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

Февраль

FEBRUARY

Book II

Translated from the Russian edition
Moscow: Synodal Press, 1904–1911

The Lives of the Saints, February. English translation of: *Жития святых на русском языке, изложенные по руководству Четьих-Миней св. Димитрия Ростовского.* Москва: Синодальная типография, 1904–1911.

Russian text: Azbuka Very library (azbyka.ru). The original is in the public domain.

Dates are those of the Church's fixed calendar as printed. On the New Calendar they are kept on the same civil date; on the Old Calendar, thirteen days later (1900–2099).

Notes are the editors' of 1904 unless marked "—Trans."

English translation and recordings: The Uncreated Light (theuncreatedlight.com). Translated with AI models (drafted by Claude Haiku, reviewed against the Russian by GPT-6 Luna Pro, checked line by line by Claude Sonnet) with editor review; not yet fully edited by a human translator. Corrections are welcome at saints.theuncreatedlight.com.

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Built November 2026.

CONTENTS

February 1. Passion of the Holy Martyr Tryphon 7
February 2. Tale of the Meeting of the Lord 22
February 3. Commemoration of the Holy and Righteous Simeon the God-Receiver 31
February 4. Memory of Our Venerable Father Isidore of Pelusium 42
February 5. Suffering of the Holy Martyr Agatha 68
February 6. Passion of the Holy Martyr Phausta, Maiden, and with Her Eulasius and Maximus 98
February 7. Life of Our Holy Father Parthenius, Bishop of Lampsacus . . . 120
February 8. Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates 158
February 9. Passion of the Holy Martyr Nicephorus 179
February 10. Martyrdom of the Hieromartyr Haralampius, Bishop of Magnesia, and with him the Martyrs Porphyrius and Baptus, and Three Women Martyrs 185
February 11. Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste, and of Others Who Suffered with Him 209
February 12. Life of Our Holy Father Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch . . 227
February 13. Life of Our Venerable Father Martinian, and the Memory of the Holy Women Zoe and Photinia 253
February 14. Life of Our Venerable Father Auxentius. 274
February 15. Life and Passion of St. Onesimus, One of the Seventy Apostles 288
February 16. Sufferings of the Holy Twelve Martyrs, Pamphilus the Presbyter and Those with Him 295
February 17. Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Tyro 303
February 18. Memory of Our Holy Father Leo, Pope of Rome. 313
February 19. Life of Our Venerable Father Dositheus, Disciple of Venerable Dorotheus. 331
February 20. Life of Our Holy Father Leo, Bishop of Catania 350

February 21. Memory of Our Venerable Father Timothy, Hermit in Symbola 358
February 22. Passion of the Holy Martyr Maurice and of His Son Photinus, and with Them Seventy Soldiers 385
February 23. Life and Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. 397
February 24. First and Second Finding of the Precious Head of the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John 413
February 25. Life of Our Holy Father Tarasius, Archbishop of Constantinople 426
February 26. Life of Our Holy Father Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza 443
February 27. Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Procopius of Decapolis, Confessor 467
February 28. Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Proterius, Patriarch of Alexandria 475
February 29. Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Cassian the Roman 483
Index of Saints and Feasts 487

THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 1

1 февраля

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

Passion of the Holy Martyr Tryphon

Страдание святого мученика Трифона

St. Tryphon was born in the land of Phrygia, in the village of Campsada, near the city of Apamea[1]. From his earliest years the grace of God rested upon him, and the Lord granted him the power to work miracles[2], that He might receive praise not only from the lips of this child but also through his wondrous deeds. In the Great Reading Menaia[3] much is told of the healings from every kind of illness performed by the holy youth Tryphon, and of his casting demons out of those who came to him. We shall first relate one of the many miracles that bear witness to the great grace of God resting upon him, and then tell of his suffering for the faith of Christ.

In the two hundred and thirty-eighth year, the emperor Gordian[4] ascended the Roman throne, and although he was an idolater, he did not persecute the Christians. This emperor had a grown daughter named Gordiana—a maiden distinguished for her intelligence and beauty, so

1. *Phrygia* – one of the large regions of Asia Minor. *Apamea* – the most important city of Phrygia, with a lively trade.

2. According to the Greek euchologies, once, through the prayer of Saint Tryphon, the inhabitants of Campsada were saved from famine, when harmful reptiles and insects appeared and devoured the grain, the leaves of trees, and all greenery. Saint Tryphon, grieving over the calamity, stretched out his hands to the Lord in prayer, asking Him to send His Angel to destroy the harmful insects; at the same time the holy martyr also bound them by oath to withdraw to remote places appointed for their dwelling.

3. *The Great Menaia-Chetia* were compiled by Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow in the sixteenth century. Besides the lives of the saints, here are included all the books of Holy Scripture, a multitude of homilies and various articles of spiritual content. On the basis of the Macarian Menaia the Menaia-Chetia of Saint Demetrius of Rostov were compiled.

4. *Gordian* reigned from 238 to 244.

that many great and renowned princes wished to take her as a wife for their sons. But great misfortune befell this maiden, and her whole family with her: by God's permission, the devil entered into her and grievously tormented her, casting her into fire and water. Physicians renowned for their wisdom were brought to the sick maiden, but could not help her. Then the unclean spirit dwelling in the maiden itself, by God's command, prophesied:

"No one can drive me out of here except the youth Tryphon."

The emperor at once sent men everywhere to seek Tryphon. Many were brought before him who bore the same name, but not one of them could cast the demon out of the emperor's daughter. At last the holy youth Tryphon was brought before the emperor. He had been found in Phrygia, in the village of Campsada, where he was tending geese beside a lake; the youth was then seventeen years old. As the saint approached Rome, the devil, learning of his arrival and beginning to torment the maiden even more grievously, cried aloud:

"I can no longer remain here, for Tryphon is drawing near, and on the third day he will come here. I can endure no longer."

Having cried out thus, the unclean spirit came out of the maiden.

On the third day St. Tryphon entered the city and was at once brought to the imperial palace, where the emperor received him most graciously, for he recognized him as the Tryphon of whom the devil had spoken when coming out of the maiden. But, to be still more certain that Tryphon had indeed healed his daughter, the emperor entreated him to make the devil visible to the bodily eyes, so that he might be seen. The saint granted the emperor's request, and spent six days in fasting and prayer; after this he received from on high still greater and mightier authority over unclean spirits. On the seventh day, at sunrise, the emperor came to the blessed one with all his senate, wishing to see the devil. Then Tryphon, filled with the Holy Spirit and gazing with spiritual eyes upon the invisible spirit of malice, said to him:

"I say to you, unclean spirit, in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ: appear visibly before those who are here, and show them your loathsome and shameless form, and reveal your weakness."

And immediately the devil appeared before them all in the form of a black dog, with fiery eyes and its head dragging upon the ground.

The saint addressed him with a question:

"Who sent you here, demon, to enter this maiden, and how did you dare to enter one created in the image of God, when you yourself are so foul and powerless, and full of every loathsome thing?"

The devil answered:

"I was sent by my father, Satan, the chief of all evil, who dwells in hell; from him I received the command to torment this maiden."

Then the saint asked him again:

"Who, then, gave you power to assail God's creation?"

Although unwilling, the demon, compelled by the invisible power of God, had to tell the truth.

"We have no power over those," he said, "who know God and believe in His Only-begotten Son, Christ, for whom Peter and Paul died here. We flee from such people in fear, and only when permission is given us do we inflict upon them light temptations from without. But over those who do not believe in God and the Son of God, and who, obeying their lusts, do the deeds pleasing to us, we receive full power to torment them. The deeds pleasing to us are these: idolatry, blasphemy, adultery, sorcery, envy, murder, and pride. By these and like deeds people are ensnared, as it were, in nets, alienated from God, their Creator, and of their own will become our friends; and together with us they suffer eternal torments."

Hearing this, the emperor and those around him were struck with great fear and terror; and many, abandoning their impiety, believed in Christ, while those who already believed were further confirmed in their faith and glorified God.

The emperor bestowed rich gifts upon the saint and dismissed him in peace to return home. But the saint distributed to the poor along the way everything he had received from the emperor; and, returning to his homeland, he gave himself to his customary labors, healing the sick and pleasing God by a holy and blameless life.

After Gordian, Philip[5] occupied the Roman throne; he reigned but a short time, being slain by his own soldiers. After him the savage Decius[6] came to the throne and raised up a cruel persecution against the Christians. During this persecution a countless multitude of Christians were killed, and many of the fainthearted, fearing the terrible torments, turned away from Christ and bowed down to idols. This emperor issued an order to his eparchs and hegemons to pursue Christians everywhere and kill them without mercy. At that time a certain Aquilinus was eparch in the East. He was informed that Tryphon professed the Christian faith and, passing through various lands, healed the sick as a physician of great skill, while at the same time teaching all to believe in Christ and thereby winning many over; and that Tryphon did not obey the emperor's command, but mocked all the gods. Soldiers were at once sent to seek Tryphon, and soon they found him, for a lamp burning with zeal for God and shining with faith and good works could not be hidden. But the saint himself, learning that they sought him, did not flee into the wilderness or hide among the mountains and in the chasms of the earth; rather, arming himself with prayer and the sign of the Cross, he boldly went out to meet those who sought him, surrendered himself into their hands, and joyfully went to the eparch Aquilinus, who was then at Nicaea[7]. When Aquilinus, surrounded by his armed guards, officials, servants, and a multitude of people, took his seat in the tribunal, Pompinian, a high-ranking scriniarius[8], said to him:

"Here is a young man from the city of Apamea, sent to your majesty, standing before the illustrious tribunal of your authority."

Aquilinus said:

"Let the man standing before us tell us his name, his homeland, and his fortune[9]."

5. *Philip* (the Arabian) reigned from 244 to 249.
6. *Decius* reigned from 249 to 251.
7. *Nicaea* – in antiquity a rich and flourishing city of Bithynia (in Asia Minor), now very poor and sparsely populated. In this city the First and Seventh Ecumenical Councils took place.
8. *Scriniarius* – a court treasurer who had great power under the eparch (governor of a province), for which reason he enjoyed special imperial trust and was entrusted with various responsible posts.
9. *Fortuna* – the goddess of fate and good fortune among the Romans.

The saint answered:

"My name is Tryphon; my homeland is the village of Campsada, near the city of Apamea. We do not acknowledge fortune, for we believe that all things come to pass by God's providence and His ineffable wisdom, and not by fortune, nor do they depend on the course of a star or on chance, as you believe. In life I am guided by my own free will, serving Christ alone. Christ is my faith; Christ is my praise and crown of glory."

The eparch said this to the saint:

"You have probably never heard, up to this day, of the emperor's command, according to which anyone who calls himself a Christian and does not worship the gods must die a cruel death. Therefore come to your senses and abandon your deceitful faith, lest you be cast into the fire."

But Tryphon cried out:

"Would that I might be found worthy, through fire and every torment, to meet my end for the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and God!"

The eparch continued:

"Tryphon, I advise you to offer sacrifice to the gods, for I see that, although young in body, you have a sound mind, and I do not wish you to die a cruel death!"

"I shall have a sound mind," the saint answered, "when I make a perfect confession to my God, and preserve inviolate, as a precious treasure, the pious faith in Him, and become a sacrifice to Him who offered Himself as a sacrifice for me."

Then the eparch, threatening the saint, cried out in anger:

"I shall give your body to the fire, and subdue your soul with the most savage tortures."

"You threaten me with a fire that goes out," Tryphon answered, "after which only ashes remain; but I threaten you unbelievers with the eternal, unquenchable fire. Abandon your vain faith and know the true God, lest you repent later, when you fall into the eternal fire."

But Aquilinus, inflamed with the fiercest anger, ordered the saint to be beaten while suspended from a tree. Hearing this order, Tryphon at once took off his own garments and joyfully gave his body over to the

executioners for torture. They hung him from the tree with his hands bound behind him and cruelly tormented him for three hours. But the saint endured his suffering courageously, uttering not a cry or a groan the whole time he was being beaten. When they had finished torturing him, Aquilinus addressed him again with words of persuasion:

"Come to your senses, Tryphon; abandon your madness and promise to worship the gods, for no one who refuses to obey the emperor's command can escape a terrible death."

The saint answered boldly:

"And I tell you that no one who denies the heavenly King Christ can inherit eternal life, but will be sent into the eternal fire, which never goes out."

The eparch said to this:

"There is no other heavenly king but Zeus, the son of Saturn[10]. He is the father of both gods and men; and whoever does not bow down to him cannot remain alive. Bow down to him yourself, if you wish to enjoy the sweetness of this life."

Then the saint, desiring to enlighten the pagan with the light of truth and to expose all the abomination of paganism, said to Aquilinus:

"Let all who worship him and place their hope in him be made like your god Zeus. It is recorded of him that he was the first most lawless sorcerer and a pernicious magician, the father of all impiety and godlessness. After his death, men who wished to follow his evil deeds made golden and silver idols of him and called him a god, and they did this so that they might have a justification for themselves in their uncleanness and lawlessness, so that no one would reproach them for their shameful deeds, since their god was like that too. In the same way, other abominable and utterly wicked men were raised to the rank of gods by their imitators[11]. You, however, believing these ancient impious traditions and false fables, worship lifeless and mute idols, forgetting the living God, who established the heavens, founded the earth

10. *Zeus* (or Jupiter) – the Greco-Roman god, regarded by the pagans as the sovereign of heaven and earth, father of all gods and men.

11. In general, the gods of the Greeks and Romans, according to their belief, were marked by the same passions and criminal inclinations as men.

upon the waters, and poured out the air. God, who created every creature and gave it a visible form, set man, who was created last, as lord over all. But man, through the envy of the devil, was seduced by the cunning serpent (Gen. 3) and fell into countless calamities. Then God the Word, moved with compassion for him, of His own will condescended to become incarnate and appeared in the likeness of man. He died on the Cross, was buried, rose on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father, until all creation shall know Him. Then He will come again with power and great glory and render to each according to his deeds. He is the God of gods, the King of kings, and the Judge of the living and the dead. And the gods you honor will serve as fuel for the eternal fire together with all who worship them."

After this, Eparch Aquilinus, setting out to hunt, ordered that Saint Tryphon also be seized, and commanded that he be tied to a horse and led along behind him. The saint had to endure great torments: the toes of his feet were torn off, for in the terrible frost his feet were bare, and the horse trod upon them with its hooves and crushed them, and his soles were split open. But the martyr, fixing his spiritual gaze upon God and burning with love for Him, counted these torments as nothing and sang the words of David: "Establish my steps in Thy paths, that my feet be not shaken" (Ps. 16:5), and others: "Establish my steps in Thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me" (Ps. 118:133).

Repeating at the same time also the words of the holy first martyr, Archdeacon Stephen:

"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" [12] (Acts 7:60). Returning from the hunt, the eparch summoned the martyr to himself and said to him:

"Now, wretch, have you not thought wisely to offer sacrifice to the gods, or do you remain in your former madness?"

The saint answered:

12. The commemoration of the holy first martyr Archdeacon Stephen, stoned by the Jews, is celebrated by the Church on December 27.

"You yourself, blinded by the devil, are full of madness and ignorance, because you cannot know the Creator of all and worship Him. But I remain wise, not departing from the truth that saves me."

The eparch ordered the saint to be led away to prison, and he himself set out for the nearby districts of the land, where he remained for some time.

Upon his return to Nicaea, the eparch, appearing in the court, again summoned Tryphon and said to him:

"Has your long stay in bonds not taught you to obey the imperial command and turn to the gods?"

"My God and Lord Jesus Christ," the saint answered, "whom I serve with a pure mind, has instructed me and has strengthened me, so that I might keep my faith in Him unchanging and unshaken. Therefore I obey and take refuge in Him alone, the true King and God, while your pride and the emperor's I despise, and from the gods you honor I turn away."

The eparch, greatly enraged, cried out to his servants:

"Drive sharp nails into his feet, and, leading him through the city, beat him."

The servants at once carried out the tyrant's command. They began to lead the saint, or rather to drag him, through the city, subjecting him to torture, and he endured terrible sufferings, both from the nails driven into his feet and from the severe frost, for the winter was harsh. But the great sufferer, having Christ before his spiritual gaze and looking toward the reward to come, bore everything with great patience and joy. When he was again brought before the eparch, the tyrant, marveling at the saint's patience, said to him with great vexation:

"How long, Tryphon, will you remain insensible to torments? And when will you feel the whole terrible pain of the sufferings?"

The saint answered:

"And when will you come to know the power of Christ that dwells in me? When will you, wretch, cease tempting the Holy Spirit?"

Then the tyrant, burning with the greatest rage, ordered that he be hanged again on a tree and mercilessly beaten with iron, and that his sides be scorched with burning candles. The servants carried out all

this with great zeal, but suddenly a heavenly light shone upon the saint, and a beautiful crown descended to his head from heaven. The tormentors, struck with fear by this vision, fell to the ground. Saint Tryphon, perceiving in himself the help that had come from above, was filled with joy and gladness, and praying, said:

"I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast not left me without help in the hands of my enemies, but hast protected me in the day of battle and hast given me salvation, and Thy hand has upheld me. And now I pray to Thee, O Lord, do not forsake me, but establish and protect me, and grant me to accomplish this struggle without stumbling, that I may be counted worthy to receive the crown of righteousness together with all who have loved Thy holy name, for Thou alone art glorified forever. Amen."

After this, the tyrant, ordering the bound saint to be untied and summoning him to himself, began to exhort him with kindness, saying:

"Tryphon, offer sacrifice to the great Zeus and bow down before the image of the emperor, and I will release you."

But Tryphon answered with a smile:

"If I have shown contempt for the emperor himself and disregarded his impious commands, shall I then bow down before his lifeless image? That will never be. As for Zeus and the other false gods, ask your own wise men, who will tell you what fables are composed about these gods to cover up their shameful deeds, applying their names to other things: they call the sky Zeus, the air Hera, the earth Ceres, the sea Poseidon, the sun Apollo, the moon Diana[13]. These same fable-makers also named various evil customs and human passions after your gods, inventing a god of wrath and war, Mars, and calling carnal lust Venus[14]. And so you, forsaking the Creator of all, the God, have madly filled the

13. *Hera* (Juno) was regarded by the ancient Greeks and Romans as the sister and wife of Zeus, the most honored among the goddesses; she was considered the goddess of the earth, patroness of marriage and childbirth. *Ceres* (or Demeter) – the Roman and Greek goddess of the earth and fertility. *Poseidon* (Neptune) was regarded as the brother of Zeus and the absolute ruler of the seas, rivers, all springs and bodies of water. *Apollo* (Phoebus) – one of the most honored pagan gods among the ancient Greeks and Romans, considered the god of the sun and of intellectual enlightenment, and also the guardian of law. *Diana* (Artemis) – a well-known pagan goddess among the Greeks and Romans, who enjoyed special veneration among them; Diana was considered the goddess of the moon and was depicted as a beautiful, bright maiden huntress.

whole universe with idols and have preferred the creature to the Creator. Not only do you yourselves, deprived of sound reason and having turned aside from the true path, rush headlong into the soul-destroying abyss, but you also try to draw us into it as well, to make us sharers in your perdition. But, flatterers, you will have no success! For you will never be able to lead astray from the true path, or to win over to your idols, those who hope in the true and living God."

Hearing these words, Aquilinus marveled at the saint's boldness, and in his anger he ordered him to be beaten without any mercy. The soldiers seized the saint and tormented him for many hours in the most cruel manner.

At last the tyrant, seeing that he could not shake the unshakable pillar of the faith or turn him away from Christ, pronounced the following final sentence upon him:

"Tryphon of Apamea, who resists the imperial command and, after manifold tortures, has not wished to offer sacrifice to the gods, is to be executed by beheading."

At once the soldiers, taking the martyr, led him out of the city to the place of execution. And Saint Tryphon, standing facing the east, addressed God with this prayer:

"O Lord God, King of those who reign, most holy above all the saints! I thank Thee that Thou hast granted me to accomplish this struggle without stumbling. And now I pray to Thee: do not allow the ensnaring hand of the wicked invisible enemy to touch me, lest he lead me into the depths of perdition, but bring me into the beloved dwellings together with Thy holy Angels, and make me an heir of Thy desired kingdom. Receive my soul in peace; and all who shall remember the name of Thy servant and offer holy sacrifices to Thee in my memory, hear them from the height of Thy holiness, and look upon them from Thy holy dwelling, granting them abundant and incorruptible gifts, for Thou alone art the good and bountiful Giver for ever and ever.

Thus the saint prayed. And even before the soldiers had cut off his head, the Lord took his soul; the honorable body of Trypho remained

lifeless upon the earth. The Christians who were in Nicaea wrapped him in pure shrouds and anointed him with fragrant spices, intending to bury him in their city as a protection for it. But the saint appeared to them in a vision and commanded that his relics be carried to the village of Kampsada, the place of his birth, and his command was carried out[1102].

Thus Saint Trypho, dedicated to God from his youth, who led many people to Christ and healed many of them of their diseases, after great torments endured for the truth, was crowned with the incorruptible crown by the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God in the Trinity, to Whom be glory forever. Amen[1103].

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thy martyr, O Lord, Trypho, in his suffering received from Thee, our God, an incorruptible crown; for, having Thy strength, he overthrew the tormentors and crushed the audacity of the weak demons. Through his prayers, save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

By the steadfastness of the Trinity thou didst destroy polytheism from the ends of the earth, O all-glorious one, having become honored in Christ; and having vanquished the tormentors through Christ the Savior, thou didst receive the crown of thy martyrdom and the gift of divine healings, as one invincible.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Vendimian, Hermit of Bithynia

Память преподобного Вендимиана пустынника Вифинийского

The Venerable Vendimian, a native of Mysia[15], came in his youth to the Venerable Auxentius, to the monastery he had founded on

14. *Mars* (or Ares) – the Greco-Roman god of war. *Venus* – the Greco-Roman goddess of beauty and love. The festivals in her honor were accompanied by manifestations of extreme licentiousness and debauchery.
15. Mysia is a region in the northwest of Asia Minor.

Mount Oxia near Chalcedon[16]. After receiving Vendimian, Auxentius did not live long. After his repose, Vendimian built a cell a little below the cell of the Venerable Auxentius, but having lived there five years, he wished to depart because of the difficulty of the place. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and strengthened him, and he lived here still thirty-seven years, working wonders during his lifetime. The Venerable Vendimian reposed about the year 512.

* * *

Commemoration of the holy Martyr Perpetua, and with her the holy youths Satyrus, Revocatus, Saturninus, Secundus, and the holy woman Felicitas

Память святой мученицы Перпетуи и с нею святых юношей Сатира, Ревоката, Саторнила, Секунда и святой Филицитаты жены

Saint Perpetua was of a noble family and lived in the city of Carthage[17]. Secretly from her father, who was a pagan, she received holy baptism, and despite his tearful entreaties and admonitions she remained unshaken in the true faith. At the age of twenty-two Perpetua was widowed, having in her arms a nursing infant, whom she herself suckled. Her brother Satyrus, the servant girl Felicitas, and the youths Revocatus (a slave) and Saturninus and Secundus (of noble rank) were also preparing to receive holy baptism. All of them, together with Perpetua, were taken by the pagan judges and confined in a narrow dungeon. Her father, who came there, sought to shake the steadfastness of the saint's faith, stirring in the martyr love for her nursing infant; but the love of Christ in Saint Perpetua stood above all earthly attachments.

16. Chalcedon was a city in Asia Minor, on the shore of the Bosporus strait (on the opposite side from it lay Constantinople). Chalcedon is known in Church history as the place where the Fourth Ecumenical Council was held.

17. *Carthage* was the most ancient and famous colony of the Phoenicians in North Africa, which in antiquity 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 flourished with great splendor for a very long time. In Carthage the pagan Greco-Roman cult, with all its superstitions, was very strongly developed.

Before her sufferings Saint Perpetua was granted the following vision[18], which she herself described while in the dungeon.

"I saw," says Saint Perpetua, "a golden ladder, exceedingly high, which reached from earth to heaven; it was so narrow that one could ascend it only one at a time; the sides of this ladder were hung and studded with sharp swords, knives, spears, daggers, nails, hooks, and other such sharp objects. At the lower end of the ladder there lay a terrible serpent, ready to spring upon those who attempted to climb it. Paying no heed to this serpent, Saturus fearlessly went first up the ladder. Having arrived safely at the very last step, he addressed me with these words: 'Perpetua! I am waiting for you, but beware lest the serpent devour you.'"

"I am not afraid of him," Perpetua answered him.

And at once she resolved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to go up the ladder. Approaching the ladder, she first set her foot upon the serpent's head, as upon the first step. And when she had climbed to the top of the ladder, she saw beautiful paradise dwellings and in them a multitude of inhabitants. When Saint Perpetua related this vision to her companions, they all understood it as a foretelling of their martyric struggle. From that time they wholly detached themselves from earthly attachments and concentrated all their thoughts upon eternity.

After many sufferings in the dungeon, the holy martyrs were at last condemned to death. The youths were cast to be torn by wild beasts in the arena[19], and against the holy women Perpetua and Felicitas they let loose a wild and raging cow, that it might gore them with its horns. But the beasts did not tear the holy martyrs, and therefore they were all afterwards beheaded with swords and knives. When Saint Perpetua was being slain, the hand of the executioner for a long time could not strike her throat; then Perpetua herself guided his sword to her neck, and thus she manfully died for Christ[20].

18. The records of the sufferings were kept in the prison by the holy martyrs Perpetua and Saturus themselves. The rest was supplemented by an eyewitness and for eyewitnesses; for it is said: "that which we have heard and seen with our eyes, and touched, we declare to you, brethren and sisters, so that you who were present here may again call to mind, for the glory of God."
19. One of the martyrs, Secundus, died already in the prison.
20. All these martyrs died about the year 203.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the commemoration of our Venerable Father Peter of Galatia, who reposed about the year 429. He is also commemorated on February 22 and November 25 under the name Peter the Stylite and Silent One.

NOTES

1102. Part of the relics of Saint Tryphon is kept in Moscow, in the church of his name at Napruda. There is a tradition closely connected with the history of this church. Once, while hunting with Tsar John Vasilyevich the Terrible, through some carelessness of the falconer, the boyar Tryphon Patrikeev, the tsar's favorite falcon flew away; the tsar ordered this falconer to find the falcon at all costs within three days, otherwise threatening him with capital punishment. The falconer searched the whole forest, but his search came to nothing. Exhausted and weary, on the third day he stopped near the Maryina Grove (in the Napruda settlement) and, from great exhaustion, fell into a deep sleep under a tree. Before this Patrikeev had fervently prayed for the help of the holy martyr Tryphon, whom, by his very name, he regarded as his patron and most trustworthy guide. And the falconer saw a wondrous dream: there appeared before him a radiant youth on a white horse, holding on his hand the tsar's falcon. "Take," he said, "your lost bird, ride with God to the tsar, and grieve not." The falconer awoke and saw that on his hand there actually sat the tsar's falcon, which he took to John the Terrible, and he related to him his vision. The former anger of the sovereign and the terrible calamity threatening the falconer were replaced by royal favors, and the pious boyar Tryphon Patrikeev, in thanksgiving before God and before the servant of God, the holy martyr Tryphon, for the preservation of his life, at once built first a chapel on the spot where he had found his falcon, and afterwards, as they say, with the assistance even of the sovereign himself, erected near this chapel a stone church in the name of the holy martyr Tryphon, on the very spot where the aforesaid appearance of this holy martyr to him took place.

1103. The Large Trebnik (ch. 60) includes "The Rite Performed over Fields, or Vineyards or Gardens, Should They Be Harmed by Vermin or Other Pests." This Rite is performed when there appears "harm and waste to fields, vineyards, orchards and gardens" caused by "many kinds of beasts, worms, caterpillars, cockchafers and locusts, mice, rats and moles, and various kinds of flies and gnats," and so forth. The said Rite states: "It is fitting that the Liturgy be served and the lamp of St. Tryphon, or of St. Eustathius, or of St. Julian the Libyan, or of both, be lit," and after the Liturgy "one should take oil from the lamps and the water of the Theophany and sprinkle it crosswise over the field, vineyard or garden, saying the prayers." The same Rite contains "the exorcism of St. Martyr Tryphon," composed in the person of this holy servant of God. Believing that

St. Tryphon, who during his life drove out "the spirits of wickedness by his coming alone" and by his prayers averted public calamities, does not, even after his blessed repose, withhold help from those who have recourse to him, the said "exorcism" of insects and vermin harmful to the vegetable kingdom is pronounced in the person of St. Tryphon, as a servant of God who has great glory before God and can with greater boldness command them, in the name of the Lord, to "depart from the place and from around the borders of the servants of God."



THE SECOND DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 2

2 февраля

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

Tale of the Meeting of the Lord

Сказание о Сретении Господнем

When forty days had passed after the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the days of legal purification had been fulfilled, the Most Pure and Most Blessed Virgin Mother, together with St. Joseph the betrothed, came from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to the Temple of God, bringing the forty-day-old infant Christ, to fulfil the law of Moses. By this law it was required, first, that after childbirth the mother be cleansed by the offering to God of a fitting sacrifice and by the prayer of the priest; and second, that the firstborn male infant be presented before the Lord and redeemed with the price established for him (Lev. 12:7). Thus the Lord had commanded Moses in the Old Testament, and in the books of the law concerning the purification of the mother it is written thus: "If a woman conceive and bear a man child, then she shall be unclean seven days; and in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying thirty and three days: she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled. But when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering: and if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean" (Lev. 12:7–8; 12:2–4).

And concerning the dedication to God of the firstborn males, the law says thus: "Sanctify unto me every firstborn (male), whatsoever openeth the womb" (Ex. 13:2)[1]. And again: "The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me" (Ex. 22:29). This was required for the great benefit of God in Egypt, when the Lord, smiting the firstborn of the Egyptians, spared the Israelites (Ex. 11:5–7). Therefore the Israelites brought their firstborn infants to the Temple, dedicating them to God as a due tribute established by the law. And they again redeemed them from God for themselves at the appointed price, which was called "the money of redemption," and was given to the Levites who served at the Temple of the Lord, as is written in the fourth book of Moses (Num. 3:49–51). The established price of redemption consisted of five holy shekels by church weight, and each holy shekel contained twenty pennies[2]. Fulfilling this law of the Lord, the Mother of God now came to the Temple with the Lawgiver. She came to be purified, though she did not require purification, being unpolluted, undefiled, incorruptible, most pure. For She who conceived without husband or lust, and gave birth without pain and without violation of Her virginal purity, had not the defilement proper to women who bear according to natural law: for how could impurity touch Her who bore the Source of purity? Christ was born of Her as fruit of a tree; and as the tree, after bearing its fruit, is not harmed or defiled, so the Virgin, after bearing Christ, the blessed Fruit, remained unharmed and undefiled. Christ came forth from Her as a ray of sunlight passes through glass or crystal. The sunbeam passing through glass or crystal does not shatter or spoil it, but rather makes it shine the more. The Sun of Righteousness, Christ, did not damage the virginity of His Mother. And through the door of natural birth, sealed with purity and guarded by virginity, He did not defile it with the bleeding customary for women, but, passing through supernaturally, He rather increased its purity, sanctifying it by His origin and

1. By the force of this law, in remembrance of the fact that on the night before the Jews departed from Egypt the Destroying Angel slew all the firstborn of the Egyptians, all the firstborn of the Jews were to be dedicated to the special service of God, that is, to service at the sanctuary. But when later only the tribe of Levi was chosen for this, a ransom of five shekels of silver was appointed for each firstborn.

2. A sacred shekel is worth about 5 kopecks in our money.

illumining it with the divine light of grace. It was in no way necessary for Her who bore God the Word without corruption to be purified. But in order not to transgress the law, but to fulfil it, She who was wholly pure and had no fault came to be purified. Together with this, filled with humility, She did not boast of Her incorruptible purity, but came, as though impure, to stand together with impure women before the doors of the Lord's Temple, and to ask for purification, not disdaining the impure and sinful. She also brought an offering, not as the rich, who brought an unblemished lamb of the first year, but as the poor, who brought two turtledoves or two young pigeons, showing in everything humility and love of poverty, and avoiding the pride of the rich. For of the gold brought by the Magi (Mt. 2:11), She took only a little, and that She distributed to the needy and the poor, keeping for Herself only what was necessary for the journey into Egypt. Having bought the two birds mentioned, She brought them for the sacrifice according to the law, and together with them She brought Her firstborn Infant. "They brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord" (Lk. 2:22), says the Evangelist Luke; that is, to return Him to God, for the law of the Lord writes that every male child that opens the womb must be consecrated to the Lord (Ex. 13:2). Holding the Newborn in Her arms, the Holy Virgin Mary knelt before the Lord and, with profound reverence, lifted up and offered the Infant to God as a precious gift, saying:

"Behold, Thy Son, O Eternal Father, whom Thou didst send to become incarnate of me for the salvation of the human race! Thou didst beget Him before the ages without a mother, and I, by Thy good pleasure, in the fulness of time, have borne Him without a husband. Behold the firstborn fruit of my womb, conceived in me by the Holy Spirit, and, as Thou alone knowest, ineffably come forth from me. He is my Firstborn, yet before all things Thine, co-eternal and co-unoriginate with Thee, the Firstborn who belongs to Thee alone, for He is come down from Thee without departing from Thy Divinity. Receive the Firstborn, with whom Thou didst create the ages (Heb. 1:2), and with whom Thou didst command light to shine together: receive from me Thy Word made flesh, by whom Thou didst establish the heaven, found the

earth, and gather the waters into one: receive from me Thy Son, whom I offer to Thee for this great purpose, that Thou mayest order concerning Him and concerning me as Thou wishest, and that Thou mayest redeem the human race by His flesh and blood, taken from me."

Having uttered these words, She gave Her precious Child into the hands of the hierarch, as the representative of God, as though giving Him to God Himself. After this She redeemed Him, as the law required, at the established price of five holy shekels, the number of which prefigured the five holy wounds upon the body of Christ, which He bore on the Cross, by which the whole world was redeemed from the curse of the law and from the bondage of the enemy[1112].

At the very time when the Mother of God brought the infant Jesus to fulfil over Him the custom prescribed by the law, there came into the Temple, guided by the Holy Spirit, the elder Simeon, a righteous and God-fearing man, who was awaiting the consolation of Israel, which was to come with the coming of the Messiah[3]. He knew that the expected Messiah was already drawing near, for the scepter had passed from Judah to Herod, and the prophecy of the forefather, the patriarch Jacob, was being fulfilled, who had foretold that the ruler would not depart from Judah until the expectation of the nations came, Christ the Lord (Gen. 49:10). Likewise the seventy weeks of Daniel had been completed, after which, according to the prophecy, the coming of the Messiah was to be. Moreover, it had been promised to the holy Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Simeon, looking upon the Most Pure Virgin and upon the Infant in Her arms, saw the grace of God surrounding the Mother with the Child, and, learning from the Holy Spirit that this was the expected Messiah, he hastened forward and, taking Him with ineffable joy and reverent fear, gave great thanks to God. He, whitened with years, like a swan before its death, sang the prophetic song: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Master, according to Thy word, in peace."

"I had no peace in my thoughts," as though he were saying, "all the days awaiting Thee, and all the days I remained in sorrow until Thou

3. The prophecy of the *70 weeks* is found in Daniel (Dan. 9).

shouldst come. Now, having seen Thee, I have received the Gift, and, freed from sorrow, I depart hence with joyful tidings to my fathers. I shall announce Thy coming into the world to the forefather Adam and to Abraham, to Moses and David, to Isaiah and the other holy fathers and prophets; an ineffable joy I shall bring to them, who until now have remained in sorrow. Dismiss me to them, that, laying aside their sorrow, they may rejoice in Thee, their Deliverer. Release Thy servant, after many years of labor, to rest on the bosom of Abraham. My eyes have already seen Thy salvation, prepared for all peoples; my eyes have seen the Light prepared for dispelling darkness, for enlightening the nations, for revealing to them the Divine mysteries unknown to them, a Light shining for the glory of Thy people Israel, which Thou didst promise through the prophet Isaiah, saying: 'I will give salvation in Zion, and My glory to Israel' (Is. 46:2)."

Joseph and the Most Pure Virgin, hearing all that Simeon said concerning the Infant, were amazed; moreover, they saw that Simeon spoke to the Infant not as to a babe, but as to the "Ancient of Days"[4], and, in prayer, addressed Him not as to a man, but as to God, having the power of life and death, who could at once dismiss the old man to another life or keep him in this present one. Simeon also turned his blessing to them, extolling and magnifying the all-pure Mother who had brought into the world God and man, and blessing him who was thought to be the father, St. Joseph, who had been granted to serve such a mystery. Then, turning to Mary, the Mother of Him, and not to Joseph, for with his eyes he perceived in Her the Mother without a husband, Simeon spoke:

This Child shall be for the fall and rising of many in Israel: for the fall of those who will not believe His words, and for the rising of those who will lovingly receive His holy preaching; for the fall of the scribes and Pharisees, blinded by malice, and for the rising of simple fishermen and unlearned people. He will choose not the wise, but will put to shame the wise of this age—for the fall of the assembly of the Old Testament Jews, and for the rising of the Church of God in grace. This

4. The Prophet Daniel saw God under the likeness of the *Ancient of Days*, that is, a very old man (Dan. 7:9–13). In Holy Scripture, old age sometimes serves as a symbol of God's *eternity*.

Child shall be a sign spoken against,[5] for great division shall arise among men on His account: some will call Him good, while others will say that He deceives the people, and they will set Him, according to the word of the Prophet Jeremiah, "as a mark for arrows" (Lam. 3:12), hanging Him upon the wood of the Cross and wounding Him as with arrows—with nails and a spear. At that time, O Mother who knew no man, continued the elder, a sword of sorrow and heartache shall pierce your soul, when you see your Son nailed to the Cross, when with great anguish of heart and lamentation you shall accompany out of this world Him whom you brought into the world without pain.

There was also in the temple Anna the Prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was a widow, already very old—eighty-four years of age; she had lived with her husband for only seven years, and, having become a widow, led a God-pleasing life, never departing from the temple, but serving God day and night in fasting and prayer. Coming into the temple at that hour, Anna spoke at length in prophecy about the Child brought into the temple of the Lord, to all who awaited deliverance in Jerusalem.[6]

Hearing and seeing all this, the scribes and Pharisees burned with anger in their hearts and were indignant with Simeon and Anna for their testimony concerning the Child. They did not keep silent, but informed King Herod[7] of all that had happened and been said in the temple. At once he sent soldiers with orders to seek out the Divine Child, Christ the Lord, and kill Him; but they did not find Him, for, in obedience to the command given to Joseph in a dream, He was in Egypt. Having fulfilled in the temple all that the Law required, St.

5. A sign of contention, a banner over which there is strife—the image is taken from a military banner in battle, which one side strives to seize while the other defends it. The Lord became a sign of contention in the same sense: some—unbelievers—struggled to destroy Him, thinking they had achieved this by crucifying the Son of God; while others—the faithful—stood and still stand beneath this banner and fight for it.

6. From this it is clear that at that time there were quite a number of people in Jerusalem who lived in hope of the promised Messiah's imminent appearance—true Israelites who, without doubt, rejoiced with great joy when they heard that their expectations and prayers had been fulfilled.

7. *Herod*, known in history as *the Great*, son of Antipater, king of the Jews, was first ruler of Galilee; but under the first Roman emperor, Octavian Augustus, in 40 B.C., he received the title of king of the Jews and ruled over all Judea, which was then subject to the Roman state.

Joseph and the Most Pure Theotokos did not return to Bethlehem, but went to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth,[8] and from there quickly withdrew into Egypt (Mt. 2:13–14). The Child grew and waxed strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him (Lk. 2:40).

The celebration of the Meeting of the Lord was established during the reign of Justinian. Although the Meeting of the Lord had previously been commemorated in the Church,[9] it had not been celebrated solemnly. The pious Emperor Justinian established this feast as a feast of the Lord and of the Theotokos, alongside the other great feasts. The establishment of this feast was prompted by extraordinary circumstances. During the reign of Justinian, for three months, beginning in the last days of October, a great plague raged in Byzantium and its environs: at first, five thousand people died each day, and then ten thousand. Even the bodies of wealthy and high-ranking people remained unburied, for their servants and slaves had all perished, and there was no one to bury their masters. In Antioch,[10] moreover, because of the sins of the people, another scourge from God was added to the plague—a terrible earthquake, which brought down all the great houses, lofty buildings, and churches; many people perished beneath their walls. Among the dead was Euphrasius,[11] Bishop of Antioch, crushed to death when a church collapsed. At that dreadful and deadly time, a pious man received a revelation that a solemn celebration of the Meeting of the Lord should be established, as with the other great feasts of the Lord and the Theotokos. And so, when the day of the Meeting of the Lord arrived, on the second of February, and the feast began to be celebrated with an All-night Vigil and processions bearing crosses,[12] the deadly

8. Lk. 2:39. *Bethlehem* is a small town not far from Jerusalem, to the south; Bethlehem lies a journey of three days or somewhat more from *Nazareth*, a city in Galilee.

9. There are references to this feast in the writings of the Fathers of the Church of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries.

10. Here *Antioch* is meant—one of the most ancient and wealthy cities of Syria, and its capital; it lies on the Orontes River, about 10 versts from where the river flows into the Mediterranean Sea. Antioch holds particular importance for the Christian Church as the second great center of Christianity after Jerusalem, and as the mother of the Christian churches among the pagans. At present, Antioch is a small and poor town with a population of up to 10 thousand.

11. *Euphrasius* was Bishop of Antioch from 523 to 527.

plague, the pestilence, and the earthquake ceased at once, through the mercy of God and the prayers of the Most Pure Theotokos. To her, together with Christ God born of her, be honor, glory, worship, and thanksgiving unto the ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, for from thee hath shone forth the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those who are in darkness. Be glad also, thou righteous elder, who hast received in thine arms the Deliverer of our souls, who granteth us resurrection.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb by Thy birth, and, as was meet, didst bless the hands of Simeon; having gone before, Thou hast now saved us, O Christ God. But grant peace in times of war to the commonwealth, and strengthen the Emperor whom Thou hast loved, O Thou who alone lovest mankind.[13]

* * *

NOTES

1112. According to the account of St. Demetrius of Rostov, the Holy Fathers add that the holy Prophet Zechariah, the father of the Forerunner, when the Most Pure Virgin came into the temple for her purification with the Child, placed her not in the place of the women who came for purification, but in the place of the maidens, where married women were not permitted to stand. When the scribes and Pharisees saw this and began to express their indignation, Zechariah stood before them and declared that this Mother was a pure Virgin even after giving birth. When they did not believe this, Zechariah said that human nature, like every created thing, must serve its Creator, and that the ordering of His creation lies in His almighty hands, according to His will—and likewise the ordering of it that a Virgin should give birth and remain a Virgin after giv-

12. In remembrance of the cessation of the plague in Constantinople and the terrible earthquake in Antioch, in some places the Church has ordained that a *litya* be held before the Liturgy, *outside the monasteries*, and that during this procession with crosses the feast's stichera and canon be sung according to custom; upon returning to the church, the *Divine Liturgy* is celebrated.

13. In the kontakion for the Meeting of the Lord, the Church commemorates deliverance from the calamities that befell the Eastern Church and, by God's mercy, ceased during the reign of Emperor Justinian.

ing birth. “Therefore,” he said, “I did not remove this Mother from the place appointed for maidens, because She is above all maidens.”



THE THIRD DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 3

3 февраля

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

Commemoration of the Holy and Righteous Simeon the God-Receiver

Память святого и праведного Симеона Богоприимца

According to the testimony of the Divine Gospel, the elder Simeon was a righteous and devout man, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. God had revealed to him the approaching coming into the world of the true Messiah (Lk. 2:2). The ancient historians relate the following concerning how Simeon received this revelation. At the command of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, a translation of the Law of Moses and the prophetic books from Hebrew into Greek was undertaken. For this work, seventy of the most learned men were chosen from among the whole Jewish people[1124]. Simeon was among them, being a wise man and well versed in the Divine Scriptures. While translating the book of the Prophet Isaiah, Simeon came to the words, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in the womb and bear a Son" (Is. 7:14). As he read them, he doubted, thinking it impossible for a woman who had no husband to bear a child. Simeon had already taken a knife and was about to erase these words from the book's scroll and change the word "virgin" to "woman." But at that moment an Angel of the Lord appeared to him and, holding him by the hand, said: "Have faith in the words that are written, and you yourself shall see their fulfillment, for you shall not see death before you behold Christ the Lord, who is to be born of a pure Virgin."

Having believed the Angelic and prophetic words, Simeon awaited with impatience the coming of Christ into the world. He led a righteous and blameless life, turning away from every evil and abiding continually

in the temple of God. There Simeon prayed to God to have mercy upon His world and deliver people from the most crafty devil.

When our Lord Jesus Christ, forty days after His birth, was brought to the temple in the arms of His Most Pure Mother, according to the custom of the Law (Ex. 13:2), the righteous Simeon also came there, led by the Spirit of God. Seeing the Pre-eternal Infant and the Most Immaculate Virgin who had borne Him, he recognized that this was the promised Messiah, and that this was the Virgin concerning whom Isaiah's prophecy was to be and had been fulfilled. Seeing Her overshadowed by heavenly light and radiant with Divine rays, Simeon approached Her with awe and joy, received the God-Child[1] into his arms, and said: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Master, according to Thy word, in peace: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Lk. 2:29–32)[2].

After this, he prophesied of Christ's sufferings and His crucifixion, and also concerning the Theotokos, that a sword of sorrow and grief would pierce Her soul when She saw Her Son hanging upon the Cross (Lk. 2:34–35).

Having attained a great age, Simeon reposed in the Lord[3]. It is written of him that he lived for three hundred and sixty years, for it pleased God to prolong the life of the holy elder, that he might live to see the longed-for year, awaited through all the ages, when the Eternal Son was born of a Virgin, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.[1128]

1. Therefore the holy Symeon is called the God-receiver.

2. The prayer of St. Symeon the God-receiver at his death: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Master" — is repeated every day in the church at the evening service, so that the evening of each day may remind each believer of the evening of his life, that is, of the death that awaits him. The holy elder Symeon, released from the bonds of the flesh, passed with joy into the other world when he took into his aged arms the Divine Infant, the Savior of the world. So every believer, at the hour of death, having sincerely partaken of the Holy Gifts, the Body and Blood of Christ, leaves this turbulent and vain world with joy.

3. The holy relics of Symeon the God-receiver were translated to Constantinople under the emperor Justin the Younger (565–578), and were laid there in the Chalkoprateia church, in the chapel of St. James, the brother of the Lord, built by this emperor. The tomb of St. Symeon the God-receiver was seen here also by our Russian pilgrim of the twelfth century, Archbishop Antony of Novgorod.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The elder prayed to be released today from the bonds of this corruptible life; having received Christ, the Creator and Lord, into his arms.

The Commemoration of St. Anna the Prophetess

St. Anna the Prophetess, commemorated in the Gospel, met the Lord Jesus in the temple together with St. Simeon the God-Receiver, and proclaimed concerning Him that He was the expected Messiah—Christ.[4]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Blaise[5]

Память святого мученика Власия

St. Blaise was a shepherd and came from Caesarea in Cappadocia.[6] When the persecution began and Christians were being sought out, Blaise too, as a Christian, was sought throughout all the surrounding places. Learning of this, St. Blaise willingly gave himself into the hands of his torturers, who stretched him out and beat him with ox sinews. But God healed his sickness and healed his wounds. When the governor learned of this, he called the miracle sorcery and ordered that, after these tortures, the saint be thrown into a cauldron of boiling water. To the horror of all who were present, the martyr remained unharmed and spoke with the people around him while in the boiling water, for the Angels of God appeared and preserved him unharmed. Then, at the governor's command, soldiers came to the martyr to take him out of the cauldron; when they saw him singing together with the Angels, the soldiers also confessed themselves to be Christians. Learning of this, the governor sent other soldiers, but they too, upon arriving, called themselves Christians. After this, the governor himself came there and saw the saint in the boiling water. Thinking that the water had cooled, the governor washed his face in it, and immediately scalded

4. Lk. 2:36–38. — More on St. Anna the prophetess see in the Tale of the Meeting.
5. He is also called Voukolos, from the Greek word βουκυλος — shepherd.
6. Cappadocia lay in the east of Asia Minor; Caesarea was the chief city of Cappadocia.

his face and died of it. Having turned many to Christ by his miracles, St. Blaise prayed to God and surrendered his holy soul to Him. Those present at his death saw a dove flying over his body. And the shepherd's staff of Blaise, when planted in the ground, grew into a great tree whose branches covered the sanctuary of the church built over the saint's relics.[7]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Adrian and Eubulus

Память святых мучеников Адриана и Еввула

The Holy Martyrs Adrian and Eubulus were natives of the city of Vannia.[8] Burning with love for the confessors of Christ, they went to the city of Caesarea[9] and there, by their words and the blamelessness of their lives, showed that they were Christians. Therefore they were seized and brought to trial before Firmilian, the governor of the province. At his command, they were beaten on the shoulders and ribs and subjected to other, even more cruel tortures, in order to compel them to renounce Christ. But since they remained steadfast in their faith, Firmilian and those with him fell into a rage, and it was decided to throw the saints to be torn apart by wild beasts. Blessed Adrian was thrown first. Seized by a lion, he bravely fought with it, after which his head was cut off with a sword. St. Eubulus, for his part, was still urged to renounce the faith by various exhortations and enticements, but he remained unyielding, and so he too was thrown to the beasts. He also fought with a lion and died, beheaded by the sword, like St. Adrian.

