, firmly blocked the entrance, and remained alone in prayer, going out nowhere. Nevertheless, after only a few days, he did not escape the snares of the devil: during the singing of prayers he heard a voice praying together with him, and perceived an ineffable fragrance. Seduced by this, he reasoned thus within himself: if it were not an Angel, it would not pray with me, and there would be no fragrance of the Holy Spirit here.

He began to pray yet more diligently, saying:

"O Lord! Appear to me Thyself in a tangible manner, that I may see Thee."

To this a voice answered:

"I will not appear to you, because you are young; otherwise you would become proud and could fall."

The recluse continued to beg tearfully:

"Never, O Lord, shall I be seduced. The abbot taught me not to heed the temptations of demons—but I will do all that Thou commandest."

Then the soul-destroying serpent, having gained power over him, said:

"It is impossible for a man clothed in flesh to see me. Therefore I send My Angel to dwell with you, and you shall do his will."

Then immediately a demon appeared before him in the form of an Angel. Nikita fell to the ground and bowed to him as to an Angel. The demon said to him:

"From now on do not pray any longer, but read books. By this path you will converse with God, and will give useful counsel to those who come to you, while I will always pray to the Creator of all for your salvation."

The recluse believed these words and, deceived, no longer prayed but began to read books zealously. In this he constantly saw the demon praying for him, and rejoiced, thinking that it was an Angel making prayer on his behalf. With those who came to him he conversed much, on the basis of Holy Scripture, about the benefit of the soul; he even began to prophesy. Fame of him spread everywhere, and all were astonished at the fulfillment of his predictions. Once he sent to Prince Izyaslav[7] with the message: "Today Prince Gleb Svyatoslavich[8] has been slain; send at once your son Sviatopolk[9] to the princely throne in Novgorod." As he had said, so it came to pass. Indeed, a few days later news came of the murder of Prince Gleb. From that time people spoke even more of the recluse, that he was a prophet, and both princes and boyars fully believed him. In truth, the demon, of course, does not know the future; but what he himself does—if, for example, he has taught evil men to kill or steal—this he also foretells. Likewise, when people came to the recluse seeking words of comfort, the demon, whom he

7. Izyaslav Yaroslavich – Grand Prince of Kiev from 1054 to 1068.
8. Gleb Svyatoslavich – Prince of Novgorod, eldest son of the Grand Prince of Kiev Svyatoslav, was killed by Finns in 1078.
9. Svyatopolk II (Michael) Izyaslavich, son of the Grand Prince of Kiev Izyaslav; Prince of Novgorod from 1078, and Prince of Kiev from 1093 to 1114.

took for an Angel, told him all that had happened to them. Nikita prophesied, and all that he foretold came to pass.

In this, no one could compare with Nikita in knowledge of the books of the Old Testament: he knew all by heart: the Book of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Judges, Kingdoms, all the prophecies in order. Generally, he knew all the books of the Old Testament very well, but the holy books of the Gospel and of the Apostles, given to us by God's grace for our salvation and for confirmation in good, he never wished to see or hear, much less read; with no one did he wish to converse about the New Testament. Hence it became clear to all that he was seduced by the devil. Distressed by this, the venerable fathers came to the one so tempted: Abbot Nikon, John, who was abbot after him, Pimen the Faster, Isaiah, who afterwards became Bishop of Rostov, Matthew the Seer, Isaac the Recluse, Agapitus the Physician, Gregory the Wonderworker, Nicholas, who was Bishop of Tmutarakan, Nestor the Chronicler, Gregory the Compiler of Canons, Theoctistus, who was Bishop of Chernigov, Onesiphorus the Seer.[10] All of them, renowned for their virtues, having come, offered prayers to God for Nikita and drove the demon away from him, so that Nikita no longer saw him. Then, leading him out of the cave, they asked him to say something from the Old Testament. But he began to swear that he had never even read those books which he had only very recently known by heart; moreover, now he did not know a single word of them. Now he could scarcely be taught his letters. Gradually coming to himself through the prayers of the venerable fathers, he confessed his sin and repented of it bitterly. After this he imposed upon himself special abstinence and labors, began to lead a strict and humble life, and surpassed others in virtue. The merciful Lord, seeing such labors of the blessed Nikita, not rejecting also his former virtues in which he had exercised himself from the days of his youth, accepted his true repentance; and just as once, accepting the repentance of Saint Peter, who