* * *

7. The holy martyr Blaise lived and died in the third century.
8. The city of Vania, or Van, lay on the eastern shore of the lake which bears the same name at the present time, in Armenia.
9. The city of Caesarea lay in Palestine and was situated on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It was the residence of the Roman governors of the Palestinian province.

Life of the Holy Right-believing Prince Roman, Wonderworker of Uglich[^1135

Житие святого благоверного князя Романа, Угличского чудотворца

The Holy Right-believing Prince Roman of Uglich lived during the grievous time of the Tatar invasion of the Russian land. He was the second son of Vladimir Konstantinovich, the second appanage prince of Uglich, and the grandson of Konstantin Vsevolodovich, at first the appanage prince of Rostov, Yaroslavl, and Uglich, and later the Grand Prince of Vladimir.[10] Vladimir Konstantinovich received Uglich Field, or the town of Uglich, as his appanage in early childhood.[11] Having married Princess Photinia, he had two sons—Andrei and Roman.[12]

During Vladimir's reign in Uglich, a terrible storm burst over the Russian land, and over Uglich with it. After laying waste to Moscow and Vladimir and slaughtering the family of the Grand Prince there, Batu moved beyond the Volga, where Grand Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich had withdrawn to gather his forces. Along the way, the Tatars brought every city they encountered under their power, while those that refused to submit they laid waste, slaughtering their inhabitants. In view of the evident and unavoidable danger, Prince Vladimir of Uglich decided not to offer fruitless resistance, but to save the city and its inhabitants by submitting to the Tatars. He himself, however, did not wish to endure the disgrace with his family, and sought safety in the north, withdrawing into the lands of Novgorod. After the disastrous battle on the Sit River and the death of Grand Prince Yuri, the Russian princes had to acknowledge Tatar rule and pay them tribute. The prince of Uglich too had to submit to this fate; after Batu's withdrawal to the south, he returned to Uglich, like the other princes once the danger had passed, and began to rule as a subordinate of the khan. It is not known whether Prince Vladimir went to the Horde to declare his submission to the

10. Constantine was the son of Grand Prince Vsevolod III Yuryevich "Big Nest," born in 1185; from 1207 he was appanage prince of Rostov, Yaroslavl, and Uglich, and from 1216 Grand Prince of Vladimir; he died in 1219.

11. He was born around 1214.

12. Prince Vladimir entered into marriage in 1232; Prince Andrew was born in 1233, and Roman on 1 October 1235.

khan, as was required and as all ruling princes were expected to do. The tradition recorded in the extended Life states that Vladimir did not go to the Horde, but, to avoid being held accountable, did not remain in Uglich either; instead, he lived in other cities and died in Vladimir on December 27, 1249. His body was then brought by his wife and children to Uglich and buried in the Cathedral of the Transfiguration.

The childhood of Right-believing Prince Roman, like that of his elder brother Andrei, thus passed amid terrible anxieties and calamities, more often in exile and wandering than in peaceful residence with his parents in Uglich.

After Vladimir's death, his elder son Andrei became prince of Uglich; he was only 16 years old. But his mother was with him and guided her children. Andrei died in 1261, leaving no children, and the principality of Uglich passed to his brother Roman, who was then 26 years of age.

Having grown up in the pious household of Prince Vladimir Konstantinovich amid terrible anxieties and trials, and having spent a considerable time wandering, Prince Roman was distinguished by his piety and had little inclination for a noisy life and merrymaking. Being sufficiently educated, he occupied himself with reading books and loved the churches of God, the clergy, and the services of the Church. Many churches in Uglich and throughout the principality of Uglich are attributed to his reign; under him it enjoyed peace, so far as this was possible during the grievous time of Tatar rule. Besides Uglich, Prince Roman's authority extended over other towns as well: Kashin, Bezhetsky Verkh, Ustyuzhna, Dmitrov, and Zvenigorod. He also built the new city of Romanov on the high left bank of the Volga, opposite the Borisoglebsk settlement.

Prince Roman was distinguished by his almsgiving; he took care to establish almshouses and houses of hospitality.

In 1265 Prince Roman was united in marriage with the princess Alexandra, but they had no children. Together with him in Uglich there lived his pious mother, Princess Photinia, who in her old age received the monastic habit with the name Eudocia; she died in 1278 and was buried in Uglich beside her spouse. In 1281 Prince Roman was bereft

of his wife Alexandra as well, and he spent his last years in solitude, devoting himself to works and deeds of piety. His blessed repose took place on 3 February 1285, to the great sorrow of his subjects and of the princes related to him, who loved and honored him. The body of Prince Roman was laid in the cathedral church of the Transfiguration of the Lord, beside the tombs of his father, his mother, his brother and his wife.

Exactly two hundred years after the death of Prince Roman, that is, in 1485, Prince Andrew Vasilievich of Uglich[13] began the construction of a new cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Lord, now of stone, within the fortress of the city of Uglich. While digging the trench for the foundation of the new church, God granted Prince Andrew the discovery of the incorrupt relics of Prince Roman, which were afterwards placed in the newly built church, where they lay whole and unharmed for more than one hundred and twenty years. Numerous miraculous healings of various diseases flowed from these incorrupt relics. Both the inhabitants of Uglich and those of the surrounding places reverently honored the relics of the holy prince, but there was no testimony on the part of the church authorities.

After the murder of Tsarevich Demetrius in Uglich, at the end of the sixteenth and the first years of the seventeenth century, miraculous healings of the sick who came to the relics of the holy Prince Roman began to recur especially often. The fame of these miracles spread everywhere, and Patriarch Job commissioned Metropolitan Hermogenes of Kazan to examine on the spot the holy relics and the accounts of the miracles. After this examination, the Most Holy Patriarch Job blessed the composition of a life, stichera and canon for St. Roman, as well as a description of the miracles from 3 February 1605[14].

In 1609 the city of Uglich suffered a great calamity, as did all Rus' at that time: the devastation by the Lithuanians. The city of Uglich was

13. Andrew Vasilyevich, son of Grand Prince Vasily Vasilyevich the Dark and brother of Grand Prince John Vasilyevich III, reigned in Uglich from 1462; in 1422 he was imprisoned by John III in Pereyaslavl, where he also died, in 1494.

14. The life of St. Roman and the description of his first miracles perished in the Lithuanian devastation. Together with the service to St. Roman there has survived a description of the miracles from his relics only from 2 March of the same year, 1605.

taken, its inhabitants were slain in great numbers, and its houses, fortress and God's churches were plundered and burned. The enemies also broke into the Transfiguration Cathedral, plundered and burned much there, and especially the relics of the holy Prince Roman, which rested there. The pious venerators of St. Roman gathered up the burned bones of his relics — the head, ribs, hands and feet — placed them in a new reliquary, and set it again in the cathedral church of the Transfiguration, where they rest to the present time.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Azariah

Память святого пророка Азарии

The holy Azariah, son of Oded, prophesied in the days of Asa, king of Judah[15]. On the occasion of Asa's glorious victory over Zerah, king of Ethiopia, Azariah, filled with the Spirit of God, urged the king and the people to abandon idolatry and to serve the true God faithfully. Stirred by the prophecy of Azariah, the king and the people cast out the idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin. Many also of the Israelites then turned to the true God, and, gathering in Jerusalem, entered into a covenant with God, giving an oath never to depart from Him. And God blessed them with a long peace[16].

* * *

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Papias, Diodore and Claudian

Страдание святых мучеников Папия, Диодора и Клавдиана

The holy martyrs Papias, Diodore and Claudian suffered in the reign of the emperor Decius[17] in the Pamphylian city of Attalia[18]. They tended herds of cattle in their land and, being Christians, spread faith in Christ among the pagans. As a result, an accusation was

15. In the tenth century before the Nativity of Christ.
16. The account of the prophet Azariah is found in 2 Chron. 15:1–19.
17. Emperor Decius was one of the most cruel persecutors of Christians, whose aim was the complete extermination of Christianity in the Roman Empire. He reigned for two years, from 249 to 251 A.D.

made against them, and by the order of the governor of the province, Paulinus, they were seized and brought before him for judgment. At the interrogation they fearlessly confessed Christ as the true God, and, firmly believing in Him, said that He is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all that is in them, and that besides Him there is no other God. Hearing this, the governor of the province was enraged and commanded that the saints be subjected to various tortures. But since he could not by these compel them to renounce their faith in Christ, he ordered their heads to be cut off with the sword. Thus the holy martyrs died for Christ and received from Him the crowns of martyrdom. The Christians honorably buried their bodies to the glory of Christ our God.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the commemoration of the holy martyr Iador, who suffered under the emperor Decius .

NOTES

1124. Ptolemy II, Philadelphus, son and successor of Ptolemy Lagus (285–247 B.C.), was one of the greatest Egyptian sovereigns. He is especially known for his enlightened love of learning. By his care the Library of Alexandria was founded. Desiring to join Syria to his possessions, he subdued also Judea, which lay on the way to Syria. After his capture of Jerusalem, many thousands of Jews from Jerusalem and its environs, as well as from Samaria, were led away captive to Egypt; but since the king treated the Jews with mercy and even gave them equal rights with the Macedonians in Alexandria, many Jews voluntarily settled in that country. Hearing that the Jewish law had its beginning from God and contains the highest wisdom and the most holy commandments, the king desired to have it in a Greek translation. By this translation he wished to supplement his rich library in Alexandria, and perhaps he wished also to render a service to the Jews, many of whom, from their long residence in Alexandria, were beginning to forget their native tongue. An embassy with rich gifts for the temple was sent to Jerusalem. In a letter to the high priest the king wrote that he should send him elders experienced in knowledge of the national law, who could accurately translate it into Greek. At that time the high priest was the grandson of Aduya, Eleazar. He chose from the twelve

18. Pamphylia lay in the southern part of Asia Minor on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. On the north it bordered on Pisidia, on the west on Lycia, and on the east on Cilicia. The city of Attalia, now Adalia, was the seaport of the province and the seat of the provincial governor.

tribes of Israel six elders from each, and, handing them the most accurate copy of the sacred books, written in golden letters on the finest parchment, sent them to Alexandria. Here they were received most favorably. They were given a house on the island of Pharos, where they devoted themselves to the translation every day until the ninth hour, or until three in the afternoon. The translation was completed in seventy days, read in the presence of the Alexandrian Jews, and approved by them. This very translation of the sacred books is called "the translation of the seventy (or more exactly, seventy-two) interpreters," or translators; it is still used in the Orthodox Eastern Church, and from it was made our "Slavonic translation of the Old Testament."

1128. Concerning the holy Symeon, who took into his arms the Infant Jesus brought into the temple and blessed Mary the Mother of God and Joseph, many think that he was a priest at the temple in Jerusalem, as Zechariah was, who earlier had received the child Mary, who was to be the Mother of Jesus, when she was brought into the temple. So say the following: St. Athanasius the Great, in his book on the common nature of the Father and the Son; St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his word on the Meeting of the Lord; St. Epiphanius, in his teaching on the fathers of the Old Testament; and others. The Gospel does not say to what rank the righteous Symeon belonged, but in the hymns of the holy Church he is called "priest," "hierarch," "minister of the holy things," "one who offered the lawful sacrifices," and "one who cleansed the people of Israel by bloody sacrifices." The very actions of St. Symeon at the Meeting of the Lord (Lk. 2:23–37) also show that he was a priest.

1135. In 1605, beginning on 3 February, miracles began to occur from the relics of St. Prince Roman of Uglich. Patriarch Job at that same time charged Hermogenes, Metropolitan of Kazan (later Patriarch), with examining the relics of the holy prince in Uglich and verifying the reports of miracles. By the blessing of Patriarch Job, the voivode Semen Romanovich Olferyev and the monk Sergius of the Danilov Monastery of Pereyaslavl composed a life, a service, and a description of the miracles (from 3 February 1605) of St. Prince Roman. After the Lithuanian devastation of the city of Uglich in 1609, the newly written life, as well as the account of the miracles from 3 February to 2 March 1605, could not be found; only the service and the account of the miracles from 2 March were copied. From a manuscript kept in the Transfiguration Cathedral of Uglich, the account of the miracles of St. Prince Roman was printed in the *Yaroslavl Diocesan Gazette* for 1873, nos. 46–48, and as a separate pamphlet: *Tale of the Miracles of the Holy Right-believing Prince Roman, Wonderworker of Uglich*. Yaroslavl, 1874. The service and the account of the miracles are also known to us from several other manuscripts. After the loss of the life written in 1605, a new and extensive life was later composed, in the eighteenth century, at the Transfiguration Cathedral of Uglich, “from the most ancient chroniclers and trustworthy geographical and historical writers”; from an eighteenth-century copy this life was printed in the *Yaroslavl Diocesan Gazette* for 1889, nos. 48–49, and as a separate pamphlet: *Life of the Holy and Right-believing Prince Roman Vladimirovich, Wonderworker of Uglich*. Yaroslavl, 1890. The data of

the mentioned “Tale” and “Life” have been checked in the present account against references to the chronicles and other testimonies.



THE FOURTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 4

4 февраля

New Calendar February 4 · Old Calendar February 17 (civil dates)

Memory of Our Venerable Father Isidore of Pelusium

Память преподобного отца нашего Исидора Пилусиотского

Venerable Isidore was a native of Alexandria[1]. He came from noble and pious parents, and was a kinsman of Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria, and of St. Cyril, Theophilus' successor. Having studied secular learning with success and having been trained in Divine wisdom, Isidore desired to dedicate himself to the service of God. Still in his youth he forsook the glory and riches of this world, and, despising the nobility of his birth and counting all things as it were dust, he withdrew to the mountain of Pelusium[2]. There, having received the monastic tonsure, he led a strict ascetic life[3]. The spiritual wisdom and austere life of Isidore gathered about him many zealots of piety, and he was chosen by them as abbot and presbyter[4]. By his rigorous labors and high learning Venerable Isidore won such esteem that not only

1. *Alexandria* – a city in northern Egypt, at the mouth of the Nile River; founded by Alexander the Macedonian in 331 B.C. It was once the center of pagan learning and the first commercial city on earth. At the beginning of the 4th century it became the center of Christian enlightenment and the seat of the patriarch. At present Alexandria is counted among the most fortified ports and the most important commercial points on the Mediterranean.

2. *Mount Pilusiotes*, located in Lower Egypt, not far from the Nile River. – *Pelusium*, or *Pelusa* – one of the cities of northern Egypt.

3. Living here in deep solitude, Isidore zealously devoted himself to the ascetic labors of the monastic life. He wore a garment of coarse hair and fed only on roots and herbs. From here the Venerable Isidore traveled to Constantinople in order to see and hear St. John Chrysostom. What Isidore saw and heard from Chrysostom, and likewise his writings, remained for Isidore, for the rest of his life, the object of attentive study and wonder, so that the clarity of mind of Chrysostom, his simplicity and his zeal became the possession of Isidore and were imprinted on all his actions. On his return to the Pilusiote monastery, he continued his ascetic life, not ashamed to rebuke hypocrites and wrongdoers: he rebuked his bishop for setting prices on places, and the civil authorities for partiality.

bishops and nobles, but the emperor himself and the Patriarchs of Alexandria sought his counsel and instruction, and he was held in great honor by all.

The church historian Evagrius[5], recalling Isidore, speaks thus: "In the reign of Theodosius[6] Isidore of Pelusium was held in great honor; the fame of him as a virtuous and teaching man spread far and wide, and his name was glorified on all lips. By his labors he so wore down his flesh that his life seemed to all an angelic life upon earth. He served as a living model of the monastic life and of contemplation, and wrote much that was most useful for the instruction of others."

The historian Nicephorus[7], bearing witness to the virtuous life of Isidore, says: "Divine Isidore from his youth shed so much sweat in monastic labors, and so mortified his flesh, warming his soul with mystical and lofty teachings, that to all he seemed to walk in perfection the Gospel way of life. He was a living and animated pillar of monastic rules and of Divine vision, and as it were the highest model of most ardent imitation and of spiritual teaching. Isidore wrote a multitude of various useful exhortations. There remained after him up to ten thousand epistles to various persons, filled with Divine grace and human wisdom, in which he expounds all the Divine Scripture and corrects the morals of men."

From these testimonies it is clearly seen what a great friend of God Venerable Isidore was. Although no detailed written life of him has been preserved, the brief words of the historians are already enough to show his holiness and wisdom, for he was a model of virtuous life for all and filled the world with his God-inspired writings. He appeared as a great defender of St. John Chrysostom, who had been unjustly deprived of his episcopal see, and he wrote much to Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria, and to the Emperor Arcadius[8], exhorting them to

4. Modesty in dress, the keeping of silence, scarcity in food, beneficence to the poor – these are the rules which the Venerable Isidore instilled in his brethren, and which were confirmed by the living example of his own life.

5. *Evagrius* – a church historian of the 6th century.

6. *Theodosius II* the Younger, grandson of Theodosius the Great, was Byzantine emperor from 408 to 450.

7. *Nicephorus Callistus*, who lived in the 14th century, wrote the "Ecclesiastical History."

abandon their evil deed; and although he did not attain success, he nevertheless exposed their malice and injustice. And after the repose of Chrysostom, he persuaded in writing St. Cyril of Alexandria, Theophilus' successor, to inscribe the name of John in the church diptychs[9] as a great confessor who had suffered much for the truth at the hands of evil men.

He also wrote to the Emperor Theodosius, admonishing him to care for peace in the Church. And he moved him to convene the third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus[10] against the impious heretics; for he himself was a great zealot of piety, a strong opponent of heretics, ready to suffer and die for the Orthodox faith, as is seen from his words. In an epistle to one who reviled him, Pherasius, he says:

"I ask you, who mock us and show yourself to us as a clever and severe judge: if the emperor had set you upon the city walls, commanding you to keep watch and defend the city, and you saw the enemy digging under and destroying the wall in order to enter the city more easily, would you not resist, with all tools and weapons, preventing the wall from being demolished and not letting the enemies in? Surely you would act so, to defend the city and yourself from the enemies, and to show fidelity and zealous obedience to the emperor. Should we not, whom God has set as teachers in His Church, stand firmly against Arius[11], who has not only waged war against the flock of Christ but has destroyed many? To endure every calamity for this cause I count as

8. *Arcadius* – son and successor of the emperor Theodosius the Great, reigned from 395 until 408.

9. *Diptych* (from the Greek words: twice and I fold) – two tablets, on one of which were written the names of the living, and on the other the names of the departed. Among us they are called *synodiks*, or simply commemorations and memorial lists. In the early Church Christians considered it an honor to be inscribed in the ecclesiastical diptych; conversely, it was a disgrace for those whose names were not entered or were removed from the diptych.

10. *The Third Ecumenical Council* was convened in 431 on account of the heresy of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who troubled the Church with a false teaching about the Person of Jesus Christ, asserting that in Him the Divinity was not united with the humanity in the very Incarnation, and therefore calling Him God-bearer rather than God-man, and the Most Holy Virgin Christ-bearer rather than Theotokos. Having condemned Nestorius and his teaching as heretical, the fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council solemnly confirmed the Orthodox teaching that one must confess in our Lord Jesus Christ one Person and two natures, and praise His Most Pure Mother as the one Ever-Virgin and true Theotokos.

nothing, and I desire nothing so much as to bear every trouble for the true faith."

From these words of the saint his zeal for piety is clearly seen; but from his epistles one may learn of his other virtues as well.

Virginity, of which Isidore himself was a strict keeper, he extols above the other virtues, calling it a queen whom everyone ought to honor, though he does not disparage honorable marriage either. In his epistle to Antonius the scholastic he says: "Those who keep virginity should be likened to the sun, those who live chastely as widows to the moon, and those who live honorably in marriage to the stars, just as the holy Apostle Paul says: 'One glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory' (1 Cor. 15:41). To those who are carried away by secular learning he gives the exhortation to devote themselves to a virtuous life rather than to eloquence. In an epistle to a certain monk, Patrimius, he says: 'I hear of you that you have a great mind and natural gifts, so that you diligently study the art of rhetoric in order to become eloquent; but the path of spiritual life is successfully traversed only by the performance of good deeds, not by the aid of eloquence; therefore, if you desire to receive an immortal reward, do not be concerned with eloquence, but rather take greater care to fulfill good deeds with diligence.'"

In like manner Isidore writes to Bishop Apollonius: "Since it is unseemly and not right to draw people by compulsion to piety, who were created with free will, who do not express their own consent and resist, you ought to take care to enlighten those who dwell in darkness by good instruction, a good life and good morals."

This saint also teaches that a virtuous man should not take pride in his good deeds, but should think humbly of himself: "The one virtuous in a single virtue," he says, "has a bright crown, but one who performs many virtues and yet thinks that he has done little good will, through such humble opinion of himself, have a brighter crown; in virtues the very thought that little has been done deserves no less praise than the

11. *Arius* (who lived at the beginning of the 4th century) debased the Son of God by his impious teaching, calling Him the highest creature, through whom God created the whole world. This heresy was condemned at the 1st Ecumenical Council.

virtues themselves (that have been accomplished); but I will say in all truth: in whoever this humble thought is preserved, in him the virtues also shine more brightly, but whoever lacks this thought, his bright virtues grow dim and his great ones are diminished. Therefore, whoever desires his virtues to be great, let him not consider them great, and they will in fact prove to be great."

Teaching others thus, Venerable Isidore himself was before all the doer of what he taught. In this he imitated the Lord, who first did and then taught. Isidore did not take pride in his good deeds, but was humble-minded; and with humility he joined chastity, like a pair of oxen laboring together, drawing the gracious yoke of Christ.

The chastity of St. Isidore is made manifest in his epistle to Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis,[12] in which he earnestly admonishes him to avoid conversations with women with all strictness. "If any conversations," says Scripture, "corrupt good manners (1 Cor. 15:33), it is conversations with women, even seemly ones, for they can corrupt the inner man secretly, through evil thoughts; and even if the body remains in purity, the soul will be defiled." Therefore the Venerable Isidore gives counsel to this bishop, who was accustomed in his spoken discourses to instruct women in what was profitable, and who boasted that he felt in himself no desires whatever. "Avoid," he writes, "as far as you can, conversations with women, good sir! For those who bear the dignity of the priesthood ought to be holier and purer than those who dwell in mountains and deserts. The former have care both for themselves and for the people, while the latter have care only for themselves. Moreover, the former are set on so high a level of honor that everyone searches out and examines their lives, whereas the latter live in caves, either healing their wounds or studying their faults, and some

12. *Palladius of Helenopolis* (368–430), a disciple of the Venerable Dorotheus, a native of Gaul, arrived in Alexandria in 388, from where he afterward withdrew into the nearby desert, where the Venerable Dorotheus also labored, and then moved to Bethlehem. In 399 he was elected bishop of Helenopolis, in Bithynia, in Asia Minor. After that, the emperor Arcadius exiled him to Antinoë as a supporter of St. John Chrysostom, and in 412 he was returned to his see at Helenopolis. At the request of Lausus, the prefect of Cappadocia, in 420 he compiled a collection of lives of the saints and accounts of them, which in his honor was called the "Lausiac History." In view of the edifying and instructive character of this collection, the church rule prescribes readings from it at Matins during the holy Great Fast.

even weaving crowns for themselves. But if you are compelled to meet with women, lower your eyes to the ground, and instruct those to whom you have come to have chaste looks. After a brief conversation, sufficient to strengthen and enlighten their souls, depart quickly at once, lest a prolonged meeting weaken and disturb your strength, and, having taken possession of you as a fierce and majestic lion, cut off his mane, which truly makes the lion a lion and guards his royal dignity. If you wish to be held in respect by women (and a spiritual man ought especially to be concerned with this), then do not have fellowship with them, and so you will be held in honor by them. For then this becomes most possible, when we seek it least of all. Men are wont to disdain those who serve them, and to stand in awe before those who do not flatter them. Yet the female nature is most of all subject to this infirmity. A woman, when she is flattered, is intolerable; but she stands in greatest reverence and amazement before those who behave toward her with freedom and authority. But you say that you have prolonged conversations with women and suffer no harm. Let it be so. But everyone knows that water wears down stones, and raindrops, falling upon them without ceasing, pierce them. Consider: what is softer than water or drops of water? Yet their unceasing action overcomes even the nature of stone. If an almost invincible substance is overcome, and suffers and is diminished by a thing that is nothing in comparison with it, then will not the human will, so easily swayed, be conquered and corrupted by long exposure?"

In thus admonishing Bishop Palladius, the Venerable Isidore also instructs us all in a chaste life, that we should not only guard our body from the fall of the flesh, but also keep our soul in purity from sinful thoughts.

The Venerable Isidore left in his writings many instructions on all the virtues; and having taught all men these virtues in his spoken discourses as well, he attained a deep old age, and, having pleased God, reposed in peace.[1157]

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having gloriously found thee another morning star, the Church, illumined by the lightnings of thy words, cries to thee: Rejoice, most blessed Isidore, wise in God!

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Nicholas the Confessor, Abbot of Studion

Житие преподобного отца нашего Николая Исповедника, игумена Студийского

Our Venerable Father Nicholas was born[13] on the island of Crete,[14] in a village called Kidonia, from which also came the holy martyr Basilides, who suffered among the ten martyrs on the island of Crete. The parents of the blessed Nicholas were Christians. In his early childhood he was given to be instructed in the word of God. When the youth reached the age of ten and had already sufficiently practiced in reading the sacred books, his parents sent him to Constantinople, to his uncle, the blessed Theophanes, who was a monk in the Studite monastery.[1160] Theophanes kindly received his nephew and led him to the abbot of the Studite monastery, the Venerable Theodore. The Venerable Theodore, foreseeing that the youth was to be a chosen vessel of God, blessed him and bade him for the time being to remain outside the monastery, in a separate building where a school for young men was housed. When Nicholas came of age, the abbot, seeing his prudence and likewise his meek and humble disposition, received him within the monastery and tonsured him into the monastic order. After several years of virtuous life in the monastery, the abbot compelled Nicholas to accept the priesthood as well. Also coming to the Studite monastery to Nicholas was his own brother, named Titus. He had fled from the island of Crete after the Saracens[15] attacked the island, and came to his

13. In 793.

14. *The island of Crete* (otherwise *Candia*) lies in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. By 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 event of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, for Cretans were also present at this (Acts 2:11). Then it was established and spread here by the Apostle Paul, as can be seen from his epistle to Titus, whom the Apostle appointed bishop in Crete (Titus 1:5). In the 17th century the island of Crete passed under Turkish rule.

brother with the sorrowful news that their parents had been carried off into captivity. Titus conveyed this news to his brother with great grief and tears. Nicholas, having received such sorrowful tidings, though his heart ached for his parents, strove to console his brother, exhorting him not to grieve.

"So it has pleased God," he said to his brother, "for without His will not even a hair falls from the head (cf. Mt. 10:30; Lk. 12:7). He knows what to do for man's benefit. Therefore let us cast our sorrow and our care for our parents upon Him. For our part, we ourselves must take care not to be taken captive by carnal lust and the allurements of this age, and that the hand of invisible enemies not lead us into a land of darkness and unillumined gloom."

Titus was softened and comforted by his brother's words, and at his urging was tonsured and himself became a good monk.

At that time the Church of Christ, governed by good pastors, dwelt in peace and quiet, but its tranquility was suddenly broken by a storm of rebellion raised by the iconoclast heretics, at whose head stood the impious emperor Leo the Armenian.[16] Leo the Armenian had been a patrician[17] in the reign of the pious emperor Michael, surnamed Rhangabe,[18] but by cunning he deposed Michael from the throne and seized it himself. For this purpose he made use of the Greeks' war with the Bulgarians. When the emperor set out for war, he appointed Leo commander over the eastern detachments of his army, not suspecting that he was seeking by deceit to overthrow him from the throne. When the battle took place, the Greeks began to win and the Bulgarians were ready to take flight. But Leo, having arranged beforehand with his own commanders, whom he himself had bribed, suddenly turned his detachments to flight, although no one was pursuing them. The Bulgarians, seeing the Greeks' unprovoked retreat, at first suspected some deception on their part, but then, seeing that the Greeks did not halt in their

15. *Saracens* – inhabitants of Arabia. Originally this name was applied to a nomadic, predatory tribe, and later Christian writers transferred the name to all Arabs and Muslims in general.
16. *Leo V the Armenian* – Byzantine emperor and iconoclast, reigned from 813 to 820.
17. *Patricians* were, in the Roman and Eastern, Byzantine, empire, persons of the highest class, corresponding to our hereditary nobility.
18. *Michael I Rhangabe* – Byzantine emperor – reigned from 811 until 813.

flight, took courage and, advancing against them, pursued them for a long time, destroying a great number of Greek soldiers, so that Emperor Michael suffered complete defeat. Leo attained his aim, for the army and the people judged the emperor to be cowardly and faint-hearted, unable to conduct a battle. He hastened to take advantage of this disposition of the people and the army against the emperor. After the defeat Michael returned to Constantinople. Leo, remaining with the troops in Bithynia[19] to guard the border, at once proceeded to carry out his long-conceived evil design against the emperor. He spread a rumor that the Greeks had suffered defeat only through the emperor's cowardice and complete inexperience in military affairs. By this he roused his entire army against Michael, which refused to acknowledge Michael as emperor and proclaimed Leo himself emperor. When news of Leo's action reached Michael, the emperor, despite the counsel of those around him, refused to oppose him, saying that he did not wish a single drop of Christian blood to be shed in civil war for his sake. Secretly from others he sent Leo the imperial crown and purple, saying to him: "I yield the kingdom to you; come to Constantinople without fear and reign."

But Leo treated Michael, who had so humbly yielded the rule to him, most cruelly. Entering Constantinople with great pomp, he at once confined Michael and his wife on one of the islands; and he commanded that their two sons, Theophylact and Ignatius, be castrated.

Some time after his accession, the impious Leo rose up against Christ God Himself and against His Holy Church. He convened an impious assembly against the veneration of icons, and ordered the holy icons to be cast out of the churches of God. The Most Holy Patriarch Nicephorus, with a council of pious bishops and archimandrites and all the God-inspired fathers, stood against this impiety of the emperor, admonishing him not to embitter and disturb the Church of Christ with heresy. But the impious emperor drove them all dishonorably from the

19. *Bithynia* – a northwestern province of Asia Minor, situated along the shores of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and the Constantinople strait. In the 14th century Bithynia was subjected to the Turks, under whose rule it remains to this day.

chambers where the pious assembly was taking place, and sent them into exile in various lands.

The holy Theodore of Stoudios, together with his disciple, the blessed Nicholas, had to suffer especially much at the hand of the impious Leo, since they opposed the impiety of the Emperor with particular vigor and boldness. At first both of them were banished together by the Emperor to a place near Lake Apollonias, to the fortress of Metopa[20]. Remaining there in prison for a whole year, they nevertheless continued to preach the true teaching concerning the veneration of the holy icons, and succeeded in turning many away from heresy. Hearing of this, the Emperor sent them to the eastern lands, to the little town of Vonita[21]. Here they were again imprisoned, and by the Emperor's order they were kept under the strictest watch, so that no one was admitted to them and they could speak with no one. But the confessors, being unable to instruct the people in piety by word of mouth, preached their teaching in writing. From their prison they sent letters to the faithful and thus, as with loud trumpets, they overthrew the heretical doctrines like the walls of Jericho, correcting and restoring the dogmas of piety that the heretics were destroying. Learning of this, the Emperor sent a cruel soldier, named Anastasius, to punish them. Anastasius, arriving at the place, subjected the confessors to cruel torture, inflicting by blows terrible wounds from which their bodies were torn apart. On his return the tormentor again locked the blessed men in prison, closing all access to them completely, and ordered that they be starved. The holy prisoners had to endure terrible sufferings, both from the dreadful wounds and from hunger and thirst, for the guards gave them bread and water in the smallest quantities, and that only every three or four days, and sometimes every seven days, throwing the food to them through a window with abuse and mockery. The prisoners remained in this confinement for three years. But before the wounds on the prisoners' bodies had properly closed, they had to endure a yet more dreadful torment from a new tormentor sent by the Emperor. This envoy came

20. This lake lies near *Apollonia* – an ancient city in Illyria. *Mesopa* or *Metopa* – the fortress of Apollonia.
21. *Vonita* or Bonit – in Anatolia, otherwise Asia Minor.

to investigate a letter that had been intercepted and delivered to the Emperor. The letter had been written to the Orthodox, in the name of Theodore, in the hand of the blessed Nicholas. This epistle contained the most severe exposure of the Emperor's impiety and of the soul-destroying iconoclastic heresy, and at the same time contained a fine instruction in piety. The envoy brought the prisoners out of their cell, showed them the letter, and asked whether they acknowledged it as theirs. The confessors openly answered that the Venerable Theodore had dictated it and the blessed Nicholas had written it with his own hand. Then the enraged envoy proceeded to torture the prisoners. First he turned to the blessed Nicholas. At the tormentor's command Nicholas was stripped of his garments, and, naked, was stretched upon the ground and beaten for a long time. Leaving the half-dead, beaten Nicholas, he began to torture Theodore, whom they beat on the body until his bones were nearly broken. Leaving Theodore half-alive, the tormentor again turned to Nicholas, desiring by flattery to win him to agreement with the Emperor. But the blessed man did not heed his words nor yield to his flattery, remaining unshaken in piety. Falling into a greater rage, the tormentor ordered that Nicholas be tortured in the most cruel manner. He was beaten for a long time over his whole body, and, having inflicted numerous wounds upon him, they left him naked, stretched upon the ground for the whole night; the time was winter, cold, for it was the month of February. But the blessed man endured all these torments, giving thanks to the Lord. After this the tormentor again shut both confessors in prison, closed access to them, and returned to the Emperor. The venerable fathers, however, suffered terrible pains from the many wounds inflicted upon them, for the sores on their bodies penetrated to the bone, and the skin was so lacerated that it hung upon them like rags. The sight of the tortured sufferers was so dreadful that it aroused compassion even in the hard hearts of the soldiers who guarded them. Out of pity the soldiers brought them warm water and oil. The sufferers washed their wounds with a sponge dipped in water and anointed them with oil, so that the wounds gradually began to close; the skin that hung loose and would not grow back to the body they cut away with a small knife.

But ninety days passed while the blessed men languished in the dungeon, and the traces of the dreadful wounds still remained on their bodies, when the impious Emperor summoned them to the region of Smyrna[22] and there, again tormenting them without mercy, ordered that they be imprisoned with their feet fastened in stocks. Here the blessed men languished for twenty months, amid sorrows and afflictions. And God heard His servants crying out to Him day and night, and, providing for the prisoners, was pleased that the impious Emperor should perish: Leo was slain by his own soldiers in the church. After Leo's death the scepter of the Greek empire was taken by Michael, called Balbus[23]. This emperor, though he himself inclined to the side of the iconoclasts, did not persecute the faithful for venerating the holy icons, and allowed each to believe as he wished. He even issued a decree to release all who had been imprisoned for the veneration of icons. At this time the blessed Nicholas, together with the great Theodore, released from prison, arrived at Chalcedon[24] to the Patriarch Nicephorus, who was there in confinement. The blessed Nicephorus was greatly consoled by their coming, and, seeing the marks of suffering upon their bodies, honored them on a par with the holy martyrs. After spending some time in Chalcedon, they went with Patriarch Nicephorus to Constantinople, with the aim of persuading the Emperor himself to abandon iconoclasm and to incline him to piety. But the holy confessors of piety had no success in their good work, for the Emperor, through his profound ignorance, did not heed their admonitions and did not incline to the veneration of the holy icons, though he still did not forbid others to venerate them. Nevertheless, while not forbidding the setting up of holy icons in the outskirts and suburbs, the Emperor strictly forbade doing so in the imperial city itself. For this reason the holy fathers Theodore and Nicholas, taking leave of the patriarch, left Con-

22. This was in the year 819. *Smyrna* – an ancient and famous commercial city on the western shore of Asia Minor; at present it is one of the most flourishing cities of Asia Minor, with a population of over 120,000 inhabitants.

23. *Michael II Traulos (Balbus)*, that is, the stammerer, reigned from 820 to 829.

24. *Chalcedon* – the principal city of Bithynia, on the northwestern shore of Asia Minor, at the southern end of the Constantinople strait, opposite Constantinople. Chalcedon is known in Church history for the fact that the 4th Ecumenical Council was held there (451).

stantinople, so that they might have the opportunity to keep their piety freely, in union with the veneration of the holy icons. They settled in Acrita[25], near the church of the holy martyr Tryphon. Here the holy Theodore, after some time, finished his earthly course and reposed in peace in God[26]. The blessed Nicholas, remaining at the grave of his spiritual father, passed his life in monastic labors.

After the death of Michael, his son Theophilus succeeded to the throne[27]. This emperor was a zealous iconoclast, and with all cruelty began the persecution of the faithful for the veneration of the holy icons. Again the faithful began to endure persecution and torment at the hands of the iconoclasts. At this time there suffered much two brothers in the flesh and in the spirit, the venerable fathers Theodore and Theophanes the Graptoi. Then the blessed Nicholas too left his dwelling at the grave of his spiritual father Theodore and wandered from place to place, until the iconoclastic emperor Theophilus died.

After the death of Theophilus the imperial power passed to his wife, the pious Empress Theodora, who ruled the state jointly with her son Michael[28]. In the Church of Christ, governed at Constantinople by the holy Patriarch Methodius, quiet was restored once more, and piety shone forth again. Then the blessed Nicholas also came to the Studite monastery. Here, after the death of the confessor Naucratius[29], under the holy Patriarch Ignatius, who followed the holy Methodius, he was appointed abbot. Three years later the blessed Nicholas, having entrusted the abbacy to the blessed Sophronius, a virtuous man, withdrew himself into solitude, where he dwelt in silence. But after four years, as soon as Sophronius had reposed in the Lord[30], the brethren came to the Venerable Nicholas and, after many entreaties, persuaded him to accept

25. *Akritas* – a cape in Bithynia, near Nicomedia, opposite Constantinople.
26. The Venerable Theodore the Studite reposed at the age of 67, on 11 November 826.
27. *Emperor Theophilus* reigned from 829 to 842.
28. *Emperor Michael III* (842–867) ascended the throne at the age of 4, and therefore the state was governed until 865 by his mother, the holy Empress Theodora.
29. *Naucratius the Studite*, Confessor, reposed on 18 April 848. In the Greek Church his memory is observed on 8 June.
30. *Sophronius* was abbot of the Studite monastery from 851 to 854.

the abbacy again. After this the blessed Nicholas served as abbot for several years.

Meanwhile Emperor Michael, having grown to manhood, became very dissolute in his manners. At the counsel of his uncle, his mother's brother, named Bardas, he expelled his mother, the blessed Theodora, from the imperial palace and compelled her to take the veil in one of the women's monasteries, and he himself invited his uncle Bardas to reign jointly with him. Such conduct of the Emperor toward his mother aroused great agitation among the people. The scandal was even greater because his co-ruler Bardas had also permitted himself a dreadful lawlessness, having abandoned his own wife and taken in her place his son's wife. The most holy Patriarch Ignatius, desiring to correct such depravity of the rulers and to put an end to Bardas's lawlessness, incessantly admonished them, but without any success. Once, on a feast day, Emperor Bardas appeared with the intention of receiving the Most Pure Mysteries; but the patriarch not only refused to allow him to communicate, but before the whole people exposed him for his lawlessness and excommunicated him from the Church. Bardas was filled with the greatest wrath against the patriarch and stirred up against him also Michael; the two emperors, agreeing together, deprived the patriarch of his throne, sending him into exile, and in his place they set up as patriarch Photius the Asekretis[31].

Seeing such disorder in the Church, the blessed Nicholas left his monastery, and taking his brother with him went to a monastic settlement on the island of Prokonnesos[32], where he lived in silence, wishing to hear nothing of the lawlessness of the emperors. He did not remain there long, however, for he was driven out from that place as well. Once, the two emperors were sailing on a ship past the place where the Saint was dwelling. Knowing that Nicholas, as a virtuous man, enjoyed great renown among the people, they turned aside to him, intending by flattery to win him over to their way of thinking, so that he would con-

31. *Saint Photius* was Patriarch from 857 to 867. (*Asynkritos* was a court rank of those close to the emperor.)

32. This island lies near Cyzicus, a city in the north-west part of Asia Minor, on the south shore of the Sea of Marmara.

firm by his words the justice of the Patriarch's deposition and likewise acknowledge the unlawful marriage of Bardas. But he not only did not approve their wicked deeds, he also foretold to them that they would perish by a sudden and evil death unless they repented of their evil works, which was afterwards fulfilled. Hearing this from the Saint, the emperors became embittered against him and drove him out from there, and by their command another was appointed abbot of the Studion monastery. And so the blessed Nicholas, in his old age, was once again compelled to wander from place to place[33]. Yet even after this the lawless emperors did not leave him in peace. By their command he was again seized, brought in chains to the monastery, and kept in a dungeon for two years[34], until both emperors indeed perished by an evil death: Bardas was killed by the servants of Michael during a quarrel between the emperors, when they were on campaign against the Saracens on the island of Crete, and Michael was killed by his own household in his palace.

After Michael, the pious Basil occupied the imperial throne[35]. He at once restored Ignatius to the patriarchal throne, and the blessed Nicholas was released from prison. The emperor summoned him and urged him to take up again the governance of his monastery. Nicholas, because of his advanced age, strongly did not wish this, and only at the emperor's insistent request agreed to accept the governance of the monastery. The emperor often called the Saint to himself, conversed with him, learning a virtuous life from his instructions, and showed the Saint great honor.

God granted His servant the gift of healing diseases in people. The wife of the emperor, Eudocia, was struck by a grievous illness, so that, receiving no help from physicians and having wholly despaired of her recovery, she awaited her near death. Then one day, falling asleep, she saw an elder in monastic garb, shining with the light of glory. Drawing near to her, the elder said:

33. At that time he was both in Mitylene (on the island of Lesbos) and on the peninsula of Chersonesus.
34. In the time of Sabbas, Abbot of the Studium.
35. *Basil I the Macedonian* reigned from 867 to 886.

"Trust in God, for you will not die now, but you will receive healing and be well."

Waking, she at once told her husband what she had seen in her dream, and begged him to summon to her from all the monasteries elders known for their virtuous life. Among the other elders invited into the empress's chamber there appeared also the blessed Nicholas, whose face shone with light, like that of Moses. The empress recognized in him the elder she had seen in her dream, and rising, she bowed to him, and at once became completely well.

Another woman, named Helen, the wife of the patrician Manuel, likewise fell grievously ill. She was near death, and her relatives had already prepared burial garments for her; but the blessed Nicholas, coming hastily to her house, made the sign of the Cross with his hand over her head and over her whole body, and the dying woman rose from her sickbed, wholly healed of her grievous ailment. Her husband Manuel also fell seriously ill. Despairing of recovery, since the physicians gave no help, Manuel awaited the approach of death. Before dying he desired to receive the monastic rank, and he turned to the blessed Nicholas with a request for tonsure. But Nicholas on this occasion refused to fulfill his wish and foretold to him that God would heal him, and that he would hold a high position at court, fulfilling his service duly, and only afterwards, having received the tonsure into the monastic rank, would depart to the other world with good deeds. His prediction came true. Manuel soon recovered, held high rank at court, and then, toward the end of his life, falling seriously ill, and having been tonsured by the blessed Nicholas, departed to God in monastic rank.

Another patrician, named Theophilus Melissenos, and his wife were in great sorrow, because all their children died suddenly after birth. When once a daughter was born to them, they brought the newborn to the Saint and asked him to be her godfather at the font, believing that the Saint's prayers would save her from death. The blessed one declined to be godfather, but, laying his hand upon the infant, he prayed to God and said to the patrician:

"The Holy Spirit says: your daughter shall live, and you shall see the sons of her sons."

And everything came to pass according to his prediction: their daughter grew up in full health, and being a beautiful maiden, was soon given in marriage and had good children.

Toward the end of his life the blessed Nicholas fell ill.

When all the brethren surrounded his bed, the blessed one addressed the monks with a question:

"Tell me, brethren, what do you presently lack?"

They, astonished at such a question, answered:

"We lack grain."

To this the blessed one said:

"God, who fed Israel in the wilderness, will not forsake you either: on the third day after my death He will give you wheat in abundance."

Having appointed Clement, who had been the steward, as abbot, the Venerable Nicholas peacefully reposed on the fourth day of February, having lived seventy-five years, and was buried with honor[36].

On the third day, as the Saint had foretold, a ship arrived at the monastery with wheat, sent by the emperor Basil. Clement received the emperor's gift with joy and said to the monks:

"Behold, fathers and brethren, our Venerable Father Nicholas has fulfilled his promise by sending us wheat in abundance."

In the same monastery there was a monk named Antony, who for many years had suffered from a hemorrhagic illness. Having lost hope in the physicians, he was near death. The abbot bade him occupy the hut of the Venerable Father Nicholas, in which he was to remain until death. And so, when Antony entered that hut, lay down, and fell asleep, the Venerable Nicholas appeared to him and asked:

"Child Antony, what illness do you have?"

He named to him his illness. The Venerable one said:

"Fear not; from this time you will be well."

Waking quickly, Antony saw, not in sleep but already awake, the Venerable one going out of the hut, in which a strong fragrance remained. He at once felt healed and rose up well. After this Antony lived fourteen years and had no illness, through the prayers of the Venerable

36. St. Nicholas reposed on 4 February 868.

Nicholas. By his intercession may we too be delivered from every illness, of soul and of body, through Christ Jesus, our Lord, to Whom be glory unto ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Cyril, Wonderworker of Novoozersk

Память преподобного Кирилла, Новоезерского чудотворца

The Venerable Cyril was born of pious and wealthy parents in the city of Galich[37]. Even while still a youth, Cyril felt an irresistible desire to be a monk. Secretly leaving his parental home, Cyril departed from Galich for the river Obnora[38], to the monastery of the Venerable Cornelius[39], of which he had heard from his parents[40]. On the way there Cyril saw an elder adorned with gray hair. When the elder asked where he was going, Cyril answered that he was going to the monastery of the Venerable Cornelius. Approving his intention, the elder bade him go there together with him. On the next day the two came together to the monastery of the Venerable Cornelius. Not far short of the monastery, the elder, having given instruction to the youth, prayed over him for a long time and then, pointing with his hand toward the monastery, said:

"Go, child, to the blessed Cornelius, and I will ask the blessed Cornelius to receive you as a monk."

After that the elder blessed the youth and became invisible. Looking around and not seeing the elder, Cyril understood that it had been a visitation of God, and gave thanks to God for it. Then, arriving at the monastery, the youth with tears implored the Venerable Cornelius to

37. Now a district town of Kostroma Province, on the low-lying south-eastern shore of Lake Galich.

38. The *Obnora* flows through Vologda and Yaroslavl Provinces and empties into the river Kostroma.

39. *Venerable Cornelius* founded a monastery in the Komel forest of Vologda, five versts from the town of Gryazovets. This monastery is known by the name of Cornelius of Komel, of the Entrance of the Theotokos. St. Cornelius reposed on 19 May 1537; his holy relics rest there. His memory is celebrated on 19 May.

40. This monastery was eighty versts from the town of Galich.

receive him as a monk in his monastery. Foreseeing in him a chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, Cornelius received him with love and tonsured him into the monastic rank[41]. The young monk wholly devoted himself to God and with fervent love began to perform the ascetic labors of the monastic life.

Cyril's parents searched for him everywhere for a long time and, finding him nowhere, wept over the loss of their son. After some years the parents learned that Cyril was dwelling in the monastery of Cornelius. In the twelfth year of Cyril's stay there, his father came and was tonsured with the name Varsonophius, and after some time news came about Cyril's mother, that she too, having lived virtuously and piously, had also died in the monastic life with the name Helen. Cyril's father, having lived in the monastery three years in fasting and prayer, departed to the Lord.

After the death of his parents the Venerable Cyril began to labor even more diligently, adding toil to toil, working both in the kitchen and in the bakery, and going through all the monastery's obediences.

Striving toward higher perfection, the Venerable Cyril resolved to lead the life of a hermit in the depths of the forests. By the blessing of the holy Cornelius he set out northward to wander in the deserts; his food consisted now of various herbs and roots, now of pine bark; he more often saw wild beasts than people. From there he came from time to time into the regions of Novgorod and Pskov, and there he venerated the holy places, praying to the Lord that He would show him a place for permanent dwelling.

By heavenly command the blessed Cyril departed from there for Belozero[42], and then went to the Tikhvin Monastery[43], dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos, where he prayed to God and His Most Pure Mother for three days. In a dream the Theotokos appeared to him and commanded him to go to New Lake. From Mount Kobylina the Vener-

41. Cyril was then about twenty years old.
42. *Beloozero* (White Lake) is located in Novgorod Province, on the border between the Kirillov and Belozersk districts.
43. The Tikhvin Monastery of the Dormition of the Theotokos is located in the town of Tikhvin, Novgorod Province. It was founded on the site of the appearance of the icon of the Mother of God known as the Tikhvin Icon.

able Cyril saw, in the middle of the lake, Red Island, overgrown with forest. On this island Cyril saw a pillar of fire at the place where the monastery now stands, and from this he understood that the place had been appointed to him by God and the Most Pure Theotokos.

Having arrived at that island, the Venerable Father settled there beneath a tall spruce, making himself a hut from its branches. Here the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said that this place had been prepared for him by the Lord. When he awoke, the blessed one went about the island and saw human footprints near his hut. Following these tracks, he came to the village of Shidnem, and asked the peasants of that village for permission to settle on the island; having obtained what he asked, he built himself a cell there. The following year he built two small churches there: one in the name of the Resurrection of Christ, and the other in the name of the Most Pure Theotokos Hodegetria.

During his stay on the island, the Venerable Father labored fervently in fasting and prayer, enduring many assaults and afflictions from demons and evil men. In time, many brethren gathered around Cyril, and a monastery was established on Red Island, known by the name of Novoezero.[44]

Having attained a great age, the Venerable Cyril was granted by the Lord the gifts of clairvoyance and miracles. Before his death, the Venerable Father foretold the calamities that were being prepared for the Russian land.

"There will be," he said, "rebellion among the people in our land and great troubles; the fierce wrath of God will be poured out, many will fall by the sword, and others will be led away into captivity."

When his disciple Dionysius came up to him and began to ask the Venerable Father, "Tell us, Father, what will happen after that?" the Venerable Father answered him: "After this I saw the King sitting upon a Throne, and before Him two youths with royal crowns upon their heads. And the Lord put weapons into their hands against their en-

44. *The Kirillo-Novoozersky Monastery* is located on the Red Island of New Lake, thirty versts from the town of Belozersk, Novgorod Province. In the monastery's sacristy there is an altar cross which, according to tradition, was painted on a board from the coffin of Venerable Cyril.

emies, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall bow down before Him who sitteth upon the Throne, and our kingdom shall be pacified and established by God. But you, fathers and brethren," the Venerable Father added, "pray with tears to God and His Most Pure Mother for the dominion of the Russian kingdom."

Having received the Holy Mysteries and signed himself with the sign of the Cross, St. Cyril surrendered his spirit to the Lord on 4 February 1532, and was buried in the monastery he had founded.[45]

* * *

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Abraham, Bishop of Arvil[46]

Память святого священномученика Аврамия, епископа Арвильского

St. Abraham was seized by order of the chief of the magi[47] in the fifth year of the persecution raised against the Christians in Persia.[48] The chief of the magi compelled the saint to renounce Christ and worship the sun,[49] but blessed Abraham said to him:

"Wretched impious man! Why do you weary yourself, commanding me to do such an abominable thing? What madness—to forsake the Creator and worship the creature! Fool! Is not the sun a creation of my God?"

These words stirred the impious persecutor to terrible wrath, and he immediately commanded that the saint be stripped, laid upon the

45. *The relics of Venerable Cyril* were found incorrupt in 1649, at the foundation of a new church being built in fulfillment of a vow made by the boyar Morozov, who had been saved from misfortune. By decision of the council, they were examined by the Archbishop of Vologda, Markell; and on 22 August 1662 they were translated in a shrine into the new church, where they rest to this day, pouring forth miracles. The uncovering of the relics of St. Cyril is commemorated on 7 November.

46. The city of Arvil or Arbela was within the bounds of the ancient Assyrian kingdom, east *of* the river Tiber in its upper reaches.[1*]

47. The Magi, or wise men, among the Persians were both priests and keepers of religious rites.

48. This persecution was raised by King Shapur II after war had broken out between the Persians and the Romans, about the year 343. The cause of the persecution was that Shapur saw in the Christians secret allies of the Romans. The fifth year of the persecution falls at about 348–352.

49. The Persians worshipped fire and the sun. The latter, under the name Mneres, was their supreme deity.

ground, and beaten over his whole body with knotty sticks. St. Abraham bore his sufferings courageously and prayed for his persecutors, saying:

"O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, for they know not what they do."

Seeing this, the chief of the magi commanded that the saint's head be cut off with a sword. The Hieromartyr Abraham suffered martyrdom in a village called Felman.

* * *

Commemoration of a Certain God-fearing Hermit

Воспоминание о некоем богобоязненном отшельнике

On this day we commemorate a certain God-fearing and pious hermit, who lived on a desert mountain within the bounds of the Egyptian city of Antinoe;[50] many who came to him received edification from his conversations and good works. The enemy of mankind envied the hermit's virtuous life and, making use of his fear of God, suggested this thought to him: "It is not fitting that others should work or serve you, for you are not only unworthy of anyone's service, but are yourself unworthy to serve anyone; therefore work only for yourself. Go, then, to the city and sell the baskets you make, buy everything you need for yourself, and leave here, so as not to be a burden to others." The devil planted this thought in the hermit's mind because he envied his stillness and labors, from which others also received great spiritual benefit, for the enemy of mankind strives to ensnare all in his nets. And so the hermit, held in honor by all and praised for his virtuous life, heeded this evil counsel as though it were good, and left his cell, not discerning the devil's cunning snares. After some time the hermit met a woman, and, after a long conversation with her, through his own heedlessness of soul, was carried away by lust. Then, going at the devil's prompting to a secluded place by a river, he finally realized that he had fallen into sin, to the joy of his enemy, the devil. In despair that he had grieved the Holy Spirit, the Angels, and the holy fathers, many of

50. *Antinoe* was a fairly large city in antiquity, in Middle Egypt.

whom, though living in cities, had overcome the devil, the hermit intended to throw himself into the rushing river, forgetting that the Lord is ever ready to come to the aid of all who hope in Him and desire healing from their sins. From such spiritual grief the hermit grew faint in body, to the great joy of the devil. And had God the All-Merciful not come to his aid, he would have died without repentance, to the joy of the demons. Coming to himself again, the monk began to consider what most difficult labor of repentance and Christian endurance he might undertake to appease God—with tears and contrition of heart. So he returned to his cell, blocked up its entrance, and began to pray to God and mourn his sin, shedding tears over himself as though over a dead man, while also fasting, grieving, and subjecting his flesh to exhaustion; yet even by all this he did not hope to blot out his grievous sin.

When the brethren came to him as usual for spiritual benefit and knocked at his door, he answered them:

"I cannot open to you, for I have vowed to repent in this manner for a whole year; but pray for me, unworthy as I am."

Thus the hermit answered them, finding nothing to say, and fearing to scandalize them if he told them of his fall, for he was known to all as a strict and experienced monk. In this manner he spent the whole year, fasting strictly and repenting of his sin.

When the feast of Pascha drew near, on the very night before the Resurrection of Christ the hermit took a new lamp, filled it with oil, and placed it in a new vessel, which he covered. Then, from evening onward, he prayed and said:

"O generous and merciful Lord, who desirest even the pagans to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth! I flee to Thee, O Savior of our souls: have mercy on me, who have greatly angered Thee and done much to the joy of the enemy, so that now, having heeded the enemy, I have become as one dead. But Thou, O Lord, who showest mercy to the impious and the merciless, and teachest a neighbor to show mercy, have mercy also upon and show compassion to my wretchedness, for all things are possible to Thee, the All-Merciful. Show me mercy, for Thou art good and merciful toward Thy creation, and even the bodies that have returned to dust Thou desirest to raise up

on the day of the Resurrection. Hear me, O Lord, for my spirit is faint within me, and my wretched soul has wasted away, and my body, which I have defiled, has grown weak; I cannot even live, for I am unworthy of it. Now, in repentance, I flee to Thee and beg forgiveness for my sins. I have sinned doubly, for I both fell and despaired; but give life to me, who am crushed, and command this lamp to be kindled by Thy fire, that from this I may understand that Thou, exceeding great in compassion, grantest forgiveness for my sins. For the rest of my life, which Thou, O Lord, shalt grant me, I will abide in Thy fear, keeping Thy commandments."

Thus praying with many tears on the night of the Resurrection of Christ, the hermit rose to see whether the lamp had been kindled; and, opening the vessel, he saw that it had not. Then he fell once more upon his face and entreated the Lord, saying:

"I know, O Lord, that I ought to have been crowned for a good struggle, but I did not heed Thy commandments, being carried away by fleshly lust, and for this I must suffer torment together with the impious; yet spare me, O Lord, who have sinned against Thee and confess my sin before all the Angels and the righteous. And if men were not to be scandalized, I would confess my sin before the whole world. Have mercy on me, O Lord, repenting of my fall; give me life, that I may also instruct others."

Having thus prayed three times, he was heard. Rising after his prayer, the hermit saw the lamp burning brightly, and greatly rejoiced at this and was strengthened in good hope in God. He marveled at so great a grace of God and the Lord's love for mankind, and his spirit rejoiced that God had forgiven his sins and heard his humble prayer; and he said:

"I thank Thee, O Lord, that in this temporal life Thou hast had mercy on me, unworthy as I am, and by this great and new sign hast given me boldness toward Thee; for in Thy mercy Thou forgivest the souls Thou hast created."

When he offered up this thanksgiving to God, the day dawned, and the hermit rejoiced in the Lord and, for joy, forgot on that day even his bodily food. The flame of that lamp he kept for the rest of his life, pour-

ing oil into it so that the fire should not go out. And again the Spirit of God dwelt with him; again all came to know of him, and received edification from him. When he drew near to his end, then a few days before his repose he learned the hour of his death, and he fell asleep in peace, commending his soul into the hands of God.

On the same day, the memory of the holy right-believing Great Prince George Vsevolodovich.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy right-believing Great Prince George Vsevolodovich .

NOTES

1157. The Venerable Isidore died about 436. St. Isidore, by his writings, was one of the great Fathers of the Church. His writings consist of letters. Their number, as is written, reached 10,000, but now does not exceed 2,090. His contemporaries saw in St. Isidore an experienced *interpreter* of Holy Scripture, and asked him for explanations of this or that saying of Scripture. Isidore fulfilled the wishes of his contemporaries in letters. The number of his letters of this content reached 3,000. Of the letters of St. Isidore now known, the greater part contain explanations of Holy Scripture, in which St. Isidore appears as the best disciple of St. John Chrysostom. St. Isidore has not very many dogmatic letters. But, like St. John Chrysostom, he was a practical teacher. "Practical philosophy, in his words, is the foundation of the edifice and the edifice itself; logic is its ornament; contemplation is its crown." "Virtue is the harmony of the soul."

1160. *The Studite monastery* – one of the most ancient and most celebrated in Constantinople. It was built (in the name of St. John the Baptist) by the patrician Studius, who, under the emperor Constantine the Great, moved from Rome to Constantinople; the monastery received its name "Studite" from his name. In this monastery the monks lived until the reign of the emperor Copronymus, observing the rule of the "Akoimetai" (Sleepless). (These monks were called "sleepless" because, being divided into three divisions, they maintained continual services in the church.) But the impious Copronymus, stirring up the Church of God with iconoclasm, expelled all the monks from Byzantium, and the Studite monastery stood empty. After Copronymus the monks again began to live at the Studite church, but in small numbers. The Studite monastery, throughout its existence until the fall of Constantinople, enjoyed extraordinary glory and privileges for the services rendered by its sleepless and fearless monks to the state and the Church, especially in the times of iconoclasm, when the Studite monks showed themselves fear-

less warriors of Christ. Famous for many centuries, the Studite monastery at present is in ruins: the monastery itself has been turned into a Muslim skete, and the church into a Muslim mosque.



THE FIFTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 5

5 февраля

New Calendar February 5 · Old Calendar February 18 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Agatha

Страдание святой мученицы Агафии

In the reign of the impious Decius,[1] at the time when the governor of Sicily[2] was Quintian, whom he had appointed, an ungodly decree was sent out into all lands ordering that all Christians be put to slaughter. At that time there lived in the city of Panormus[3] a maiden named Agatha, daughter of noble and wealthy parents, raised in Christian piety. Having heard of the ungodly decree of the persecutors concerning the slaughter of Christians, Agatha burned with zeal for Christ the Lord, to Whom she had betrothed herself by the purity of her virginity. She forsook love of her own homeland, and, counting as nothing the dignity of her high birth and disdaining the riches left to her by her parents and all the glory of this world, she began to prepare herself to suffer for Christ. The igemon Quintian, hearing of the beauty, nobility and wealth of this holy maiden, was inflamed toward her with impure passion, and planned to see her and win her to his criminal lust, and at the same time to take possession of her property. Learning that she believed in Christ, he at once sent soldiers from the city of Catana[4] to Panormus to bring the saint to trial as a Christian. The soldiers, coming to the holy Agatha, wished to take her, and promised to bring her with honor to their commander if she would promise to worship their

1. Decius reigned from 249 to 251 A.D.
2. Sicily is one of the larger islands of the Mediterranean Sea, near the Apennine peninsula.
3. Panormus (now Palermo) lies on the northern shore of the island of Sicily, on the gulf of the same name; it is a very ancient and considerable city, founded long ago by the Phoenicians.
4. Catana was an ancient city on the eastern shore of Sicily; at the present time it is populous, flourishing in its culture and trade, with a population of more than one hundred thousand.

gods. Asking them to wait a little, Agatha went into an inner chamber of the house, and, shutting herself in, raised her hands to heaven and began to pray, saying:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Thou knowest my heart and the disposition of my soul, my love and my faith in Thee! Be my leader and helper against the enemy, whom I have already trampled and slain for Thy sake, my God. And now, O Master, I beseech Thee, suffer not the utterly defiled and utterly wicked man, the servant of demons, to defile my body, in which I have lived purely and honorably until now; hasten and speedily overcome the devil and his servant Quintian, lest he say: 'Where is her God?' (cf. Ps. 78:10). Accept as a sacrifice and offering my tears, for a sweet fragrance, for Thou alone art God, and to Thee belongs glory forever. Amen."

Having prayed thus, she went out of the city with the soldiers, accompanied by some citizens, neighbors and acquaintances; she walked with full readiness to stand manfully for her Lord, like an unshakable wall; and she reflected within herself: "Behold, first I fought with the devil, striving to keep my virginity in purity and to overcome my fleshly passions, which I have overcome with the help of the grace of my Christ, and trampled the enemy who wars through passions and lusts against men; now I go to the second battle, in which I must lay down my soul for Christ. But, devil, you shall not rejoice through me, but you shall be more shamed yourself; for I hope in Christ my God, that from on high He will look upon my struggle with the multitude of His holy Angels and help me, the weak one."

Reflecting thus within herself, she washed her face with hot tears. As she continued on the way, the strap of her sandal came undone; to tie it, she set her foot upon a stone and looked around, and she no longer saw any of the neighbors who had accompanied her: all, having left her, had returned back. Therefore she wept even more and turned in prayer to God, saying:

"Almighty Lord, for the sake of my fellow citizens, who did not believe me that I wish to suffer for Thy holy name, show some miracle in this place!"

And behold, at once there grew a wild, barren olive tree, which was an image of the wild minds of the citizens of Panormus.

When the holy Agatha arrived at the city of Catana, the commander ordered her to be placed in the house of a wealthy woman named Aphrodisia. She had five young daughters, whom he ordered, by means of flattering speeches and various pleasures, to seduce Agatha's mind toward fleshly love and to persuade her to offer sacrifices to the gods. They, now praising and extolling her and making many promises, now by means of threats, sought to win Agatha to fulfill the will of Quintian, but had no success at all: neither by word nor by deed could they turn her from divine love to worldly love. They adorned her with costly garments, offered gifts and various rich dishes and delicacies, arranged dramatic performances and dances, with musicians playing, and committed before her eyes all manner of disorders and ridiculous things. But she, not wishing even to look at all this, said:

"Let it be known to you that my mind and thoughts are founded upon the rock and cannot be turned away from the love of Christ; your flattering words are like the wind, and the offering of worldly joys is no more than rain; and your threats are rivers, which, though they may flow against my dwelling, cannot move it, for it stands on a firm foundation, as on a rock, which is Christ, the Son of the living God."

Speaking thus, she poured streams of tears over her breast: for as the hart seeks the springs of water (cf. Ps. 41:2), so she strove toward suffering for her Lord.

Aphrodisia, seeing the firmness and unshakableness of Agatha's heart, went to the commander Quintian and said to him:

"Sooner can a stone be shattered and iron turned into tin than this maiden be persuaded and turned away from Christ; I myself and my daughters have spent day and night only in exhorting her to agreement with us, now with caresses and entreaties, now with threats: I have set before her face rare necklaces and beads, costly garments, gold and precious stones, I have given her slaves and my villages as gifts, but she despises all this as dust trodden under foot."

Then the angered commander Quintian ordered Agatha brought into his private chamber; here, sitting in his place, he, full of impure

thoughts, asked the maiden of what family she was. Saint Agatha answered:

"I am of noble origin and have distinguished and wealthy kinsfolk."

Quintian said to her:

"If you are of noble birth, why do you wear poor clothing, like some slave-woman?"

"I am Christ's servant," answered the saint, "and therefore I wear the likeness of a slave-woman."

Quintian said:

"How then do you call yourself a slave, being free, as the daughter of noble parents?"

"Our nobility and freedom consist in this," answered the saint, "in working for Christ."

The commander asked:

"Are we, who do not work for your Christ and renounce Him, then unfree?"

Agatha answered:

"You are in such captivity and bondage that you have become not only slaves to sin, but also worshippers of abominable and insensate idols, honoring wood and stone as god."

"If you utter such blasphemies," said Quintian to her, "you will be delivered to many tortures; but tell me, why do you renounce our gods?"

"I renounce them," answered Agatha, "because they are not gods but demons, whose images you make of bronze and marble, gilding their faces."

Quintian said:

"Listen to good advice, maiden, and offer sacrifices, lest you undergo various torments and bring dishonor and reproach upon your noble birth, after which you, though against your will, will still have to bow down to the gods, the lords of the universe."

The holy Agatha answered:

"Let your wife be like Aphrodite,[5] your goddess; and may you yourself be like Zeus,[6] your god."

When the saint said this, Quintian ordered her struck on the face and said:

"Do not insult the commander." Saint Agatha answered:

"Where is your reason, commander? I wish you to be like your god, and you do not wish to be like him and are ashamed of your own gods: therefore, renounce them together with me."

The commander said:

"You deserve many torments, to which I shall at once deliver you if you do not do what you are commanded."

"I fear nothing," answered the maiden; "if you give me to be eaten by wild beasts, the beasts, seeing me and hearing the name of Christ, will become tame; if you cast me into the fire, the Angels from heaven will cool me with dew; if you inflict wounds and torments upon me, I have the Spirit of truth as my helper, Who will deliver me from your hand."

After this the commander ordered Agatha taken to a dark and foul-smelling dungeon; the saint went there as to a feast and a celebration, commending herself to her Lord. In the morning Quintian, summoning the holy Agatha again to trial, asked her whether she had sufficiently considered her well-being. Saint Agatha answered:

"My well-being is Christ."

But the governor said:

"Renounce Christ, lest you perish in your youth."

"Renounce you your gods," answered the saint, "which are nothing other than stone and wood, and draw near to the true God, who created you, lest you undergo eternal torments."

Then the enraged tormentor ordered Agatha hung naked upon a tree and beaten. As the saint was being beaten, the tormentor said to her:

5. Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of love and beauty. The festivals held in her honor were marked by the most open licentiousness and debauchery.

6. Among the Greeks Zeus was honored as the chief deity, the father of all gods and men. Greek myths ascribe to Zeus various carnal vices, impure passions and crimes.

"Change your thoughts and bow down to the gods, that you may remain alive."

She answered:

"By these sufferings I acquire for myself blessedness, and I rejoice amid them as one rejoices who has acquired great treasures: these temporal torments are profitable to me. As wheat is not gathered into the barns until it has been cleansed of the chaff, so it is impossible for my soul to enter paradise unless the body is first torn by torments."

The commander ordered the servants to torment Agatha more severely; then he commanded that her breasts be torn with iron pincers and cut off. When this was being carried out, the martyr said to the commander:

"Impious and inhuman tormentor! Are you not ashamed to cut off a woman's breasts, the breasts from which you yourself were nourished by your mother? But I have other breasts in my soul, which you cannot touch, for from my youth they have been dedicated to God."

After this the saint was cast into prison. At midnight there appeared to her the holy Apostle Peter, in the form of a comely old man, bearing in his hands many remedies for her; before him went a beautiful youth with a burning candle. The saint thought that some physician had come. The Apostle said to her:

"The impious tyrant, though he has torn thee with wounds, has gained no success; on the contrary, thou hast conquered him by thy courage. He commanded that thy breasts be not only torn but cut off; for this his soul will be tormented eternally. At the time when thou wast enduring the torments, I stood and looked on, and I considered that thy breasts could be healed, and for this I have come here."

The holy Martyr Agatha answered:

"I have never used any remedy for my body. I think that now too one should not break this good custom, acquired from youth."

"I too am a Christian," said the old man, "and I have come, hoping to heal thee; therefore be not ashamed before me."

The saint answered:

"Thou art a man, and I am a maiden; how can I, without shame, bare my body before thee? I would rather endure the pain of my

wounds than wish to be uncovered before the eyes of a man. I thank thee, honorable father, that thou hast come here with the intention of healing my sores; but know that remedies from human hands shall never touch my body."

The old man said to her:

"Why then dost thou not wish me to heal thee?"

The saint answered:

"I have my Lord Jesus Christ, who heals all with a single gesture and restores the fallen with a single word; He, if He wills, can heal me, His unworthy servant."

The Apostle was gladdened by the great faith of the holy Martyr, and with a smile said to her:

"He sent me to thee, maiden, for I am His Apostle. Look: thou art healed."

Having said this, he became invisible. Then the holy Martyr Agatha, learning who it was that had appeared to her, gave thanks to God, saying:

"I thank Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast remembered me and sent Thine Apostle to heal me."

Looking at her body, she saw her breasts whole and her wounds healed. All that night an extraordinary light filled the prison, illuminating it. Frightened by this, the soldiers fled and left the prison unlocked. The other prisoners who were there, seeing this, said to the saint:

"Behold, the doors are open and no one is guarding them. Go out and flee."

"I do not wish to lose the crown of martyrdom," answered Agatha, "nor to bring calamity upon the guards. Having my Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, who has healed me, as my helper, I will remain here to the end, confessing Him."

After four days had passed, on the fifth, the tyrant again sat down on the judgment seat, and summoning the holy Agatha to him, said to her:

"How long wilt thou resist the imperial command? Offer sacrifice to the gods, or thou shalt be delivered to the most cruel death."

The saint answered:

"Vain are thy words, and unjust is the command of thy emperor, which defiles even the very air. Tell me, wretched and senseless one, who seeks help from wood and insensate stone? I offer the sacrifice of praise to Him who healed my breasts and restored my body."

The tyrant commanded that her breasts be uncovered, and seeing them whole and unharmed as they had been before, he asked:

"Who healed thee?"

The Martyr answered:

"Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Quintian cried out:

"Thou again namest Christ, of whom I do not even wish to hear!"

And he commanded that sharp tiles heated in the fire be spread on the ground, and that hot coals be sprinkled upon them, and that the saint be cast naked upon them, to burn and torment her. When this was being carried out, suddenly an earthquake began, not only near that place but throughout the whole city; the earth split open and swallowed Quintian's friend Vultheius and his companion Theophilus, by whose counsel Quintian had carried out this cruelty. All the citizens, frightened by the earthquake, ran to the praetorium to Quintian, crying out to him to cease tormenting the innocent maiden, for whose sake the earthquake had come. Quintian, frightened by the earthquake and by the uprising of the people, commanded that the saint be taken back to prison. The Martyr, coming into the prison, raised her hands to heaven and said:

"I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast granted me to suffer for Thy holy name, and, having destroyed in me the desire for temporal life, hast given me patience. Hear me, Lord, at this hour, and be pleased that I may leave this world and pass over to Thy rich and great mercy."

Having thus prayed, she yielded up her spirit into the hands of God[7]. Learning of this, the citizens hastened to come, and taking her holy body, they carried it with honor for burial. Suddenly there approached the body of the holy Martyr a beautiful youth, whom no one in the city knew; with him were a hundred beautiful youths. Having escorted the

7. St. Agatha reposed in the year 251.

body of the holy Martyr to the place of burial, he placed in her coffin a little stone tablet on which was the inscription:

"A pure mind, a voluntary sacrifice to God, and deliverance for the fatherland."

Having placed the tablet with this inscription at the head of the holy Martyr, that youth at once became invisible; and everyone understood that he had been an Angel of God.

After this, the voivode Quintian, taking his soldiers, went to the city of Panormus to seize the wealth of the holy Martyr Agatha and appropriate to himself all her property. On the way he had to cross a deep river. He went onto a ferry together with his horses and sailed across the river. The horses suddenly went mad against him: one bit his face with its teeth and disfigured him entirely, and the other struck him with its feet, and beat him until it threw him into the river, in which he drowned, ending his evil life by an evil death. For a long time they searched for his body, but did not find it: it perished together with his soul. After this no one among the imperial governors dared to wrong the relatives of the holy Agatha. Her glory spread everywhere, and over her relics a church was built; the garment in which the saint had walked was laid upon her tomb, as a reminder of her humility[8].

A year after the repose of the holy Martyr Agatha, Mount Etna[9], near the city of Catania, began to pour forth fiery lava, which flowed from the opening on the mountain like a huge river, with a loud roar, sweeping down stones melted like wax. The inhabitants of Catania were in great fear, dreading the ruin of their city. Then not only Christians but also unbelievers all gathered at the church of the holy Martyr Agatha, took her garment, stood against the fire rushing toward the city, and with this garment, as with a shield, defended themselves against the destructive and terrible flame. The fire, as if ashamed before the garment of the holy Martyr, turned back and went out. At the sight of this miracle the inhabitants rejoiced greatly, praised God, and magnified the holy Martyr Agatha. This miracle took place on the fifth

8. The relics of St. Agatha were translated to Constantinople in 1040, but in 1126 they were returned to Catania.

9. Etna is a fire-breathing mountain on the island of Sicily, near the city of Catania.

day of February, on which the holy Martyr suffered for Christ her Lord, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Let the Church today be adorned with the glorious purple, dyed with the pure blood of Martyr Agatha: rejoice, O praise of Catania, crying out.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Theodulia

Страдание святой мученицы Феодулии

In the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, Roman emperors[10], the governor in the city of Anazarbus[11] was one Pelagius, a cruel persecutor of Christians. He commanded his servants to go and search throughout his whole province for Christians, to seize them and bring them to him for judgment, where, having heard the imperial command, they were to bow down to the gods. The servants, setting out to carry out the order, seized a certain Christian woman named Theodulia. She, fearing not so much the torments as being defiled by the unbelievers, offered them much gold, asking them to let her go. But they, not taking the gold, brought Theodulia to their voivode, telling him that she had wished to buy herself off from them with gold. The governor praised the servants who had not accepted the gold and had not released her, and for this rewarded them with gifts. He himself, seating himself on the judgment seat and placing before him this blessed woman, asked her her name. She answered:

"I am a Christian."

The voivode Pelagius said:

"Before I begin to torment thee, tell us thy name."

The saint answered:

"I have already said, and I have not lied, that I am called a Christian. This is my honorable and eternal name; people call me Theodulia. I

10. Diocletian (in the East) and Maximian (in the West) reigned from 284 to 305 A.D.
11. *Anazarbus* – a *city* in Cilicia, in the southeast of Asia Minor.

was born of Christian parents and received a good upbringing in the Christian law."

The governor said:

"I see that thou answerest me madly."

"You yourselves are mad," answered the holy Theodulia, "for, having forsaken God, you worship a stone."

The governor continued:

"I exhort thee as a sister: offer sacrifice to the gods, and then go and enjoy thyself on my estate, and thou shalt be in great honor."

Theodulia answered:

"Enjoy thine own estate yourself together with thy father, Satan, and you both shall inherit eternal torments."

To this the governor said:

"I know that you women are hot-tempered and irascible and vex the authorities; but I am not quick to anger, and I instruct thee with meekness, that thou mayest submit to me and offer sacrifice to the gods, and not ruin thy soul."

The saint answered:

"Abiding in the confession of God, I do not ruin my soul but save it, and my body will go into the earth; therefore I do not speak to thee as a madwoman: torment my body, if thou wishest. God, seeing my patience and my full readiness to suffer for Him, will give me His help, for He Himself suffered for us on the Cross, accomplishing the salvation of His people."

Pelagius said to her in reply:

"Thou thinkest by these words of thine to stir up my wrath, so that I may destroy thee the sooner; know then that I shall torment thee long, cutting off each of thy members one by one, until I destroy thee."

"Cunning and rapacious wolf," said the saint in reply, "how can you destroy a sheep that has Christ, the Creator of all, for its Shepherd? Can anyone snatch me from His hand?"

Then the tormentor, enraged, ordered the saint to be stripped, hung up by her hair on a cypress tree, and tortured with iron hooks made red-hot, which burned her breasts. The saint, amid her torments, said:

"Behold, governor, I do not feel the torments; but you, as I see, suffer more, and are defeated by me."

The governor answered her:

"Our gods are merciful, and they know that you will turn to them; therefore, sparing you, they have taken the pain away from you, so that you may not feel the torments."

The saint said:

"Where are your gods who spare me? Show them to me, that I may pay them honor."

Hearing these words, the governor rejoiced greatly and ordered that she be quickly untied and led into the temple of Hadrian, whom they worshipped as though he were a living and mighty god.[1208] Entering that temple, the saint saw the idol of Hadrian, and, praying to the True God, she breathed upon the idol, and it at once fell as if struck by thunder, and broke into three pieces. Going out, the saint said to the voivode:

"Go in and help your god, for he has fallen and broken."

Entering, the governor saw the idol lying on the ground, broken into three pieces, and he wept with great lamentation over it. The news of the destruction of Hadrian's idol reached the emperors; they sent a man from themselves to the city of Anazarbus to ascertain the truth of this report, and, if it was true, to give the governor of the city to be eaten by beasts. Learning of this, the governor fell at the feet of the holy Theodulia with tears, begging her to make their god whole again, and promising to become a Christian if he should see this god standing in the same place where he had been at first.

The saint, having offered fervent prayer to Almighty God, ordered the idol to stand whole in its place, and the idol at once stood whole, went, and stood in the place where it had stood before. The man sent by the emperors, coming and seeing the idol whole, returned to the emperors without having done the governor any harm. After this, a decree came from the emperors to Pelagius, commanding that Theodulia be subjected to various tortures and put to death. Pelagius, however, not only did not fulfill his promise to become a Christian, but also forgot the benefaction of the saint Theodulia, and therefore again took her for tor-

ments, ordering that her feet be bored through with red-hot iron rods. While this was being done to her, the commentariensis[12] Helladius approached Pelagius and said:

"I beg your excellency, give this maiden into my power, and I will persuade her to bow down to the gods; but if I do not accomplish this, you may cut off my head."

The governor gave the saint into his power. He took five long nails, drove one into her left ear so that it passed through to the right, and another into her right ear so that it passed through to the left; he drove a third nail into her forehead, and with two he pierced her breasts. The saint, lifting her eyes to heaven, prayed to God that He would grant her patience, and at once she received God's help and healing: the nails fell out, and she became unharmed. Helladius took the saint into his house and began to persuade her with flattery to bow down together with him to the gods, "that I too," he said, "may receive honor from the governor, and you may be granted great glory from the emperors themselves."

The saint answered him:

"Rather, be persuaded yourself and become a Christian, that you may be granted not a temporary but an eternal honor in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead and will render to each according to his deeds."

Then Helladius said to her:

"Speak the whole truth, servant of Christ, for my heart has been kindled within me by your words."

Then Theodulia began to speak to him:

"This world and all its riches and all its glory are transitory, but the age to come is endless; and whoever does good here will receive good reward in that age, while those who do evil in this world will be tormented there forever; and those who bow down to idols, as you do, will especially be given over to eternal torments."

By such teachings the saint Theodulia brought Helladius to the knowledge of the truth, and in heartfelt emotion he said to her:

12. *Commentarisius* – an official who oversaw the prisoners and kept records of them.

"I beg you, Lady Theodulia, do not remember the evil that I have done to you, but pray to your God for me, that I too may become a Christian."

When morning came, Helladius, together with Theodulia, appeared before the voivode and said:

"I could not turn the servant of the True God from the right and blessed path; on the contrary, she has instructed me in the right path, delivering me from the darkness of ignorance and leading me to Christ, the True God, in whom, without any doubt, I believe, whose holy name I confess, and whom I worship with zeal."

Hearing these words, the voivode at once ordered that his head be cut off with a sword, and his body thrown into the sea. Thus his martyrdom was accomplished on the twenty-fourth day of the month of January. The saint Theodulia was thrown into a furnace heated to great heat, but remained unharmed. After this the tormentor ordered a griddle to be heated for the blessed Theodulia, stretched her upon that griddle, and poured over her boiling pitch, wax, and oil; but the griddle, from the fire by which it was heated, flew apart in pieces, and sparks and flame burned many of the people standing around, while the voivode himself, seized by that flame, died a dreadful death; and the saint Theodulia again remained unharmed.

At the sight of this miracle, a multitude of people believed in Christ, among them honorable citizens, Macarius and Evagrius.

After this the unbelievers again heated the furnace, threw into it the saint Theodulia together with Macarius and Evagrius, as well as a multitude of those who believed in Christ. And all of them, having prayed there, received death, and passed to endless life, where they are crowned with the crown of victory and rejoice with all the saints, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of our Holy Father Theodosius, Archbishop of Chernigov

Житие святого отца нашего Феодосия, архиепископа Черниговского

St. Theodosius, Archbishop of Chernigov, by his origin belonged to the noble Trans-Dnieper family of the Uglitskys.[13] Theodosius's father, named Nikita, was a priest in Little Russia; his mother was called Maria. His parents raised their son in the fear of God and Christian piety; under the influence of their instruction he received, from his very early years, the seeds of that piety which adorned his whole subsequent life. By nature gentle, obedient, and impressionable, Theodosius from his youth burned with a fervent love for God and zeal for the house of God. Having received his initial instruction at home and there learned to read and write, Theodosius was then sent by his father for further education to the Kiev Brotherhood Epiphany School.[14] Here, under the influence and guidance of pious teachers, exercising himself in the study of Holy Scripture and the writings of the Fathers, the saint strove to order his own life according to them; here he grew and was strengthened in spirit in the knowledge of the truths of the Orthodox faith and in the labors of piety. And also here, during his studies at the school, there arose in the young Theodosius a desire to imitate, as far as he was able, the angel-like life of the Venerable Antony and Theodosius and the other ascetics of the Caves, those great intercessors and heavenly protectors of ancient Kiev, the throne-city, under whose gracious overshadowing he lived and was educated, and whose incorrupt and glorified relics he constantly beheld before him. In his free hours, the favorite occupations of Theodosius were prayer, contemplation of God, and reading the word of God. Here too the saint Theodosius became well acquainted with church part-singing, in the singing school established by the Most Reverend Lazarus Baranovich. In general, the Kiev Brotherhood Epiphany School, founded for the support and defense of the Orthodox faith against the attacks of the Polish-Catholic clergy and the Jesuits,[15] conducted all its teaching in a strictly Orthodox Christian spirit, by which the young souls of its pupils were also imbued; it had among its teachers true luminaries of Orthodox

13. According to tradition, this surname was granted to one of the ancestors of St. Theodosius for distinction shown in repelling the enemy from the city of Uglich.

14. This is the famous, oldest school in Russia, whose founding dates back to the end of the sixteenth century; today it is the Kiev Theological Academy, housed in the Brotherly Monastery, in Podol, Kiev.

spiritual enlightenment. Undoubtedly the saint Theodosius received there the highest and best education of that time, which was to contribute to the full development of all the richly gifted powers of his soul.

Soon after completing his education at the Kiev Brotherhood Epiphany School, Theodosius took monastic vows, to which his soul, which ardently thirsted for spiritual labors, had already aspired while still at school. And so, in his young years, this true ascetic of Christ counted all the goods of this world as nothing, left the turbulent and vain world, and received monastic tonsure in the Kiev Caves Lavra under the name of Theodosius, in honor of the great ascetic of the Kiev Caves and founder of the common monastic life in Russia, the Venerable Theodosius, whom he so reverently honored and to whose prayerful intercession he had so often turned even during his studies in Kiev. From this time begins Theodosius's strictly ascetic life, which soon won him fame not only in the monastic world but also among laymen.

The humility and exemplary life of the young ascetic drew the attention of Dionysius[16] (Balaban), then Metropolitan of Kiev, who appointed him Archdeacon of the Kiev Sophia Cathedral. There he labored with honor until Metropolitan Dionysius was removed from Kiev, after which he was appointed administrator of the metropolitan's cathedral house. But life in Kiev, disturbed by worldly vanity, could not satisfy the inner longing of the humble monk for stillness and his desire to abide in constant prayerful communion with God. Therefore St. Theodosius, drawn by love for the labors of piety and monastic stillness, soon left Kiev and settled in the remote and small Krupitsky Baturin Monastery[17], long renowned for the strictness of its monastic

15. The Kiev-Brotherly Theophany School, serving as the chief nursery of enlightenment for all of southern Orthodox Russia, at the same time sent forth from its walls not a few famous champions of the Orthodox faith within the bounds of the South Russian Church, which was subjected to constant attacks from its enemies: the Catholics and the Uniates in agreement with them, who, scorning the Orthodox faith, acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope, and still more insidious the Jesuits, monks of the Catholic order, who set themselves the goal of establishing Catholicism and papal supremacy everywhere by whatever means.

16. Metropolitan Dionysius administered the Metropolis of Kiev for no more than half a year. He was appointed to the metropolis in February 1658 and withdrew from Kiev in July 1658, although he nominally continued to be counted as Metropolitan of Kiev.

17. Near the town of Baturin, now in the Chernigov Province, 30 versts from the city of Konotop; founded in the sixteenth century.

life, where he was ordained to the rank of hieromonk. But however much the learned, pious and diligent monk hid himself from the world, he could not remain unnoticed by the higher spiritual authorities. St. Theodosius did not labor long in the Krupitsky Monastery. He stood out markedly from the rest of the brethren by his spiritual wisdom and strictly ascetic, virtuous life, and for this reason, after a short time, he was appointed abbot of the Korsun Monastery in the Kiev eparchy. The new appointment of Hierarch Theodosius satisfied his inner inclinations. The Korsun Monastery[18], situated on an island of the river Ros, far from human dwellings in a picturesque locality, fully corresponded to the saint's desire for solitude and the labors of piety far from worldly vanity. Here too he himself served as a high example to the monastic brotherhood through his pious, truly ascetic life, and he showed a wise ability for governing the monastery. Therefore, soon afterwards, he was transferred as abbot of the famous Kiev Vydubychi Monastery[19]. This ancient abode had shortly before been in the hands of the Uniates and Roman Catholic Poles and had been ruined by them. The greater part of the monks had scattered, for no one wished to go to live in a ruined monastery; the monastery buildings were in decay, and some monastery lands had been unjustly seized from the abode. In general the monastery needed both inner and outer reorganization, and it required much strength and skill to restore it to its former state. But Theodosius did not lose heart and, with the help of God, successfully accomplished his task and brought the famous ancient abode back to its former splendor and order. He obtained from the Hetman of Little Russia the confirmation of land in various tracts, and permission from the Tsar that every five years his monks be sent to Moscow to collect alms and to seek the royal favor, which they received in generous measure. At the same time he restored the monastery buildings and churches and

18. In the Konev district, Kiev Province. – St. Theodosius was appointed Abbot of the Korsun Monastery around 1661.

19. This was in 1664. The Kiev-Vydubitsky Monastery was one of the most ancient and important monasteries of the Kiev eparchy; founded at the end of the eleventh century; at the beginning of the seventeenth century, during the Polish rule, the Union was introduced into it, but afterwards it was again returned to the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Kiev; today it is a second-class men's monastery.

in general reestablished the outward order of the abode. He took especial care for good order and splendor in the services of the monastery. Well acquainted with church chanting, St. Theodosius formed in his monastery so excellent a choir that it became renowned not only in Kiev and throughout Little Russia but also became known in Moscow, so that Theodosius, at a request from Moscow, sent singers there as organizers of the chanting. Yet still more worthy of attention are the labors of this true ascetic of Christ in restoring monastic order and regulating the inner life of the Vydubychi Monastery. Zealously fulfilling the duties of the monastic calling, he served the monks as a high example of strict ascetic life, attracting to his abode a multitude of those seeking salvation. At the same time, desiring still more to instill into the monks of the Vydubychi abode the spirit of true asceticism, the hierarch established on the monastery land, in the Mozyr district[20], a small skete for those of the brethren who sought complete solitude and severe ascetic struggles.

Although afterwards, according to the word of the Savior, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33), St. Theodosius, this faithful laborer in the vineyard of Christ, endured many unjust sorrows and afflictions[21] because of human slander and envy, his ascetic life and wise guidance of the monks earned him the general respect of the Kievans. Especially did the then locum tenens of the Kiev metropolitanate, Archbishop Lazarus Baranovich of Chernigov[22], who had formerly been his teacher and rector at the Kiev Theophany Brotherhood School, distinguish St.

20. In the Minsk Province. There was an island, "Mikhailovshchina," belonging to the Kiev-Vydubitsky Monastery, where in 1680 St. Theodosius founded and organized a small skete, whose superior was appointed one of the strict ascetics of the Vydubitsky Monastery, the hieromonk Job Opalinsky.

21. St. Theodosius suffered especially much through the intrigues of Methodius, Bishop of Mstislavl and Orsha, who laid claim to the Metropolitan throne of Kiev and, for his own purposes, slandered the hierarch together with the superiors of other Kiev monasteries, accusing them of political intrigues and treason against the Moscow government; but the truth immediately prevailed, and the innocence of Theodosius was at that same time openly proven.

22. Lazarus Baranovich – rector of the Kiev-Theophany Brotherly School, from 1657 Archbishop of Chernigov, a prominent political and literary figure of southern Russia, a preacher and polemicist against the Catholics and Uniates; he was highly respected by his contemporaries; St. Demetrius of Rostov calls him "a great pillar of the Church."

Theodosius with his favor and attention. In one letter from this period, the Most Reverend Lazarus prophetically expresses his wish that "his (Theodosius') name be written in heaven." As locum tenens of the Kiev Metropolitanate, Hierarch Lazarus appointed Theodosius, who was then still Archimandrite of Vydubychi, his deputy in the metropolitanate[23]. Later, when Bishop Gideon of Lutsk was elected Metropolitan of Kiev by Little Russia[24], Theodosius was sent by Lazarus Baranovich, together with another honored abbot, to petition for confirmation of the election, as a man who had served the Little Russian Church greatly[1222]. By this Hierarch Lazarus and the other spiritual and secular dignitaries of Little Russia clearly wished to set forth Theodosius as a man especially worthy and capable of the highest office. At that same time, in Moscow, St. Theodosius obtained a royal charter permitting the Vydubychi Monastery to send its monks to Moscow to collect alms. From this time on, whenever an occasion presented itself, Theodosius of Uglich was looked to as one worthy to occupy the highest place. Thus, after the death of Metropolitan Gideon of Kiev, Theodosius was one of the candidates for the see of the Kiev Metropolitanate. Earlier still, by the will and desire of the Most Reverend Lazarus Baranovich, who had returned from Kiev to Chernigov to attend to the affairs of his eparchy, he was summoned to Chernigov and appointed Archimandrite of the Chernigov Yeletsky Monastery[25], in place of the late abbot of that abode, the renowned Ioannikius Golyatovsky[26].

The Yeletsky Monastery at that time was very poor and meagre. Its estates and economic resources were few, and in general the monks suffered great want in their maintenance. The new abbot energetically set about the arrangement of the abode entrusted to him. Immediately

23. At that time the Metropolis of Kiev remained vacant for quite a long time, on account of political disturbances, as a result of which its administration was temporarily entrusted to the most esteemed archpastor of southern Russia, who was Lazarus Baranovich.

24. Gideon (Svyatopolk-Chetvertinsky) – Bishop of Lutsk, from 1686 Metropolitan of Kiev; he reposed in 1690 and is known for his charters and epistles to various clergy.

25. The Yeletsk Dormition Monastery in Chernigov, a first-class monastery, was founded in 1060 by the Grand Prince of Chernigov, Sviatoslav Yaroslavich.

26. Ioannikii Goliatovsky – a famous South Russian preacher and polemical writer of the seventeenth century, first rector of the Kiev-Mohyla College and then Archimandrite of the Chernigov Yeletsk Monastery.

upon entering upon his duties he went to Mazepa, Hetman of Little Russia[27], with the representation that "the Yeletsky abode is short of bread supplies and especially of firewood, so that it is hard to live with the brotherhood, and there is nothing with which to help, since the archimandry possesses few subjects." Mazepa, who in general was not generous toward clergy and monasteries, granted St. Theodosius' petition out of special esteem for him and gave the village of Moshchonka into the possession of the monastery. Likewise others of means, moved by respect for Theodosius, were led to bestow benefactions upon the Yeletsky Monastery.

Thus, under St. Theodosius, within two or three years the Yeletsky abode attained a prosperity fully securing its existence. Caring for the outward good order of the monastery, St. Theodosius no less cared for its inner welfare, for the establishment and maintenance within it of truly monastic life. In this respect his own personal ascetic labors already served as a most instructive example for the Yeletsky brotherhood in the course of monastic life.

Amid these and other monastery labors, Theodosius was at the same time an active helper of Archbishop Lazarus in the work of preaching, and, at the desire of the archpastor, also managed the economic and in part the eparchial affairs of his episcopal house. In time the Most Reverend Lazarus saw that Archimandrite Theodosius of Uglich conducted the business entrusted to him prudently and wisely, and became fully convinced that he could be his best helper in the governance of the Chernigov eparchy. Therefore, with the consent of the Hetman of Little Russia, he proposed that Theodosius go to Moscow to Patriarch Adrian[28] with a request to appoint him as his assistant. This was in 1691. In Moscow the virtuous life and spiritual wisdom of Theodosius had long been heard of, and therefore the patriarch willingly granted the wish of the aged hierarch of Chernigov, whom all es-

27. Ivan Mazepa – Hetman of Little Russia from 1687 to 1709, when he betrayed Peter the Great and Russia, going over to the side of the Swedish King Charles XII; in the same year he died.

28. Adrian – the last (tenth in order) Patriarch of All Russia, who governed the Church from 1690 to 1700.

teemed, and he notified the Hetman of Little Russia of this by his patriarchal charter, in which he spoke of St. Theodosius with praise.

But this assistance was not sufficient for the aged hierarch who was ending his days. Filled with gratitude to Theodosius for his zealous participation in the governance of the flock, the Most Reverend Lazarus desired, while still living, to see Theodosius in the episcopal rank, so as to prepare in him a worthy successor to himself.

In 1692 he and the hetman petitioned Moscow in writing, addressed to the Tsars John and Peter Alekseyevich and to Patriarch Adrian, for the elevation of the Archimandrite of Yelets, Theodosius of Uglich, to the rank of archbishop[29]. Both of them testified in their own names that "the most honorable archimandrite is a good man, adorned with the virtues of the monastic life which he has led from his youth; experienced in the governance of monasteries, filled with the fear of God and spiritual wisdom, enlightened, most zealous for the beauty of the Church, able to manage the household of the cathedral and the Eparchy of Chernigov." The petition of the esteemed elder-hierarch was granted, and in the same year Theodosius set out for Moscow for his consecration. There, on 11 September, his election as bishop was performed, and on the 18th of the same month he was consecrated Archbishop. The newly consecrated archbishop remained in Moscow for about two months at the wish of the Patriarch, who regarded St. Theodosius with respect and availed himself of the opportune occasion to keep him in Moscow for conversations and for joint celebration of the services.

Great was the joy of the aged archpastor of Chernigov, Lazarus Baranovich, when he saw his beloved helper in the episcopal dignity. The flock, who reverently loved and honored St. Theodosius, was also deeply gladdened by this. Thus the Church of Chernigov was blessed with the governance of two famous hierarchs, pillars of Orthodoxy, who implored the mercy of God for the peace of the whole world and the welfare of their God-saved flock. Meanwhile Theodosius, even in the

29. As for Theodosius being raised immediately to the rank of *archbishop*, this is explained by the fact that the great Moscow council of 1667 established at Chernigov an *archbishopric*, and the Chernigov see was at the same time placed first among the other archbishoprics of the Russian Church.

episcopal dignity, assisting Bishop Lazarus and often entirely taking his place, preserved for him an unbounded love and devotion as a son, rendering complete obedience to his benefactor, undertaking nothing without the consent of the Chernigov first-hierarch, and striving in the affairs of governing the flock to act according to his direction and will.

But the Lord did not long allow two great and famous pillars of Orthodoxy to stand together as guardians of the Chernigov flock. On 3 September 1693 the great elder-archpastor quietly and peacefully fell asleep. He had governed the Chernigov Eparchy for thirty-six years. St. Theodosius solemnly buried him, together with the clergy of Chernigov and those who had arrived from other places, in the Chernigov Cathedral of Boris and Gleb, behind the left kliros.

Before informing the Tsar and the Patriarch of the death of Bishop Lazarus, St. Theodosius went to the hetman of Little Russia to inform him of the sad event. Together with him he sent Hieromonk Pachomius and certain other persons to Moscow with a report to the Tsar and the Patriarch on the death and burial of Bishop Lazarus. The hetman wrote that he had grief and sorrow at the repose of Lazarus, and now finds consolation and comfort that, after his death, in the immediate time, that episcopal throne had been taken up by Bishop Theodosius of Uglich, who by his virtues can adorn the Church and by skillful discernment arrange the affairs of church governance.