10. The commemoration of St. Nicon of the Kiev Caves is March 23; of St. John, the so-called Vethopeshchernik, April 19; of St. Pimen the Faster, August 27; of Isaiah, Bishop of Rostov, May 15; of St. Matthew the Clairvoyant, October 5; of St. Agapetus, June 1; of St. Gregory, August 8; of Theoctistus, Bishop of Chernigov, August 6; of St. Onesiphorus the Clairvoyant, November 9.

had thrice denied Him, He said to him, "Feed My sheep,"[11] so He gave a similar sign of the acceptance of repentance to this blessed Nikita. For his great love, shown in the keeping of the commandments, the Lord made him shepherd of His rational flock, raising him to the episcopal throne of Novgorod.[12] There the Lord, to assure those in his care and to fully convince them that the saint's lapse into temptation was forgiven, glorified his virtuous life with the gift of working miracles. Thus, once, in a time of drought, the saint prayed to God and brought rain down from heaven; at another time, by his prayers he quenched a fire in the city; he performed many other miracles as well. After good governance of his rational flock, he passed to the Lord into eternal life in the year 1108, on January 30. He was bishop for thirteen years. He was buried with honor in the side-chapel of the great church of the holy God-parents Joachim and Anna. The body of the blessed Nikita remained hidden in the tomb for four hundred and fifty years, and then in 1558, in the reign of the pious sovereign John Vasilyevich, Autocrat of all Russia, under Metropolitan Macarius and Archbishop Theodosius of Novgorod, the relics of Saint Nikita were found whole and entirely uncorrupted.[13] Even to this day they pour forth many healings upon those who come to them in faith. To our God be glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having enjoyed abstinence, O God-wise one, and having bridled the desires of thy flesh, thou didst sit upon the throne of hierarchy, and like a many-radiant star, illuminating the hearts of the faithful with the dawns of thy wonders, O our Father Hierarch Nikita, now pray to Christ God that He save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Having been honored with the episcopal dignity, and standing in purity before the Most Pure One, thou didst offer diligent prayer

11. Jn. 21:16–17.
12. St. Nicetas was consecrated Bishop of Novgorod in 1096.

for thy people; and as thou didst bring rain by thy prayer, so also at times didst thou quench the burning of the city. And now, O hierarch Nikita, pray to Christ God that He save thy people who pray to thee, that we all may cry out to thee: Rejoice, O wondrous hierarch and father.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Victorinus, Victor, Nicephorus, Claudius, Diodorus, Serapion and Papias

Память святых мучеников Викторина, Виктора, Никифора, Клавдия, Диодора, Серапиона и Папия

All these holy martyrs suffered for the faith of Christ in the reign of Decius. Victorinus, Victor and Nicephorus were put into a stone mortar and pounded with a stone pestle; Claudius died after his hands and feet had been cut off; Diodorus was burned with fire; Serapion was beheaded; Papias was cast into the sea[14].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Triphaena

Память святой мученицы Трифены

The holy martyr Triphaena was from the city of Cyzicus[15]; she was the daughter of Christians: Anastasius the senator[16] and her mother Socratia. The saint gave herself willingly to suffering. Publicly exposing the error of idolatry, and those who madly honored idols as gods, she urged them to renounce vain worship and turn to the true God. For this the governor of the city, Caesarius, commanded that

13. Long before the discovery of the relics of St. Nicetas, Bishop of Novgorod, he was venerated among the saints; already in the first half of the thirteenth century his memory was celebrated. At present his incorrupt relics openly rest in the St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.
14. The holy martyrs Victorinus, Victor, Nicephorus, Claudius, Diodorus, Serapion and Papias suffered in Corinth in 251.
15. Cyzicus – a city of Phrygia, on the western shore of Asia Minor, on one of the peninsulas of the Sea of Marmara.
16. Senator (synklitikos) – the highest court dignitary, a rank of the state council.

she be thrown into a heated furnace, but the holy martyr came out of it unharmed; then she was hanged on a tall tree and cast down from on high onto sharp nails, after which she was given over to be devoured by beasts, but they did not touch her; finally she was torn to pieces by the horns of an enraged ox. It is recorded that where her blood flowed, a spring of water welled up, from which many received help and healing.

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