In reply the Tsar wrote that he would show Theodosius the same royal favor that Bishop Lazarus had enjoyed; the Patriarch wrote to the hetman that he regarded the ordination of Archbishop Theodosius during the lifetime of Archbishop Lazarus as a special Providence of God bestowing blessing upon the Chernigov flock, and asked the hetman, as a son of the Church, to help Bishop Theodosius in his cares for the holy Church. At the same time the Patriarch sent a charter "of the Holy Table" for the final confirmation of St. Theodosius on the Chernigov see as an independent archpastor, in which, among other things, he speaks of him as a virtuous man, adorned from his early years with the monastic life in virtues, skilled in the governance of honorable monasteries, full of the fear of God and spiritual understanding, a lover of wisdom, the most zealous steward of the beauty of the Church, who had fully

and justly merited the governance of the household and the Eparchy of Chernigov.

Remaining the sole archpastor of Chernigov, St. Theodosius with paternal zeal cared for the welfare of his flock, and even more than before he showed before all, in plain sight, sanctity of life, sincere love for ascetic labor, Christian mercy, and love for all who came to him. By his good deeds and Christian virtues he shone not only for the flock of Chernigov but far beyond its bounds.

In Moscow itself his name had long been spoken with special respect, for by his spiritual wisdom and moral qualities he stood out among all the Russian hierarchs of his time. In ordering the affairs of the Church of Chernigov, St. Theodosius showed in himself for his flock a model of deep faith in the Providence of God, of zeal for prayer and church worship, of gentle forbearance toward the infirmities of his neighbors and sympathy for their needs, and therefore won the unanimous, unfeigned love and respect of his flock. Until the last moments of his life, as a true warrior and ascetic of Christ, he labored for the glory of the holy Orthodox faith and for the good of his neighbors. According to the word of the Apostle, he, "fervent in spirit, served the Lord" (Rom. 12:11); and for all around him he was "a lamp that burns and shines" (Jn. 6:35).

The flock of Chernigov was aware that its archpastor, St. Theodosius, was a true servant of God, a faithful steward in the house of God, a vigilant guardian of the Church, a tireless laborer, and a trustworthy man of prayer and intercessor for all before the Lord. The bishop especially drew the hearts of all to himself by his judgment, which was just and merciful; and he was compassionate to the helpless and orphaned, for whom he diligently sought what was due by justice, as well as by generous charity in the spirit of the Gospel and Christian mercy.

In general he was one of those public figures who are found only in the Kingdom of Christ, who manage to accomplish for the common good far more than the great and mighty of this world. "Be of the same mind one toward another; mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate; be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16).

With the most careful zeal St. Theodosius labored to strengthen in his flock love for the ascetic life, which he had loved from his earliest years and whose high example he showed to all in himself. To this end he diligently strove not only to support the monasteries that already existed in his eparchy, but also to found new monastic communities. Thus he founded the women's monastery called Pechenikian[30]. The best memorial of St. Theodosius's paternal care for the good ordering of monastic communities is his episcopal letter of blessing given to the nuns of the Pechenikian monastery. Blessing with a father's love the newly founded community, the bishop enjoins the nuns "the virtue of humility and complete obedience" to their abbess, as the source of peace and its pledge, and of his episcopal and God's blessing.

Following this, by the bishop's blessing, another monastery was founded, two versts from the town of Lyubech[31]. At the same time, alongside his cares for the development of ascetic life and the ordering of monastic communities in the Chernigov Eparchy, St. Theodosius zealously cared for the building and adornment of the churches of God[32]. Concerned for the moral welfare of his eparchy, he gave chief attention to the clergy, striving to choose for the priestly posts persons worthy and capable, and by every means to strengthen the pastoral and enlightening activity of the parish clergy.

St. Theodosius also labored much during his governance of the Chernigov Eparchy for the cause of Orthodoxy in Little Russia, to repel there the baneful Polish Uniate-Catholic influence and to strengthen the Russian nationality here. He also brought no small benefit to the Russian state, for by his moral influence, eloquence, and Christian peacefulness he always knew how to calm the outbursts of hot-headed, willful

30. The monastery was built by the widow of the Starodub colonel, Maria Sulimova, on land purchased by her together with her late husband, called "Pecheniki"; whence the monastery received its name. It no longer exists.

31. Lyubech – now a trading settlement and town in the Gorodnia district of the Chernigov Province, 52 versts from Chernigov.

32. Thus, he consecrated the magnificent church in honor of the Holy Trinity near the Ilyinsky Monastery, and the church in the name of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Domnitsky men's monastery (35 versts from Chernigov).

Ukrainians and thereby to guard the state from harmful and dangerous disturbances.

But St. Theodosius shone on the Chernigov see only a short while. He lived in Chernigov only about eight years: up to five years as Archimandrite of Yelets, and three years and four months as archbishop, during which, after the death of Bishop Lazarus Baranovich, he independently governed the flock for about two years. Sensing his approaching death, the bishop summoned to Chernigov the vicar of the Bryansk Svensky Monastery, Hieromonk John Maximovich[33], and in the middle of 1695 he consecrated him Archimandrite of the Yelets monastery, which he himself had not ceased to govern until then, preparing in the new archimandrite a worthy successor to himself on the see. Soon after this the great luminary of the Russian Church was extinguished. The repose of St. Theodosius followed on 5 February 1696. Bitterly mourned by the orphaned flock, St. Theodosius was buried in the Chernigov cathedral Monastery of Boris and Gleb, behind the right kliros.

Having completed the course of his earthly ministry, Hierarch Theodosius did not abandon his flock: lying incorrupt in his body within the cathedral church, from the very first days after his repose he did not cease to bless all who came to him for help, pouring down the grace of God in abundant and miraculous healings upon those who sought his prayerful intercession before God. A series of miraculous manifestations of the grace of God, revealed through the prayerful intercession of St. Theodosius, became manifest soon after his blessed end, in the gracious healing from a grievous illness of his successor in the Chernigov see, the Most Reverend Archbishop John Maximovich. The Most Reverend John fell gravely ill with a fever; the sickness rapidly grew worse, and delirium set in. Suddenly, at the height of the illness, the Most Reverend summoned his cell attendant and gave instructions to have Vespers served without delay in his chambers and the appointed rule of prayers read for him, and in the morning to make ready

33. John Maximovich – afterwards Metropolitan of Tobolsk and all Siberia, where he labored much in spreading Christianity among the non-Russian peoples; he reposed in 1716. His memory is locally venerated with reverence as that of a God-pleasing saint.

everything for his service in the church. Those around the sick archpastor thought he was raving, but they were obliged to yield to his insistent demand and carry out his wish. On the following day, to the amazement of all, the Most Reverend, completely restored to health, celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Afterward he told those around him that on the previous night St. Theodosius had appeared to him and said: "Serve tomorrow and you will be well." In gratitude for his instantaneous, miraculous healing from a grievous illness, the Most Reverend Archbishop John Maximovich composed at that same time, in honor of the wonderworker of God, a "praise"[34] written in verse according to the custom of the day, in which he calls him "an earthly Angel and a saint dwelling in the Seraphic flock." By his order, over the tomb of Hierarch Theodosius there was then constructed, in the foundation of the Borisoglebsk cathedral church, a stone crypt with an entrance by a winding staircase.

The striking miracle of the healing of the Most Reverend John Maximovich served as the beginning of the veneration of Hierarch Theodosius as a gracious wonderworker and saint of God. In the course of time this veneration spread far beyond the bounds of the Chernigov province, owing to new and abundant manifestations of the grace of God from the healing relics of St. Theodosius. These miracles were the more evident and striking in that they were often accompanied by appearances of St. Theodosius to the sick in dreams, at which he commanded them to pray, to fast, to have a moleben served, and so on, promising healing; sometimes, too, he admonished, instructed, and reproved in a fatherly manner those who came to him, when they had sinned in some way. Thus, to a mute man the Hierarch appeared in a dream vision and said: "Go to the cathedral, have a moleben served, and you will be well." On the next day the mute man, to his astonishment, began to speak, and then, seeing in the cathedral a portrait of the Hierarch, recognized in it the wonderworker of God who had appeared to him in his dream. "I bless and forgive you," the Hierarch said to a

34. This "Praise" was written beneath the painted image of St. Theodosius in the Borisoglebsk Chernigov Cathedral, above the entrance to the stone chamber where the relics of the hierarch rested.

priest who in a dream had confessed his sins before him and prayed for the healing of his son; he promised to heal the infant, who recovered on the following day. To a woman who, in grievous suffering, called upon the Hierarch for help and with tears prayed to him during the holy Great Lent, he said, gently reproving and admonishing: "You have not kept the fast; this is not good. You will be unworthy to partake of Pascha. Strive to receive Communion on Great Saturday." To another woman, who with tears prayed to God and called upon the Hierarch to pray for the recovery of her husband, the wonderworker said kindly, consoling and encouraging her: "Do not weep, I will beseech God, and your husband will be well." Soon after this her husband, who had suffered from a painful illness for about a year, was completely restored to health. The Hierarch appeared to a sick woman who called upon him and said to her only one word: "Be calm," and her spiritual sufferings were at once brought to an end. It is difficult to enumerate all the wondrous healings accomplished through the prayerful intercession of St. Theodosius; it is enough to say that from every corner of the Russian land they drew numerous throngs of pilgrims to his tomb.

For the first time the body of Hierarch Theodosius was found incorrupt seventy-six years after his blessed repose on February 14, 1772, when, by the blessing of the local bishop Theophilus, it was transferred into a new wooden coffin, and the first cypress coffin of the wonderworker of God was distributed in pieces to the pilgrims. From the beginning of the last century the reverent veneration of St. Theodosius of Uglich as a gracious wonderworker grew especially strong. Report of him and of the miracles flowing from his relics now spread far beyond the bounds of the Chernigov province, among Orthodox persons of various rank and condition. In 1824, at the tomb of Hierarch Theodosius, a healing from a grievous illness took place for the Chernigov merchant Gorbunov, a schismatic, who after this turned to Orthodoxy and, in memory of his miraculous healing, built at his own expense a new coffin for the incorrupt relics of the Hierarch. In the course of time, at the cathedral church, more or less regular and continuous records began gradually to be kept of the healings granted from the relics of St. Theodosius, sufficiently verified and attested. From 1850 a detailed

chronicle of miracles through prayers to St. Theodosius has been kept constantly at the Chernigov cathedral, and also in some other places.

Meanwhile the constant abundant gathering of pilgrims to the tomb with the relics of Hierarch Theodosius, given the crowding and the inconvenience of the approach to it, led in 1856 to the building, on the south side of the front part of the vestibule of the Borisoglebsk cathedral, of a semicircular chapel with a convenient staircase, and to the enlarging and brightening of the crypt itself.

By the end of the past century the name of Hierarch Theodosius, as a great wonderworker of God, protector from calamities and afflictions, deliverer from every evil circumstance and warm intercessor before God, was known throughout all Russia; and although at his tomb only panikhidas were served, the people paid him veneration as to one already glorified as a saint. The veneration of St. Theodosius by the people as a saint, and the numerous cases of miraculous healing from his incorrupt relics, drew the attention also of the civil authority, which was expressed in the most humble report of the Chernigov governor for 1889; and this report in turn drew the attention of the late Sovereign Emperor Alexander Alexandrovich. In view of this, the Most Holy Synod found it timely to proceed to ascertain the incorruption of the body of the late hierarch and the miraculous manifestations occurring at his tomb[35]. The body of the hierarch, despite nearly two hundred years of resting in the crypt, which moreover is not dry, was found incorrupt; at the same time many cases of miraculous healing through invocation of St. Theodosius in prayer were duly investigated, attested under oath by the healed themselves, their kinsfolk and eyewitnesses[36]. In view of this, the Most Holy Synod determined: "that Theodosius, Archbishop of Chernigov, of blessed memory, be numbered among the saints, and that his body, glorified by the grace of God and incorrupt, be recognized as holy relics," and to perform their solemn opening; and the consent of the Sovereign Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich followed without delay.

35. The examination was conducted by the Most Reverend Ioannikii, Metropolitan of Kiev, together with the local bishop Antony, the rector of the Chernigov Seminary, a protoiereus who was a member of the Kiev Spiritual Consistory, and two protoiereis from the local cathedral clergy.

36. Forty-nine such cases were examined.

The solemn opening of the relics of Hierarch Theodosius took place on September 9, 1896. It was performed by the Most Reverend Metropolitan of Kiev Ioannikius, with six hierarchs concelebrating, and a host of archimandrites and hegumens and other clergy. The relics of the wonderworker of God were then transferred from the Borisoglebsk cathedral to the Transfiguration cathedral and placed in a new cypress coffin and a new precious silver shrine; here, beneath a canopy with many lamps, they were laid on the right side of the cathedral, where they now rest. All the days of the celebration of the glorification of the newly revealed wonderworker of God, a vast throng of the people, a hundred and fifty thousand strong, filled the city, turning to St. Theodosius with fervent prayers, seeking his intercession before God and hastening to venerate his holy incorrupt relics. The celebration of the glorification was marked by numerous wondrous healings and made a deep impression not only on the Orthodox but also on the schismatics. Glory to God, wondrous in His saints!

Troparion, Tone 4:

Richly adorned among the hierarchs, O Hierarch Theodosius, thou wast a light to thy flock; then thou didst depart to the eternal abodes. Entreat of the Throne of the King of Glory that we be delivered from the evils that assail us, and that our souls be saved, O saint, by thy prayers.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

For Christ, the Chief of shepherds, thou didst labor, O Hierarch Theodosius, nourishing thy rational sheep in spiritual pastures; and from Christ the Savior thou didst receive the healing gift, to cure every bodily and spiritual infirmity of all who with faith come to thy healing relics. Pray, O saint, that our souls, which call upon thy name, be saved from the snares of the enemy.

* * *

NOTES

1208. The reference is to a temple with an idol or image of the Roman emperor Hadrian (*reigned 117–138 A.D.*). The Romans, as is well known, numbered their deceased emperors among the host of the gods (the so-called *cult of the Caesars*), offering them divine honors, sacrifices, and so forth. This veneration of the emperors began with Augustus and continued throughout the whole period of the pagan Roman Empire. Not only deceased Caesars (that is, emperors) were worshipped as gods, but even living ones. This veneration was compulsory for all. It was considered obligatory to keep even in one's house an image of the reigning emperor among one's household gods (*penates*). The observance of the cult of the Caesars in the Roman Empire was strictly enforced, and whoever, through negligence or disrespect, did not wish to show honor to the emperor was treated as the gravest of criminals. The Roman authorities demanded this same religious veneration of the emperors from Christians as well.

1222. St. Theodosius, as one of the most honored clerics, was the representative of the embassy which the council electing the metropolitan dispatched in 1685 to the newly elected man, to announce his election and to invite him to accept the throne of the Kiev Metropolis. In the same year the "most honorable" and "esteemed in the Little Russian Church" Abbot Theodosius, together with the Pereiaslav Abbot Jerome Dubyna, was sent to the Tsars John and Peter Alekseevich and to Patriarch Joachim with a request for confirmation of the metropolitan elected by Little Russia. It should be noted that at that time, men chosen in Little Russia were sent to Moscow not only so that they might deliver this or that petition and appear as intercessors for these petitions when occasion required, but also with the aim of presenting them before the Tsar and the Patriarch as persons capable and destined for higher posts. This is how it was regarded both in Moscow and there, and both representatives of the embassy, the Abbots of Vydubitsy and Pereiaslav, were received as "men esteemed in the Little Russian Church." The result of this embassy was the great work of the accession of the South Russian Church to the Moscow Patriarchate.



THE SIXTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 6

6 февраля

New Calendar February 6 · Old Calendar February 19 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Phausta, Maiden, and with Her Eulasius and Maximus

Страдание святой мученицы Фавсты девицы и с нею Евиласия и Максима

In the reign of the impious emperor Maximian, in the city of Cyzicus,[1] there lived a young maiden named Phausta. She was the daughter of wealthy Christians, who raised her in the spirit of Christian teaching; but at thirteen years of age she was orphaned. After the death of her parents the maiden Phausta spent all her time in fasting, prayer, and the reading of Holy Scripture.

Strictly keeping her virginity, she despised all the allurements of this world: both riches and luxury and every indulgence of the flesh, and she walked the narrow and sorrowful path of life. For this reason she soon became known to all and was glorified by all; for so virtuous a life could not be hidden from men, according to the word of the Lord: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Mt. 5:14). The report of Phausta reached the emperor Maximian himself. Maximian at once sent to Cyzicus his chief priest, named Eulasius, that he might seek out and seize the Bride of Christ. At the same time the emperor said to him:

"If she consents to offer sacrifice to the gods, let it be well with her; but if not, cast her into the depths of the water."

Eulasius, arriving at Cyzicus, found Phausta young in years but fully perfected in faith and understanding. Mounting his tribunal, he began to compel her to offer sacrifice to the false gods. But the saint answered him:

1. Cyzicus, a city on one of the peninsulas of the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara).

"I will not offer sacrifice to those gods who are both deaf and blind, and are nothing more than the work of human hands. I have in heaven a Father and a Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and I cannot forsake Him; I cannot forsake the inheritance which I have with my Lord."

Then Eulasius said to her:

"Phausta, offer sacrifice to the gods, lest you die an evil and tormenting death."

The saint answered:

"Do not consider me a foolish woman: although I am still young in years, I have a courageous and perfect heart."

Then Eulasius, filled with rage, commanded that the hair of the saint's head be cut off, for her shame and dishonor, and, hanging her from a tree, that she be beaten without mercy. Phausta, cruelly tormented, lifted her eyes to heaven and began to pray to God. As she prayed, a lightning bolt flashed so terrible that many were struck dead by it. Seeing this, Eulasius was greatly frightened, and calling the saint, he said to her:

"Maiden, tell me, who are you? For I see that you perform magical deeds."

The saint answered:

"Hear me, Eulasius: command a painter to depict my image, and also to depict all these torments which I endure."

When this request was fulfilled, Phausta said to him:

"Let it be known to you that just as this image does not suffer and does not undergo those torments which are depicted here, so my body does not feel those sufferings which you inflict upon me: my soul is wholly strengthened in my Lord. As for what else you wish to do to me, carry it out quickly."

Then Eulasius commanded that the holy Phausta be placed in a wooden chest, and, nailing it shut with wooden nails, that it be sawn through. The servants diligently set about carrying out what was commanded them, while the saint in the chest sang, praising the Lord. The servants sawed at the chest for a long time, but were unable to saw it through: the saw could not touch the martyr, as though she were some

hard adamant. At last, exhausted, the servants became as though dead. Then they came to Eulasius and said:

"Our master, the woman whom you gave us to torment, we sawed at her enclosed in the chest from the first hour until the sixth, but could do nothing: we changed six saws, yet did not even touch her. We set fire to the chest in order to burn her in it, but the fire not only had no power over her, it did not even scorch the chest. And she all this time was singing: 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee' (Is. 43:2)."

Hearing this, Eulasius was greatly disturbed, and calling the saint to him, he said:

"You greatly astonish me by performing such wonders! I am already eighty years old, but I have never seen anything like this. I adjure you by your God, in whom you believe, tell me the whole truth."

The holy Phausta answered him:

"I beg you, my lord, listen attentively to what I shall tell you: it is the power of God that preserves me in the midst of my tortures, as you yourself have seen; and if you now listen to me with attention, you will soon yourself turn to my faith."

To this Eulasius said:

"Speak the truth quickly, I will listen to you."

Then the saint said to him:

"God is immortal and eternal, and all His works are true; His judgment is holy and righteous, and He everywhere preserves His servants who live righteously and holily and fulfill their courageous ascetic labor; He preserves all those who by their life have shamed the devil, who have rejected and despised the idols which you hold to be gods, and who have conquered the evil of this world. The Most High God keeps from all evil those who, despising all earthly things, strive toward the heavenly, and who, living piously, keep the commandments of God blamelessly. And this is because such people have known Him as the one God, and have been persuaded that there is no other god besides Him who descended from heaven to earth and, dwelling in the

womb of the Most Holy and Most Pure Virgin, was ineffably pleased to be born of her; and then, coming to maturity, He performed many glorious and wondrous deeds, and, teaching men the truth, of His own will ascended the Cross and suffered for us, that He might save us; having been buried, on the third day He rose, and in glory ascended into heaven, so that at the end of the ages He might appear again, to judge the living and the dead and to render to each according to his deeds. This is why we follow Christ, giving ourselves for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven to wounds and torments, so that we may not perish eternally; here on earth we die, but there we shall live an unending life."

Hearing this, Eulasius came to know the great power of the Living God. Touched in heart, he was changed for the better. Loosing the bonds from the holy martyr Phausta, he granted her complete freedom.

Then one of Eulasius's servants, coming to the emperor Maximian, said to him:

"Sovereign, Eulasius has betrayed your trust in him and now wishes to become a Christian; therefore, before he has accepted Christianity, try to restrain him from this error."

The emperor, hearing this, was greatly grieved. Summoning at once his eparch Maximus, who was distinguished by great cruelty and inhumanity, he sent him, after an oath before the gods, to Cyzicus to Eulasius.

Arriving at Cyzicus, Maximus began, with great fury, to interrogate the blessed Eulasius in this way:

"Tell me, wicked man, how did you dare to forsake our great gods, and, despising them, believe the mad Christians and enter into fellowship with them?"

Eulasius answered him:

"I swear by my head that if you will listen to the maiden Phausta, you too will soon come to know the true God and will feel yourself blessed."

Then the eparch Maximus, greatly enraged, commanded that Eulasius be hanged on a tree and cruelly beaten.[2] And for a long time they

2. At this time Eulasius was about eighty years old.

tormented the holy martyr there; and in the midst of his sufferings he prayed to Christ God thus:

"Lord, almighty God, who helped Thy servant Phausta in all the torments she endured and showed my eyes Thy wonders, deliver me, a humble man, from this fierce and cruel eparch, for I have loved Thee, O Lord, because of Thy many great wonders."

Then the eparch commanded that the sides of the holy martyr be burned with lighted candles; being so scorched, the holy sufferer asked Phausta, who was standing there and watching his sufferings, to pray for him to the Lord.

The saint, having compassion on him, began to pray thus:

"O Lord my God, show forth Thy grace and hear me, Thy servant: receive Eulasius into the fold of Thy rational flock and number him among Thy righteous, for Thou art blessed unto the ages, amen."

Then the eparch commanded that the holy Phausta also be delivered to his unrighteous judgment, because she had persuaded Eulasius to become a Christian.

"Impious woman," said Maximus to her, "how did you dare to turn our glorious priest Eulasius away from the great gods and to convert him to your God?"

The holy Phausta answered:

"I trust in my good and most merciful God, who called Eulasius to be a son of light; He will also call you to worship and to know Him."

"Phausta," replied the eparch, "do not consider me as foolish as Eulasius, who listened to you."

And at once he commanded that she be bound and iron nails be driven into her feet.

When the servants diligently carried out this command, the saint felt no pain at all. The eparch Maximus, seeing that the holy Phausta paid no attention to these wounds, called a detachment of soldiers and told them that if anyone could, let him find for her an even greater and most cruel torment.

Then one of the soldiers, named Claudius, said:

"My lord, if your excellency wishes to put her to death quickly, let her be given over to be devoured by beasts."

The eparch at once commanded this to be done, and the saint, naked, was led to the place where Christians were customarily given over to be devoured by wild beasts.

Here a lioness was let loose upon her, but the lioness, approaching quietly, bowed her head before the saint. Then many other beasts were let loose upon the holy Phausta, but all of them, falling down at her feet, bowed before her.

The eparch, seeing this, was greatly amazed, and commanded that she be bound at the feet, tied with a rope, and dragged along the ground. As the saint, naked, was being so dragged, she cried out to the Lord:

"Lord Jesus Christ, cover Thy creature, that the eyes of the shameless and impious may not see the nakedness of the body of Thy Bride."

And immediately a cloud, descending from on high, covered the saint as though with a beautiful garment.

After this, again one of the soldiers, named Eusebius, said to the eparch Maximus:

– If your Grace permits, give her into my power.

The eparch replied:

– Take her, and torment her as you can and wish.

The soldier, seizing the holy martyr, led her to a smith, and, ordering him to make a great number of long iron nails, commanded that they be driven into her head, her forehead, her eyes, her breasts, her shins, and her whole body.

The saint, meanwhile, prayed thus:

– Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee, for Thou art the Searcher of hearts, the glory and crown of the righteous! Grant me, Thy humble and unworthy servant, to walk the path that leads to the untroubled haven with Thee; and bring Maximus the eparch to the holy faith and to Thy love; establish him in Thy fear, and number him with those who confess Thee, the True God, that all may know that Thou art the One God, and that divine honor and glory are due to Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

Eusebius, seeing that the young virgin, wholly wounded by the nails and streaming with blood, yet did not suffer and seemed not even to

feel pain, ordered a great cauldron to be brought, filled with pitch and sulphur, and, once it was heated, cast into it the holy Phausta together with the holy Eulasius, and a great fire to be kindled beneath the cauldron.

The holy martyrs, standing in that cauldron as in a fair and cool place, sang and glorified God. And immediately the fire went out, and the cauldron cooled.

Then the eparch Maximus, seeing the faith and patience of the saints, said:

– Eternal God, who didst help Eulasius to share in the sufferings for Thee together with Thy servant Phausta! Receive me also, wretched and sinful, and admit me to fellowship with these two, that I, the worst and least of them, may complete the triune number, in the image of the Holy Trinity. Lord God of hosts! Show Thy goodness upon me, Thy unworthy servant, and quickly have mercy upon me, that through me Thou mayest be glorified yet more!

No sooner had he said this than the heavens were opened, and the Son of God was seen in heaven with the hosts of the holy Angels and Archangels and with the assembly of all the saints, shining like light. Seeing this terrifying and awesome sight, Maximus cried out with a loud voice to God:

– Lord, receive me as Thou didst receive Thy servant Eulasius, and remember not my iniquities and unrighteousnesses, but forgive Thy sinful and unworthy servant, and forgive me as once the thief.

Having said this, he at once ran to the cauldron in which the holy Phausta and Eulasius were, and, lifting his eyes to heaven, signed himself with the sign of the Cross and said:

– In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit – I too am with you!

After this he stripped off his garments, and, once more signing his whole body with the sign of the Cross, threw himself into the cauldron.

Then the holy and blessed Phausta, filled with great joy and gladness, that the Lord had heard her and brought Maximus to the holy faith, cried out:

– Glory to Thee, O Christ God, that Thou dost wish no one to perish, but desirest all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth! Behold, I am between two of Thy servants, like a fruitful vine bearing clusters, and like a cord "threefold" (Eccl. 4:12), inseparable from them, for Thou hast said: "where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20). While the saint was speaking these words, a voice was heard from heaven: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor in the struggle and are burdened with sufferings for My name's sake, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28), into My Heavenly Kingdom.

The saints, hearing this voice, were filled with ineffable joy, and, giving thanks to the Lord, committed their souls to Him in peace; this was on the sixth day of the month of February[3].

By their prayers, O Lord, forgive us our transgressions, and, granting us Thy mercy, make us partakers of eternal life, for Thou art blessed with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and glorified unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Dorothea, and with her Christina, Callista and Theophilus

Страдание святой мученицы Дорофеи и с нею Христины, Каллисты и Феофила

In the land of Cappadocia, in the city of Caesarea[4], there lived a pious virgin named Dorothea. She spent all her time in the service of God, with humility and meekness, in purity, spiritual sobriety and chastity. Moreover, she was a maiden so wise that even learned men could not equal her. And all who knew her glorified the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had such a virgin for His servant: her gaze was full of reverence, her life holy, her wisdom incomparable, and her virginity undefiled. In her love for Christ she was so perfect that she was fully worthy of the heavenly bridal chamber. But for His sake she re-

3. They reposed between 305 and 311 A.D.

4. Cappadocia is the ancient name of a region in the east of Asia Minor, between the Cilician Taurus, the Euphrates, the Black Sea, and the river Gadis. Caesarea is the chief city of Cappadocia.

doubled her ascetic labor still more. Overcoming her flesh and the devil, Saint Dorothea wove for herself a double crown: the crown of virginity and the crown of martyrdom; and rejoicing, she departed to her Bridegroom Christ. How she suffered for Him, the following account will tell.

When the fame of the holy Dorothea spread among the people, the report of her reached also the hegemon Sapricius, the persecutor of Christians. He immediately set out for the city of Caesarea and, seizing the holy virgin, ordered her to be brought before his unrighteous judgment.

The holy Dorothea, standing before the impious judge, prayed in her soul to the Lord and called upon God and her Savior for help.

Sapricius asked her:

– Tell me, what is your name?

The saint answered:

– My name is Dorothea.

– I have summoned you, – Sapricius continued, – so that, by the command of our glorious emperors, you may offer sacrifice to the great gods.

The holy Dorothea answered:

– God, the King of heaven, has commanded me to serve Him alone. So it is also said in Scripture: "Then Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Mt. 4:10). "Thus shall ye say unto them: The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens" (Jer. 10:11). Therefore one must consider: to the command of which king ought we to be more obedient – the earthly or the heavenly? And whom ought we to hear – God or man? What are kings? – no more than mortal men; and such also are your gods, whose idols you worship.

– If you wish to be alive, healthy and undefiled, – Sapricius retorted, – abandon Christianity and offer sacrifices to the gods; if not, then, according to the law, you will be cruelly tortured, and will serve as a terrible example to others.

The saint answered:

– I shall be an example of the fear of God for all the faithful, – let them fear God, and let them not fear cruel men; for these men do what evil dogs do: senselessly and unconsciously they tear innocent people to pieces, rage, storm, bark, and seize and rend with their teeth those who pass by.

– As I see, – said Sapricius to this, – you have resolved to remain steadfast in this impious confession and wish to die with the others by an equally painful death. Listen to me, offer sacrifice to the gods – and you will be spared the cruel tortures.

The saint answered:

– Your torments are temporal, but the torments of Gehenna are eternal. Therefore, in order to escape eternal sufferings, I shall not fear temporal sufferings! I remember the words of my Lord: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt. 10:28).

Then Sapricius said:

– That is precisely why you ought to fear the gods, lest they be angry with you: if you do not offer them sacrifice, they will destroy both your soul and your body.

– I have already told you, Sapricius, – answered the holy Dorothea, – that you can in no way persuade me to offer sacrifice to the demons who dwell in vain idols.

Hearing this, Sapricius was greatly angered, and, turning to the servants who were already prepared for the execution, said to them:

– Set her in the place of execution, so that, afraid of the torments, she may consent to become a servant of our gods.

Then the servant of God Dorothea, standing in the place of execution, bravely and fearlessly said to her judge:

– Why do you delay in tormenting me? Do what you wish to do, – so that I may as soon as possible be able to see Him, for love of Whom I fear neither sufferings nor death.

– But who is He whom you so desire? – asked Sapricius.

The holy Dorothea answered:

– Christ, the Son of God.

– Where is this Christ? – asked the hegemon.

The saint answered:

– By the omnipotence of His Divinity He is everywhere, but in His humanity we confess Him to be in heaven, seated at the right hand of His Father; with Him, with God the Father, and with the Holy Spirit, He is one Godhead. It is He who calls us to the paradise of eternal joy; there the gardens bear fruit continually; there lilies, roses and other beautiful flowers ever bloom; the fields, mountains and hills of that paradise are eternally green, and the springs are sweet; the souls of the saints in Christ there rejoice unceasingly. O Sapricius, if you were to believe my words, you would escape perdition and enter with God into this paradise of ineffable blessedness.

Then Sapricius said to her:

– You must abandon this delusion and offer sacrifice to the gods, and afterwards marry and rejoice in your life, lest you perish as your fathers perished through their folly.

The holy Dorothea answered:

– I shall not offer sacrifice to demons, for I am a Christian, and I shall not marry, for I am already the bride of Christ. This is my faith; it will lead me into paradise and into the bridal chamber of my Bridegroom.

And the saint was then cruelly tortured.

After the tortures, Sapricius ordered that St. Dorothea be taken to two women, sisters by birth, named Christina and Callista. At first they had been Christians, but afterward, fearing torments, they had renounced Christ, and in despair they lived ungodly lives, spending their time in luxury and worldly vanity. For their apostasy from Christ they had been enriched by the idolaters. To these women Sapricius sent the holy virgin Dorothea, and he bade them say:

"As you, having abandoned the error and sorcery of the Christians, offered sacrifices to the invincible gods and received gifts from us, so turn this mad woman away from Christian madness and convert her to our gods; and if you succeed in doing this, we will reward you with still greater gifts."

The women took the holy virgin into their house and began to persuade her:

"Submit to the judge and heed his counsel. Like us, save yourself from torment, for above all you must take care not to destroy yourself in torments in this temporal and beautiful life, and not to die before your time."

St. Dorothea answered:

"Oh, if only you would heed my counsel, repent of the idolatrous sacrifice you have offered, and turn again to Christ! You would save yourselves from the torment of Gehenna, for our Lord is good, rich in mercy, and merciful to all who turn to Him with their whole heart."

Then Christina and Callista said to her:

"Since we have already perished by falling away from Christ, how can we turn back to Him again?"

The saint answered them:

"It is a far greater sin to despair of the mercy of God than to worship idols. Therefore do not despair, and do not doubt our merciful and skillful Physician: He can heal all your wounds. There is no wound He does not desire to heal. He is called the Savior because He saves all; He is the Redeemer because He redeems all; He is named the Liberator because He grants freedom to all. You need only turn to Him with all your soul in repentance, and without doubt you will be granted forgiveness."

Then the two sisters, Christina and Callista, fell at the saint's feet, wept, and begged her to pray for them to the merciful God, that He would accept their repentance and grant them forgiveness.

After this, the holy virgin, with tears in her eyes, cried out to the Lord:

"O God, who hast said: 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?' (Ezek. 33:11)?[5] O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast declared to us that 'there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just per-

5. Prayer of St. Basil the Great before Holy Communion. Cf. the book of the Prophet Ezek. 33:11.

sons, which need no repentance' (Lk. 15:7). Show Thy goodness to these sheep of Thine, whom the devil sought to snatch away and separate from Thee; bring them back into Thy fold, to Thy flock, and, O good Shepherd, after their example may all who have fallen away from Thee turn back!"

After some time, the governor Sapricius ordered that Christina and Callista be summoned before him together with St. Dorothea, and when they came, he questioned the two sisters in private:

"Have you succeeded in bringing Dorothea over to our gods?"

Then Christina and Callista answered the governor in a loud voice:

"We have sinned and acted very wrongly, for out of fear of temporal torments we offered sacrifice to idols. Therefore we besought the holy Dorothea, and she admonished us to repent, so that we might receive from Christ our Lord forgiveness of our sins."

Sapricius, tearing his garments, was filled with great fury. He ordered the two sisters to be bound together, joined back to back, and thrown into a tub of pitch, and then, piling wood beneath it, to be burned.

Then the holy sisters began to pray thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Receive our repentance and grant us forgiveness."

As these virgins were being scorched, St. Dorothea, seeing this, rejoiced and cried out:

"Go before me, O sisters, be assured of the forgiveness of your sins, and know that the crown of martyrdom which you lost at first, you have now, without doubt, won back again. And now your merciful Father will go out to meet you, as if rejoicing at the return of the prodigal son. He will embrace you, glorify you as His sincere daughters, exalt you before His Angels, and enroll you in the host of the holy martyrs."

Thus the holy women, Christina and Callista, uterine sisters, suffered and died in repentance, receiving from Christ, together with forgiveness, the crown of victory.

After this, Sapricius commanded that St. Dorothea be seized again for torture, and, hanging her up, he tormented her as before.

The saint, amid such great torments, was filled with such joy that it seemed she was already entering the bridal chamber of her beloved Bridegroom, Christ.

Then Sapricius said to her:

"What does it mean that joy appears on your face, and that you, while enduring torments, seem so very happy?"

St. Dorothea answered:

"In my whole life I have never rejoiced as I rejoice now, and above all I rejoice for those whose souls the devil took away from God through you, and whom Christ has now taken back again. Now there is great joy in heaven, for the Angels rejoice over their souls, the Archangels make merry, and together with them all the holy Apostles, martyrs and prophets triumph. So, Sapricius, hasten to accomplish what you have planned, that I too may pass quickly to the blessedness of the holy virgins and rejoice in heaven with those with whom I wept on earth."

Then Sapricius commanded that the holy martyr be scorched with burning candles. She, rejoicing still more, with a bright and joyful face, cried out to her judge:

"You, together with your idols, are worthless!"

After these words, the tormentor ordered that St. Dorothea be taken down from the tree and beaten with the hands.

"Let the face that reviles me," he said, "be struck."

While the saint was being beaten, she did not cease to rejoice, and those who beat her grew weary.

Then the governor pronounced this sentence of death:

"The arrogant maiden Dorothea, who would not offer sacrifice to the immortal gods and live, but preferred rather to die for some unknown Man called Christ, we command to be beheaded with the sword."

The holy virgin Dorothea, hearing this, cried out loudly:

"I thank Thee, Christ, Lover of souls, that Thou callest me into Thy Paradise and leadest me into Thy most holy bridal chamber."

And when the holy martyr was led to death and was coming out of the praetorium, a certain learned man and counsellor of the governor, named Theophilus, said to her mockingly:

"Hearken, bride of Christ: send me from the Paradise of thy Bridegroom an apple and some rose blossoms."

St. Dorothea answered him:

"I will indeed do so."

When they came to the place of execution, the martyr begged the executioner to allow her to pray a little to her Lord. And when she had finished her prayer, there appeared to her an Angel of the Lord in the form of a very beautiful youth; on a clean cloth he carried three fair apples and three rose blossoms.

Then the holy martyr said to him:

"I beg thee, take all this to Theophilus and say to him: 'Behold, now thou hast what thou didst ask.'"

Having said this, she bowed her holy head beneath the sword, and, being beheaded, departed triumphantly to Christ the Lord, her Bridegroom, whom she had loved from her youth, and now received from His hand, in the heavenly chamber, the crown of victory.

Theophilus, mocking the promise of the holy virgin Dorothea, said to his friends:

"Today, when St. Dorothea, who called herself the bride of Christ and boasted that she would enter His Paradise, was being led to death, I said to her: 'Hearken to me, bride of Christ: when thou enterest the Paradise of thy Bridegroom, send me from there some rose blossoms and apples.'"

And she answered:

"Truly I will send them to thee."

Having said this, Theophilus and his friends laughed. And suddenly there appeared to him an Angel with three fair apples and three blossoms, who said to him:

"In fulfillment of her promise, the holy virgin Dorothea has sent thee all this from the Paradise of her Bridegroom."

Then Theophilus, seeing the apples and flowers and taking them in his hands, cried out loudly:

"Christ is the true God, and there is no unrighteousness in Him at all!"

His friends and companions said to him in reply:

"Theophilus, art thou raving or mocking?"

He answered them:

"I am neither raving nor mocking, but sound reason compels me to believe in the true God, Jesus Christ."

"But what does this sudden change of thine mean?" they asked him.

"Tell me, what month is it now?" Theophilus asked his friends.

"February," they answered him.

"In this winter season," said Theophilus, "frost and ice cover all Cappadocia, and there is not a single tree or any plant that is adorned with leaves. Then how do you think these flowers and these apples with their twigs and leaves came here?"

Having said this, he showed them the apples and the rose blossoms. Theophilus's friends, seeing these fruits and smelling their fragrant perfume, said:

"We have never seen anything like this even in the season that is usual for fruits and flowers."

To this Theophilus replied:

"When the holy virgin Dorothea was being led to death, I considered her mad, since she called Christ her Bridegroom and kept speaking of His Paradise. Then, mocking her as one mad, I said: 'When thou comest to the Paradise of thy Bridegroom, send me apples and flowers from there.' She answered me: 'I will indeed do so.' Then I laughed at her words, but now, after her beheading, suddenly there appeared before me a little lad, not more than four years old, of ineffable beauty; I did not think he could even speak, but, pushing me, this lad began to speak like a perfect man:

"Holy Virgin Dorothea," he said to me, "as she promised, has sent you gifts from the paradise of her Bridegroom."

Having said this, he handed me everything that had been sent into my hands and became invisible. Having spoken these words, Theophilus cried out:

"Blessed are those who believe in Christ and suffer for His holy name, for He is the true God, and everyone who believes in Him is truly wise!"

After such and similar exclamations of Theophilus, some came to the hegemon and said to him:

"Your counselor Theophilus, who until now hated the Christians and sought to destroy them by a cruel death, now openly praises and blesses the name of a certain Jesus Christ, and many of those who hear his words have come to believe in this Man."

The hegemon immediately ordered Theophilus brought before him and asked him:

"What were you saying just now, openly?"

Theophilus answered:

"I was praising Christ, whom until this day I reviled."

The hegemon said to him in reply:

"I am amazed at you, a man of sense, that you now glorify the name of Him whose worshippers you until now persecuted."

"It is for this reason that I have believed in Christ as the true God," Theophilus answered, "that He suddenly turned me from error to the path of truth and was pleased that I should know Him, the true God."

Then the hegemon said:

"All who incline to philosophy grow more and more in wisdom, but you, from being wise, have suddenly become mad, calling God Him whom the Jews crucified, as you have heard also from the Christians themselves."

To this Theophilus answered:

"I have heard that Christ was crucified, and I was in error, not counting Him God and reviling Him daily. But now I repent of my former errors and blasphemies, and confess Him to be the True God."

"Where and when did you become a Christian," the hegemon asked him, "if until this very day you have been offering sacrifices to the gods?"

"At the very hour," answered Theophilus, "when I believed in Christ and confessed Him, then I became a Christian; and now I believe with all my heart in the immortal Christ, the Son of God, and I proclaim His true name, His holy name, His undefiled name, a name in which there is found neither hypocrisy nor that error which reigns in idols."

Then the hegemon said:

"So then, our gods are an error?"

"How can there not be falsehood in those idols," answered Theophilus, "which human hands have made of wood, forged of copper and iron, and carved of tin, in which owls nest and spiders weave their webs, and which inside are full of mice? And if I am now speaking untruth, then let me be a liar; but you yourself consider whether I am speaking the truth. And since I do not lie, you yourself will soon agree with the truth and turn away from falsehood. For you, as a judge who judges others for falsehood, ought yourself to turn from falsehood to the truth, Christ God."

Then the hegemon said:

"So then, our gods are not living beings?"

"In the idols we see a human likeness," answered Theophilus to this, "but they are without sensation; God, however, is an invisible, living Being and the Giver of all life. Idols, if they are made of precious material, are usually guarded lest thieves steal them; but the Heavenly God is guarded by no one, yet He guards all, preserving His creation."

Then the hegemon cried out:

"O wretched Theophilus! I see that you desire to perish by a cruel death."

"I strive to attain a good life," answered the blessed Theophilus.

After this the hegemon said:

"Know that if you remain in this your madness, I will hand you over to great torments, and then order you to be handed over to a cruel death."

"I now desire only this, that I may die for Christ God," answered Theophilus.

"Remember your house, your wife, your children and your relatives," then said the hegemon, "and do not foolishly give yourself over to a cruel death, for it is truly madness to surrender yourself of your own will to those tortures and punishments with which criminals are usually chastised."

To this the holy martyr answered:

"This is not madness but great wisdom: to accept untimely death for the sake of ineffable and eternal blessings and eternal life, paying no heed to these brief and temporal torments."

Then the hegemon said:

"So you prefer torment for yourself rather than rest, and desire death rather than life?"

"I do fear torments," answered Theophilus to this, "and I tremble before death, but I fear those torments which will have no end, and I shudder at that death which draws after it eternal punishment. The sufferings to which you can hand me over will soon come to an end, but the punishment prepared for idolaters will never cease!"

Then the hegemon ordered St. Theophilus hanged naked on a tree and cruelly beaten. When the saint was being beaten, he said:

"Now I am wholly a Christian, for I am hanged on a tree, and it is like the Cross. Therefore I thank Thee, Christ God, that Thou hast granted me to be hanged upon Thy sign."

"Wretched man," said the hegemon, "spare your body!"

"Wretched man, spare your soul!" answered Theophilus. "I do not spare my temporal life, but for that my soul will be saved forever."

Then the tormentor, growing still more angry, ordered the martyr to be scraped with iron claws and singed with candles. The saint, however, as though not feeling his sufferings, rejoiced in his torments and only said:

"Christ, Son of God, I confess Thee; number me among the company of Thy saints!"

His face at this was joyful.

After the tormentor's servants had grown weary from their labor, the hegemon Sapricius pronounced on the saint this sentence of death:

"Theophilus, who until now has not offered sacrifice to the immortal gods, and who now has grown corrupt and even turned away from our gods to the Christian assembly, we command that his head be cut off with the sword."

The holy Theophilus, hearing this, cried out:

"I thank Thee, my Christ God!"

And rejoicing, he bowed his holy head beneath the sword. Beheaded, he was crowned with the crown of martyrdom, and, coming to the Lord in the eleventh hour of his life, received a reward equal to the first (Mt. 20:1–16), in the Kingdom of Christ our God, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory forever, amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Julian

Память святого мученика Иулиана

The holy martyr Julian was a native of the city of Emesa[6]. Having well studied the art of healing in his youth, he healed not only the bodies of men but also their souls: for in healing diseases he taught belief in Christ, and converted many of the pagans to Christ God.

When the holy martyrs Silvanus the bishop, Luke the deacon, and the reader Mocius, whose memory is celebrated January 29, were seized and led out of prison to be devoured by beasts, Julian, falling down before these martyrs, kissed them and besought them not to fear death for the Lord.

After this he was seized by the pagans and shut up in a certain cave; there they drove a long nail into his head, and also pierced his hands and feet with nails; after this he yielded up his spirit to God.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna

Память святого Вукола, епископа Смирнского

The servant of God Bucolus, from his infancy, was distinguished by guilelessness and chastity, and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

The all-praised and beloved disciple of Christ and His confidant, John the Theologian, seeing that he was an experienced and worthy man in the spiritual life, appointed him bishop of the Church of Smyrna[7]; for the Christians of Smyrna this appointment was very timely, and the hierarch of Christ Bucolus did much that was prof-

6. Emesa is a city in Syria, east of the river Orontes, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea in the northwest of Syria.

itable for them. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he shone like a lamp on a lampstand (Mt. 5:15): those abiding in the darkness of error and idolatrous delusion he enlightened with heavenly light, and through holy baptism made them sons of light (Jn. 12:36), and he defended all from countless, invisible, yet fierce and unbridled beasts, who seek whom they may devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

Before his repose St. Bucolus[8] entrusted his rational flock to the blessed Polycarp, and passed from temporal life to eternal. After the body of the hierarch had been buried, God was pleased that at his tomb there grew a myrtle[9], which was distinguished by healing the sick.

* * *

Commemoration of the holy martyrs Martha and Mary, and their brother the holy martyr, the youth Licarion

Память святых мучениц Марфы и Марии и брата их святого мученика Ликариона отрока

These martyrs lived in the land of Asia[10], in those times when persecution was raised against the Church of Christ by the kings and princes of the impious idolaters.

Martha and Mary, abiding in virginity, were concerned only to please the Lord, and burned with desire to receive death for Him.

7. Smyrna was a famous trading city of Ionia on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea (the Archipelago), some sixty-six versts from Ephesus, at the mouth of the river Meles, one of the most ancient cities of Asia Minor. The Church was planted in Smyrna by the holy Apostle John the Theologian. Smyrna now belongs to the Turks, but the Christian faith is still preserved and flourishes there to this day. The city remains even now one of the most prosperous cities of the empire.

8. He reposed about 100 A.D.

9. Myrsina means the myrtle tree. It grows in Asia, America, and Africa (in Egypt), and in southern Europe along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Branches of this tree were used in the feasts to adorn dwellings; myrtle wreaths were placed upon the head during banquets, especially wedding feasts. Among the ancients the myrtle was generally regarded as a symbol of love and quiet happiness, an image of joyful circumstances in the present and of bright hopes for the future.

10. Asia was a province of the Roman Empire, in the west of the Asia Minor peninsula, with its chief city Ephesus.

It happened once that an impious voivode was passing by their house. At that very moment Martha, opening the doors of her house together with her sister, cried out, addressing the voivode:

"We are Christians!"

The voivode, together with his servants, hearing these words, paid them no heed and passed on. Then the sisters cried out again after the voivode:

"We are Christians!"

To this the voivode said to them:

"I forgive you for the sake of your youth: it would be distasteful to me to put you to death."

To this the holy Martha cried out:

"O voivode, martyrdom is not death but life!"

Hearing this, the voivode grew greatly angry and ordered the holy maiden seized.

Then Mary also came out of the house and said to the voivode:

"What my sister has said, that I also say."

Then there came out of the house also a small youth, the brother of the martyrs, by name Licarion, and cried out:

"What Martha and Mary have said, that I also say, for I am a Christian."

And the voivode ordered all three of them hanged on crosses. Their mother also stood there and said to them:

"Be saved, my beloved children, and receive the crown from Christ."

And Mary said, hanging on the cross:

"May you also be saved, our mother, with the fruit of your womb, for you have brought us to Christ."

After this Martha and Mary were pierced on the crosses, and Licarion was beheaded by a soldier with a sword.

* * *

THE SEVENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 7

7 февраля

New Calendar February 7 · Old Calendar February 20 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Parthenius, Bishop of Lampsacus

Житие святого отца нашего Парфения, епископа Лампсакийского

Bearing a name that is a synonym for virginity,[1] St. Parthenius was born in Melitopol.[2] His father, named Christopher, was a deacon of one of the churches of that city. Parthenius was not taught letters from childhood, but, listening to the Divine Scripture read in the church, he so thoroughly studied much of it that he could match any skilled scribe. In his youth he often went to a lake not far off, and fishing there and selling his catch, he gave the money he earned to the poor. From his earliest years he was filled with the grace of God; and at eighteen years of age, by invoking the all-holy name of Christ, he began to cast out demons from men and to work many miracles.

After the fame of St. Parthenius began to spread among men, Philip, Bishop of Melitopol, summoned him to himself. Having examined everything he had heard about the holy youth and having been assured of all of it, he marveled at his virtue and at the grace of God within him, and commanded that he be taught the art of letters. Soon afterward Bishop Philip ordained St. Parthenius, against his will, to the presbyterate and entrusted him with the care of one of the churches. In the rank of presbyter St. Parthenius labored all the more in the virtues. Having received from the Lord a double grace of holiness and of wonderworking, he healed every kind of sickness and, by the

1. From the Greek word *parthenos*, meaning "maiden," "virgin."
2. Melitopol: one of the cities of Mysia, the north-western province of Asia Minor.

name of our Lord Jesus Christ, performed many marvelous wonders. Among such miraculous signs, the following is one.

Once, on the road, a certain man who had had one of his eyes gouged out by a youth met the wonderworker; the injured eye hung upon his cheek, and the man, suffering and weeping, supported it with his hand. St. Parthenius, taking the gouged-out eye in his hand, put it back into its place and washed it with water; within three days the sick man was completely healed.

On another occasion a woman, afflicted on her body with a fierce and incurable disease, came to St. Parthenius and asked him for healing; when the Venerable made the sign of the Cross upon her forehead, she at once received healing.

Once St. Parthenius set out to visit a sick man; as he walked near the house of a certain nobleman, a large dog, slipping its leash, rushed at the saint and, leaping with its forepaws upon his shoulders, tried to bite him in the face. But the hierarch, breathing upon it and making the sign of the Cross, caused the dog to die in that very moment; after this St. Parthenius shook it off his shoulders.

Hearing of such miracles, Achillius, Archbishop of Cyzicus, summoned St. Parthenius and appointed him Bishop of Lampsacus.[3] Arriving at the see entrusted to him, Parthenius found all its inhabitants devoted to the impious Hellenic idol-worship, while Christians there were at that time very few in number. The good Shepherd of Christ grieved greatly over this. He first of all began to exhort, rebuke and entreat his flock; pointing them to the path of truth and performing wonders by the name of Christ, he healed the sick and thereby brought many to the knowledge of the true God. Seeing at last that the inhabitants of that city were advancing in the faith and that idol-worship was being rejected, St. Parthenius resolved to destroy the foul shrines located there and in their place to build splendid holy churches of God. To this end St. Parthenius went to the great Emperor Constantine to ask him for authority to do so. Received with honor and great kindness by the pious and Christ-loving emperor, the hierarch of Christ obtained

3. Lampsacus: a considerable city of Mysia, founded by the Phocaeans, in the north-western region of Asia Minor.

what he desired: St. Constantine the Great gave him his imperial decree for the destruction of the idol shrines and, at the same time, handing him much gold for the construction of holy churches of God, dismissed him in peace.

Returning to Lampsacus, the hierarch of God Parthenius at once tore down all the shrines to their foundations, and soon raised in the midst of the city a spacious and beautiful church of God; he himself took part in its construction and with his own hands helped the builders.

While this church was being built, a certain man who had an unclean spirit within him came to St. Parthenius; the demon had long since taken possession of him, but he did not understand this. And so this man, possessed by a demon, approached St. Parthenius and began to greet him with affectionate words. But the hierarch of Christ, perceiving the presence of an unclean spirit in him, refrained from returning the greeting.

Then the demon, put to shame in that man, said to the saint:

"I wished to see you, and that is why I greeted you; why then did you not answer my greeting?"

"Well, you have seen me; so what do you want?" St. Parthenius replied to him.

"I have seen you and recognized you," said the demon.

"If you had truly recognized me when you saw me," answered St. Parthenius, "you would have gone out of this creature of God."

To this the demon said:

"I beg you, do not drive me out of my dwelling, in which I have lived so long."

"And how long have you been in this man?" asked the saint.

"From his very childhood," answered the demon, "and until now no one has noticed me, only you; and now, as I see, you are driving me out; but if so, where will you order me to go?"

"I will give you a place to dwell," answered St. Parthenius.

"I think you will surely order me to enter a herd of swine," said the demon.

"No, I will show you a man in whom you may dwell; only come out of this one," answered St. Parthenius.

"But do you really intend to do this, or are you only saying so? Tell me this," asked the demon of St. Parthenius.

"I tell you the truth," said the hierarch, "that I know a man in whom, if you wish, you may dwell; only come out of this one quickly."

After this the demon, persuaded by the saint's words, asked him to point out such a man to him.

Then St. Parthenius, opening his mouth, said to the demon:

"Here is the man: enter and dwell in me."

The devil, as though scorched by fire, cried out at this:

"Woe is me! If, after so long a time, you drive me out of a stranger, what evil will you not do to me if I take up residence in you? And how shall I enter the house of God?"

Having said this, the demon vanished into deserted and impassable places; and that man, by the grace of God, became healthy and glorified the Lord.

After the church building itself was finished, St. Parthenius took care to set up the Holy Table in the sanctuary, so that the Divine Liturgy might be celebrated upon it.

At this time he found in one of the ruined idol shrines a large stone; by its appearance it was very suitable for making the Holy Table, and so the hierarch of Christ commanded the masons to dress it more finely and prepare it for the celebration of the holy meal upon it.

The craftsmen, having shaped and prepared this stone as it should be, placed it properly upon a cart and harnessed strong oxen to it, to carry it to the church.

The devil, enraged at the stone taken from the shrine, frightened the harnessed oxen, and they suddenly rushed off so swiftly that no one could hold them back. The driver who walked beside them and guided them, named Eutychian, by the action of demons fell backward under the wheels, and the heavy cart, loaded with the stone, rolled over the fallen man, broke his bones and crushed him; and the driver died at once.

Learning of this, the hierarch of God Parthenius said:

"Diabolical malice has done this, but, O devil, do not hinder God's work!"

Rising at once, he took with him the pious men who were with him and hurried to the place where this unhappy accident had occurred. Seeing the corpse of the dead man, he bent his holy knees in prayer and, with tears, prayed fervently to the Lord in this way:

"Almighty God, Giver of life and death, Thou knowest why the malicious enemy by his snares has brought death upon Thy creature; but, O Most Good, as always, so now also, render his evil intention vain and restore life to Thy servant Eutychian, and thereby show the faithful Thy invincible power, for Thou alone art God, and to Thee belongs glory forever. Amen."

While St. Parthenius was still uttering this prayer, the dead man, in the sight of all the people, came back to life and cried out:

"Glory to Thee, O Christ God, who raisest even the dead!"

And at once, healthy as before, he drove the oxen and brought the stone on them right up to the church.

Then all who witnessed this miracle and the sudden resurrection of the dead gave glory and praise to the Most Good God, and began to bring from everywhere the sick and those suffering from unclean spirits, and they were all healed, by the grace and power of God, through the prayer of St. Parthenius; and at that time almost no one any longer turned to the medical art, considering it wholly unnecessary, and the people ceased to go to physicians, for all diseases, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, were healed without payment by the hierarch of Christ.

Among other sick people, St. Parthenius in three days healed the daughter of a certain Dionysius, of royal lineage, named Daphne, who was possessed by a demon.

On another occasion he healed the daughter of the Smyrnan prince Mamalius, named Agalmatia; she too was possessed by a demon and often lay rolling on the ground; foam issued from her mouth, and at times she seemed as if dead.

St. Parthenius also helped a noblewoman named Zoile, who had earlier been possessed by the spirit of unbelief, which greatly distressed her.

Once there was brought to the holy servant of God a youth, the son of a presbyter, named Nicon; he too was sorely tormented by a demon. The parents, prostrating their son at the feet of St. Parthenius, besought him to have pity on him and deliver him from the unclean demon.

Then the hierarch of Christ said to them:

Your son is unworthy of healing, and the evil spirit has been given him as a punishment, for he is a parricide. For you yourselves, often suffering insult and abuse from him, have in the grief of your souls prayed that he be punished by the Lord. Leave him, then, in this sickness; this chastisement is needful for him.

But they, as loving parents grieving in heart over their son, with tears in their eyes cried out to the saint:

"Pray to God for him, O holy hierarch of God, that he may be delivered from the fierce devil!"

Then the blessed Parthenius, seeing the tears of the parents, had compassion on them. He prayed fervently to the Lord, and the demon came out of the youth at once. The parents, seeing their son restored to health, returned to their house, glorifying and blessing God.

There was also brought to the holy hierarch of God Parthenius a certain woman of the city of Arisbe, named Alexandra. This woman, by the power of the devil, was possessed as it were by the spirit of some serpent: at times she hissed in the manner of that reptile, and at such times she slew many. The holy hierarch of Christ, casting out the evil spirit from her, healed her and sent her home to her kin in health.

On another occasion Saint Parthenius, by the laying on of his hand and by prayer, healed a maiden brought to him by her parents, the daughter of Synodius, a citizen of Abydos, who was likewise possessed by a demon and wandered in the mountains.

At that same time the servant of God also wrought a miracle upon a soldier named Aksan. All the limbs of this man were paralyzed, but the

holy hierarch of Christ bathed him with water, and after offering prayer over him, sent him away healthy.

A man named Alan, a Syrian by birth, under the influence of an evil spirit dwelling in him, hanged himself in the church built by Saint Parthenius, and hung dead in the narthex of the catechumens. Learning of this, the hierarch went to his corpse, and by his prayer cast out the devil from him and raised him from the dead.

Eutropius, an inhabitant of Parea, a city lying between Lampsacus and Cyzicus, brought to Saint Parthenius his demon-possessed wife. The holy hierarch of Christ, breathing upon the face of the sufferer and offering prayer over her head, healed her at once.

The servant of God likewise healed another demon-possessed woman, named Akakia, brought to him from the village of Pheleia.

At the same time Saint Parthenius healed a certain Eucheria, the wife of the nobleman Agapitus. Having prayed over her and given her holy oil to drink, he healed her at once; before this she had been poisoned, and she suffered grievously and was tormented by the deadly poison.

A certain youth named Maximus, from the city of Visa, while staying at Lampsacus, served one of the deacons. Once, being taken ill with a stomach ailment, he could not be cured and died. His parents, learning of their son's death, came from Visa to Lampsacus to bury him. Taking the body of Maximus from the bier, they carried it weeping to the church, and on the way they laid it down at the very place where the holy hierarch of God Parthenius was to pass. Approaching this place and seeing the dead man lying there and his weeping parents, the servant of God shed tears, and kneeling, prayed to God for him; and at once Maximus came to life, rose up, sat, and began to speak. Saint Parthenius stretched out his hands to him, raised him, and returned him healthy to his parents. All the inhabitants of this city greatly marvelled at so glorious a miracle and glorified the Lord.

There were also brought to the holy servant of God the deaconess Theophila from the village of Asermia, and with her, from the same village, the maiden Rufina; both were paralyzed by demonic power.

Parthenius, sprinkling them with holy water and praying over them, healed them both.

The servant of Christ also healed by his prayer a certain Phelasius, the only son of the presbyter Hilary; this sufferer, by the work of Satan, was mentally paralyzed.

On another occasion he healed a certain beggar-woman, an old woman named Calliope, and with her the maiden Cyriacia; both suffered from unclean spirits. Giving them money for their sustenance, he sent them away healthy.

Besides these and many other inexpressible wonders of the saint, among other things the following also took place.

Into a house in which the imperial purple robes and the garments for the imperial dignitaries were prepared, the devil entered and caused much harm to the workers: he destroyed their work and terrified them with apparitions. Because of this all were in great sorrow, and the overseers over them feared the imperial wrath and even execution for the needless waste of so many goods. The holy hierarch of God Parthenius, learning of this, at the request of the overseers came there at once and exorcised the demon by the dread and holy name of Christ. The demon, being driven out, cried out audibly and said that some divine fire was driving him into the fiery Gehenna; and from that time all the devilish snares ceased in that house.

On another occasion an unclean spirit began to hinder the fishermen. When they lowered their nets into the water, by the delusion of the devil it always seemed to them that a multitude of fish had been caught in them; but when with great labor they hauled their nets up onto the shore, they found in them not a single little fish. Thus the fishermen labored in vain for a long time. This happened not only at Lampsacus but in all the surrounding cities and regions of that country. And so fishermen gathered to Saint Parthenius from everywhere and asked him to pray to God for them, that their labor might not be in vain. When the servant of God prayed to the Lord for them with tears, it was revealed to him by God that the fishermen were suffering these snares from the devil. At once the saint, rising, went and walked along all the shores and landing-places, offering prayers and driving out from

everywhere the devil who nested in the waters; then he bade the fishermen cast their nets into the water before him. When they gladly did this, through the saint's prayers their catch was so great that from the multitude of fish the nets could scarcely be hauled onto the land; and from that time on, as before, their catch of fish was always abundant.

Once, during a fishing, when Saint Parthenius was sitting at the Cataptelian landing-place, a large fish called *finnos* (tuna) got into the fishermen's net. Leaping out of the net, it fell at the feet of the saint. Making the sign of the cross over it, he commanded that it be cut up and distributed to the brethren to be eaten to the glory of God.

Then the holy hierarch of Christ healed a lame man named Callistus, who after this began to walk properly.

At this same time he also healed another man, named Lezvia; he was covered with scabs from head to foot, so that he did not differ in anything from a leper. Anointing him with holy oil and praying over him for three days, the hierarch sent him away healthy.

Once the holy hierarch of God Parthenius, on church business, set out for Thrace; arriving at the city of Heraclea[4], he visited the Archbishop Hypatianus, who at that time was gravely ill, and in conversation with him asked the cause of his sickness. In that same night the Lord revealed to His servant Parthenius that Archbishop Hypatianus was suffering a grievous illness on account of his love of silver and his avarice, since he appropriated to himself the goods and property even of the poor and needy.

In the morning Saint Parthenius came again to the archbishop and said:

"Arise, great hierarch, for you are afflicted not by bodily infirmity but are being chastised for your infirmity of soul. Shake it off from yourself, and you will be healthy."

To this the sufferer replied:

"I myself recognize that I am a sinner, and therefore the Lord chastises me; but I beg you, pray for me, that I may be cleansed of my iniquities."

4. Heraclea was one of the cities of Thrace, a province of the Byzantine Empire, in the northeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula.

Then Saint Parthenius said to him:

"If a man sins against his neighbor, will not his prayer be heard? But you have sinned against God. Therefore, what belongs to the poor, return to God, and you will be healthy both in soul and in body."

Moved by these words, the archbishop said:

"Father, I have sinned before my Lord, and He is the righteous Judge!"

And at once, summoning his steward, he ordered that the silver gathered by him from the property of the poor be brought. Seeing how much there was, he begged Saint Parthenius that he give all of it to the needy. But the servant of God advised him to distribute what belonged to the poor himself.

Then the sick archbishop ordered himself to be placed on a cart and taken to the church of the holy martyr Glykeria; there, gathering the beggars and the needy, he distributed to them all his silver. And the good and most merciful God, who did not despise the two mites of the widow nor the tears of the harlot, and who received the repentance of the publican, also accepted the repentance of this archbishop and in three days fully healed him. Saint Parthenius, visiting the churches of Heraclea daily, performed in them his customary prayers.

Once he entered a certain church; there he saw lying a sick man who was utterly withered. Moved with compassion for him, the holy hierarch of God knelt and with tears prayed to the most merciful God for him; then, rising from prayer, he anointed the sufferer with holy oil, healed him at once, set him on his feet, and bade him walk. And the healed man, glorifying the Lord, went home completely well.

Learning of this extraordinary miracle, the citizens of Heraclea, whatever infirmities and diseases they were afflicted with, flocked to the servant of God; and all, by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and through the prayers of the hierarch, returned home healthy.

While Saint Parthenius, by the grace and power of Christ, was performing these wonders, healing various diseases, there was with him the archdeacon of the Church of Heraclea; he bore the same name as the archbishop, Hypatianus.

This archdeacon, seeing the wonders performed by Parthenius, once fell at the feet of the servant of God and with tears in his eyes told him that because of a drought in his village the seed sown had perished, and all vegetation, the fields, the gardens, and the vineyards.

"Honored father," he begged him, "go there, look upon all that has withered, and pray to God that He may give rain to the earth, so that our whole region may be saved from famine."

Saint Parthenius hastened out to the fields, the gardens, and the vineyards; and seeing that all that had been sown and all the orchards had dried up, he wept. Kneeling down, with tears in his eyes, he prayed long to the Human-loving God, asking Him to give rain upon the earth and to make every growing thing spring up.

God, who fulfils the will of those who fear Him, even while the saint was still praying, covered the sky with rain clouds, and a heavy rain fell, watering the earth to abundance.

Remaining overnight with the archdeacon in his village, Hierarch Parthenius spent the whole time in prayer. In the morning he said to the archdeacon:

"Brother, be careful of yourself. You know that your archbishop was punished by God with a grievous illness for his love of money. This very night the Lord has revealed to me that within a few days he will pass from this temporal life, and you will be Archbishop of Heraclea in his place. Know, therefore, that one must always care for the poor, for this above all propitiates God."

Then Saint Parthenius, having blessed the fields, gardens, and vineyards of the archdeacon, and by his prayer and blessing having made them fruitful, returned to the city. There he went first of all to the archbishop, to greet him, and afterward to sail away on his journey. The archbishop received the servant of God warmly and embraced him. When they had sat down and begun to converse with one another, Saint Parthenius said to him:

"I inform you, Hierarch, that within a few days you will leave your body and go to the Lord, for Christ, our true God, is calling you. As the Lord has revealed to me, when you depart to God you will leave as your successor your good Ipatian, your archdeacon."

The archbishop answered:

"Let the will of the Lord be done!"

And embracing one another with the holy kiss, they parted. Saint Parthenius, departing from Heraclea, after a few days arrived in his city of Lampsacus. The Archbishop of Heraclea, having fallen ill again after some time, reposed in the Lord, and in his place Ipatian, the former archdeacon, was appointed. Thus the saint's prophecy was fulfilled.

When the time of harvest and gathering of all fruits came, Archbishop Ipatian went to his estates, to the fields and vineyards which had previously dried up for lack of rain, and found upon them a great abundance of fruit, more than in all former years. This was through the prayers and blessing of Saint Parthenius.

The archbishop filled a large ship with wheat, wine, and all kinds of fruit, and sailed to Lampsacus to the wonderworker, to offer him thanks for his blessing.

Saint Parthenius received the archbishop kindly, but did not wish to accept the gifts he had brought, saying:

"Give thanks to God for everything, and distribute this to the brethren."

After a fairly lengthy and gracious conversation with the saint, Archbishop Ipatian returned home, and by the saint's command he distributed to his brethren a great quantity of wheat, wine, and all kinds of fruit. Until his death he proclaimed before everyone those great wonders of God which the Lord had wrought through His servant Parthenius.

Thus the servant of God and great wonderworker, Saint Parthenius, shining in an angel-like life, turned many from idolatry to the true God, and healed a multitude of the sick from various diseases. At last he himself fell ill, and, being called by the Lord, he died on the seventh day of February, having reposed peacefully in venerable old age. When news of the honorable repose of the saint spread through the surrounding cities and villages, hierarchs came to his burial from every side: the Archbishop of Heraclea, the Bishop of Cyzicus, the Bishop of Melitopolis, the Bishop of Parium, and many other bishops and priests. As if

by agreement, they all came to the city of Lampsacus and gave the saint a glorious burial. With the singing of psalms and other spiritual hymns, they laid his honorable body near the cathedral church, in the chapel he had built.[5]

And at the tomb of Saint Parthenius many healings were granted to the sick. Not only during his life, but also after his repose, this unmercenary and wonderworking physician cleansed lepers and cast demons out of people. Even now he heals and cures our souls and bodies by his prayers, and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thou didst receive the divine grace of miracles, O God-wise holy priest Parthenius, wonderworker and God-bearer, cleansing the passions of the faithful and casting out, O Father, the spirit of wickedness. Wherefore we praise thee as a great mystic of the grace of God.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Luke of Hellas

Житие преподобного отца нашего Луки Елладского

Saint Luke was born in Hellas.[6] His parents were settlers from a foreign land: they had come here from the island called Aegina, which lies in the Aegean Sea.[7] Unable to endure the constant incursions of the Arabs, they left their fatherland, and, moving into the regions of Greece, wandered there until at last they settled in a locality called Kastoria.[8] Here the blessed Luke was born to them; his parents' names were Stephen and Euphrosyne.

From his earliest years the blessed Luke, growing up among children, showed nothing childish in himself; he readily left all childish

5. St. Parthenius reposed in 318.
6. In antiquity, Hellas was the name given to the central part of Greece.
7. Aegina is one of the islands of the Archipelago. The Aegean Sea, otherwise the Gulf of Salonica, lies to the northwest of the Archipelago.
8. Castoria is a village in Attica, the southeastern region of Hellas, or Central Greece.

games and amusements. Even in his youth he seemed a perfect man: he loved silence and solitude, and was distinguished by modesty.

And most wonderful of all: at such an age he was already a great faster and abstainer. He not only did not eat meat, but also abstained from milk, cheese, and eggs. He did not even touch apples and other garden fruits, which are so especially sweet and pleasant to small boys; he fed only on bread, water, and garden greens. On Wednesdays and Fridays he ate nothing until sunset.

Yet even more worthy of wonder is that, with such fasting and abstinence, Luke had neither guide nor teacher. Through the grace of God working in him, he himself ascended day by day to ever greater and greater ascetic labors: he avoided gluttony and sweet foods, and loved fasting joined with toil, scarcity in everything, even in what is necessary, and in general all that mortifies the flesh. In these ascetic labors alone he exercised himself. And whatever seemed so sweet, joyful, and pleasant to others, all this for the blessed Luke was something heavy, hateful, and unpleasant; and what almost everyone found burdensome, unpleasant, and unbearable in life, that was pleasant and desirable to him.

The parents of Saint Luke, noticing such a way of life, unusual for young men, were greatly astonished, and especially astonished at his fasting and abstinence. Thinking that this came not from any virtuous disposition but only from childish frivolity, they resolved to test him in this way: they cooked meat and fish together in one vessel and offered him this dish at table. His father, taking a fish, gave it also to the blessed Luke. He, not knowing that this fish had been cooked together with meat, began to eat it; but, perceiving by the taste how it had been prepared, he was deeply grieved and at once vomited up what he had eaten. As though he had of his own will committed some great transgression, weeping and sighing, he would not even eat bread, and in such weeping and fasting he spent three days. Then his parents, seeing that this aspiration to piety was present in him not from childish frivolity but by the grace of God, afterward allowed him to live according to his good desire.

The blessed Luke obeyed his parents in everything, carefully fulfilling whatever they commanded: he tended sheep; when he came of age he worked the land, and at times performed household service, mortifying his young flesh and subduing his passions. He was so merciful to the poor that for their sake he often deprived himself of all that was necessary. When he went out on some errand from home, he gave all the food he had taken to the poor, and remained himself hungry. In the same way, with great eagerness and love, he gave away his clothes to them, and often returned home naked. For this his parents reproached him, scolded him, and even punished him; and sometimes they even let him go naked and for a long time did not give him any clothing, thinking that he would be ashamed of his nakedness and stop giving his clothes to the poor. But the virtuous youth did not cease doing works of mercy: he was not ashamed of his nakedness and did not fear punishment. Nakedness for the sake of the poor was for him a royal purple, and punishment and beating for them he counted an honor and a praise, and he did good to the poor all the more after that.

Once the blessed Luke was going out to the field to sow wheat, and on the road he met some beggars. He divided the wheat among them, keeping only a little for sowing himself. But the Lord, who repays alms to the needy a hundredfold, blessed this meager sowing: that summer his field yielded more wheat than in former years, so that when the time of harvest came, they gathered more wheat than ever before.

When Stephen, the father of St. Luke, fell ill and died, the man of God, having left off working the land, devoted himself to the study of books. Zealous above all in contemplation of God and in the study of prayers, the Divine youth made such progress that, raising his mind to God, he would at times be lifted bodily above the earth, as his mother Euphrosyne once plainly saw. Noticing one day that her son had been a long time without coming out of his room, she, wishing to learn what he was doing, peered secretly through a crack and saw him at prayer: his mind was fixed on God, and his whole body stood in the air, not touching the earth at all, but held off from it as though by a cubit. Euphrosyne saw this not once but two or three times, and greatly marvelled at it; afterwards she would tell others of it with an oath.

This blessed youth had for a long time desired to leave the troubled world and to devote himself to monastic stillness and the labours of the monk. One day, pondering this, and burning with desire to take the monastic habit, he went out of the house secretly from everyone, intending to leave Hellas. On the way he met soldiers and guards, who were seizing slaves who had run away from their masters and casting them into prison.

Seeing a poorly dressed youth, they thought he was one of the runaway slaves and seized him; they asked whose slave he was, whence he came and whither he was fleeing. The youth answered them that he was a slave of Christ and was going to the holy fathers for the sake of prayer. But the soldiers did not believe him; thinking that he wished to conceal from them his servitude and flight, they began to beat the innocent youth without mercy; then they threw him into prison, until he should declare whose slave he was and how he had run away from his master. Blessed Luke regarded all this as a temptation from the envious enemy, who hindered his good intention. But after a while the saint was recognized by certain people; after their testimony about him, blessed Luke was freed from his bonds.

When the servant of Christ returned home, he had to endure from his household not only reproofs and reproaches but even beatings. Day and night the saint prayed to God that He would graciously grant him the monastic habit, and soon he received what he desired in the following way.

Two monks came to that region from ancient Rome; seeing them, Luke at once remembered his intention, and his heart burned still more with love for God. Conversing with them, he asked where they were going. They said they were going to Jerusalem. Then blessed Luke began to entreat them to take him with them on the journey and thus make him a participant in their monastic life. But they refused to take him, making excuses: on the one hand, that he was still young, scarcely in his seventeenth year, and unaccustomed to a long journey; on the other, that they feared his parents, lest they suffer some harm from them when, learning of everything, they pursued and overtook them. But blessed Luke told them that he was an orphan and a wanderer and

that no one was watching him, and he begged these monks to take him. Nevertheless, they left that region with him secretly and, coming to Athens, went to pray in the beautiful local church of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, and spent the night in the monastery. But when they set out on their way to Jerusalem, the monks left blessed Luke in that monastery.

"Here, youth," they said to him, "is a good place for the fulfilment of your intention; here you can obtain what you desire, and soon you will be numbered among the fair company of monks."

Having entrusted him to the hegumen, they departed on their way.

The hegumen asked him several times whence he was and of what family, but could learn nothing: the servant of God concealed his homeland and his home and did not wish to reveal himself to anyone. Yet, seeing that he was a youth of good character, quiet, gentle, humble and obedient, he tonsured him into the rank of novice.

The mother of blessed Luke grieved greatly for him: she could not bear separation from her beloved son, whom she regarded as the sole consolation of her widowhood and as comfort in sorrow, and she wept bitterly for him, crying out to God:

"Woe is me, O Lord! Thou art the witness of my widowhood and orphanhood. First Thou didst sadden me by taking from me by death the friend whom Thou hadst joined to me in marriage, after which Thou didst subject me to the sorrows of a widow, which are more terrible to me than death itself. Now Thou hast removed from my eyes him who was my comfort in such great sorrows, and I do not know where I may see him, the sole dawn of my life of many sorrows. Now I must with David cry out: 'My heart trembleth; my strength hath forsaken me, and the light of mine eyes, it is not with me' (Ps. 37:11). And why has the youth gone so far from us? Did we ever forbid him to serve Thee, our Lord, without ceasing? Or did we ever command him to perform any household labours, compelling him thereby to neglect his customary prayers? Did I ever teach him to love the fleshly more than the spiritual, the earthly more than the heavenly, the temporal more than the eternal? I learned from my parents to be a mother not only in the flesh but also in the spirit, and I wished to see my son perfect in the

virtues; I gave him more time for prayer than for service to me; it was joy to me to see my beloved child, if not always, then at least for some time; it was enough for me merely to hear from neighbours praise of his good morals and so comfort my sorrowful soul. Therefore, O Lord and King, despise not the tears of my eyes, but hear them and be pleased to assuage my great sorrow; and Thou wilt assuage it when Thou again givest my maternal eyes to behold my beloved child: then, having found my son, I will gather everyone together and confess Thy majesty and will glorify Thee all the days of my life."

Thus praying in her sorrow, the widowed mother inclined the good God to mercy, and she received what she asked.

The Lord, who accomplishes all things by His will, granted a vision to the hegumen of that monastery in which blessed Luke was living as a novice: he saw in a dream a weeping mother, who cried out to him thus:

"Why hast thou wronged me, a widow? Why hast thou added this sorrow to my sufferings? Why hast thou so ruthlessly taken from me the sole comfort of my widowhood? Why hast thou stolen my son, the support of my old age? Bearing this sorrow, I shall not cease to turn to God and the King of all and to cry out against thee."

Terrified by such a dream vision and by the words spoken, the hegumen at first thought it was a mere diabolical delusion; but when on the following night and on the third he saw the same woman in a dream and heard from her the same wrathful words, then he understood that this was not a diabolical deception but an appearance sent from God.

In the morning the hegumen, summoning the youth Luke, who was with him as a novice, said to him in anger:

"Why hast thou resolved to conceal everything about thyself, although I have several times asked thee who thou art and whence? Why didst thou say that thou hadst neither parents nor kinsfolk? And how didst thou dare to approach this holy estate and to live among us, wholly filled with guile and falsehood, as the very facts bear witness concerning thee? If at the beginning thou hadst told us the truth, then now, contrary to thy wish, there would be no revelations about thee. Therefore depart from us and from all of us who are monks, and return

to her who bore thee; for on her account, since she is greatly grieved, I have suffered greatly this third night."

While the hegumen spoke thus, blessed Luke, greatly frightened, stood as though astonished; he looked down, and his eyes shed tears, so unwilling was he to be parted from the holy brotherhood. The hegumen, seeing his tears and humility, was moved and began to speak with him gently:

"Child, you must now return to your mother, though afterwards you will not be forbidden to live in the monastery; do as I advise you, for it is plain that her prayer has power to entreat God and far surpasses your own prayer."

Hearing this, blessed Luke made no objection to the hegumen's words; bowing to him, he asked only for his prayers and blessing. And so, although he did not wish even to leave the monastery, he was compelled to set out on the way to his mother, to the village of Kastorion.

Entering the house, he found his mother grieving; but when she saw him she was filled with joy and tenderness. Yet she did not rush at once to embrace her son. As a woman strong in spirit and God-fearing, she first lifted her eyes to God and raised her hands to Him, offering Him thanks that, by His help, she now again received her beloved son, of whom she had been deprived.

"Blessed be the Lord," she said, "who has heard my prayer and does not deprive me of His mercy."

Thus Luke, by God's will, was restored to his mother; he served her as a son and remained with her for four months. Then blessed Luke, burning in spirit for God and for a life of stillness in God, again resolved to leave his mother. This time she no longer hindered his good intention, nor did she keep him from the road, for she knew that her son, like everyone else, ought to honour God above his parents.

Thus, accompanied by his mother's prayers as by a good guide, St. Luke soon came to a seaside mountain called John's. There was a church there in the name of the holy unmercenaries, the physicians Cosmas and Damian. There, having built himself a small cell, he began to live in it according to God. What labors he undertook here, wrestling with demons and mortifying his flesh, cannot be recounted in detail, yet

nothing can be passed over in silence. Let us therefore relate only a few things out of many, so that we may know what manner of God's servant this was in his life.

The Venerable Father had a disciple who was scandalized by his teacher. He thought that the saint was hypocritically praying without ceasing. Seeing that he occupied himself with nothing, neither reading the Divine books nor studying the writings of the Fathers, the disciple supposed that his teacher, being an unlettered man who did not know the Divine Scripture, spent all his nights not in vigil but in sleep and idleness. And so one night, very late, when the elder had already shut the doors of his cell, the disciple sat outside by the doors, leaned his head against them, and began to listen to what the elder did at night: did he sleep, or did he pray? Listening thus, he remained by the doors the whole night until morning. What he heard there he himself related afterwards. "I heard," he said, "how the saint, kneeling, struck his head against the ground and, with each prostration, reverently said: 'Lord, have mercy!' Then, kindled with still greater zeal for God, he made more frequent prostrations and called out even more fervently, 'Lord, have mercy!' And so he prayed until his body was exhausted; but even when he fell prostrate upon the ground, he did not grow weary in spirit, for even lying down he called upon God in prayer. Then, rising again, he knelt and did the same, and in such prayer he spent the whole night until the very dawn. After this, the disciple, convinced by the labors of his father, repented of his former doubt, and after the saint's repose he confessed all this with an oath before others."

But the Venerable Father mortified his flesh not only by nightly kneelings but also by daily labors. He made for himself a small garden and began to plant various trees there and to sow all kinds of seeds, not for his own needs or for sale, but for the wearing down of the flesh, for every day he labored in his garden until his face was wet with sweat. And if there were fruits from his trees and seeds, he distributed them to those who came to him; sometimes, filling a large basket with them, he carried it to neighboring, foreign fields and left it there. Thus St. Luke nourished others by his labors, while he himself always remained in fasting.

It happened that deer began to come into his garden; eating one thing and trampling another with their feet, they greatly damaged it. The saint drove them away, but when he returned to his cell, they came there again; and so it was repeated several times. Then the saint, vexed, went out to the deer and said to one of them, the largest, as to some rational and speaking creature:

"Why do you do me harm and ruin my labors, when I have never wronged you? For we are servants of the One Lord and creatures of the One God. Moreover, I am created in the image of God and have authority over all creation, for the Creator has subjected all things to man. Therefore, by the command of the Lord, do not move from the place where you stand, but receive the worthy punishment."

And no sooner had the saint uttered this than the deer, as if struck by some arrow, fell to the ground and lay motionless, while the other deer ran away. It happened that hunters walking in the desert saw all this; they hastened up to the deer and, with joy, already dragged off their unexpected catch to slaughter it. But the Venerable, taking pity on the deer, said to them:

"Brethren, you have no right to take this deer. You did not hunt it, nor did you catch it; you came upon one already caught and now want to slaughter it. You ought rather to pity it, for it has fallen from weakness and now lies there without thinking of fleeing."

Hearing this, the hunters left the deer, marveling at the saint's compassion. And the saint let the deer go into the desert whole and well.

Though so perfect in life as a monk, our Venerable Father Luke had not yet been clothed in the full monastic rank. But he greatly desired it and fervently prayed to God that He would grant him to be counted worthy of this holy Angelic image; and his prayer was heard, and he received what he desired.

Once, two elderly monks, adorned with honorable gray hair and venerable faces, came to him from no one knew where. They said that they were going to old Rome. These monks, having offered prayer, clothed the Venerable Luke in the full monastic habit; having instructed him, they began to prepare for the journey. The Venerable Luke, having nothing with which to send them on their way, for he was poor

both in body and in spirit and did not even have necessary food, accompanied them, nourishing himself on the way with spiritually profitable conversations with them. Coming to a certain seashore, the travelers sat down to rest a little and were already about to part from the blessed Luke at that place, giving him the kiss of peace in the Lord. But while they were still sitting, suddenly a large fish leaped out of the sea and fell on the shore before their feet; then another leaped out, and both thrashed upon the ground, as if giving themselves into their hands. This came about through the prayers of St. Luke; for he, having no suitable food to entertain on the road those who had done him good, with his secret, heartfelt prayer besought the Lord, the Provider of all creation, to send them food for the way. And He who once sent bread and meat to Elijah through a raven, He also sent food from the waters of the sea to these venerable fathers. And they, taking both fish, gave thanks to God, who opens His hand and satisfies every living thing.

The Venerable Father Luke, having received the perfect Angelic rank, undertook an even more perfect manner of life; he began to labor still more, adding to his former ascetic efforts still heavier labors, and he increased his fasting with tears and all-night vigils. His food was barley bread, and sometimes raw greens and water; to sleep he rarely gave himself over. For this purpose he had dug in his cell a trench resembling a grave, which he did for the constant remembrance of death. And when he needed to sleep at night, he would lie down in this grave, as if dying and being buried; and, resting a little, he would at once rise again to prayer, saying the words of the prophet David: "Thou openest Thy hand and fillest every living thing with good pleasure" (Ps. 144:16). "I rise before the dawn and cry out; I hope in Thy word. Mine eyes anticipate the morning watch, that I may meditate on Thy word" (Ps. 118:147–148). When St. Luke began to lead such a life, soon the fame of his virtue spread among all the neighboring inhabitants, and people began to flock to him from everywhere.

Once two brothers, sons of the same father, came to the Venerable and told him that their father, before his death, had buried in the earth all his gold, silver and coins somewhere, and, dying, had not shown them the place where he had hidden all his treasure. "So, Father," they

said, "we beg you, pray to God that He may reveal this hidden place, and then our daily quarrels between us will cease. For we, being brothers, each think that the other has stolen the father's inheritance and kept it for himself. So do this: by your prayers, let the enmity between us be quenched, and let our poverty cease through the treasure that is found."

The Venerable, however, refused and sent the brothers away from him, saying that his prayer could not move the Lord to do this. But they, coming often, wearied him with their entreaties, and at last they moved him to pity.

The saint, having prayed for them to God who sees all, and having learned in revelation the place where the father of these two brothers had hidden his treasure, showed it to them. Then they, going there, began to dig the earth in that place and soon found their father's gold and silver, and they glorified this miracle throughout all the neighboring villages. But the enemy of good, the devil, though always defeated by this brave soldier of Christ, again planned to wage war against him. Wishing to inflict insult and harm upon him, he contrived the following by his snares.

At the devil's instigation, three women came to the saint from a nearby village; falling with weeping and sobbing at his feet, they began to confess their grievous sins and to beg that he, by his good counsel and prayer, would heal their souls. St. Luke, wishing by all means to avoid their importunity and to be rid of them, sent them to the priests, since he himself did not have this rank but was only a simple unordained monk. Yet these women did not obey the saint, and he heard from them the confession of the most dreadful sins of women.

When these sinful women had gone, the enemy of men, who shoots at the upright in heart (Ps. 10:2), again attacked the saint with unclean thoughts and stirred up sinful warfare in his mortified members. Then St. Luke, perceiving the deceit of the devil, armed himself against him with the weapon of prayer. Standing in one place for three days and praying to God the whole time, he overcame this snare of the devil; with a rain of tears he quenched the dreadful flame of lust, and thus, with the help of God, he crushed the head of the infernal serpent.

After three days of prayer, when the saint's body was already utterly spent, he dozed a little; and in this state there appeared to him in a vision an Angel in the form of a beautiful youth. In his hand he held a fishing-rod, which he began to thrust into the Blessed Luke's mouth and throat; and it seemed that the blessed man swallowed it all, and that it reached to his very entrails. Then the youth who had appeared drew the rod out of him, and on it he brought forth a certain part of his body, fleshy and bloody; and casting it away, he said to him:

"Be bold, and fear not."

Starting up at once from sleep, the saint understood that the Lord had delivered him from carnal and sinful passion, and he gave thanks to his Saviour and Deliverer.

The Venerable Luke, by the purity of his life, possessed also the gift of foresight and foretold the future. He, for example, announced in advance the invasion of the Bulgarian armies into Greek lands, which came to pass in its time, as will be told below.

The holy ascetic also perceived the secrets of the human heart. The Venerable had a sister named Gali. She was his sister not only in the flesh but in the spirit as well: imitating her brother in all things, she passed her life in virginity, chastity and monastic labours. Sometimes, together with her novices, she came from her monastery to her brother and there served him, if he needed anything; at other times she tended his garden, planting and pruning the trees.

Once the Venerable said to her and to those who were with her:

"A man is coming toward us, carrying a great burden upon his shoulders, and therefore he is heavily weighed down."

Having said this, he left the women who had come to him and went himself up his mountain. They, not understanding his words and marvelling, pondered what the words the Venerable had spoken might mean: who is this one who is weighed down, and with what is he burdened? And after a while a certain man came there, who not only bore no burden but carried nothing at all, and began to ask about the Venerable: "I must see him on a certain matter," he said. The saint's sister answered this man:

"He is not here; he has gone for a time into the wilderness. But if you wish to see him, wait until he comes."

The man who had come said:

"I will not leave until I see him," and, awaiting the saint, he sat near his cell for seven days. When the seven days had passed, the Venerable came back from his wilderness, and noticing this man, he looked upon him without his customary meekness, even angrily, and with a stern voice he said to him:

"Why have you come into this wilderness? Why, having left the cities, have you withdrawn to the mountains? Why, having scorned the shepherd and the clergy of the Church, have you come to us, unlearned simple folk? And how have you dared to stand before our eyes, not fearing the vengeance of God, being guilty of immeasurable transgressions?"

Terrified by such words of the saint, the man who had come wept, and from fear he could not utter a single word. Then St. Luke turned to him again:

"Why are you silent?" he asked. "Why do you not confess your deeds and speak of the murder which you committed, so that, repenting of all your transgressions, you may at least a little appease God?"

Then that man, scarcely able to speak for weeping and sobbing, said to the saint:

"O man of God! What more do you desire that I should tell you? Enlightened by the grace of God that dwells in you, you yourself, before my confession, spoke of my grievous sin. As I see it, everything that I did in secret is known to you. Yet if you command it, I will tell openly of my lawlessness before all."

And that man began to recount in detail before everyone how, where, and for what cause he had killed his friend on the road, confessing this sin with tears and humility; then, falling at the feet of St. Luke, he begged the saint not to leave him caught in the devil's snares. The saint, having instructed that man at length and set him on the path of salvation, sent him to the priests.

All this has been recounted to show the foresight of St. Luke, how he perceived even the secret sins of men.

Let it be permitted to tell of another such case as well.

A ship's captain named Demetrius, who often came sailing his ship to a landing-place not far from the saint's cell, became well acquainted with him, and whenever he came to him he was granted to receive his holy prayers and to take delight in his conversations.

Once, having put in to shore and intending to go to the Venerable, he resolved to appear before him not empty-handed, but to bring him something from his catch. He often fished at that landing, but this time, casting lines with his sailors into the sea, he caught nothing and laboured all day in vain. But, already late in the evening, he remembered the Venerable Luke, and cast his line in his name, and there took hold a fish so large that he could scarcely draw it out of the water. Then he cast the line a second time in the saint's name, and caught another fish, like the first but somewhat smaller. He went to the Venerable and took with him the smaller fish, and kept the larger one for himself. St. Luke, being a seer, learned of everything that had happened; yet he received his guest and the gift he brought with courtesy. But in conversing with him he reminded him, among other things, how Ananias had sinned before God by keeping back part of the price received for the field, and how the holy Apostle Peter had learned of it (Acts 5:1–5). Hearing this, Demetrius understood that the saint's words touched upon him as well, since he had kept back the larger fish; filled with awe before the foresight of the blessed father, and ashamed at the rebuke of his sin, he fell at his feet and, confessing his sin and repenting, asked his forgiveness. St. Luke, instructing him gently, forgave him, and ordered his disciple to cook the fish that had been brought and give it to the brethren who came to him, since he himself did not eat fish. And many times, foreseeing that the brethren would soon come to him, he would tell his disciple and order him to prepare food and bread for them.

Seven years after St. Luke's sojourn on his mountain, the invasions of Bulgarian armies upon the Greek land began, of which the Venerable had foretold long before. The inhabitants fled, some into the cities and fortresses, some to the island of Euboea and to the Peloponnese[9]; then

9. Euboea is a long island stretching from northwest to southeast along the shores of the regions of Central Greece, Boeotia and Attica. – The Peloponnese is southern Greece.

the Venerable Luke too left his mountain, boarded a ship and set out for Corinth[10]. There, hearing of a certain stylite who laboured at Patras[11], he went to him and stayed with him for ten years, serving him with complete obedience and diligence, as a son to his father. Concerning this stylite, a certain presbyter began to speak ill, and, leading astray those who heard him, he reviled and slandered the righteous man. The Venerable Luke, hearing the reviling words that insulted his father, laid aside his natural meekness, and, contrary to the presbyter, began to praise the ascetic, and, exposing the false words of that presbyter, stood firmly for the innocence of his teacher. But the presbyter, a cruel man, struck St. Luke on the cheek, and at once the judgment of God overtook him: raging, he fell to the ground and so remained until his death, being given over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved (1 Cor. 5:5).

After ten years had passed, the Venerable Luke returned again to his homeland, to Hellas, and settled in the place of his first dwelling on the mountain of John.

Once it happened that the Bishop of Corinth, who was journeying to Constantinople, passed by the saint's mountain, and now stopped to rest right by the Venerable's cell. St. Luke, learning of this, went to pay him reverence and brought with him gifts from his labours: fruits of the trees, vegetable roots, and greens. The bishop, receiving him graciously, went to see his cell, and, seeing his solitary and silent life, his garden and his labours, he marvelled and received great edification from it. He resolved to give the hermit alms, and ordered that each of those who had come with him should give several coins, and he himself gave gold from his own purse; thus a considerable sum was gathered, which he wished to give him; but St. Luke did not wish to accept it.

"Holy Vladyka," he said, "I seek and ask not for gold, but for your holy prayers and instruction. And why should I have gold, when I have

10. Corinth was the oldest, most famous and wealthiest city of ancient Greece. It lay on the Isthmus of Corinth, which joins the Peloponnese to the rest of Greece, in a beautiful and fertile plain on the southeastern shore of the Gulf of Corinth, between the Ionian and Aegean Seas. The ruins of ancient Corinth are today located near the present-day Corinth, called Kurounto, which has only about 5,000 inhabitants.

11. Patras is an ancient city on the northern shore of the Peloponnese.

chosen poverty and this humble life? Therefore give me what I ask and desire: teach me, a simple man, how I may be saved?"

The bishop, grieved, thinking that St. Luke was refusing and despising not the alms but himself, said to the Venerable:

"Why do you reject our gift, and with it us ourselves? I too am a faithful Christian, though a sinner; a bishop, though an unworthy one. And why, imitating Christ in all things, do you not imitate Him in this? For He too accepted the alms offered by pious people; so if you have no need of gold, yet take it and distribute it to those in need. If you regard almsgiving as a thing unnecessary, you deprive the poor of what they require, and you do not acknowledge the salvation of those who give alms: for the beggar, if he does not accept alms, from whence will he obtain all that is necessary for him? And we, if we do not give alms, how shall we be saved?"

Persuaded by these words of the bishop, the Venerable accepted the alms, but not all the gold, only a single coin, and the bishop, giving him his blessing, set out on his way.

St. Luke had a custom: on Palm Sunday, early in the morning, he would ascend to the top of the mountain and, carrying a cross in his hands, sing: "Lord, have mercy." Once, when he was ascending the mountain in this way according to his custom, a viper crept out of a hole and, at the devil's urging, bit the big toe of his foot and hung upon it. The saint, bending down, took the viper and, flinging it off his foot, said to it:

"Neither harm me, nor will I harm you; but let each of us go his own way, for we are creatures of the One Creator, and can do nothing without the will and command of our Creator."

And the viper crept back into its cave, and the Saint went on his way up the mountain, remaining wholly unharmed by the viper's sting.

A certain courtier, who had charge of the imperial treasures, was once sent by the Emperor to the land of Africa. When he was in Corinth, carrying with him a great quantity of imperial gold, he suffered a theft, and all the imperial gold was lost. In the search for the stolen goods many were tortured and put to death, but the gold was not found, and the imperial official was in great grief. Men of rank among

the citizens came and consoled him, but they could not console him: despairing of finding the gold, he did not expect to remain alive, for he feared the Emperor's wrath. Then one of those present stood up in their midst and said:

"No one can point out where the stolen gold is, except Luke the monk, through whom God works many miracles."

Hearing this, the others said, "Truly so," and they all began to speak of him, praising his virtuous life and the grace of God within him. The imperial official, hearing this, sent to the Saint with this entreaty:

"Imitate Him Who, for the salvation of the human race, did not refuse to come down from heaven, and come for a short time to our city to visit those who are possessed by great sorrow."

St. Luke at first did not wish to go, avoiding vainglory and the honor of men; but afterwards, for the sake of the many who were suffering because of the stolen gold, he went. In the city he was received with honor by the imperial official and the citizens, and first of all he ordered a meal to be prepared:

"Let us first give what is due to the belly," he said to the official, "and let us rejoice to the glory of God: He Who gave us wine to make our hearts glad, He is able to mingle for us, in His love for mankind, also the cup of joy."

When they sat down and dined, feeding their souls with the good instruction of the Saint more than their bodies with food, the Venerable Luke, looking upon one of those who stood by and served them, and calling him by name, summoned him to himself and said to him:

"Why have you all but brought death upon yourself, and so great a calamity upon your master, by daring to steal the imperial gold? Go quickly and bring here the gold which you have hidden in the earth, if you wish to obtain mercy and forgiveness."

Hearing this, the servant was greatly afraid and stood silent, trembling all over: he whom even his own conscience had accused could not now utter a single word. Then, falling to the ground and embracing the Saint's feet, he told the whole truth, asking forgiveness with tears, and he received it. The Saint desired not only to expose his sinful wound

but also to heal it. And at once the thief went out, and quickly returned, bringing the stolen gold, all of it intact, and laid it before the eyes of all; and there was great joy both for the imperial official and for all who were with him, and all who had feared for the gold were comforted. And the devil, who had prompted this theft, was put to shame, since the thief was forgiven, and the lips of all glorified the Lord Jesus. The Saint, however, claiming no glory for himself from all who surrounded him, but ascribing all the glory of this miracle to God alone, returned home.

Some time later, the Venerable Luke went to a monastery in the city of Thebes[12], to visit there the abbot Antony: it was his custom to come to God-inspired men and to hold edifying conversations with them. While he was with Abbot Antony, it happened that the son of one of the leading citizens fell gravely ill. This citizen, hearing that St. Luke had come to their monastery, went there at once and, falling at his feet, began with tears to beg him to come to his house and visit the sick youth, who was now dying: he believed that after the visit of the servant of God his son would become well. The Saint began to refuse with humility, saying:

"What am I? And what great thing do you see in me, that you hold such an opinion of me? There is one Physician of souls and bodies, Who can deliver us from death: it is God, Who created us; a sinful and mortal man can do nothing such as this."

And that citizen went away in sorrow, weeping and despairing of his son's life. In the evening the abbot, conversing with the Venerable alone, said to him:

"I think, honorable father, that you have not done well in not visiting the sick man and comforting the grieving father; for thus we too shall hear the word of Christ: 'I was sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me' (Mt. 25:43)."

To this St. Luke replied:

"To heal the sick is the work of the power of God; to comfort the sorrowing befits those who have words and wisdom on their lips. As for

12. Thebes was the principal city of Boeotia, the central region of ancient Greece.

me, I am far from the first, and entirely lacking in the second, being a simple and unlearned man; but if you agree and think that it would be pleasing to God, go first and be my guide, and I will follow after you."

And at once, though it was already late in the evening, they both set off for the city. Coming to the house of that citizen, they found the youth half dead and no longer speaking, and all the household waiting for his end. The father of the sick youth, together with all who were in the house, falling at the Saint's feet, began with tears to beg him to pray for his dying son, that he might be restored from the gates of death. Moved by the sick youth's father's entreaty and persuaded by Abbot Antony, the Venerable, lifting up his hands, prayed for the sick youth; and after the prayer he immediately returned to the monastery, and as soon as the morning dawn appeared he hastened away to his mountain; thus did he avoid human glory. With the coming of morning, Abbot Antony sent his servant into the city to learn what was happening with the sick youth: whether the prayers of the Venerable Luke had accomplished anything. And this servant, returning almost at once, told the abbot a strange and wondrous thing:

"The youth who last night was at the point of death," said the servant, "I met sitting on a horse and riding to bathe in the bathhouse."

Hearing this, the abbot marveled and glorified God.

Many, coming to the Venerable Luke with their needs and disturbing the silence that was dear to him, wearied him, and he resolved to withdraw to a more desert place. But he did not carry out his intention at once; first he sent his disciple Herman to Corinth, to a certain experienced and God-inspired man, Theophylact, asking him for good counsel: should he remain in one place, on the mountain of John, and endure the burden of those who came to him, or should he move to another place, unknown to anyone? Theophylact sent him a reply, one that had once been given from heaven to St. Arsenius the Great:

"Flee from men, and you will be saved."

The Venerable Luke received this counsel with joy, and together with his disciple he left the mountain of John and settled near the sea, in a certain desert place called Kalavie. Living here, he earned his food

by the labor of his hands: the Saint dug the earth, sowed wheat, and, grinding it on millstones, prepared bread for himself.

Once sailors passing by him put in to shore not far from the Venerable's cell; entering it, they found no one there, for St. Luke had gone off somewhere with his disciple. Seeing a good millstone, they took it and carried it off to their ship. Soon the Venerable came to his cell and, seeing that his millstone was gone, went to the sailors, asking them to return the stone to him. But they argued and began to assert that they had not taken it. Then St. Luke said to them:

"If you did not take it, then sail on into the sea; but if it is with you, may the Lord repay you as He wills."

Having said this, the Venerable departed, and at once the one who had taken the stone fell down dead. After this all the sailors were filled with great fear, and coming, they begged the Saint's forgiveness and returned the stone. The servant of God, however, was greatly grieved at the sudden death of the sailor, and wept over him for many days.

Three years after the Venerable had settled in this place, an invasion of the Arabs came upon the Greek land, and the Saint moved to a desert island without springs of water, called Ampil; there for a fairly long time he endured both hunger and thirst, and from there he moved to a fertile place called Soterie. Having cast out from that land a demon who wished to frighten him with apparitions, he dwelt here until his blessed repose. Brethren gathered to him here, and a small monastery was established. The praetor of that land, by name Krinet, who loved the Venerable, built a church in his monastery in the name of the Holy Great Martyr Barbara; and the Saint remained in this monastery in fasting and prayer, unceasingly laboring for God and serving the salvation of men: for by his teachings and his life he brought spiritual benefit to the souls of his brethren, and by his prayer he healed bodily diseases. The monk Gregory, who had almost always suffered from stomach pain, he healed with a single word. He also healed a certain noblewoman living in Thebes; she was afflicted with a fierce and long-lasting illness and had already despaired of help from physicians; he sent to her his disciple Pancratius, who, coming, anointed her with holy oil, and the woman was suddenly healed. In general the Venerable granted

swift healing from all diseases, and to many he even foretold the future. Having lived in that place for seven years, St. Luke drew near to his repose.

Before his death the following occurred. The Venerable had among his other disciples one named Theodosius, who had a brother, Philip, a layman. Once Philip resolved to come to the monastery of the Venerable, partly to visit his brother and partly to see St. Luke, of whom he had heard much that was glorious. The Venerable, however, foreseeing his coming, said to Theodosius:

"Prepare, brother, everything needed for a good meal; your brother is coming to us for supper."

Theodosius, seized with astonishment and joy, diligently prepared the food, and often going out beyond the gate, he looked down the road and awaited his brother's arrival with impatience. In the evening Philip came and brought with him much of what was needed for a meal. He was received with love by the Saint, and in the evening they all sat down together to supper, partaking of all that had been set out, to the glory of God. At this meal the Venerable ate and drank more than was his custom, and he did this for the sake of Philip's entertainment. After supper and the customary prayers before sleep, Philip lay down to rest; but on his bed he was tempted concerning the holy servant of God, Luke. He thought: "This old man is a hypocrite; he eats and drinks much, and only puts on an appearance of asceticism and holiness." After this, falling asleep, Philip saw in a dream two radiant youths, who looked upon him with angry eyes; their faces were fierce, and they spoke harsh words:

"Why do you think so impiously of the Venerable? And why do you condemn a man who is innocent and holy? Lift up your eyes, which see only the earthly, and look how great an honor he has been granted, he whom in your opinion is a hypocrite and a deceiver."

Philip, looking up, saw a certain most glorious place, all spread with purple, and standing in that place was the Venerable Luke: he shone with divine glory, like the sun. Starting up from sleep, Philip was terrified and told all this to his brother Theodosius and the other monks, and afterwards with repentance he confessed his sin to the Venerable

Luke himself; having obtained his forgiveness, he departed with great spiritual profit to himself.

Foreseeing his speedy departure to God, St. Luke went to visit all the fathers who were in that desert and gave each of them the last kiss.

"Pray for me, brethren," he said to them, "pray to the Lord Christ; we do not know whether we shall see one another again or not."

Having thus gone round to all of them, he afterwards shut himself up in his cell and for three months prepared himself for his death. At last, eight days before his death, St. Luke fell ill; when he was already completely ill and lying on the ground, the priest Gregory asked him:

"What do you bid concerning your burial? And where do you command that your body be laid?"

To this the Saint answered:

"Bind my feet with a chain and cast me into the forest thicket, so that I, now useless to anyone, may at least be of use to the beasts for food."

Then the priest began to beseech the Saint to dispose otherwise of his body and to point out a place for his burial. After some time the Venerable said:

"Bury me in the very place where I lie: the Lord wishes to glorify it for the glory of His holy name."

Having said this, the Saint, as the sun was already setting, lifted up his eyes heavenward and said:

"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!"

And he fell asleep in the sleep of temporal death; this was on the seventh day of the month of February; and his holy soul departed to God, to life everlasting.

When morning came, all the monks and lay people from the surrounding localities gathered at this holy monastery, and there was a great concourse of people; all wept at the loss of so great a lamp to the world. They buried the servant of God with honor in the very place where he had commanded, in the cell where he had labored.

Six months later, to a certain monk, Cosmas the eunuch, who was going from the land of Paphlagonia[13] to Italy, a vision of God occurred;

in this vision he was commanded to go to the place where the Venerable Luke rested and to remain unceasingly at his tomb. Coming to that place and settling there, the monk Cosmas dug up from the earth the coffin with the incorrupt relics of the Venerable, and placing it on top of the tomb, he enclosed this holy coffin with boards and a grating, and he converted the cell itself into a church; and there were great miracles from these holy relics: from them there flowed a fragrant myrrh, and those anointed with it received healing: the lame were healed, the blind regained their sight, the lepers were cleansed, and demons were cast out of people, by the prayers of the Venerable Luke and by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever, amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs, the Thousand and Three, who suffered at Nicomedia

Память святых мучеников тысячи и трех, в Никомидии пострадавших

In the reign of the impious and savage emperor Diocletian a great persecution was raised against the Church of Christ: at this time Christians for the Name of Christ were everywhere cast into prisons and put to death. Among them suffered also the servants of Christ, the bishop Theopemptus and Theona, a former sorcerer, and four imperial officials: Vassus, Eusebius, Eutychius and Basilides, to whose guard the holy martyr Peter, the chamberlain of Diocletian, had been entrusted; and the wives of those officials, who, having accepted the holy faith, remained unshaken in the confession of Christ and laid down their souls for the Lord. After the death of these martyrs, their household, all the servants, slaves and freemen, having considered among themselves, unanimously said:

"Behold, our masters, who ruled over us in this world, having for the sake of the holy faith in Christ disdained this temporal life, have obtained for themselves the Kingdom of Heaven, and for their contempt of the earthly now enjoy heavenly blessings: why then should we not also

13. Paphlagonia is a harsh mountainous region in the northern part of Asia Minor.

follow our masters? Let us go to the emperor Diocletian and say to him: We are Christians, and we desire, together with our masters, who had authority over us in this life, to receive in the future life the incorruptible crown."

Having reached such a decision among themselves, and all agreeing to it with willingness, they counted how many they were together with their wives and children, and it came to a thousand and three persons.

Going forth all together, they stood before the tribunal of the impious tormentor Diocletian and with one voice began to cry out:

"We too are Christians and will follow our fathers and masters, who shed their blood for Christ; we do not obey the demons, nor do we worship blind, deaf, dumb and lifeless idols!"

The emperor, seeing that they were so many, was filled with great wrath; yet, pretending at first to be gentle, he began to entice them with kindly words. He said to them:

"Why do you act so unwisely and voluntarily expose yourselves to such destruction? Better obey me, as a father who wishes you only good, and offer sacrifice to the gods; by this you will avoid the madness by which Eusebius and his friends were deluded, for which they died such a cruel death. But you, if you obey me and offer sacrifice to the immortal gods, will be granted by me great honor and gifts and, by our favor, will be richly rewarded."

The holy ones answered the tormentor:

"We do not ask for your gifts, nor do we fear your threats, but we strive to offer the sacrifice of praise to the living and true God; as for you, what you wish to do, do quickly with us: for us nothing is dearer than Christ."

Diocletian, hearing such words from the holy martyrs, became afraid lest they stir up some tumult among the people, since he saw with what great boldness they defended their faith in Christ; by a motion of his hand he gave command that soldiers with drawn swords surround this whole Christian assembly; among them were also many small children, whom their mothers held in their arms: some of them were one year old, others two or three months.

When the armed host had surrounded the Christians on all sides, the emperor said to them:

"So now heed my counsel and declare that you consent to offer sacrifice to the gods and to worship them, so that you may return to your homes whole and unharmed; spare yourselves and your infants, as I spare you, lest you and your children perish through folly; for if you do not heed me, your Christ will not help you in anything."

To this the holy ones answered him:

"We have learned to worship the One God who dwells in the heavens, and His Only-begotten Son and Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom all things came into being, and His Holy Spirit; therefore do not entice us with any promises of your vain favor: you will not persuade us by your blessings, nor will you frighten us by threats, so that we should fall away from faith in Christ our Lord and worship the lifeless idols venerated by you: nothing can be dearer and more desirable to us than Christ, who lives unto the ages of ages."

Then Diocletian, enraged, again gave command to the soldiers that they should immediately cut them all down. And they, like savage beasts, fell upon the Christians from all sides and cut down the holy martyrs of Christ; they spared no one, not even the children sucking at their mothers' breasts, and of the thousand and three not one was left alive[14]

Thus the holy martyrs of Christ completed their martyr's contest in the true confession of Christ, in the month called by the Egyptians Mekhir, on the 13th day, by our reckoning February 7, at Nicomedia, the metropolis of the province of Bithynia[15], in the reign of Diocletian; while over us reigns, as now and forever He reigns and will reign, Jesus Christ, the True God and our Savior, to Whom be glory and praise with God the Father and with the Holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, unto ages of ages, amen.

14. They reposed in 303.

15. Bithynia is a region in the northwestern part of Asia Minor. Nicomedia was the principal city of Bithynia and the favorite residence of the emperor Diocletian.

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THE EIGHTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 8

8 февраля

New Calendar February 8 · Old Calendar February 21 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates

Страдание святого великомученика Феодора Стратилата

The impious Emperor Licinius,[1] having taken up the scepter after the impious Maximian and imitating him in all things, at once raised a great persecution against those who were distinguished for piety; he sent a decree of this impious command to all the cities and lands. At that time a multitude of brave soldiers of Christ were slain: Licinius put to death the forty Martyrs of Sebaste, as well as renowned soldiers and princes of his household, and finally he killed three hundred men from Macedonia.

When the impious Licinius saw that nearly all the Christians, scorning his command, were giving themselves up to death for the holy faith, he then ordered that only the most distinguished and noble among them be sought out, that is, only those who were in his army or lived in the cities, and he commanded that only these (without paying attention to the multitude of the common people) be compelled to idolatry; he hoped by fear to persuade all who were under his power to remain faithful to idolatry.

While everywhere they began with great diligence to search for the most distinguished of the Christians, Licinius, who was then in Nicomedia, learned that in Heraclea,[2] near the Black Sea, there lived a

1. Licinius was the Roman emperor in the eastern half of the empire; he reigned from 307 to 324.
2. Heraclea was a city in Pontus, in the northern part of Asia Minor.

certain holy man named Theodore Stratelates, that he was a Christian and was converting many to Christ.

St. Theodore was a native of Euchaita,[3] which lay not far from the city of Heraclea; he was a brave and valiant man, very handsome in outward appearance; besides this he was distinguished by his wisdom and great eloquence, so that he was called *vrioritor*, that is, the most skilled orator.[4] By imperial command he was appointed stratelates, that is, voivode, and the city of Heraclea was given under his administration; he was rewarded thus for his bravery, which became known to all after he had slain a serpent at Euchaita.

Not far from the city of Euchaita, to the north of it, there was a desert field, and in it a great chasm, within which lived an enormous serpent. When it came out of this chasm, the earth in that place shook; and having come out, it devoured everything that happened to come in its way, both man and beast.

Hearing of this, the brave soldier of Christ, St. Theodore, who was then still among the army, without telling anyone of his intention, went out alone against that fierce serpent.

He took with him only his usual weapons, and on his breast he had a precious cross. He said to himself:

"I will go and deliver my fatherland from this fierce serpent by the power of Christ."

When he came to that field, he saw high grass, dismounted from his horse and lay down to rest. In that region there lived a certain pious woman named Eusebia. She was an elderly woman; some years before, having obtained the honorable body of St. Theodore the Recruit, who had suffered in the reign of Maximian and Maximinus, she had buried him with spices in her house at Euchaita, and every year she celebrated his memory. This woman, seeing this second Theodore, the soldier of Christ, called Stratelates, sleeping in that field, approached him in great fear, and taking him by the hand, woke him, saying:

3. Euchaita was a city in the north of Asia Minor, not far from Heraclea; today it is Marsivan.
4. From the Greek word *rhētōr*, meaning orator or rhetor, and *vri*, an inseparable syllable that intensifies the meaning of the word joined to it.

"Rise, brother, and quickly depart from this place; for you do not know that many have suffered a dreadful death in this place. Therefore rise quickly and go on your way."

The honorable martyr of Christ Theodore, rising, said to her:

"What fear and terror are you speaking of, mother?"

The servant of God Eusebia answered him:

"Child, an enormous serpent has taken up residence in this place, and therefore no one can come here: every day this serpent, coming out of its lair, finds someone, man or beast, and immediately slays and devours him."

The valiant soldier of Christ Theodore said in reply:

"Go away and stand farther from this place, and you will see the power of my Christ."

The woman, withdrawing from the place, threw herself on the ground, weeping and saying:

"God of Christians, help him at this hour!"

Then the holy martyr Theodore, making the sign of the cross, struck himself on the breast, and looking up to heaven, prayed thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who shone forth from the Father's Being, who helped me in battles and gave victory over my adversaries, Thou art the same now, Lord Christ our God; therefore send me victory from Thy holy height, that I may overcome this enemy, the serpent."

Then, speaking to his horse as though to a man, he said:

"We know that the power and might of God exist in all, both in men and in beasts; therefore help me, by the help of Christ, that I may overcome the enemy."

The horse, hearing the words of its master, stood still, awaiting the appearance of the serpent. Then the martyr of Christ, approaching the chasm, cried out loudly to the serpent:

"I speak to you and command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified of His own will for the human race: come out of your lair and crawl toward me."

The serpent, hearing the voice of the saint, stirred, and immediately the earth in that place shook. But St. Theodore, marking himself with

the sign of the cross, mounted his horse, which, tearing at and trampling the serpent as it came out, stood upon it with all four hooves.

Then the soldier of Christ Theodore struck the serpent with his sword, and having slain it, said:

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou didst hear me at this hour and didst grant me victory over the serpent!"

After this he returned safely to his regiment, rejoicing and glorifying God. The citizens of Euchaita and the neighboring inhabitants, hearing of this, went out to that field, and seeing the serpent slain by St. Theodore, marveled and cried out:

"Great is the God of Theodore!"

Then a multitude of the people believed in Christ, and especially the soldiers, and all of them, being baptized, became one flock of Christ, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

After this St. Theodore, living in Heraclea, preached Christ, the true God, and many of the pagans were converted to Christ. Every day the citizens gathered for baptism, and already almost all of Heraclea had accepted the holy faith.

Hearing of all this, the impious Emperor Licinius was greatly grieved, and from Nicomedia, where he himself was then staying, he sent to Heraclea officials with his bodyguards, so that they, taking Theodore Stratelates, might bring him to him with honor.

When they came to Heraclea, St. Theodore received them with honor: he feasted them and gave each a gift, as servants of the emperor. Then they began to call the saint to Licinius:

"Go," they said, "to Nicomedia, to the emperor, who loves you so; for he, hearing of your bravery, your beauty and your wisdom, greatly desires to see you, intending to honor your valor with a worthy dignity and gifts."

St. Theodore answered them:

"Let the emperor's will and yours be done; only rejoice and be glad today, and tomorrow we shall do what must be done."

Three days passed, and yet, despite the entreaties of the envoys that St. Theodore go with them to the emperor, he remained in his city. Then, keeping some of the imperial envoys with him, St. Theodore sent

the rest back to the emperor with a letter in which he said that he could not leave his city at a time when there was such great unrest among the people: for "many," he wrote, "having abandoned the ancestral gods, worship Christ, and nearly the whole city, turning away from the gods, glorifies Christ, and there is danger that Heraclea will fall away from your kingdom"; "therefore," he continued, "take the trouble, O emperor, and come here yourself, taking with you the images of the more renowned gods; do this for two reasons:

1) to pacify the rebellious people, and

2) to restore the ancient piety; for when you yourself offer sacrifices with us before all the people, the people, seeing us worshipping the great gods, will imitate us and be confirmed in the ancestral faith."

St. Theodore wrote such a letter to the emperor Licinius, thereby urging him to come to Heraclea: the saint wished to suffer in his own city, so as to sanctify it with his blood shed for Christ, and by his suffering and courageous feat to confirm others in the holy faith.

The emperor Licinius received this letter of the Stratelates and, having read it, rejoiced.

Without the least delay, he took with him about eight thousand soldiers and the most distinguished citizens of Nicomedia, and gladly set out with his princes and officials for Heraclea; he also took with him the idols of the gods more honored by the people, both gold and silver.

On the same night, when St. Theodore, as was his custom, was praying, he had the following vision: it seemed to him that he was in a temple whose roof was opened, and from there shone a heavenly light, as from some great luminary, and it illuminated his head; and then a voice was heard:

"Be bold, Theodore, I am with you!"

After this the vision ceased.

Then St. Theodore understood that the time of his sufferings for Christ had come, and he rejoiced, burning in spirit. Hearing that the emperor was approaching the city, he entered his prayer chamber and prayed thus with tears:

"Lord, Almighty God, who dost not abandon all who hope in Thy mercy, but dost protect them, be merciful to me also, and keep me by

Thy protection from the enticement of the enemy, that I may not fall before my adversaries, and that my enemy may not rejoice over me; appear to me, my Savior, in the time of the trial that stands before me, which I so desire to bear for Thy holy name; strengthen and establish me, and give me the strength to stand courageously for Thee, even unto blood, and to lay down my soul for love of Thee, as Thou, having loved us, didst lay down Thy soul for us on the cross."

Having thus prayed with tears, St. Theodore washed his face. Then, clothed in bright garments, he mounted his horse, the same on which he had once slain the serpent at Euchaita, and with his troops and the citizens went out to meet the emperor. As was fitting, he bowed to him and, greeting him with reverence, said:

"Rejoice, most divine emperor, most mighty autocrat!"

The emperor also received St. Theodore with great courtesy; he kissed him and said:

"Rejoice also, most beautiful youth, brave warrior, glorious voivode, and bright as the sun, most wise guardian of our fathers' laws and worthy of the diadem! After me it befits you to be emperor."

Conversing thus kindly and cheerfully, they entered the city to the sound of tympana and trumpets, and both, rejoicing, lay down to rest that day.

In the morning, when the imperial throne had been prepared on a high platform in the square in the middle of the city, Emperor Licinius came with all his retinue and with Theodore Stratelates, and, seating himself on the throne, began to praise the city, its citizens, and the saint Stratelates, saying:

"Truly, this place is worthy to be called the throne of God; it ought to be honored by men as another heaven. This city is both great and populous, and its inhabitants are all pious and devoted to their gods. Truly, nowhere are our great gods honored as they are here; and there is no more fitting and convenient place for the service of the great gods than this. That is why Heracles, that wondrous and most valiant god of ours, son of the great god Zeus and of the goddess Alcmene[5], loved this place and named the city Heracleia after himself. And truly, Theodore,

it is worthy to become your possession: it befits you to hold this wondrous city, and you alone are worthy to govern such a people. For you honor our gods, and all your love is directed toward them; day and night you occupy yourself with nothing else than with pleasing the ancient Hellenic gods. Therefore now show your love for them, and offer sacrifice to them with reverence, so that the whole people may see your zeal for the gods and know that you are a sincere friend of the great gods and pleasing to the emperor."

Thus spoke Licinius, enticing and flattering the saint. St. Theodore answered the emperor thus:

"Long live the emperor. Let your will be done; only give me today, for my house, the images of the great Hellenic gods which you have brought with you, both the golden and the silver ones, so that on this night and the next I may first honor them in my home with sacrifices, incense, and fragrances; and afterward, if you command, I will offer them sacrifices openly before all the people."

The emperor, hearing this, was greatly pleased. He at once ordered the golden and silver idols to be brought. St. Theodore, taking them with him, went home, and there, during the night, he broke them into small pieces and distributed the pieces to the beggars.

Two days later the emperor sent to the saint, commanding him to fulfill his promise and that same day offer sacrifices to the gods before all the people. Theodore, promising to do all this, hastened to the emperor, and the emperor, together with him, rode to the square in the middle of the city, and there, seated on his throne, said to St. Theodore:

"Most wise Theodore, excellent voivode, honored by the emperors who reigned before us! The day of sacrifice and festivity has come. Therefore, offer sacrifices to the gods publicly, so that all the inhabitants may see your reverence toward them and through this become even more diligent and zealous in their sacrifices."

5. Heracles or Hercules was a hero of ancient Greek legends, who personified human physical strength and was later revered by the ancient Greeks as one of their favorite gods. Dius or Zeus was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the father of gods and men, governing heaven and earth and sending thunder and lightning to the earth. Alcmene, according to Greek myths, was a mortal woman who conceived by Zeus and bore Heracles.

While the emperor was speaking, one of the centurions standing there, named Maxentius, said to him:

"By the great gods, O emperor, you are now deceived by this impious Theodore. For yesterday I saw the golden head of the goddess Artemis[6] in the hands of a beggar who was walking along and rejoicing. I asked him where he had found it, and he told me that Theodore Stratelates had given it to him."

Hearing this, Emperor Licinius shuddered and, perplexed, was silent for a long time.

Then St. Theodore said to him:

"Such is for me the power of Christ: everything that the centurion Maxentius has told you, O emperor, is all true, and I did well in breaking your idols. For if they could not help themselves when they were being broken, how can they give help to you?"

Licinius, hearing this answer of St. Theodore, remained for some time speechless, like a dumb man who has lost his reason. Sitting in great sorrow, with his head resting on his right hand, grieving and lamenting, he at last said:

"Woe is me, woe is me! How I have been shamed! I do not know what I shall now say or what I shall do. Being the most mighty emperor and having gathered so great a host of warriors, I came to this unhappy man, and now I am mocked by all my enemies, especially because this accursed fellow has broken my victorious gods and given them to beggars."

Then, turning to the saint, he said:

"Theodore, is this your return to the gods for the gifts received from them? Was this what I expected when I showered you with such great honors? And was it for this that I left Nicomedia and have now come to you? O evil and wicked man! Truly, you are a son of deceit and a foul dwelling of wickedness, who by flattery made me come here. But I swear to you by the power of my great gods that I will not endure this, and your cunning will not end well for you."

The saint answered Licinius:

6. Artemis or Diana, according to the beliefs of the ancient Greeks, was the goddess of the moon and of hunting.

"Mad emperor, why are you so angry? Look for yourself and understand the power of your gods. If they were truly gods, why did they not help themselves? Why did they not become angry with me when I was breaking them, and send fire from heaven to burn me? But they are lifeless and powerless things, which are as easily cut by the hand of man as gold and silver. You, O emperor, rage and are indignant, but your madness makes me laugh. You rage and fume, but I am strengthened and pay no heed to your fury. You grieve, but I rejoice at the destruction of your gods. You strive against the Lord, but I bless Him. You blaspheme the true God, but I praise Him in hymns. You worship dead gods, but I worship the Living God. You serve the foul Serapis[7], but I serve my most pure and most honorable Lord Christ, who sits upon the purest Seraphim. You honor the abominable Apollo[8], but I honor the God who lives forever. You are a Thracian coal[9], but I am a Roman prince; you, Licinius, are a winnower, but I, Theodore, am a gift of God[10]. Therefore, O emperor, do not be angry or rage; by so doing you only reveal your inner torment and will become like an ass or some mule."

Then Emperor Licinius, being still more enraged, commanded that the saint be stretched out naked in the form of a cross and beaten severely with raw ox sinews.

And the soldiers beat the holy martyr without mercy, taking turns among themselves, so that he was beaten now by three, now by four soldiers; and during this time six hundred blows were given to St. Theodore on his back and five hundred on his belly.

And Emperor Licinius mocked him, saying:

"Theodore, endure a little while, until Christ your God comes to you, Who will deliver you from the hands of the tormentor."

The saint answered:

7. Serapis was the Egyptian god of the souls of the dead, who was invoked as a savior from sickness and death. Later his veneration passed also to Greece and Rome, where it became very widespread.

8. Apollo was the Greco-Roman god of the sun and of intellectual enlightenment.

9. A nickname of Licinius, alluding to his humble origin from Thrace.

10. Licinius, in Latin, means "winnower"; Theodore, from the Greek, means "gift of God."

"Do with me what you will, and do not stop; for neither sorrow, nor distress, nor wounds, nor the sword, nor any other torment will separate me from the love of Christ."

Then the emperor, inflamed with still greater fury, said:

"Do you still confess Christ?"

And he again commanded that the holy martyr be beaten without mercy on the back with leaden rods, and then that his body be scraped with iron claws and scorched with burning candles, and his wounds rubbed with sharp potsherds.

The saint, bearing all this courageously, said nothing else but only: "Glory to Thee, my God!" After all these torments the emperor commanded that St. Theodore be shut up in prison, his feet bound in fetters, and that he be given no food for five days. When five days had passed, he ordered a cross to be prepared and the saint to be crucified upon it.

And so, as once Christ our Lord was crucified by Pilate, so now St. Theodore was crucified by Licinius on a cross, and his hands and feet were nailed to it.

But the cruel tormentors sought to increase still more the sufferings and torments of the saint. They drove a sharp and long nail into him and cut his body with razors; and young men and boys bent their bows and shot at his face, so that the pupils of his eyes were pierced by arrows.

"I," says the chronicler of his sufferings, "the notary[11] Uar, seeing all these terrible torments, and as it were hearing his inner groans of suffering, threw down the book in which I was recording all this, and, falling with weeping at his feet, said:

'Bless me, my lord, bless me! Tell your servant your last word!'

And my lord, the warrior of Christ Theodore, said to me in a quiet voice:

'Uar, do not abandon your service, and do not cease to watch my sufferings; describe them, describe also my end, and mark its day.'

Then, calling upon the Lord, the saint said:

11. A *notarius* was a stenographer. In the early centuries after Christ, the term was usually applied to imperial secretaries who authenticated documents.

'Lord, You said to me long ago: I am with you. Why then have You now forsaken me? Behold, O Lord, how wild beasts for Your sake have torn me all to pieces: the pupils of my eyes are pierced, my body is mangled by wounds, my face is wounded, my teeth are broken; only my bare bones hang on the cross. Remember me, O Lord, suffering the cross for Your sake: for Your sake I have endured iron, and fire, and nails. Now receive my spirit, for I am already departing from this life.'

Indeed, the whole body of Theodore had been torn to pieces.

Licinius, thinking that the martyr had died, left him hanging on the cross. But behold, during the first watch of the night, an Angel of the Lord took the holy martyr down from the cross and made him whole and sound, as he had been before; greeting him, the Angel said:

"Rejoice and be strengthened by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Behold, the Lord is with you. Why did you say that He had forsaken you? Therefore, accomplish your struggle to the end, and you will come to the Lord to receive the crown of immortality prepared for you."

Having said this to the holy martyr, the Angel became invisible. After this, the holy martyr Theodore, giving thanks to God, began to sing thus: "I will extol Thee, my God and King, and bless Thy name for ever and ever" (Ps. 144:1).

But the impious Licinius, even before dawn, sent two of his centurions, Antiochus and Patricius, commanding them:

"Go and bring me the body of Theodore, who died in torments. I will place it in a tin chest and cast it into the depths of the sea, lest the mad Christians somehow take it."

When they went and approached the place where Theodore had been crucified, they saw the cross, but the martyr who had been crucified upon it was not there. And Antiochus said to Patricius:

"The Galileans speak the truth,[12] that their Christ has risen from the dead. It is He, as I think, who has raised up His servant Theodore also."

12. So the pagans contemptuously called Christians, considering Christ to have come from Galilee, a region which even among the Jews enjoyed an ill reputation.

At that time Patricius, drawing nearer to the cross, saw the holy Theodore sitting on the ground and glorifying the Lord. Then Patricius cried out loudly:

"Great is the God of the Christians, and there is no other god besides Him!"

After this, both centurions, approaching the saint, said:

"We beseech you, martyr of Christ, receive us, for from this hour we too are Christians."

And on that day both of these centurions believed in Christ, and with them seventy soldiers.

Licinius, learning of this, sent his deputy Sixtus, and with him three hundred soldiers, that he should slay all who had believed in Christ.

When these soldiers came and saw what wonders the holy Theodore was performing by the power of Christ, they immediately believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. And an innumerable multitude of people gathered at that place, and all cried out:

"There is one God, the God of the Christians, and there is no other god besides Him!"

And again:

"Who is this tormentor Licinius? Let us stone him! For us there is one God and King, Christ, who is preached by Theodore!"

And a noise and tumult arose among the people, and there even began a shedding of blood.

A certain soldier, named Leander, ran to that place with a drawn sword and rushed upon Theodore, wishing to strike him with his sword. But Sixtus, the imperial deputy, restrained him, wrested the sword from his hands, and cut him down. And another soldier, named Mirpos, a native of the Ugrians,[13] rushing upon the imperial deputy Sixtus, killed him.

The holy Theodore, desiring to quiet the popular tumult, cried out loudly:

13. The Ugrians are Slavs originating from the land of Ugoria or Red Ruthenia, now western Ukraine.

"Cease, beloved! My Lord Jesus Christ, hanging on the Cross, restrained the Angels, lest they should execute vengeance upon the human race."

After the martyr Theodore had spoken thus to the people, beseeching and exhorting them, the noise and popular commotion ceased.

At this time the holy martyr was walking past the prison, and the whole people and soldiers followed him; and the prisoners who were in the dungeons cried out loudly to the saint:

"Have mercy upon us, servant of the Most High God!"

By his word the saint freed them from their bonds, opened the prison doors, and said to them:

"Go in peace, men, and remember me."

And the whole city assembled, and all turned away from idolatry and glorified Christ, the One God.

At this time the sick were healed, and demons were cast out of men. Whomsoever the saint touched with his hand, or whoever merely touched his garment, immediately received healing.

Then one of Licinius' attendants, seeing what was taking place, went to him and said:

"The whole city, having abandoned the gods, by the teaching and sorcery of Theodore, has believed in Christ."

The emperor, filled with rage, immediately sent a soldier to behead the holy Theodore. The people, however, seeing this soldier, again raised a tumult: rising up against Licinius, they wished to kill his servant. Then the saint began to exhort the people to abandon this intention. He said:

"Brethren and fathers! Do not stir up a tumult against Licinius, for he is a servant of his father, the devil; and it is fitting for me now to go to my Lord Jesus Christ."

Having said this, he began to pray to God, and after a rather lengthy prayer he blessed the people.

Then, signing himself with the sign of the Cross, he said to his servant Uar:

"My child Uar, take care to write down the day of my death, and bury my body in Euchaita, in the estate of my parents; and when you

too draw near to death, leave instructions that you be buried on my left side."

Then the martyr of Christ prayed again, and at last, pronouncing the word "Amen," bowed his honorable and holy head beneath the sword and was beheaded.

This took place on the 8th day of the month of February, on a Saturday, at the third hour of the day.[14]

After the beheading, the whole people showed the martyr great honor: taking candles and censers, the Christians laid his body in a fitting place; and then on the eighth of June it was transferred with great solemnity to Euchaita, and there innumerable miracles were performed, to the glory of Christ God, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and worship for ever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

By true warfare, O Passion-bearer, thou wast a most gracious commander of the army of the Heavenly King, O Theodore; for with the weapons of faith thou didst arm thyself wisely, and didst defeat the ranks of demons, and wast revealed as a victorious sufferer. Wherefore we ever bless thee with faith.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having clothed thy soul in faith with courage, and taking the word of God as a spear in thy hand, thou didst vanquish the enemy, O Theodore, greatest of martyrs; pray with them to Christ God without ceasing for us all.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Prophet Zechariah the Sickle-bearer

Память святого пророка Захарии Серповидца

The decree of the Persian king Cyrus concerning the liberation of the Jews in Babylonian captivity rang out like joyful tidings;[15]

14. St. Theodore was beheaded with a sword in the year 319.

and those of them who languished in bondage in a foreign land, as "in darkness and the shadow of death, bound in affliction" (Ps. 106:10), hastened to the land of their fathers. Taking with them the sacred vessels seized by Nebuchadnezzar at the destruction of Jerusalem (1 Esd. 1:7–8), the returning settlers, under the leadership of the prince Zerubbabel, who was descended from the royal house of David (1 Esd. 1:8, 2:2; 1 Chr. 3:19, 9–17), returned to their homeland. In the seventh month after their return they rebuilt the altar from the heap of ruins (1 Esd. 3:1–6), and then proceeded to restore the destroyed temple. In the second month of the second year the foundation of the new temple was laid according to the ordinance of David, "and all the people shouted with a loud voice, praising the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid" (1 Esd. 3:11); and many of the elders, who had seen the former temple, could not restrain their tears, knowing that, given the poverty of those who had returned, the second temple could by no means be so magnificent; they wept aloud, mingling their sobs with cries of joy (1 Esd. 3:12–13). But the very construction of the temple, despite the generous flow of offerings at first, proceeded extremely slowly. The land was unsettled; robbers roamed everywhere, and it was impossible to conduct regular sowing and harvesting of grain; the heavy burden of the rule of Persian officials (Neh. 9:36–37), frequent droughts and famine (Hag. 1:6, 10–11) exhausted the people. To this was added enmity with the Samaritans.[16] Having their own sanctuary on Mount Gerizim and considering Palestine already their possession, they were extremely hostile toward the Jews, especially after the latter rejected their offer to take part in the building of the

15. He reigned from 559 to 530 B.C. Cyrus's favor toward the Jews is explained by the prophecy of Isaiah (Is. 44:28, 45:1), shown to him by the prophet Daniel, in which the liberation of the Jews from captivity through Cyrus was foretold more than a hundred and fifty years in advance.

16. The Samaritans were a mixed people, formed from the union of settlers who occupied the territory of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel after its destruction by the Assyrians with the remnants of the Israelite people who had been led away into captivity. In a foreign land the settlers continued to honor their former gods; but when the Lord sent prides of lions upon them for this, the Samaritans, in order to avert the calamity, established among themselves the worship of the true God, without at the same time giving up idolatry (4 Kgdms. 17:27–34).

temple; by various slanders before the Persian government the Samaritans succeeded in halting the work for nearly fifteen years.[17]

These obstacles weakened the pious zeal of the Jews for the restoration of the national sanctuary; to lift up the religious spirit of the chosen people, men of especially strong spirit were needed; such men the Lord raised up in the persons of His prophets Haggai and Zechariah, of whom we are now to speak.

The holy prophet Zechariah,[18] the sickle-bearer,[19] was of the tribe of Levi; he was the son of Berechiah and grandson of Addo or Iddo;[20] the latter returned together with Zerubbabel from the Babylonian captivity and in the book of Nehemiah is called the head of a priestly family.[21] Holy Scripture has not preserved detailed and definite information about the life of the prophet Zechariah; it only occasionally lifts the veil to report this or that fragmentary notice about the life of the prophet of God. Thus, it is silent about the time and place of the birth of the prophet Zechariah, beginning its account of his life from the time of his coming forward in the prophetic ministry. He was called by God to the prophetic activity while still of youthful age (Zech. 2:4), in the second month of the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes (Zech. 1:1) — only two months later than the prophet Haggai (Hag. 1:1). By their joint prophetic activity the holy Haggai and Zechariah brought it about that the Jews ceased thinking of their own needs and set to building the temple with zeal. "The prophet Haggai and the prophet Zechariah, son of Addo," Ezra bears witness, "prophesied to the Jews who were in Judea and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel. Then rose Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and began to

17. (1 Esd. 4:1–3) The Jews refused the Samaritans, as men of a double faith.

18. From the Hebrew: the memory of the Lord.

19. So the prophet Zechariah is named by some of the Fathers of the Church, on the basis of a single revelation granted to him, in which he saw a flying scroll, probably bent in the shape of a sickle (Zech. 5:1–2).

20. Zech. 1:1. In the books of Holy Scripture the prophet Zechariah is called the son of Iddo. This is explained either by the custom of the Jews, in genealogies, of naming the better-known ancestors, or perhaps by the fact that, after his father's death, the prophet Zechariah was brought up by his grandfather; the latter opinion belongs to St. Cyril of Alexandria.

21. Neh. 12:16. In the time of the high priest Joiakim, son of the high priest Jeshua (*Zech., ch. 3*), the prophet Zechariah was already himself a priest and the head of a family, probably because of his father's early death (Neh. 12:12–16).

build the house of God in Jerusalem, and with them were the prophets of God, supporting them" (1 Esd. 5:1–2). "And the elders of the Jews built and prospered, according to the prophecy of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, son of Addo" (1 Esd. 6:14).

The ministry of the prophet Zechariah probably continued even after the building of the Temple; in his last discourses, which make up the content of his book from chapter 9 to the end, there are no longer any exhortations to finish the construction of the Temple without negligence, and it may be thought that by the time these discourses were delivered the Temple was already complete.[22] Tradition says that the holy prophet Zechariah lived to a great old age and was buried near Jerusalem, beside the prophet Haggai.

After the prophet Zechariah there remained a precious legacy: a book containing his prophetic visions and discourses. A distinctive feature of the content of the book of the prophet Zechariah is the abundance of messianic prophecies: no other prophet offers such a multitude of details concerning the last days of our Savior's life as the prophet Zechariah does. The book of the prophet Zechariah may be divided by its content into two parts: in the first (from Zech. 1:1–21 to Zech. 6:1–15) are the visions, and in the second (from Zech. 7:1–14 to the end) the discourses. There are eight visions in all; most of them are explained to the prophet by the Angel of God; their purpose is to assure the Jewish people of God's protection. In the *first* vision, of the horsemen who rode through the whole earth and found it at rest, God reveals that the prosperous nations, the oppressors of the Jews, will be struck by His wrath, and that Jerusalem will be restored and the cities of Judah will be exalted (Zech. 1:7–17). What the fate of the Gentiles will be is explained by the *second* vision, of the four smiths who come to cast down the horns, the symbol of the nations that scattered the Jews and destroyed Jerusalem (Zech. 1:18–21). After the crushing of the oppressors of the Jews, who hindered the building of the city and the Temple, Jerusalem will again be inhabited; this is revealed in the

22. The construction of the Temple was completed in the sixth year of the reign of Darius Hystaspis (1 Esd. 6:15). Darius reigned from 521 to 486 B.C.; the year of the Temple's construction therefore falls in 515 B.C.

third vision, of the Angel of the Lord who goes out with a measuring line to measure Jerusalem, since it will spread out because of the multitude of people, and the Lord Himself will be a wall of fire around it (Zech. 2:1–13). The sins of the people will no longer hinder the Lord's dwelling in Zion, because they will be forgiven, as the *fourth* vision shows: the prophet sees the high priest Joshua in soiled garments, a symbol of sinful uncleanness, while Satan accused him; but God justifies him, and the soiled garments are taken from the high priest, the representative of the people, and replaced with clean ones, which foreshadowed the future great work of God's mercy, the removal of the sins of the whole earth in one day through the Branch, the Messiah (Zech. 3:1–10). In the *fifth* vision the prophet is shown a golden lampstand (a symbol of the Church, Rev. 1:13, 20) with seven lamps, filled with oil from two olive trees standing on either side of it; this signified that God Himself watches over the Temple and the people, and the two olive trees, Zerubbabel and Joshua, are the instruments of His providence (Zech. 4:1–14). But the Jewish people would not enjoy the mercies of God, of which the preceding five visions speak, for long: they would again fall into corruption and again bear punishment; this thought is unfolded in the *sixth* vision, of the scroll with the curse upon thieves and perjurers (Zech. 5:1–4), and in the *seventh* vision, of the ephah (a measure of liquid) with a woman sitting in it, an image of impiety, which two others carry away to Shinar, or Babylon (Zech. 5:5–10).

At the time contemplated by the prophet, as the fifth and sixth visions show, the corruption of the chosen people will reach its height; then the curse will fly over all Judea and strike the wicked, until the measure of the people's iniquities is filled and the final punishment comes upon them; the wicked woman is the Jewish people, and the ephah is the measure of iniquities that called down the curse. Nor will the Gentiles remain unpunished, as the last, *seventh* vision of the four chariots with horses of varying colors harnessed to them shows, a symbol of the Angels of the Lord who will go round the whole earth to judge the enemies of God. After the destruction of the pagan world the kingdom of the Messiah will come, which the prophet depicts by the following symbolic action: he places on the head of the high priest Joshua

two crowns of gold and silver, a symbol of the priestly and royal dignity of the coming Messiah, together with the prediction that the Branch (the Messiah) will come and build the Temple and will be high priest; when this comes to pass, even distant nations will come to build the Temple of the God of Israel (Zech. 6:1–15).

The second part (from Zech. 7:1–14 to the end) contains the discourses of the prophet Zechariah. In his first discourse, in response to the question of his contemporaries whether the fasts established in memory of the sad events of the captivity should be observed, the prophet teaches that fasting must be joined with deeds of righteousness and love for one's neighbor; then the fasts will be turned into days of rejoicing, and the blessing of God and the joy of salvation, which is to embrace the Gentiles as well, will rest upon Israel (Zech. 7:1–14, 8:1–23). In the second discourse the prophet foretells the ruin of the nations hostile to Israel; Jerusalem will be under the special protection of God, and no oppressor will pass through it any more. Then the prophet invites the Jewish people to rejoice, for there comes to them a righteous and meek King; He will establish righteousness on the earth and save His people, and will destroy the haughtiness and self-confidence of men. He will reveal His kingdom by entering His capital riding on an ass and a young colt, meek animals serving as a symbol of peace.[23] The kingdom of the Messiah, the kingdom of peace, will spread from Judea over the whole earth; the King will draw men into it not by force but by the bloody sacrifice which He will offer for all people to reconcile them with God. Defeat is foretold for the Hellenes, the enemies of the people of God, and blessing of fruitfulness and childbearing for the Jews. After depicting the bright destiny awaiting Israel in the near future, the prophet turns to depicting the rejection of the Jewish people that is to follow: the prophet addresses Lebanon with a request to open its gates to the enemy who will lay waste all Judea. The cause of such calamity the prophet Zechariah explains by a symbolic history of two staves of the Heavenly Shepherd. On one of them was the inscription

23. The holy Evangelists, recounting the solemn entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, cite this passage from the book of the prophet Zechariah, thereby applying it to Christ the Savior (Mt. 21:4–6; Jn. 12:14–16).

favor, and on the other *bonds*; when the sheep, despite the Shepherd's care for them, did not amend, He broke the staff inscribed *favor*, which signified the end of the covenant between God and His people, and then demanded for Himself payment for His pastoral labors, but the Jews valued His activity at 30 pieces of silver; these pieces of silver the Shepherd cast to the potter in the house of the Lord.[24] After this the Shepherd broke the other staff, *bonds*, as a sign that the brotherhood between Judah and Israel was dissolved. When the good Shepherd was rejected, the flock fell into the hands of hirelings (Zech. 9:1–17, 10:1–12, 11:1–17).

In the last discourse the prophet announces that all the nations of the world will rise against Jerusalem, but the Lord Himself will defend it and destroy the assailants; upon the Jewish people the Lord will pour out a spirit of grace and supplication, and the Jews will look on Him whom they pierced and will mourn for Him as for an only son.[25] Then a fountain will be opened to the house of David, cleansing them from their sins, and all memory of idols and false prophets will be destroyed; the Shepherd will be struck, and the sheep will be scattered.[26] The Lord creates a gracious kingdom, small in number, forming only a third part of those living on the earth, but tested and holy. At last the pagan nations will once more surround Jerusalem, but the Lord will rise up to defend it and to defeat them, and then there will be a single day known only to the Lord: there will be no light, the luminaries will withdraw, there will be neither day nor night; only toward evening will light appear.[27] From Jerusalem living waters will flow; it will become the cen-

24. St. Evangelist Matthew, relating the decision of the Sanhedrin to purchase with the pieces of silver cast aside by Judas a potter's field for the burial of strangers, sees in this the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah, but names it a prophecy of Jeremiah, probably because the scroll containing the prophetic books, which lay before the holy Evangelist, was headed with the name of the prophet Jeremiah.

25. St. Evangelist John, relating the fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus Christ, cites the prophecy itself word for word (Jn. 19:34–37).

26. The Lord Himself applies this prophecy to Himself when, after the Last Supper, on the way to Gethsemane, He foretells to the Apostles that they will soon forsake Him (Mt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27).

27. Here one can see a prophecy of the darkening of the sun during the crucifixion of Christ (Lk. 23:44–45).

ter of a new kingdom in which only the righteous will dwell, nothing unclean being in it any more. (Zech. 12:1–14, 13:1–19, 14:1–21).[28]

* * *



28. Some passages from the book of the prophet Zechariah are read at Vespers as Paroimiai. Thus, Zech. 9:9–14 is read on Palm Sunday; Zech. 11:10–13 on Great Friday; Zech. 8:7–17, 19–23 on the Friday of the Cheese-Week; Zech. 14:4, 8–11 (which speaks of the appearance of the Lord on the Mount of Olives) on the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord, which took place on that mount.

THE NINTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 9

9 февраля

New Calendar February 9 · Old Calendar February 22 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Nicephorus

Страдание святого мученика Никифора

In great Antioch of Syria there lived a certain presbyter named Sapricius, and a simple citizen named Nicephorus. They bore such love for one another and were such close friends that some considered them brothers by birth.

After many years of such friendship, the devil, who hates all that is good, envied them and sowed in them such tares of enmity that they did not even wish to meet one another on the road: so greatly did they hate one another. And to the same extent that love and friendship had formerly reigned between them, so afterward, through the working of Satan, hatred and enmity toward one another boiled up within them.

Having lived in such hatred and enmity toward one another for quite a long time, Nicephorus came to his senses and understood that the devil was sowing this enmity. He began asking his friends and neighbors to go to the presbyter Sapricius and entreat him to forgive him, who repented, and to love him with his former love; but the presbyter would not give up his enmity toward him.

Then Nicephorus again sent other friends with the same request, but the presbyter would not listen to them either. He also rejected those sent a third time and did not heed their entreaties; thus he was not moved to mercy, that he might forgive his brother, who humbly sought forgiveness. On the contrary, hardening his heart, he remained implacable, forgetting the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said: “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Lk. 6:37); and again: “Therefore if

thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. ... For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Mt. 5:23–24; Mt. 6:14).

Then Nicephorus, seeing that the presbyter Sapricius would not accept intercession on his behalf, went to him himself and, falling at his feet, said to him:

"Forgive me, father; for the Lord's sake, forgive me."

But Sapricius did not even look at him; he was a merciless man and had neither love nor fear of the Lord. Though he was a Christian and a presbyter, he ought to have forgiven his brother even without being asked. Receiving no forgiveness, Nicephorus went away from him, shamed and rejected.

At that time—in the reign of Valerian and Gallienus[1]—Sapricius, too, was seized as a Christian and brought before the governor for torture.

The governor asked:

"What is your name?"

"I am called Sapricius," he replied.

"What is your lineage?" the governor asked.

"I am a Christian," Sapricius replied.

"Are you a cleric?" the governor asked again.

"I am a presbyter," Sapricius replied. Then the governor said:

"Our emperors, rulers of this land and of all the Roman territories, Valerian and Gallienus, have commanded that those who call themselves Christians offer sacrifice to the immortal gods; and whoever, despising it, rejects the imperial command, let him know that, after every kind of torment, he will be condemned to a cruel death."

After these words, Sapricius, standing before the governor, said:

"O governor! We Christians have a King, Christ God, for He alone is the True God and Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; but all the pagan gods are demons, and may they be destroyed

1. Valerian reigned from 253 to 259; his son Gallienus reigned from 260 to 268. Even during his father's lifetime he had been made Caesar and co-ruler by him.

from the face of all the earth. Being the works of human hands, they can help no one."

Then the enraged governor ordered him stretched upon the wheel and mercilessly tortured. Amid these torments Sapricius said to the governor:

"You have power over my body, but you have no power over my soul; over it has power only Jesus Christ, Who created it."

After this, Sapricius courageously endured all the torments inflicted upon him.

Seeing that he remained steadfast, the cruel judge pronounced this sentence of death upon him:

"We command that the presbyter Sapricius, who has despised the imperial command and refused to offer sacrifice to the immortal gods and to abandon the Christian delusion, be beheaded with the sword."

As Sapricius was going to his execution, hoping to receive the heavenly crown of martyrdom, the blessed Nicephorus heard of it and hastened to meet him; falling at his feet, he said:

"Martyr of Christ, forgive me; I have sinned against you!"

But Sapricius made no reply, for his heart was still possessed by demonic malice.

As they went farther on the road to the place of execution, St. Nicephorus again fell at Sapricius's feet, saying:

"Martyr of Christ, forgive me for whatever I have sinned against you as a man. Behold, a crown is given you from heaven by Christ, because you have not denied Him, but have confessed His holy name before many."

But Sapricius, blinded by hatred and hard of heart toward forgiveness, remained implacable, showing no intention whatever of forgiving him. He did not even speak a word to his brother, who was entreating him, so that even the executioners themselves marveled at Sapricius's hardness and said to Nicephorus:

"We have never seen such a foolish man as you: here he is already going to his death, and you entreat him all the more earnestly. Can he do you any harm after death? And why do you need to make peace with one who is about to die?"

To this St. Nicephorus answered them:

"You do not know what I ask of Christ's confessor, but God knows."

When they came to the place where Sapricius was to be beheaded with the sword, St. Nicephorus again addressed him:

"I entreat you, martyr of Christ," he said, "forgive me if I have sinned against you in anything as a man. It is written: 'Ask, and it shall be given you' (Mt. 7:7). Behold, I entreat you; grant me forgiveness."

But his hard-hearted friend Sapricius was not moved by such entreaties. He did not remember the words of the Lord: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mt. 22:37, 39); but, closing the ears of his heart and body, he remained like a deaf asp, rejecting the entreaty of the one who adjured him. Thus Sapricius did not heed what was said in the Gospel: that whoever forgives his neighbor will himself be forgiven; nor did he listen to the Lord's words: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mt. 7:2). Wherefore the Lord, the righteous Judge, by His just judgment, withdrew His grace from Sapricius; and at once he fell away from the Lord and lost the crown of martyrdom he had woven for himself.

When the executioners said to Sapricius, "Bend your knees, that we may cut off your head," he said to them:

"Why do you wish to behead me?"

The soldiers answered him:

"Because you refused to offer sacrifice to the gods and disobeyed the imperial command for the sake of a certain man called Christ."

Hearing this, wretched Sapricius said to them:

"Do not kill me, for I will do what the emperors command: I will worship the gods and offer sacrifice to them."

Thus hatred blinded Sapricius's heart! It tore him away from the grace of God, and he, who had earlier been tormented and had not denied Christ, now, instead of receiving the crown of glory that was already his through martyrdom, renounced eternal life and became an apostate.

Hearing these senseless words of Sapricius, Nicephorus, with tears in his eyes, began to entreat him:

"Do not do this, beloved brother! Do not deny our Lord Jesus Christ! Do not lose the heavenly crown you have woven for yourself amid your sufferings! Behold, the Lord Christ stands at the doors, and He will appear to you again and grant you eternal life in return for this temporal death, which you have come here to undergo."

But Sapricius did not heed his entreaties: he hastened toward eternal death, losing with it the endless life he was to receive through a single stroke of the sword.

But St. Nicephorus, seeing that Sapricius had wholly fallen away from the holy faith and torn himself away from Christ, the True God, began to cry aloud to the executioners:

"I am a Christian and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom Sapricius has denied; therefore behead me in his stead."

The soldiers, not daring to put him to death without the governor's command, marveled greatly that he was voluntarily giving himself up to death, crying out freely:

"I am a Christian, and I will not offer sacrifice to your gods!"

Then one of the executioners went to the governor and reported that Sapricius had promised to offer sacrifice to the gods, but that there was someone, he added, who wished to die for the one called Christ, and was therefore crying aloud:

"I am a Christian; I will not offer sacrifice to your gods, and I will not obey the imperial commands!"

Hearing this, the governor ordered Sapricius released and Nicephorus beheaded in his stead. Thus the holy martyr was put to death for Christ on the ninth day of the month of February[2], and, rejoicing, departed to Christ the Lord, that he might receive from His right hand the crown of victory and stand before Him in the company of the holy martyrs, who glorify the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, God Who is One in Trinity; to Him be honor and worship, glory and dominion unto the ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

2. St. Nicephorus the Martyr suffered and died about the year 257.

Bound by the bond of love, O Nicephorus, thou didst visibly destroy the malice of hatred, and wast beheaded with the sword; O divine martyr of the incarnate Savior, pray to Him for us who sing thy glorious memory.

Another Kontakion, Tone 3:

Fixing thy gaze, O glorious one, upon the love of the Lord, and taking His glorious Cross upon thy shoulder, thou didst put the devil's schemes to shame; thou didst suffer even unto death, and wast shown to be a victor for the truth, a warrior and an initiate of the grace of God.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyrs Marcellus, Bishop of Sicily, and Philagrius, Bishop of Cyprus

Память святых священномучеников Маркелла, епископа Сицилийского, Филагрия, епископа Кипрского

The Holy Hieromartyrs Marcellus and Philagrius were disciples of the holy Apostle Peter. During the earthly life of Christ, St. Marcellus lived in the city of Antioch. Hearing of the wonders of the Lord, he came from Antioch to Jerusalem to see Him, and it was then that he became acquainted with the Apostle Peter. After the Resurrection of Christ, St. Marcellus was ordained bishop of Sicily by the Apostle, and there he died a martyr's death, after he had converted a multitude of pagans to Christ. St. Philagrius, meanwhile, was bishop on the island of Cyprus, zealously preached faith in Christ, and, having endured for this many tortures, departed to the Lord.

THE TENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 10

10 февраля

New Calendar February 10 · Old Calendar February 23 (civil dates)

Martyrdom of the Hieromartyr Haralampius, Bishop of Magnesia, and with him the Martyrs Porphyrius and Baptus, and Three Women Martyrs

Страдание святого священномученика Харалампия, епископа Магнезийского, и с ним мучеников Порфирия и Ваптоса и трех мучениц жен

In the reign of the impious Roman emperor Severus,[1] as the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ spread, the service of demons began to decline and idolatry itself was coming to an end. At this time there lived in the city of Magnesia[2] the holy bishop Haralampius. He instructed people on the path of salvation and taught them the word of God; he said: "My King, Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit sent the apostles and prophets, that people, instructed by their holy preaching, might walk unswervingly along the way of truth. But your emperor Severus, with cruel torments, compels people to offer sacrifices to lifeless idols, and by this very act delivers their souls to eternal death. Jesus Christ, my King, through the prophets and apostles has delivered to us the words of heavenly life; by this preaching our enemy is driven out, the serpent is trampled underfoot, unbelief is transformed into faith, and the teaching of the demons perishes, and the whole host of the enemy falls in its raging fall. Therefore it is better to believe the words that guide us to the path of eternal life than to stand for a cause that brings eternal ruin."

1. The Roman emperor Septimius Severus reigned from 193 to 211 A.D.
2. Magnesia – a city in Thessaly, a northeastern region of Ancient Greece.

After such words, the holy bishop was seized by the unbelievers and brought for torture and judgment before the governor Lucian and the military commander Lucius.

When the hieromartyr Haralampius repeated the same things before them, the governor said to him:

"You speak senseless words out of the abundance of your heart, not distinguishing good from evil. But, honorable elder, do not think that you will not be tortured for these words. Therefore, heeding our counsel, conduct yourself as becomes an elder, and, having reflected well, approach the gods with a sacrifice, lest we inflict on you such torments as you cannot even imagine."

Saint Haralampius answered:

"I am already old and am finishing this temporal life; I will by no means despise the heavenly blessings that await me."

Then the judges, becoming enraged, began to prepare everything for cruel torments, and they said to him:

"Offer a sacrifice to the gods, wicked man!" Saint Haralampius answered:

"I will not offer a sacrifice to demons. For you see that the demons you worship tremble and shudder before the sign of the Cross of Christ."

After this the judges commanded that Haralampius be stripped of his sacred vestments, and they began to torment this angel-like man while he was naked. Hanging the hieromartyr up, two of the servants began to tear his body with iron claws, and they continued until they had stripped off all the skin from his head to his feet.

But Saint Haralampius, all torn, said to those who tormented him: "I thank you, brethren, that, having scraped my mortal body, you have renewed my spirit, which strives to pass into the new, eternal life."

After these words of the saint, both soldiers who were tormenting him were seized with terror, and they said to the judges: "The dishonor you inflict on this man turns to honor for him, and the torments to consolation. Is he not Christ himself? Having taken the likeness of an elder, has he not come to Asia, that he might turn all its inhabitants to

himself? His body, torn by iron claws, becomes harder than iron, so that the claws are driven into it, while it itself remains unharmed."

When the soldiers had said this, the governor, gnashing his teeth, cried out: "O wicked slaves, and the most lazy in carrying out orders! Not doing what you were commanded, you even defend a man condemned to torment!"

But the soldiers who had tormented Saint Haralampius were at last utterly exhausted, and they began to confess openly and glorify the power of Christ, which strengthened the sufferer; and therefore both were at once beheaded for the name of the Lord. Their names were Porphyrius and Baptus.

Also three women who had been watching the martyr's suffering believed in Christ here. They began to glorify His most holy and almighty name, and for this they were tortured.

After this the commander Lucius, rising from his place and taking the instrument of the executioners, himself began to torment Saint Haralampius, cruelly tearing his whole body. And at once his hands were paralyzed from the elbows, as if cut off by a sword, and, clinging to the martyr's body, hung upon him.

Lucius, without hands, fell to the ground and began to cry out: "This man is a sorcerer! Help me, governor!"

The governor, approaching and seeing his commander's hands hanging on the body of the martyr, spat in the face of Saint Haralampius, and at that very moment the governor's head turned and his face was now looking backward.

Then the people of Magnesia, seized with great fear, began to beseech the holy martyr, saying: "Put aside your anger and turn away God's vengeance! For it is commanded you that you should not render evil for evil."

Saint Haralampius said in answer: "As the Lord God lives, there is no malice in my heart, nor flattery on my tongue! You yourselves see how Christ God has punished these lawless rulers; He will also grant us eternal life, and will destroy the impious."

Then all cried to the Lord: "Lord, do not destroy us who have sinned against Thee! Behold, Thou hast now, O God, punished our

princes, that Thou mightest bring us to the light and make us worthy of eternal life."

And a great multitude of people believed in Christ here.

After this Lucius said: "Man of God, Angel of the Lord, have mercy on me, who am suffering grievously; these my hands weigh you down, hanging on your body: restore them to their place, and then you too will be freed from the burden, and I shall be healed of my ailment; and if you do this, I will believe in your God."

Then the saint, pouring out his prayer before the Lord, cried: "Varukh, Manuid, Maron-Afa, Ravvuni, that is, Blessed, God with us, Lord our God, who didst take upon Thyself our flesh, my Teacher, look upon the humility of those in chains; release from the bonds of punishment these my judges, and heal me, Thy confessor, who am wholly covered with wounds!"

And behold, a voice was heard from heaven, saying: "Haralampius, earthly lamp that illumines even heaven, servant of the Angels, companion of the prophets, friend of the apostles, fellow-warrior of the martyrs, and worthy of My converse, I have heard your prayers and received the words of your lips; let this your supplication be for the healing of these sick men."

And at once Lucius and the governor Lucian were healed of their ailments.

Then Lucius, falling at the feet of the holy martyr, began to ask for baptism, which he soon received; and the governor ceased the persecution of the Christians, saying: "Until I have informed the emperor of all this."

After this many came to the saint, and having confessed their sins, were baptized, and the sick with various ailments received healing.

The governor Lucian, however, went to the emperor Severus, who was then in Antioch of Pisidia,[3] and told him everything that had happened in Magnesia: "A certain man from the sect of the Galileans has come to us," he said; "he began to turn everyone away from the gods, and he gave healing to the sick; the commander Lucius, having

3. Antioch of Pisidia – in the western part of Asia Minor, on the border with Phrygia.

been healed, believed in Christ, and almost all of Magnesia has accepted his faith; I too, having also recovered, have come here to report all this to your imperial majesty."

Hearing this, Severus, filled with anger, cried out: "O eternal gods, dishonored by impious men! Why has the teaching of these deceitful people spread so widely over the earth!"

And at once he sent three hundred inhumane and cruel soldiers to seize Saint Haralampius. He commanded them first to subject the saint to torments, and then to bring him from Magnesia to Antioch.

The soldiers, returning to the emperor, took the martyr of Christ with them; they drove a sharp iron nail into his body, and they braided a rope into his beard, which was rather long, and, winding it around his neck, dragged the saint along on the way to the emperor.

And when they had gone fifteen stadia[4] from Magnesia, the horse walking on the right side turned to the soldiers and clearly said in a human voice: "O three hundred soldiers, thrice-accursed servants of the devil! Do you not see Christ God and the Holy Spirit who are with this man? Why do you do all this to him? O hard-hearted ones! Free him whom you cannot bind, that you yourselves may be freed from your bonds."

The soldiers were greatly terrified by such human speech spoken by a horse; nevertheless, fulfilling the emperor's command, they continued to drag the holy martyr toward Antioch.

At this time the devil, transformed into an elder, appeared before the emperor Severus and said to him: "Woe is me, O emperor! I am the lord of the Scythians, but into my land there came a certain man named Haralampius, a great magician, and he turned all my army away from me, and all the people have joined my legions; and so I, abandoned by all, have come to forewarn you, lest something similar happen to you as well."

No sooner had the devil spoken this than Saint Haralampius, dragged by the soldiers, was brought before the emperor. The emperor, seeing him, at once drove three sharp stakes into his chest, and then he

4. Approximately 2 2/3 versts by our reckoning.

commanded that wood be brought, that it be lit, and that the martyr be burned with fire little by little, so that he would not die at once but would endure the torments longer.

While Saint Haralampius was tortured in this way for a long time, a certain woman standing there at that time, wishing to please the emperor, took hot embers and poured them over the head, face and beard of the martyr, saying: "Die, old man, die; it is better for you to die than to lead us astray with your deceitful teaching."

This woman was the emperor's concubine. Her sister said to her: "Or do you, wretched woman, not fear God? In carrying out the emperor's will you provoke God's wrath. Severus will not help you when Christ is angry with you."

And turning to the martyr, she said: "Man of God, your old age is honorable, and God is with you; I too desire to believe in Him and be freed from my sins."

After this, when the fire had gone out and the servants who were tormenting the saint had grown weary, yet the martyr himself remained unharmed and in perfect health, the emperor said: "Stop tormenting this man. Let him answer my questions."

And when the holy martyr had been brought closer to the emperor, Severus said to him:

– Haralampius, when I was conversing early in the morning with the Scythian king, I grew angry and reviled you. But having endured this torment, you will remain in honor with us, if only you will answer the questions I put to you. How many years do you have?

St. Haralampius answered:

– I have spent a long time in this vain life: I have lived one hundred and thirteen years.

– Then how is it, – said Severus, – that having lived so many years you have not until now come to know the immortal gods? The holy martyr answered:

– Having lived many years, O emperor, I have also acquired great knowledge: having come to know Christ, the One True God, I have believed in Him.

After this the emperor asked him whether he had a wife or not.

The saint answered:

– I have won for myself the Heavenly Virgin, that is, the kingdom of my Christ; on earth I had no wife. Then the emperor asked him:

– Do you know how to raise the dead?

– This is not in human power, – the saint answered, – but in the power of Christ.

Then the emperor ordered that a man be brought who had for a long time been possessed by an evil spirit; for thirty-five years the devil had tormented this man: wishing to destroy him, the spirit of malice drove the unfortunate man now through deserts and mountains, now cast him into thickets, marshes and chasms of the earth.

When this man was brought close to the saint, then, perceiving the fragrance coming from the saint, he at once cried out: “I beseech you, servant of God, do not torment me before the time! But command me by a word to come out, and if you wish, I will tell you how I entered this man.”

The saint agreed, and the devil related the following: "This man wished to rob his neighbor, but he said to himself: If I do not first kill the heir, I shall not be able to seize his wealth; and having killed the neighbor, he was already about to seize his inheritance. Seeing him in such a state, I entered into him, and now I have dwelt in him for thirty-five years."

Then St. Haralampius said to the devil: "Come out of this man and do him no further harm."

And at once the devil left him, and the demoniac became well.

After this the emperor exclaimed:

– Truly great is the God of the Christians!

Three days later a certain young man died; the emperor, having ordered the corpse to be brought to him, said to St. Haralampius:

– Pray to your God, that this dead man may rise.

The saint, having prayed, raised the dead man, and many people believed in Christ at this; the emperor himself marveled, seeing such wonders.

At this time there was with the emperor a certain eparch named Crispus; in counsel with Severus he said to him: “Wipe this man from

the face of the earth: he is a sorcerer, and he works his wonders by enchantment."

The emperor, believing the words of Crispus and changing his former good feeling toward the martyr, said to him:

– Haralampius, offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will escape the hand of the executioner.

The saint answered:

– Torments bring me great benefit: as my body is covered with wounds, so does my spirit rejoice within me.

Then the emperor, enraged, commanded that stones be thrown into the saint's mouth, and those who struck him said: "Submit to the emperor, that you may not die undeservedly."

At last the emperor said to the soldiers: "Take burning torches and set fire to his beard and scorch his face."

And so, when the soldiers brought the torches to the saint's beard, a great tongue of fire came out of it and, rushing upon the people standing around, scorched up to seventy wicked men.

Seeing this, Severus, filled with fury, said: "The Scythian king spoke truly to me, that Haralampius is a sorcerer and that he also wishes to turn my army away from me."

And then, turning to his nobles, he asked them:

– Will you not tell me who this Christ is, in whom Haralampius believes?

– Christ is the Son of Mary, – Crispus answered him, – She bore Him of adultery.

Then a certain man named Aristarchus said to Crispus:

– Do not speak foolishly; whence did you hear this mystery, and why do you know who Mary and Christ were?

To this Crispus said with anger:

– Are you wiser than I?

– Yes, I know more than you, – Aristarchus answered. Then Emperor Severus cried out:

– O wicked man! Do you dare to contradict me?

Aristarchus answered to this:

– No, O emperor, I do not wish to contradict either you or anyone else; I am only defending Christ.

After this the emperor, burning with rage, took a bow, drew it, and shooting an arrow upward, said: "Christ, if thou dwellest in heaven, come down to us and set up Thy tents on earth; behold, I am preparing battle against Thee and have a great army to rise against Thee; so come down to earth and stand against me. But if Thou wilt not come down, I will overthrow the heavens, quench the sun, and seize Thee myself with my own hands."

At the time when the emperor so boldly and shamelessly spoke such blasphemies against the Lord Christ, the earth shook, and great fear fell upon all. The Lord, angered, shook the earth like a leaf; and from above terrible peals of thunder were heard, and lightnings were seen, so that all standing there were as if dead with fear. The emperor, and with him the eparch Crispus, bound by some invisible bonds, were lifted up from the earth and seemed to hang in the air.

Then the emperor called out to the martyr: “Haralampius, all this has happened because of my sins, and I justly bear this torment; but pray to your God, that I may be delivered from this torment – and I will glorify His name and yours throughout the whole city, for I am seized by great terror from your Christ.”

At this time the emperor’s daughter, named Galina, approached them and said to Severus: “My father, no one can resist God: for to Christians He is hope, and to the impious He is destruction. Believe in Him, and He will preserve you and free you from those invisible bonds by which He now binds you: He who bound you is the eternal and almighty God.”

Falling before the holy martyr, the blessed Galina said: “I beseech you, servant of God, pray to the Lord Christ, and by your prayer free my father from these invisible bonds.”

And no sooner had St. Haralampius prayed than this terrible chastisement of God ceased, and the emperor, freed together with the eparch from punishment, stood upon the earth and said: “Lord of heaven and Creator of earth, have mercy on me! Thou who dwellest in heaven, look graciously upon the earth!”

After this the emperor, together with the eparch and all his nobles, went to his palace and did not come out from there for three days, all the while pondering the wrath of God and the terrible chastisement of the Lord that had just occurred.

At this time the emperor's daughter Galina had a vision, which she related to St. Haralampius: "It seemed to me," she said, "that I was standing in a place richly watered; and suddenly I saw a large enclosed garden, in which trees of every kind of fragrance had been planted; in the midst of them grew a beautiful vineyard, and in this vineyard stood a tall cedar, at whose roots a spring flowed. Near this place stood a dread guardian, who would not allow anyone to enter this garden. Nearby I saw my father and the eparch Crispus, whom the guardian of this garden with his fiery sword drove away from this place. At this time I was seized with great fear and only prayed that this guardian would allow me to remain there. He, at that time, said to me: 'Come here, and I will carry you with honor into this garden on my shoulders (shoulders.—*Ed.*).' And when I was in it, beneath the cedar, by the spring, I heard someone say: 'This place is given to you and to those like you.' Such was the vision I had, and now I beseech you," Galina concluded, "tell me, what does it mean?"

Then St. Haralampius said to her: "Your dream signifies the following: the abundance of water is the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the enclosed garden is Paradise. The vineyard signifies the repose in Paradise of the righteous, and the fragrant trees are the choirs of the holy Angels. The tall cedar signifies the glory of Christ's Cross, and the spring – eternal life, given to the human race through the Cross. And the guardian who took you upon his shoulders is the Lord Christ, Who, having left the ninety-nine sheep in the mountains, went to seek the lost sheep, and having found it, took it upon His shoulders (Lk. 15:4–5). Your father, however, together with the eparch, will be cast out from the Paradise of God, for they – now thankful to God – will soon again become disobedient to Him, falling into the devil's snares."

Indeed, soon after the terrible chastisement of God, King Severus again fell into error and, forsaking God, whose mighty hand he had

only just come to know, again turned to idols. Calling the martyr to him, he said:

– Charalampius, heed my counsel, bow down to the gods, and you will be in honor with us.

The saint answered:

– It cannot come to pass that a servant of God should be seduced by the words of a tormentor; truly, O king, your words are senseless and absurd.

Then, enraged, Severus said:

– O insane man, dost thou consider my words senseless!

And he ordered that a fishing hook be fastened to his lips and that he be led thus through the whole city.

The daughter of the king approached her father and said: "Father, what are you doing? Why do you torment this righteous man? Why do you entangle yourself in the devil's nets and, forsaking the good, choose evil? Why, rejecting life, do you prefer death? Why do you rise up in the fury of a tormentor against this servant of Christ? Heed me, Father, and as you formerly strove toward evil, so now be zealous for all that is good; for he who sows evil shall also reap evil, but he who sows with blessing shall reap good. Remember the punishment of God that was upon you, when you were bound by invisible chains and, hanging in the air, confessed the true God; but now, freed from your bonds, you renounce Him. Thus many rulers, under the chastisement of the Lord, come to know His power, but once freed from the punishment they forget their Lord again."

Having heard this, King Severus was not in the least corrected, but, growing still more enraged, said:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, Galina!"

"Whatever you wish, Father, I will do it all," she answered him.

Then the king, rejoicing, said:

"Let Charalampius be released, since my daughter has consented to offer sacrifice to the gods."

When the holy martyr was brought before the king, Severus said to him: "Our daughter Galina has fallen away from your faith into ours,

and now she wishes to offer sacrifice to the gods. Go in with her, Charalampius, into the temple of our gods, and do what we desire of you."

Since Charalampius made no answer to this, the king thought that he had consented.

Meanwhile Galina went to the temple of Zeus and Apollo and said to the priests there: "In penitence I have come to beseech the gods whom I offended by believing in Christ."

The priests, hearing this, cried out:

"Great Zeus! Almighty Apollo! Creator of heaven and king over all rulers, look upon Galina and, for the sake of King Severus, have mercy on her!"

The blessed Galina, entering the idol-temple, called the priests to her and asked them:

"Which idol shall I first overthrow: the idol of Zeus, or Hercules and Apollo?"

"No, Galina," answered the priests, "do not contemplate such evil, and do not mock our saviors, lest, provoked, they overturn heaven and crush the whole earth."

Then Galina, taking the idol of Zeus, said to it:

"If you are a god, how is it that until now you could not see that I have come to destroy you?"

Having said this, Galina struck the idol violently against the ground, and it broke into three pieces. Then she seized the idol of Apollo and likewise broke it, saying:

"Fall to the ground, you too, Satan, bent old man, for you are dust!"

And she broke all the idols. Then the priests, coming to King Severus, said to him:

"O king, our hope is lost. Now the sun will be extinguished and the world will perish, for our gods are dead." The king, astonished, asked:

"What do these words of yours mean?"

"Galina, your daughter, has destroyed our gods," they answered.

Then Severus said:

"Go and summon to me tonight fifty smiths. Restore the idols and set them again in their temple, and say that they have risen, as the Galileans say of their Christ, that He rose from the dead."

The priests carried out all this with great care. In the morning, coming to the king's daughter, they said to her:

"Go into the temple and see our risen gods."

"The gods have risen?" asked Galina. "I will go and look at them!" The priests said:

"Truly a great miracle: those who were dishonored and reviled yesterday now shine with still greater honor and glory."

The next morning the blessed Galina said:

"New idols are easier for me to destroy than old ones."

And turning to the idol of Zeus, she added:

"Jupiter, risen from the dead, I command you: go back again to the dead!"

Having said this, Galina again broke all the idols.

Then the priests, filled with rage, a second time informed the king of the destruction of their gods.

Severus, calling his daughter to him, said to her:

"Why have you destroyed our gods?"

Galina answered:

"You call them your gods only because you are deluded by a false teaching: they are nothing more than lifeless things."

At this the king cried out:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, seed of impiety, not my offspring!"

To this the blessed Galina, as though mocking her father, said:

"I have already offered them sacrifice as far as I was able; but if you wish, I can do the same with your remaining gods."

Then the enraged king left his daughter and turned again to torturing the holy martyr Charalampius: he gave him over to be mocked by a widow.

When Charalampius entered the widow's house, he leaned against a pillar standing there, and at once this pillar became a great tree, covering the whole house of this woman with its branches.

Seeing such a miracle, the widow was afraid and said: "Depart from me, Charalampius; I am not worthy to receive such a man. It seems to me that you are either Christ, or an Angel, or a prophet, or an apostle.

I beg you, go away from me; I am not worthy to receive you under my roof."

To this the holy martyr answered her: "Take courage, daughter, for you have found grace with the Lord. Only believe that He is 'great, the Lord,' and merciful, 'and greatly to be praised' (Ps. 47:2; 95:4)."

On the next day, in the morning, the neighbors, seeing the tall and leafy tree whose shade covered the widow's house, said to one another:

"What is this wonder?"

Some answered:

"It is because St. Charalampius is there; this is why the pillar has become a tall tree."

Entering the house, the neighbors found the saint sitting and teaching the widow; he was saying to her:

"Blessed are you, that you have believed in Christ, blessed, for your sins are forgiven you, for the Lord receives the penitent."

And the people who had come said to him:

"Why do you not tell us whether you are indeed Christ?"

St. Charalampius answered:

"Forgive me, children; I am your servant and the slave of Christ, and I do all this in His name."

Then the widow, with boldness, cried out in a loud voice:

"Rejoice, Charalampius, always shining with the unquenchable light[5]; rejoice, Charalampius, who guidest by grace; rejoice, Charalampius, all-radiant lamp."

While she was saying this, her neighbors who had come, believing in Christ in their hearts, fell at the knees of St. Charalampius, openly confessing Christ, and all received saving baptism.

On the next day the king ordered the saint to be brought to judgment. Those who had believed in Christ, coming to the king earlier, informed him of the miracle that had been wrought: how the pillar had sprouted and become a great tree.

Severus was greatly astonished, but the eparch Crispus said to him: "O king, if you do not command this sorcerer to be slain with the

5. Charalampius, in Greek translation, means "shining with joy."

sword, soon everyone will be seduced by his miracles and, forsaking our gods and us, will follow after him."

Then the king condemned the saint to beheading by the sword. Hearing of this, the martyr Charalampius joyfully sang this psalm of David: "I will sing of mercy and judgment, to Thee, O Lord. I will sing and understand in the blameless way: 'When wilt Thou come to me?'" (Ps. 100:1–2 and to the end of the psalm).

Coming with joy to the place where he was to finish his earthly struggle, St. Charalampius said: "I give thanks to Thee, Lord God, that Thou art so merciful and generous to me. Thou, O Jesus, who didst strike down the enemies, take captive hell, and heal mortal diseases, remember me, O Lord my God, in Thy Kingdom."

As he prayed thus, the heavens opened, and the Lord Himself came down to the martyr with a multitude of holy Angels. A beautiful emerald throne was set up, and the King of glory, seated upon it, said to St. Charalampius:

"Come, Charalampius, who hast suffered so much for My sake; ask of Me whatever thou wilt, and I will give it to thee." The holy martyr answered:

"For me, O Lord, it is already a great mercy that Thou hast granted me to see the awesome glory of Thine; but, Lord, if it pleases Thee, render glory to Thy name: let there be in that locality where my relics will rest and where my memory will be honored, let there be no famine, no pestilence, no pernicious wind that destroys the fruits; but let peace, prosperity, and an abundance of wheat and wine reign in that place. And save, O Lord, the souls of those people; for Thou Thyself knowest that men are flesh and blood, so forgive them their sins and grant them an abundance of earthly fruits, that they, being satisfied and rejoicing in the midst of their labors, may glorify Thee, their God, the Giver of every good. Let the dew that descends from heaven be for them a healing. O Lord my God! Pour out Thy grace upon all!"

After the saint had uttered this prayer, the Lord said:

"Let it be according to your petition, My valiant warrior!"

After this the Lord entered heaven, surrounded by His Angels, and the soul of St. Charalampius followed after Him.

Then the soldiers went and reported to the king the glory with which the martyr had been honored: how the Lord had appeared to him, how he had died without any beheading by the sword, and how they had seen his soul ascending to heaven. Severus was greatly astonished by all this and fell into great fear. The blessed Galina, the king's daughter, asked him for the body of the martyr, and taking it, wrapped it in clean shrouds, anointed it with fragrances and costly myrrh, and, glorifying the Lord, placed it in a golden coffer. The king did not dare to judge and punish his daughter; seeing that the Lord was with her, he left her to live in Christian piety, as she chose.

This invincible and unconquerable Great Martyr Charalampius, who now intercedes for the whole world, suffered in the month of February, on the tenth day[6]; standing at the right hand of the throne of God, he unceasingly prays to the Lord our Jesus Christ for us, to Whom be glory and dominion, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having been adorned with the grace of the priesthood, O glorious one, thou didst brightly adorn the Church with thy divine sufferings, which thou didst bravely endure for Christ, rejoicing, O Charalampius, honorable luminary of the world, who illuminatest the ends of the earth, as one invincible.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Prochorus, Wonderworker of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного Прохора, Печерского чудотворца

The Lord, rich in mercy and compassion, often sends afflictions upon man, that through such chastisement He may lead him to the truth and draw him to good works. And if He permits men to be tormented and to suffer, He is not slow to show mercy, and to grant healing to their wounds, as we see from the Life of this Venerable Prochorus.

6. St. Hieromartyr Charalampius died in 202 A.D.

In the days of the reign of Sviatopolk Izyaslavich,[7] the people of Kiev suffered much violence from this prince, who put to death even the nobles of his household without cause, and seized their property. For this reason the Lord permitted the enemies of Rus' to gain such power at that time: great hordes of Polovtsians[8] rose up against Sviatopolk; moreover, strife broke out between the princes, and there came then in the Russian land a great famine and want. At this time the blessed Prochorus came from Smolensk to the Kiev Caves Monastery to the abbot John,[9] and received from him the monastic tonsure. In the monastery he zealously labored in the virtues and subjected himself to such abstinence that he refused even to eat ordinary bread. He gathered the herb orache, and rubbing it with his hands, made bread from it and fed on that. In the summer he laid up such bread for the whole year, and when summer came again he did the same for the following year, so that he had no need at all of bread; for this reason he received the surname "the Orache-eater." Except for the prosphora he ate nothing; he never ate even vegetables, but only orache, and drank nothing but water. The Lord, seeing the endurance of the saint in such great abstinence, turned the bitterness of the bread prepared from orache into a pleasant sweetness for him, and the servant of God spent all the days of his life not in sorrow and want, but in joy: the blessed Prochorus never grieved, but always labored for the Lord in gladness. He never feared the raids of enemies, for he lived like a bird, having nothing but orache. He could not boast together with the Gospel rich man: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry" (Lk. 12:19); but even for the grass he had gathered for a year he reproached himself, saying, "Prochorus, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (Lk. 12:20). The saint in deed fulfilled this word of the Lord: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father

7. Reigned from 1093 to 1113 A.D.
8. Polovtsians – a wild nomadic people of the Turkic tribe who, from the second half of the eleventh century, came from beyond the Caspian steppes into the southern Russian steppes and made frequent and devastating raids on the southern Russian principalities.
9. Between 1089 and 1108 A.D., the years in which John was abbot of the Caves Monastery.

feedeth them" (Mt. 6:26). Like the birds, the blessed Prochorus easily went to the place where the orache grew, and from there carried it to the monastery on his shoulders, as if on wings. Thus he fed himself, like a heavenly bird, with food not sown, from untilled earth. At this time, because of the constant wars, a great famine began in Rus', so that death threatened the people.

But the Lord, desiring to glorify His servant and to save the people from death, in that year blessed the harvest of orache, and more of it grew than in former years. Then the blessed Prochorus labored still more. Continually gathering this herb, he rubbed its seeds with his hands, and making bread from such flour, distributed it to the poor and to those dying of hunger.

Some, seeing how the saint Prochorus gathered orache, also began to lay in stores of it to sustain themselves during the famine, but because of its bitterness they could not eat such bread. Then all those in need began to come to the blessed Prochorus; the saint refused no one his bread of orache. And to everyone the taste of this bread seemed pleasant, as if it had been mixed with honey. Thus the bread baked from orache by the hands of the blessed Prochorus was taken by the people more willingly than bread baked from wheat. And in all this, what seemed especially wondrous was that this bread appeared pure and sweet to the taste only when it was given by the blessed Prochorus with his blessing; but if anyone took it without the saint's blessing, it appeared black as earth and bitter as wormwood. So one of the brethren took the saint's bread secretly, without his blessing, and began to eat it. But it proved in his hands to be like earth, and so bitter that it could not be eaten. And this happened several times. But this monk was ashamed to confess his sin to the blessed one and to ask him for bread with his blessing. Yet, having long endured great hunger, he could no longer bear it, and seeing before his eyes inevitable death, he came to the abbot John, and recounting to him all that had happened, began to beg his forgiveness. The abbot, not believing it, ordered another brother to take bread secretly from the saint Prochorus, to see whether it was really so. When the bread was brought, what the first brother had said was confirmed: no one could eat it because of its bit-

terness. Keeping this bread for himself, the abbot again sent to the saint to ask for bread with his blessing; "and, departing from him," he said, "take secretly another bread as well." After these loaves had been brought, the bread taken secretly changed before them and became black as earth and bitter as wormwood, like the first bread; but the bread received with the blessing of the saint Prochorus proved pure and sweet as honey. Because of this miracle the blessed Prochorus became renowned everywhere, and by feeding many he rendered them great benefit. At this time Sviatopolk Izyaslavich, Prince of Kiev, entered into strife with David Igorevich, Prince of Volodymyr-Volynsk. He took up the contest with him over the blinding at Trebovl of Prince Vasilko Rostislavich, whom, at the instigation of David Igorevich, Prince Sviatopolk had ordered to be blinded. At the same time Sviatopolk Izyaslavich began a civil strife also with Volodimer Rostislavich, brother of Vasilko, Prince of Peremyshl, and even with Vasilko himself, over the domain of his father Izyaslav, which the Rostislavichi had seized.[10]

Prince Sviatopolk drove David out to the Poles, and, having placed his son Mstislav in David's city of Volodymyr, himself returned from the campaign to Kiev. But he could not overcome Volodimer, and Vasilko sent against them, with the Hungarians, Yaroslav, another of his sons. During this great public disorder and lawless plundering, it was forbidden to allow merchants from Halych and Peremyshl to pass into Kiev, as a result of which almost throughout the whole southern Russian land there was no salt, and a great calamity befell the people.

Seeing this calamity, the blessed Prochorus gathered into his cell a multitude of ashes from all the cells, and, having prayed to the Lord, began to distribute it to all who were in need of salt: by the prayers of the saint, it proved to be pure salt. And the more abundantly he distributed it, the more it multiplied; there was enough of it in abundance not only for the monastery, but the laity also, coming in great numbers to the blessed Prochorus, took it for themselves. For all this the blessed Prochorus took nothing: he distributed his salt to all freely, as much as

10. All this took place in 1099.

each asked, so that often one could see that the marketplace was empty, while the saint's monastery was full of people coming to receive salt.

At this time the devil stirred up great hatred against Prochorus on the part of those people who sold salt in the market and now did not receive the expected profit. They thought that in those days they would acquire great riches from salt, but they were greatly mistaken, for what they at first sold at a high price, afterward no one would buy even for a trifle. Gathering together, all who traded in salt came to Prince Sviatopolk and began to slander the blessed one, saying: "Prochorus, a black-robed monk of the Kiev Caves Monastery, has taken from us great wealth, for he has drawn everyone to himself for the purchase of salt, and we, who pay tribute to thee, cannot sell our salt, and therefore we are ruined."

The prince, having heard them, resolved both to quiet the murmuring among the sellers and to acquire wealth for himself. He decided with his counselors to raise the price of salt, so that, taking it away from Prochorus, he might sell it himself through his servants. The prince said to these rebellious servants: "For your sake I too will rob this monk."

Wishing, as it were, to please the merchants, he harbored in himself only the thought of gain; but out of envy he wished only to do them harm: for envy cannot abide that which is profitable to others.

So Sviatopolk sent to take all the salt from Prochorus. And when it was brought, he went himself to look at it together with those rebels who had slandered the blessed one. And here all saw before their eyes – dust. Then the prince ordered some to taste this salt, but it proved to be dust in taste as well. And all were amazed at this change and were perplexed.

Then the prince, wishing to learn for certain how this whole miracle would end, ordered this dust to be kept for three days. Meanwhile a multitude of people came to the saint Prochorus to get salt from him, but, learning of its plundering, they returned without it, cursing him who had done this.

But the blessed Prochorus said to them: "When this salt has been thrown out by the prince, then go and gather it for yourselves."

Indeed, the prince kept this salt in his possession for three days, and seeing nothing in it but dust, he ordered it thrown away. But after it had been poured out, it again turned into salt. When the citizens learned of this, they began to gather at that place and joyfully collected the salt. When this wondrous miracle took place, the prince, who had done such an injury to the saint, was struck with terror. He could not conceal this miracle, since it had occurred before the whole city, and so he began to inquire what it might mean. Then they told him everything that the Blessed Prochorus had done: not only the salt transformed from dust, but also the loaves of orache with which he had fed so great a multitude of people, and how these loaves became sweet when they were taken from the hands of the Blessed One with his blessing, and how, on the contrary, they seemed bitter when someone took them in secret.

Hearing all this, Prince Sviatopolk was ashamed of his deed; going to the Caves Monastery, he was reconciled with Abbot John. Previously, however, he had held enmity against him for his rebukes of insatiable greed and of the oppression of the people. For this he had even imprisoned John in Turov[11], but, fearing the intercession of the Christ-loving Prince Vladimir Monomakh, he soon returned John with honor to the Caves Monastery.

After this miracle, Sviatopolk came to have great zeal toward the Most Holy Theotokos and toward the Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius of the Caves; and the Blessed Prochorus he greatly honored and extolled, considering him a true servant of God. He gave him his word that he would no longer inflict any violence on anyone, and he confirmed this promise with the following agreement: "If, by the will of God, I die before you, then with your own hands lay me in the tomb, that you may show your lack of resentment toward me; but if you repose before me, then I, taking your coffin upon my shoulders, will my-

11. This was approximately in 1107. The relics of the Venerable Prochorus are now in the Cave of St. Antony.

self carry you into the cave, that I may receive from the Lord forgiveness for my grievous sin against you."

After this agreement, the Blessed Prochorus lived many years, passing his blameless life, full of privations, in a manner pleasing to God; and then he fell sick. The prince, at that time, set out on a campaign against the Polovtsians. Then the Blessed Prochorus sent word to the prince that the hour of his death had drawn near.

"If you wish to fulfill your promise," he announced, "and to receive from God the remission of sins, come to me, and let us grant each other forgiveness, and you shall lay me in the tomb with your own hands. So I await your coming. But if you delay and I die without you, the fault will not be mine, and your struggle will not end for you as it would had you come to me."

Hearing this, Sviatopolk, leaving his army, at once set out for the sick Prochorus. The Blessed One gave the prince much instruction concerning almsgiving, the future judgment, eternal life and endless torments; he granted him forgiveness of sins and his blessing, and took leave of all who stood around the prince; then, lifting his hands to heaven, he committed his spirit into the hands of God. Prince Sviatopolk, together with the black-robed monks, took the body of the Venerable One, carried it into the cave, and with his own hands laid it in the tomb.

After this he set out on campaign and won a complete victory over the Polovtsians; he took captive nearly all the inhabitants of the Polovtsian land and led them into his own country. This victory, granted by God to the Russian land, was won according to the prophecy of its intercessor, the Venerable Prochorus. From that time on, Prince Sviatopolk, when going into battle against his enemies or to the hunt, always stopped at the Caves Monastery for a blessing, and there, in the church built by God, with great zeal and thanksgiving he venerated the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos and before the tombs of the Venerable Theodosius and Prochorus, and only then did he set out on campaign.

And after that the reign of Sviatopolk flowed happily, having received, after many harsh trials, the blessing of God through the prayers of the Blessed Prochorus. The Christ-loving Prince Sviatopolk Izy-

aslavich himself, as a witness, openly confessed before all the miracles and signs of this servant of God.

By the holy prayers of the Venerable Prochorus, Wonderworker of the Caves, may the Lord Christ deliver all of us now also from every calamity and evil circumstance, for to Him, with His Unbeginning Father and the Most Holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, belongs all glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Ennatha, Valentina and Paula

Память святых Еннафы, Валентины и Павлы

The Holy Martyrs Ennatha, Valentina and Paula received a martyr's death from Firmilianus, governor of the Palestinian province. St. Ennatha was from Gaza[12], and St. Valentina from the vicinity of the city of Caesarea[13]. Both were maidens. First, St. Ennatha was brought to trial before Firmilianus. Under interrogation she courageously declared herself a Christian, and for this, by the governor's command, she was first subjected to cruel beatings, and then hung up on a pillar and her body was scraped. After this, St. Valentina was brought before Firmilianus. She was accused of disrespect toward the pagan gods, and the governor commanded her to offer sacrifice to the idols. To this end she was led to a pagan temple standing not far from the court. But when the saint was brought into the temple, instead of offering sacrifice to the idols, she boldly threw a stone onto the altar and turned her back to the fire burning upon it. Then Firmilianus flew into a rage and commanded that she be beaten mercilessly on the ribs; then he condemned her, and with her St. Ennatha, to be beheaded

12. Gaza lies on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; in antiquity it was one of the five most famous Philistine cities and served as the boundary of the Canaanites in the south of Palestine. From the fourth century Gaza was already a Christian city, and in the seventh century it was conquered by the Muslims. At present, of the former famous Gaza only ruins remain, near which is a new city of the same name – one of the rather flourishing cities of Palestine.

13. Caesarea – a large city in Palestine, on the Mediterranean Sea, where the Roman procurators, the representatives of Roman imperial power, resided. At present, on the site of Caesarea there are only ruins, overgrown with wild plants.

by the sword. Last of all, St. Paula was brought to torments. By the governor's order she was subjected to manifold tortures, but, with the assistance of Christ's grace, she endured her sufferings with great fortitude, and the tormentor commanded that her head be cut off with the sword. Before the execution she offered thanksgiving to God, and, bowing to the Christians present at the execution, she bent her head beneath the sword and thus yielded up her spirit to God[14].

* * *



14. They suffered under Maximian II Galerius in 308 A.D.

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 11

11 февраля

New Calendar February 11 · Old Calendar February 24 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste, and of Others Who Suffered with Him

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Власия, епископа Севастийского, и других, пострадавших с ним

In those ancient times, when the impious served idols and many men worshipped the creation and the work of their own hands, the faith of many saints also shone forth, and among them flourished the piety of the holy and glorious Martyr Blaise. This saint, withdrawing from every evil deed, lived his whole life meekly and righteously, pleasing to God and blamelessly. His fellow citizens, the inhabitants of the city of Sebaste, which lay in Cappadocia[1], were pious people, and they desired that Blaise be appointed their bishop, and their desire was fulfilled. The new shepherd tended the flock of Christ with zeal at a time when frequent persecutions were raised against the Church of Christ, and many, having endured sufferings, were deemed worthy of the crown of martyrdom. At that time, in the reign of Diocletian[2], the holy Great Martyr Eustratius also struggled in a good contest, one of the five martyrs together with his companions[3]; he stood for the faith of Christ even unto blood, and for this was cast into prison. In the night the holy Blaise visited him there, having bribed the prison guards with a large sum of gold. Blaise extolled the Martyr of Christ, who bore his sufferings so manfully. Eustratius gave Blaise his testament, composed

1. Cappadocia is a large region in the eastern half of Asia Minor. Sebaste was a city of Cappadocia on the border with Lesser Armenia, in the north-eastern part of the region.
2. He reigned from 284 to 305.
3. The Church commemorates them on 3 December.

before his death, making provisions in it concerning his body and his property, as is related in his Life. Saint Blaise hid himself from the hands of the tormentors, as many other saints also did at that time, not giving himself up to torments without a special dispensation of God; few Christians then lived in the city, and even these were secret worshippers of Christ; most, from fear of torments, fled into deserts, mountains and caves; and some, unable to endure the tortures, worshipped idols for a time. So too the holy Blaise, not only in the reign of Diocletian but also in the reign of Licinius[4] (under this emperor he suffered), hid himself from the fierce persecutions on a desert mountain called Argeus[5]; there he dwelt in a cave and struggled in silence and fasting, offering up unceasing prayers to God. Wild beasts came to him, and if they found the saint in silent prayer, conversing with God, they, as though they were rational beings, did not interrupt his contemplation of God, but stood before the cave waiting until the saint, finishing his prayer, came out to them, and they did not depart until the saint, coming out and laying his hands upon them, blessed them; and if any beast felt itself ill, it came to the saint and received healing through the laying on of his holy hand.

At this time the governor Agricolaus strove in every way to destroy as great a number of Christians as possible, subjecting them to various dreadful tortures: some he gave over to the sword, others he ordered to be burned in fire, others to be drowned in rivers, and still others he gave to be devoured by beasts. For this last purpose he commanded his huntsmen to catch as many predatory beasts as possible. Carrying out this command, the hunters went out to the chase, and, traversing mountains and deserts, came also to Mount Argeus, where the holy bishop Blaise was hiding; approaching the saint's cave and seeing before it a multitude of frolicking beasts, they said to one another: "Let us go and see what is happening there."

Drawing near, they saw that the holy Blaise was sitting in his cave, as though in some chamber, and offering fervent prayers to God. Say-

4. He reigned from 307 to 324.

ing nothing to the holy bishop, they returned home and told the governor Agricolaus everything they had seen; he ordered a large number of soldiers to go with the huntsmen, seize the Christians hiding there and bring them to him. Coming to that mountain and entering the cave, the soldiers sent found there only the holy Blaise, who was offering prayers to God and glorifying His holy name.

"Come out of here," they said to Blaise, "and go with us to the city: the governor summons you."

Hearing this, the saint rejoiced and said:

"Good, my children, let us go together; the Lord has remembered me: He appeared to me three times this night, saying, 'Arise and offer Me a sacrifice, as befits you in your rank of bishop.' So, my children, you have come here today at the right time. May my Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

On the way, the pagans, seeing the saint's meekness and hearing his teaching, and being struck by his miracles, turned to the true God; for through his prayers healings were granted by the Lord to many who were sick, and not only to people but also to animals. When the sick were brought or led to him, he laid his hands upon them, offered prayer for them, and dismissed them completely healthy. A certain woman had an only son; while he was eating, a fish bone lodged in his throat, so that he could not utter a word and was already at the point of death; the mother, taking him half-dead, carried him to the saint and laid him at his feet, weeping bitterly and crying out: "Have mercy on my son, servant of our Savior Jesus Christ; he is all I have."

In this she told Blaise what had happened to her son. The holy hierarch of God, placing his hand into the boy's throat and raising his eyes to heaven, prayed to the Lord thus: "My Savior! Thou helpest all who call upon Thee in faith: hear my prayer, and by Thy invisible power draw out the bone lodged in the throat of this child and heal him. And in the time to come, if anything befalls a man or an animal and they call upon my name, saying, 'O God, help through the prayers of Thy ser-

5. Argeos, otherwise Argaeus, is a large mountain of Asia Minor, part of the Anti-Taurus, in north-western Cappadocia, crowned at its summit with eternal snow and at its foot with fine forest.

vant Blaise,' then Thou, O Lord, swift to help, help them too and grant healing to the glory and honor of Thy holy name."

Praying thus, he healed the boy and returned him to his mother, who, in great joy, unceasingly offered praises to God. Because of such miracles the name of Blaise became glorified not only in Sebaste but even in Nicopolis[6]. While the saint was still on the road, not far from Sebaste, the following occurred.

A certain poor widow had nothing except one piglet; a wolf, creeping up, seized it. The poor woman began to weep bitterly; seeing the saint coming, she ran to him and, with tears, began to tell him of her grief. The saint, smiling, said to her: "Do not give way to sorrow, woman, do not weep: your piglet will be returned to you alive and unharmed."

Having said this, the saint continued on his way, and the wolf ran up to the poor widow, carrying her piglet in its teeth; it set it down before her without any injury and ran back into the desert; and the widow took her piglet, rejoicing and praising God.

When the holy Blaise reached Sebaste, the governor Agricolaus, learning of this, at once ordered him to be cast into prison. On the next day, seated on the judgment seat, Agricolaus ordered the hierarch of God to be brought before him; seeing him, the governor first addressed him with such flattering words: "Rejoice, Blaise, beloved friend of our gods and of ours!"

To this the saint replied: "Rejoice also, mighty governor, but do not call demons gods, for they will be given over to eternal fire together with those who worship them."

In anger the governor ordered the saint to be beaten mercilessly; after a long torment the saint again said to the governor: "Mad seducer of human souls, do you really think to turn me from the true God by your tortures? No, this is impossible, for I trust in Jesus Christ, Who strengthens me; however, do as you wish."

Seeing the saint's unshakable faith, the governor commanded that he be taken back to prison.

6. Nicopolis was a city in Lesser Armenia, on the border near the river Lycus, now Enderes.

Then that poor widow, struck by the manly sufferings which the holy Blaise endured for Christ and by his firm steadfastness in the holy faith, slaughtered her piglet, which she had received unharmed from the wolf's teeth, cooked the head and feet, and placed them on a dish; to these she added also seeds, earthly fruits and garden vegetables, as much as her poverty allowed; placing all this in a basket and lighting a candle, she carried the basket to the saint in prison; falling at the feet of the martyr, she began to beseech him to take this food and partake of it. Having offered praise to God, the saint partook of the food brought him; then, blessing the widow, he said to her: "Woman, celebrate my memory thus every year, and nothing needful in your house will fail; and if anyone else should imitate you and celebrate my memory, he will receive God's gifts in abundance, and the blessing of the Lord will rest upon him all the days of his life."

The pious widow, having received such instruction from the saint, returned to her house glorifying God; and of her may be applied the Gospel saying: "in the whole world it will be told, in memory of her, also what she has done" (Mt. 26:13).

Meanwhile the impious tyrant, seating himself again on the judgment seat, ordered the holy Blaise to be brought for torture.

"Blaise," he said to the martyr, "will you offer sacrifice to the gods? Then you will remain alive. Or do you wish to subject yourself to a painful death?"

To this the saint replied:

"The gods that did not make heaven and earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens" (Jer. 10:11), and the death with which you threaten me will grant me eternal life.

Seeing such steadfastness of the saint in the faith, the governor commanded that he be stripped, hung on a tree, and scraped with iron implements. After a long torment the holy martyr said to the governor:

"Wicked man, full of defilement, do you truly mean to terrify me with wounds, when Jesus Christ is my helper? I do not fear your visible torments, for I look upon the future, invisible blessings promised to those who love God."

After this the tormentor commanded that he be taken down from the tree and led back to the prison. As St. Blaise was being led to confinement, there followed after him seven pious and God-fearing women who, gathering the blood that dripped from the saint's body onto the ground, anointed themselves with it. The attendants who accompanied the saint saw this, seized them, and brought them before the governor, saying:

"These women too are followers of Christ." Then the governor addressed the women and said:

"Come to your senses, offer sacrifice to the gods, and receive great honors from me."

The honorable and holy women answered him:

"If you desire, O governor, that we bow down to your gods and offer sacrifice to them, then first of all we must purify ourselves. Let us go, then, to the nearest lake and wash in it, as is customary, our faces and our whole bodies; command that your gods also be brought there, and after we have bathed we will bow down to them on the shore of that lake."

Rejoicing, the governor ordered that his idols be brought. Placing them in sacks and sealing the sacks with tin, he gave them to the women; then he commanded the soldiers to accompany the women with the idols to the shore of the lake and from there to bring them back again with honor. Taking the sacks of idols upon their shoulders, the women carried them to the lakeshore. When they came to a place where the lake was very deep, they asked the soldiers to withdraw from them, as though ashamed to undress in their presence, and to wait a little while until they had completed their washing. When the soldiers had withdrawn, each of the women cast into the lake the idol she was carrying, and the defiled idols sank quickly into the water like tin. Seeing this, the soldiers seized the women in anger and, bringing them to the governor, told him of the drowning of the idols. The governor's face changed with fury, and he roared at the soldiers like a lion: "Wicked servants, why did you not hold the gods? Why did you not prevent the women from casting them into the depths of the lake?"

In reply to this the soldiers said: "Most illustrious governor, these women deceived you and with a cunning purpose took your gods; not knowing their treachery, we did not hold them."

Then the holy women also said to the governor: "The true God knows nothing of human flattery, but your gods, made of lifeless stone and wood, gold and silver, were taken by us through flattery and drowned. They were not able either to free themselves from our hands or to save themselves from drowning. How then can they save others and deliver them from misfortunes?"

Filled with rage, the governor commanded that a furnace be kindled, that tin be melted, and that iron combs and three-pronged forks be brought, along with seven copper plates heated red-hot and shaped like garments. All of these he had placed on one side, and on the other side he laid soft robes and various women's adornments. He said to the holy women: "Choose for yourselves one of two things: either bow down to the gods and offer them sacrifice, and then you will keep your lives and walk in those bright garments and precious ornaments; but if you do not do this, you will endure all these torments that have been prepared for you."

One of those women, who had two young sons, seized a bright garment and threw it into the furnace, where it burned up. The sons then began to beg their mother, saying: "Dear mother, do not let us perish on this earth, but as you nourished us on earth with your sweet milk, so help us also to attain the Kingdom of Heaven."

After this the governor commanded that they be hung up naked and that their bodies be scraped with iron combs. Then the soldiers saw that, instead of blood, milk flowed from their wounds, and their bodies became white as snow. The Angels of God, descending from heaven, strengthened the holy women amid their torments and comforted them, saying: "Do not fear, but continue your struggle, like a good farmer who, having begun the harvest, finishes it; having completed his work, he receives thanks and reward from his master and returns joyfully to his house. So also labor, that you may receive from our Savior Jesus Christ eternal blessed life."

Afterward the governor commanded that they be taken down from the tree and cast into a fiery furnace. When they were cast there, the fire at once went out, and they came out of the furnace without any harm. Then the governor said to them:

"Abandon your sorcery and offer sacrifice to our gods."

The holy women answered him with one voice:

"There will be no good for you, son of the devil. We will not forsake our Lord Jesus Christ, nor will we bow down to stone and wood, to idols like yourself, deaf and insensible, for we have been called to the Kingdom of Heaven."

Hearing this, the governor commanded that their heads be cut off with the sword. When they had been brought to the place where their death awaited them, they asked the soldiers:

"Wait a little while, until we have prayed to God."

Kneeling down, they prayed thus: "Glory to Thee, our great and glorified God; glory to Thee, O Christ, reigning forever, who hast called us to the way of salvation! For who is as great as Thou, who hast inspired us to renounce darkness and to draw near to Thy true light! We pray Thee, O Lord, number us with Thy first martyr Thecla; receive our prayer for us from our most holy father and shepherd Blaise, who has set us upon the true path."

Having prayed thus and risen from the ground, they stretched out their hands to heaven, and, lifting up their eyes, with pure hearts they cried out together to God: "Glory to Thee, O Christ our God, who hast granted us to stand in this place, as sheep for the slaughter, for Thy holy name. We desire to be offerings to Thee; receive then our souls upon Thy heavenly altar."

The two sons, drawing near to their mother, said to her:

"Mother, crowns are ready for you from the Lord in heaven; and commit us to the good Passion-bearer, the most holy bishop Blaise."

Then the executioner came forward and cut off the honorable heads of the seven holy women; such was their end.

After this the governor, having ordered St. Blaise to be brought from the prison, asked him:

"Will you offer sacrifice to the gods now or not?"

"Wretched blind man," the saint answered, "you do not see the true light. Which of those who have known the living God would offer sacrifice or bow down to lifeless idols? Know then, you benighted and impious man, that you have forsaken the living God and worship insensible stone. I do not fear your threats; torment me as you wish. Behold, I deliver my body to you for the sake of my Christ; God alone has power over my soul."

Then the governor said to the saint:

"If I command that you be cast into the lake, can your Christ, whom you worship, then help you?"

"Blind and senseless one," the saint answered, "you, honoring idols, think yourself saved; and I, honoring Christ, shall I not show you on the waters the power of my God?"

Then the governor commanded that he be led to the lake and cast into the depths. But the saint, coming to the shore, signed the water with the sign of the Cross, walked upon the water as upon dry land, and, reaching the middle of the lake, sat upon the water as upon the ground. He addressed the soldiers standing on the shore and the tormentor's servants with these words:

"If you have gods, then show their power: come, you also, walk upon the water."

Then sixty-eight men, calling upon the names of their gods, entered the lake, wishing to walk upon the water, and all suddenly sank into the water like tin and perished. But an Angel of the Lord, descending from heaven to the saint, said to him: "Hierarch filled with the grace of God, come down from the water and receive the crown prepared for you by God."

Coming down to land, the saint, with a face shining like bright snow, came to the governor and reproached him. Then the governor issued a sentence of death against Blaise, with the following content: "Blaise does not obey me, he scorns the emperor, he reviles our gods, and by his sorcery he has drowned sixty-eight men in the water. For all this he must be beheaded with the sword, together with the two youths."

Together with the youths, Blaise was led out from the governor. Coming to the place of execution, he prayed for his sins, for the whole world, and especially for those who would celebrate his memory; and for such he prayed that no sickness might touch them, that their houses might be filled with every good, and that their prayers might be heard. At that time a bright cloud descended from above and overshadowed him, and from the cloud there was heard the voice of Christ: "I will fulfill all your petitions, My beloved ascetic."

Then the executioner cut off his honorable head, and afterward those of the two youths mentioned above, on a rock beyond the city wall in Sebaste. This took place on the eleventh day of the month of February.[7]

A pious woman named Elissa, taking up the holy bodies of the martyrs, honorably buried them in the same place. From the tomb of the saints, healings were given to the sick.

Learning of the suffering death of the hierarch of Christ Blaise, the aforementioned woman, who had one piglet, honored the memory of the saint by gathering her neighbors and acquaintances to her home, and God blessed her house with every abundance. Imitating her, other pious people also began to celebrate the memory of St. Blaise every year, bringing candles and incense into the church, gathering in the homes of their fellow believers, and giving alms to the poor and the needy. From that time there arose that pious custom which some still keep even now, namely, to celebrate the memory of the holy hieromartyr Blaise after the example of that widow who was the first to make such a commemoration; and this remembrance takes place to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit is glorified and worshipped forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

Divine blossoming, unfading flower, much-suffering branch of the vine of Christ, Blaise, God-bearer, fill with the joy of thy gladness

7. Holy Hieromartyr Blaise suffered and died about the year 316. His relics were transferred to the West during the Crusades; parts of them are found in many countries of Europe.

those who with faith honor thy memory, interceding unceasingly for us all.

Another Kontakion, Tone 8:

Adorned with the anointing of consecration and with the blood of martyrdom, O glorious Blaise, thou shinest everywhere in the heights, rejoicing and beholding us who have come to thy church and there call upon thee without ceasing: keep us all.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Empress Theodora

Память святой царицы Феодоры

St. Theodora was the wife of Emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast,[8] but she did not share the iconoclastic heresy of her husband. The emperor-iconoclast expelled from the capital the Patriarch of Constantinople Methodius, put Annius in his place, and burned the holy icons. The fervent Empress Theodora, although she did not openly dare to venerate the holy icons, secretly kept them in her bedchamber and kept vigil at night in prayer, beseeching God to send down His mercy upon the Orthodox. She had a son named Michael, whom she brought up in the Orthodox faith. After the death of her husband, the blessed Theodora again restored St. Methodius to the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople, and convened a holy council, at which the iconoclasts were anathematized, Annius was deposed from the throne, and the holy icons were brought back into the churches of God.[9] In consultation with the whole holy council of the Fathers, Theodora prayed to God on behalf of her husband, that He would deliver him from eternal torment, so that he might receive unspeakable life. After this the blessed Empress Theodora labored well in piety, and soon afterward yielded up her soul to God, toward Whom she had striven, leaving the kingdom to her son Michael.[10]

8. The iconoclast Emperor Theophilus reigned from 829 to 842.
9. Thus the restoration of the veneration of icons was effected at the Council of Constantinople of 842. In memory of this, a special "Rite of Orthodoxy" was then established in the Church, performed to this day on the first Sunday of Holy Lent.
10. Emperor Michael III reigned from 855 to 867.

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Memory of the Venerable Demetrius of Priluki, Wonderworker of Vologda

Память преподобного Димитрия Прилуцкого, Вологодского чудотворца

Our Venerable and God-bearing Father Demetrius came from the city of Pereyaslavl[11] of pious parents. From his youth he was given over to bookish instruction and became skilled in reading the Divine books; he surpassed many of his peers in understanding and was distinguished among them by his humble wisdom, which he always kept hidden in his heart. The blessed one loved often to meditate on the age to come, on the judgment of God, on the recompense to each according to his deeds, on the Kingdom of Heaven, the joy of the righteous and the bliss of Paradise. Having studied the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the saint came to know that life in this world is swiftly passing. And therefore he soon left this vain world and, with a tender soul, coming into the fear of God, in that same Pereyaslavl took the monastic habit in the Nagorny Borisoglebsky Monastery. Here, zealously laboring in a virtuous life, he practiced spiritual sobriety and prayer, distinguished by purity, extreme humility and spiritual love for all. Thus this diligent and tireless God-pleasing ascetic, instructed in the law of the Lord day and night, obtained the fruit of salvation, seeking God with chastity and a pure heart, and passing a life equal to the angels'. The monks and the common people loved the saint for his great virtue. After some time God granted the Venerable Demetrius to receive the rank of priesthood. At that time the Venerable Sergius, Wonderworker of Radonezh, established near Radonezh a monastery in the name of the Holy Trinity, and by the will of God instituted there a cenobitic community. The Venerable Demetrius often visited the Venerable Sergius for spiritual conversations, about how best to govern a monastic community and to lead chosen people to God. After this the Venerable Demetrius built a church in the name of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, and beside it founded a monastery on

11. Pereyaslavl-Zalessky, Northern, is now a district town of the Vladimir Governorate.

the shore of Lake Pereyaslavl,[12] and was abbot of that monastery. For the sake of spiritual benefit, many monks and laymen desiring to live in his monastery flocked to the Venerable One, and the blessed one received them, instructing them with humility and tonsuring the laymen into the holy monastic order. Thus he gathered about himself a great flock of God, the rational sheep of Christ. Soon afterward the Venerable One established a cenobitic community in his monastery, confirming it with strict rules. The brethren in all things obeyed the saint with love and obedience, as an Angel of God and a true teacher, and especially as an intercessor for the Kingdom of Heaven. Afterwards, fleeing human glory,[13] the blessed Demetrius withdrew from here to Vologda; there, not far from the city, the Venerable One loved a solitary place at a bend,[14] formed by the elbow of the river Vologda, built here a church in the name of the All-merciful Savior, and founded a cenobitic monastery.[15] When the report spread of the Venerable One's settling at Priluki, many of his disciples moved from Pereyaslavl to their beloved teacher at Priluki; many seeking the monastic life came to the Venerable One also from various other lands. Thus the cenobitic Priluki monastery was formed. And the Venerable Demetrius gathered here a numerous brotherhood.[1319] Having well shepherded the flock of Christ, the rational sheep entrusted to his guidance, the Venerable One reposed in the Lord on February 11, 1392.[16]

12. Now the so-called "St. Nicholas in the Marsh," a retired monastery in Pereyaslavl-Zalessky.

13. The report of the high life of Venerable Demetrius reached the Grand Prince of Moscow, Demetrius Ivanovich Donskoy, and he invited the venerable one to be godfather to his children. The venerable one fulfilled the prince's wish and received from him generous gifts for the monastery. After this he resolved to leave the Pereyaslavl monastery and withdraw to a remote place.

14. Luka means a bend, a curve, a winding shore, a cape around which a river flows.

15. This was in 1371. The Spaso-Prilutsky monastery (of the second class) is located 15 versts from Vologda. At the founding of the monastery, the owners of the place lovingly gave their land to the venerable one. Ardent zeal also appeared among the citizens of Vologda; each hastened to give the venerable one whatever he could for the building of the church. Grand Prince Demetrius Donskoy, learning of Venerable Demetrius's founding of the new Spaso-Prilutsky monastery, sent donations from himself for it.

16. The body of Venerable Demetrius was buried in the Church of the Saviour which he had founded. At his tomb, and through his intercession, miracles and various healings were accomplished. And now the relics of Venerable Demetrius of Prilutsk rest in the same church, where there is also the wonderworking icon of this saint, which was with Grand Prince John III during his campaign against Kazan.

Troparion, Tone 1:

From above, from God, O Venerable One, thou didst receive spiritual grace, and from Him thou wast made known, O blessed one. Therefore thou too, in the Spirit, didst come to know the better things, His dwelling in the age to come, and didst test thyself ascetically in thy monasteries. And now, rejoicing with the Angels, O Holy Demetrius, pray to the Savior for us all, that we all cry out: Glory to Him Who gave thee strength, glory to Him Who crowned thee, glory to Him Who works healings through thee for all.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

From thy youth, O Venerable One, taking up thy cross, thou didst follow Christ, in prayers and fastings, in vigils and great sufferings wearing down thy flesh. Wherefore the All-seeing Eye, beholding thy labors, glorifies thee with miracles, and teaches all to call upon thee: Rejoice, Venerable Father Demetrius, adornment of ascetics.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Right-believing Prince Vsevolod, named Gabriel in Holy Baptism

Память святого благоверного князя Всеволода, нареченного во святом крещении Гавриилом

The holy right-believing Prince Vsevolod, named Gabriel in Holy Baptism, was the son of Grand Prince Mstislav, the son of the famous Vladimir Monomakh.[17] In 1117 the aged Vladimir Monomakh seated his son Mstislav in Kiev-Belgorod,[18] so as to have in him a helper for himself, and in his place he set as prince in Novgorod his

17. Vladimir Monomakh, grandson of Yaroslav the Wise, the ideal of the ancient Rus' prince, is known especially as a peacemaker among warring princes; from 1114 to 1125 he was Grand Prince of Kiev.

18. Belgorod was a small town of the Principality of Kiev, which nevertheless, during the reign of the heirs of Vladimir the Great, had a bishop and for some time was an appanage seat. Now it is a village of the Kiev Governorate and district, on the Irpen, belonging to the Metropolitan of Kiev, with 1,900 desyatinas of land and over 1,500 inhabitants, with a parish church.

grandson, the son of Mstislav, the blessed Prince Vsevolod. The blessed Prince Vsevolod led a God-pleasing life and justly governed the principality entrusted to him, as befits Orthodox princes. He was distinguished by every good deed and good disposition: he was God-fearing, truthful, gentle and meek, and he had an unfeigned love for all alike. Prince Vsevolod loved to build churches of God, loved the ecclesiastical and monastic order, gave them generous alms, and honored them as the brethren of God. A monument to his zeal for building churches is the magnificent church he erected on the Novgorod trading square, at Petryatin Court, in the name of St. John the Forerunner, with a side chapel, furnished with costly icons, a very valuable Gospel and all the liturgical books; by a special charter he secured the support of the church and its clergy, partly from the duties on all articles of trade, a considerable part of which also went to the support of St. Sophia Cathedral. The pious prince was a defender of widows and orphans, was merciful to the poor, supported the infirm and distributed abundant food. In 1132 the father of the blessed Prince Vsevolod, Mstislav,[19] died in Kiev, and the great Kievan throne was taken by Mstislav's brother Yaropolk, who gave Vsevolod southern Pereyaslavl, which was considered the senior principality after Kiev.[20] The Novgorodians let Vsevolod go with displeasure; meanwhile the younger sons of Monomakh, uncles of Vsevolod, rose up for Pereyaslavl against the grand prince, supposing that he wished to make his nephew heir to the Kievan throne. One of these princes, Yuri Vladimirovich,[21] took up arms against Vsevolod and wished to seize Pereyaslavl. The saint, hearing of this and wishing to avoid civil strife, left Pereyaslavl without bloodshed for Novgorod, leaving Pereyaslavl to Prince Yuri.

The free Novgorodians by this time had already forgotten the beneficent rule of Vsevolod and at first did not want to receive him, but they

19. Mstislav Vladimirovich, father of St. Prince Vsevolod the Blessed, was Grand Prince of Kiev from 1125 to 1132. He was succeeded by his brother Yaropolk, who reigned in Kiev from 1132 to 1138.

20. The Principality of Pereyaslavl was considered the first after the Grand Principality of Kiev. Pereyaslavl-South is now a district town of the Poltava Governorate, on the rivers Alye and Trubezh.

soon came to their senses and invited back the prince who had done them so much good. Shortly after this, the blessed Prince Vsevolod, at the demand of the Novgorodians, was compelled to march with them on a campaign against Suzdal and Rostov.[22] A bloody battle took place, but the men of Suzdal and Rostov gained the upper hand, though more of them fell than of the Novgorodians. In that same year the blessed prince, together with the pious archpastor Nifont, founded a magnificent stone church in the name of St. Clement, but it was not his lot to finish it. In May 1136 a rebellion broke out in Novgorod. The proud and willful Novgorodians, angered that they had failed to boast of victory over the men of Suzdal, rose up against the holy Prince Vsevolod and declared him deposed. "We have no help from you," they said to the saint, and they drove him out of Novgorod.

Then the Blessed Prince Vsevolod went to Kiev to his uncle, the Grand Prince Yaropolk, son of Vladimir Monomakh. Yaropolk gave Vsevolod the administration of Vyshgorod[23], but the Blessed Prince remained there only a short time. The men of Pskov, valuing both the benefactions and the high qualities of Vsevolod, sent chosen men to Vyshgorod with an earnest petition that he come to rule over them, for at that time there was no prince in Pskov. St. Vsevolod consented and went to rule in Pskov. On the way, when he passed by Polotsk[24], Vasilko, prince of Polotsk, hearing of the saint's coming, hastily went out to meet him, greeted the saint with the brotherly kiss in Christ and with words of welcome, gave him many gifts, and escorted him with

21. Yuri (George) Vladimirovich Dolgoruky, youngest son of Vladimir Monomakh, Prince of Suzdal, afterwards Grand Prince of Kiev from 1148 to 1150; he was later expelled by Izyaslav Mstislavich, but after some time again seized the Grand Principality of Kiev, though not for long.

22. This happened as follows. Izyaslav Mstislavich, through the favor of the power-loving Prince Yuri Dolgoruky, came from Turov to Novgorod to seek help against Yuri, who had insolently offended the Mstislavichi. The Novgorodians stirred and offered to defend Izyaslav against Yuri. The Blessed Prince Vsevolod did not wish to take part against his uncle, and St. Michael the Bishop dissuaded the Novgorodians from the campaign, pointing to the dangers of a winter campaign. But in the end Vsevolod had to yield to the wish of the Novgorodians and march against the men of Suzdal and Rostov.

23. Vyshgorod was a small town near Kiev.

24. Polotsk is now a district town of the Vitebsk Governorate, at the confluence of the Polota with the Western Dvina. The Principality of Polotsk occupied most of the Vitebsk Governorate, parts of the Mogilev, Minsk and Vilna Governorates.

great solemnity. Meanwhile the inhabitants of Pskov went out to meet the Blessed Prince Vsevolod, headed by the clergy with the venerable crosses, and so received him into the city. And there was great joy in Pskov because of the saint's arrival. Likewise the saint rejoiced at his coming to Pskov, as though to the heavenly Jerusalem, foreseeing in spirit that his honorable relics would be laid there. And he at once began to reign, justly governing the men of Pskov until the end of his life. The pious prince immediately founded a stone church in the name of the Holy Trinity, completed in the following year. The Latinizing peoples all feared the very name of the saint and did not dare to attack Pskov. St. Prince Vsevolod reigned in Pskov a little over one year. Then, by the will of God, he fell into a grievous bodily illness; having received the Most Pure Body and Blood of Christ in preparation for the departure of his soul, and having bidden peace to his household and to all the citizens of Pskov, he departed to the Lord and was gathered to his fathers, where all the saints rest. The repose of the Blessed Prince Vsevolod-Gabriel took place on Thursday of Cheesefare Week, 11 February 1138. All the citizens of Pskov, the abbots and a multitude of clergy accompanied the body of the saint with honor and laid it in the church of the holy Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica. The sword and shield of the Blessed Prince Vsevolod were placed upon his tomb, to the praise and confirmation of the city of Pskov, where they remain to this day in the Trinity Cathedral. Fifty-two years after the blessed repose of the holy right-believing Prince Vsevolod-Gabriel, his relics were found incorrupt. In 1192 the holy prince appeared in a vision to a God-fearing man and said: "Tell the authorities to transfer my relics to the church of the Holy Trinity: there I wish to lie down. The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted to me the city of Pskov, that I should guard it."

Then his holy relics were reverently transferred to the Trinity Cathedral[25]. From that time, at the tomb of the Blessed Prince Vsevolod, manifold healings began to flow to those who came to his holy

25. This was in 1192.

relics in faith, to the glory of Christ Jesus, our Lord, to Whom belongs glory now, always, and unto ages of ages.

Troparion, Tone 4:

From youth thou didst appear, God-wise Prince Gabriel, a divine vessel, chosen by God, reared in piety, who kept the faith undefiled and didst found many holy churches; thou didst suffer exile at the hands of thine own, as thy forefathers, the chaste ones, suffered murder at the hands of a brother. Standing with them before the Holy Trinity, pray that the Russian realm be preserved and that all of us be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having wisely removed to the city of Pskov, Blessed Prince Gabriel, thou wast a good fruit to God in this life, ever flourishing in virtues, and like David in guilelessness; therefore thou didst receive eternal life in the Heavens, ever beholding the Holy Trinity. Pray that we be delivered from all afflictions, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, thou establishment of our city.

* * *

NOTES

1319. By his labors and virtues the venerable one served as a high example and model for the brethren gathered in his monastery, while at the same time ceaselessly instructing and admonishing them. He was distinguished by love of the poor and by beneficence. Himself always content only with a prosphora and warm water, he went round the monastery's lands and took care that everything needed for the brethren's meals was delivered in time. His clothing, winter and summer alike, was a single one: a stiff sheepskin tulup, under which in summer he was wet from the heat and in winter suffered from the frosts. Yet for the brethren's sake he went out with them to their labors. So that others might not see his tearful prayer, he often withdrew for prayer to a secluded place on the left side of the church, where a wooden annex had been made for this purpose. By his high ascetic labors of self-denial and self-renunciation the venerable one attained a high spiritual perfection and was granted the gift of clairvoyance.

THE TWELFTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 12

12 февраля

New Calendar February 12 · Old Calendar February 25 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch

Житие святого отца нашего Мелетия, архиепископа Антиохийского

St. Meletius was first Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia,[1] but was afterwards raised to the archiepiscopal throne of Antioch in the following manner. Eudoxius, Archbishop of Antioch,[2] a follower of the Arian heresy, enticed by the wealth of the see of Constantinople, desired to transfer there, since the impious heretic Macedonius,[3] who had previously occupied the place of chief pastor in Constantinople, had been deposed, and in the reign of Constantius,[4] son of Constantine the Great, the Church of Constantinople abounded in great treasures and was far richer than the Church of Antioch and other churches. Therefore Eudoxius, disdaining the throne of Antioch, began to seek the throne of Constantinople. Learning of the intrigues of their archbishop, the people of Antioch were greatly offended with Eudoxius, indignant that he despised his own Church, and so they expelled him. Going to Constantinople, Eudoxius obtained the throne there;[5] and the people of Antioch, having assembled a council, deliberated all together whom they should choose in place of Eudoxius. At this council the greater part of those present were Arians, who were then in great power; the

1. Sebastia of Armenia – in the northeast of Asia Minor.
2. Eudoxius occupied the patriarchal see in Antioch from 357 to 358.
3. Macedonius I, Patriarch of Constantinople, occupied the patriarchal see in 341; afterwards, as a heretic, he was deposed, but several times seized the patriarchal authority in his hands until 360. Macedonius impiously taught concerning the Holy Spirit that He is a mere servile creature, having no part in the Godhead and the glory of the Father and the Son.
4. Emperor Constantius reigned from 337 to 361.
5. Eudoxius was Patriarch in Constantinople from 360 to 370.

number of the Orthodox was small, and moreover they were despised and called Eustathians, after St. Eustathius, who in his time as Archbishop of Antioch had suffered exile for the Orthodox faith. On the lips of all present at that council was the name of St. Meletius; all wished to have him as their archbishop, but the Arians especially desired it, for they considered him one of their own way of thinking and hoped that he would also win the Eustathians to their views and teach the whole of Antioch the Arian error. Thus, at the council Meletius was chosen by common consent to the archiepiscopal see; all confirmed the conciliar decision with their signatures and entrusted it for safekeeping to St. Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata, who was present at that council and was a man of Orthodox faith. Then they sent their petition to St. Meletius together with an imperial letter, and with great honor, amid a large gathering of the people, they brought him to Antioch. Bishop Theodoret[6] describes the arrival of this holy man in the city as follows: "When the great Meletius, summoned by the emperor, approached Antioch, there came out to meet him all who bore the priestly rank, the clergy, and all the citizens; here were Jews and unbelievers as well; all desired one thing: to see the most glorious Meletius."

Thus does Theodoret describe the event. St. Meletius was therefore raised to the archiepiscopal throne in Antioch, for he was a man worthy of it, wise and filled with holiness; this is attested also by St. Epiphanius, who lived at the same time. Praising him highly, he writes of him thus: "That man (St. Meletius) is held in great honor among us; a good report of him goes everywhere; in his life he is steadfast, honorable, his manners are most praiseworthy; the people love him for his blameless life; all are greatly amazed at him."

Thus does St. Epiphanius speak of Meletius. How much the people loved him is seen from the fact that at his consecration each one strove to invite him to his house, desiring that the visit of the saint might bring him a blessing.

Having entered upon the throne of Antioch, St. Meletius began zealously to teach the people a virtuous life and good morals, preparing in

their hearts the way to true Orthodoxy; for the saint judged that he could more successfully sow the seeds of Orthodoxy in the souls of his flock if he first corrected their evil morals, uprooting from the field of their hearts the thorns and thistles. Then Meletius ordained as deacon the great Basil, who had come to Jerusalem from Antioch. Another famous man of that time, St. John Chrysostom, was then still a small boy; he received Baptism from the saint, was among the people who met Meletius, and during Basil's stay in Antioch he pursued his study of books; afterwards, in his panegyric to St. Meletius, he described the thirty-day separation of the saint from the Church to which the heretics subjected him. This happened as follows. All the people wished to know exactly what confession their new archbishop held; when Meletius was asked about this, he addressed the people in church with a sermon on the Word of God, in which he glorified the Orthodox faith established at the First Ecumenical Council held at Nicaea; he also confessed that the Son of God is co-eternal, co-essential, and equal with God the Father, that He is not created, and that He is the Creator of the whole creation. Thus the saint loudly taught the people; hearing this, the archdeacon of the Antiochian Church, who shared the impious teaching of Arius, came up to his archbishop and boldly closed the saint's mouth with his hand, so that he could neither confess the true faith nor teach Orthodoxy. Although the archdeacon's hand hindered Meletius from speaking, he nevertheless stretched out his hand to the people and confessed the Holy Trinity with his fingers even more clearly than with his tongue: first he showed three fingers, thus depicting the Three Persons of the Godhead; then, bending down two, he left one raised, showing thus the One God in Three Persons. Seeing this, the archdeacon released the saint's mouth and seized his hand, which so clearly depicted the Trinity. Freed, the saint again confessed and glorified the One Trinity with his tongue, and he exhorted the people who listened to him to hold firmly and unswervingly to the confession established at the Council of Nicaea: "Whoever," he said, "rejects the dogmas of the

6. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus, was one of the most distinguished teachers of the Church and a famous church historian of the fifth century. The event mentioned above is described by him in his Church History.[1*]

Council of Nicaea stands far from the truth." And so it continued for a long time: the said archdeacon either stopped the mouth of the hierarch, not allowing him to speak, or held his hand, hindering it from depicting the Trinity with the fingers, while the hierarch, now with his mouth, now with his fingers, clearly preached the Orthodox faith to the people. Then the Orthodox, whom the heretics called "Eustathians," rejoiced with great gladness, seeing on the apostolic throne such a pious hierarch, and in their exultation they cried out, supporting the true confession of their pastor; the Arians were greatly grieved. They expelled God's hierarch from the church and everywhere began to revile him, asserting that he was a heretic, a follower of the teaching of Sabellius;[7] they also incited Emperor Constantius to condemn Meletius and to send him into exile in his homeland, Armenia. At night the saint was led out of Antioch and sent to Armenia, and in his place was chosen one Euzoius, a follower of Arius, who at the time of Meletius's election had still been a deacon.

St. Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata, seeing that such turmoil had arisen in the Antiochian Church from the heretics, who had expelled their innocent bishop, St. Meletius, grieved over this very deeply. Rising, he left Antioch without informing anyone and set out for his city. Learning of Eusebius's departure, the Arians recalled that the document appointing St. Meletius to the archiepiscopate, drawn up and signed by the whole council, was in his keeping; they feared that St. Eusebius might at some time expose them at a council, showing that they themselves had unanimously chosen an archbishop and then themselves expelled him. Therefore they besought the emperor, who was then in Antioch, to order that Eusebius be sent for and the document taken from him.

The emperor at once sent a horseman after Eusebius, that he might overtake the bishop as quickly as possible. When the messenger overtook Eusebius and delivered to him the imperial command, the holy bishop answered: "I cannot surrender the document now, but I will give

7. Sabellius taught erroneously concerning the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, asserting that God is one Person: as Father He is in heaven, as Son on earth, and as Holy Spirit in creatures.

it up only when all who entrusted it to me have gathered together again."

Thus the messenger returned to the emperor without having accomplished anything. Then the emperor was greatly angered and, writing a letter, sent it to St. Eusebius; in this letter it was stated that if Eusebius did not surrender the document, his right hand would be cut off. The emperor wrote thus only to frighten the saint; he forbade the messenger to carry out the threat. When the imperial envoy came a second time to the holy bishop and handed him the menacing letter, Eusebius, having read it, stretched out both his hands, saying: "You may cut off not only my right hand but even my left, but I will not surrender the document, for it openly exposes the malice and lawlessness of the Arians."

Again the envoy had to return with nothing. Hearing such an answer from the saint, the emperor was greatly astonished at the fearless courage and unwavering steadfastness of Eusebius, and afterwards he spoke of him before many with great praise.

After the deposition of St. Meletius from the archiepiscopal throne, the Orthodox separated from the Arians. They took for themselves one church standing outside the city walls in a place called Palaea, and in that church the presbyter Paulinus conducted services for them according to the rite of the Orthodox Church. Some years later Emperor Constantius died, and in his place there succeeded Julian the Apostate[8]. At the beginning of his reign Julian hypocritically showed himself pious, released all the bishops who had been in exile, and commanded them to return to their sees. Then, by the imperial command, St. Meletius also returned from his confinement to Antioch. He found that in that city the Church of the Orthodox had divided into two parts: some awaited his return to the archiepiscopal throne, while others, not waiting for him, had chosen as bishop the aforementioned presbyter Paulinus; the latter were then called Paulinians, and the former Meletians. The cause of the division was also that the Paulinians did not receive into communion with themselves those of the followers of Arius who had returned

8. Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363.

to Orthodoxy through the teaching of St. Meletius; they did not receive such persons for two reasons: first, because these persons had been baptized by the Arians, and second, because St. Meletius himself had been chosen to the archiepiscopal see of Antioch by the Arians, who at the council were more numerous than the Orthodox. Both parts held equally to the Orthodox dogmas, but the occasion of the division was only the circumstances described. Upon his return the saint zealously took care to reunite the divided flock of Christ. The meek and humble-hearted archbishop did not deny the episcopacy of Paulinus but acknowledged it, and himself shepherded the new flock, namely those who had converted from Arianism to Orthodoxy, whom the Paulinians at that time did not receive into communion. But when the lawless Julian, having established himself on the throne, openly renounced Christ and began to worship idols, St. Meletius was once again expelled from Antioch. Throughout Julian's vast kingdom a persecution was raised against Christians, which was especially severe in Antioch. The lawless emperor, setting out with his whole army on a campaign against Persia, came to Antioch. Here he offered many sacrifices to the idol of Apollo, which stood in a place called Daphne; this place lay in the suburbs of Antioch. Here too were laid the relics of the holy martyr Babylas with three infants. Once the emperor asked his false god Apollo, who had once given oracles to men, whether he would defeat the Persians. The idol gave him no answer, for since the relics of St. Babylas had been transferred to that place the demon had fled from it; from that time the idol, which had formerly given many predictions, ceased to give answers, for this demon used to prophesy through the idol. The emperor was grieved that the idol would cease to give predictions; learning from the local priests that the relics of Babylas were the cause of the silence of the idol Apollo, he ordered the Galileans (so he called the Christians) to remove those relics from there. As soon as they were removed, fire fell from heaven upon the temple of Apollo and burned the shrine together with the idol. This greatly grieved and shamed the impious priests, and they resolved to take revenge on the Christians. To this end they began to tell the emperor that the Galileans, out of hatred, had set fire to the temple of Apollo during the

night. Then the emperor was filled with fury against the Christians: he ordered that they be pursued and driven out, and at that time the holy archbishop Meletius was also expelled from the city; other Christians, fleeing voluntarily from Antioch, hid in secret refuges. Then the two holy presbyters of Antioch, Eugenius and Macarius, and St. Artemius were also subjected to torture. When this God-hating emperor Julian perished by a dreadful death, the pious and Christ-loving Jovian[9] ascended the imperial throne. Then St. Meletius again became the shepherd and teacher of Orthodoxy in Antioch, and Emperor Jovian honored the venerable man and loved him greatly. Therefore the Arians began to fear the saint. Some of their bishops even began hypocritically to patronize the Orthodox confession, desiring thereby to please the emperor and the Antiochene archbishop Meletius.

At that time a local council gathered in Antioch, convened by St. Meletius and Eusebius of Samosata. At it the Arians confessed the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and acknowledged as correct the faith established at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea; but this confession of theirs was insincere and false, for when shortly afterwards Emperor Jovian died and Valens ascended the throne[10], the heretics clearly showed that they had not abandoned their heresy; through his wife Domnica they even drew the emperor into their error. Then the church of the Orthodox was again persecuted, and its pastors were again driven out. This impious Emperor Valens remained a long time in Antioch, establishing and planting there the Arian heresy; incited by the heretics, he also banished the most holy archbishop Meletius, and the saint remained in exile until the death of Valens.

After Valens, the pious Emperor Gratian[11] ascended the throne; then, by imperial command, the Orthodox bishops who had been in confinement were restored, and they freely occupied their sees. Then St. Meletius, for the third time, returned to Antioch to his throne; but the dissension among the faithful over the two bishops, Paulinus and Meletius, still continued: some still regarded one as bishop, others the other,

9. Jovian reigned from 363 to 364.
10. Valens reigned from 364 to 378.
11. Gratian reigned from 383 to 392.

and both sides shunned one another; the saint applied all his effort to reconcile them. Then the pious and Christ-loving Emperor Gratian issued a decree for his whole realm, by which all churches were to be taken from the Arians and returned to the Orthodox. With this imperial decree a certain prince named Sapor came to Antioch. Before the imperial envoy St. Meletius addressed Bishop Paulinus with these words: "Since the Lord has entrusted to me also the care of this flock, and you have taken a part of them from me under your guidance, and the sheep themselves do not differ from one another in their confession of faith, let us unite the flock, brother; let us end all dispute over primacy, let us together shepherd the rational sheep and together care for them. But if the possession of the archpastoral throne produces strife between us, I shall endeavor to destroy it: I shall place the Divine Gospel upon this throne, and we shall do thus: we shall both sit on either side of the Gospel, and if I first finish my earthly course, you alone shall shepherd the flock; but if you first give up your soul to God, I shall, to the best of my strength, care for the flock." Thus proposed St. Meletius, who was distinguished by unusual meekness, but Paulinus did not agree to such a proposal. Then Prince Sapor reported this to the emperor, and receiving a reply from him, he took the cathedral church together with the other churches from the Arians and gave it to the most holy Meletius, while Paulinus continued to shepherd those sheep whom he had once taken from Meletius. Thus the holy archbishop received that throne to which he had been unanimously elected by the council's decree. He zealously and wisely governed his flock in peace and quiet until his blessed death. The Arians could no longer rise up and cause oppression to the Church of Christ and its good pastors; in particular they could no longer persecute St. Meletius, who shone like the sun, illumining the Church and dispelling the darkness of heresies. Following his teaching, many Antiochians grew in virtue and Orthodox faith, and like him became perfect luminaries of the Church. Such was Flavian[12], who after Meletius succeeded to his throne; Acacius, afterwards bishop of Beroea; Diodore of Tarsus; and Elpidius, domestic of Meletius, who afterwards

12. Flavian was Patriarch from 381 to 404.

occupied the episcopal see in Laodicea. Especially well known were St. John, afterwards surnamed Chrysostom, who had been ordained deacon by St. Meletius, and John's friend Basil, not of Caesarea but another, of the same name but younger, a native of Antioch, who grew up together with St. John. These and many others later adorned and enlightened the Church of Christ, each in his place, like candles in a candlestick. At that time, in the land of Syria, where Antioch was located, St. Simeon[13] also began his ascetic labor; he afterwards went up onto a pillar, but at first he bound himself with an iron chain on a high hill, as is related in his life. Hearing of this, the blessed Meletius came to him, and seeing him in fetters said: "A man can govern himself even without shackles; not with an iron chain, but by his will and reason he can bind himself to one place."

Hearing these words, the Venerable Simeon accepted this counsel; he removed his fetters and bound himself by his own free will, that he might be a voluntary prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Shortly before the blessed repose of St. Meletius, the pious Theodosius[14] came to the throne. He had first been a renowned voivode under Emperor Gratian, and enjoyed great honor for his bravery, for he had often won glorious victories over the barbarian regiments. This Theodosius, even before he ascended the imperial throne, once saw in a dream the Archbishop of Antioch, St. Meletius; he had never seen him in waking life, but had only heard of him. In the dream Theodosius saw that Meletius stood beside him and placed upon him the imperial robe and the royal crown. Awaking, Theodosius told his vision to one of his household and wondered what it might signify; soon afterward the vision was in fact fulfilled. Emperor Gratian, perceiving that it was impossible for him alone to govern east and west because of the vastness of the empire, and seeing that the barbarians threatened from every side, chose as his co-ruler the voivode Theodosius, as a virtuous, brave and orthodox man, and entrusted to him the whole eastern half of the empire, which had formerly been held by Emperor Valens, while he himself took the western part. Having received the eastern half, and

13. Evidently St. Simeon, the first Stylite, whose memory the Church celebrates on September 1.
14. Theodosius the Great came to the throne in 379 and reigned until 395.

having defeated the Goths who were advancing upon Thrace, Theodosius came to Constantinople and desired to see St. Meletius, who, as had appeared to him in the dream vision, had crowned him to the kingdom. At that time, by the agreement of the holy great fathers, the orthodox bishops, and by the will of the pious emperors Gratian and Theodosius, the Second Ecumenical Council[15] began to assemble in Constantinople. Bishops from the whole world were summoned to this council by imperial letters. Then the most holy Archbishop Meletius of Antioch also arrived in Constantinople. Emperor Theodosius ordered his boyars and household that no one should point out St. Meletius to him: he wished to recognize him himself, by the face he had seen in the dream, and to be fully assured that it was indeed Meletius, and not some other hierarch, who had crowned him in the vision. When the great council of bishops entered the imperial hall, the emperor, looking at them, at once saw and recognized St. Meletius. Leaving everyone, he went up and fell at the feet of Meletius and began to kiss his hands, his breast, his eyes, his lips, the head of the saint, as a most reverent son greets his father whom he has long desired to see. Before everyone the emperor related how this saint had appeared to him in the vision, placing the imperial crown and purple upon him, and had shown him preference above all the hierarchs. At that council St. Meletius amazed everyone with the following wondrous sign. When the Arians were teaching unorthodoxly concerning the Holy Trinity and corrupting the pious faith by their evil doctrine, this divinely wise man rose and showed the people who asked him for instruction three fingers as a sign of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity; then, joining two fingers and bending down one, he blessed the people. At that moment a fire, like lightning, overshadowed him, and the saint cried out loudly: "We confess Three Hypostases and speak of One Essence."

Thus St. Meletius amazed everyone, put the heretics to shame, and strengthened the Orthodox in the Orthodox faith; he also confirmed St. Gregory the Theologian on the patriarchal throne of Constantinople. Soon after this, while the council had not yet taken place and not all the

15. In 381. At this council the heresy of Macedonius was condemned, and the Nicene Symbol of Faith was supplemented and completed with five new articles of the Symbol.

bishops had gathered in Constantinople, St. Meletius fell briefly ill and peacefully yielded up his soul to the Lord[16], plunging the emperor, the hierarchs, and the whole Orthodox people into deep grief. All honorably buried this glorious archpastor and carried him to Antioch: there his honorable body was laid near the hieromartyr Babylas, for the protection of the city, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Fearing thy spiritual boldness, the apostate Macedonius flees; and thy servants, drawing near in love as they perform the prayerful service, O Meletius, companion of the Angels, fiery sword of Christ our God, slaying all the godless: we sing thee, the lamp that enlightened all.

* * *

Life of our holy father Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia, Wonderworker

Житие святого отца нашего Алексия, митрополита Московского и всея России чудотворца

St. Alexis the Wonderworker, Metropolitan of Russia, came from a boyar family. His parents Theodore and Mary were boyars of the Principality of Chernigov. St. Alexis was born in Moscow[17] during the reign of the Moscow prince Daniel Alexandrovich[18], whose son and heir, Prince John Danilovich[19], then still a youth, stood as godfather to Alexis at holy baptism, and the infant was given the name Eleutherius. When he grew older, he was given to teachers for book learning. Once,

16. St. Meletius, Patriarch of Antioch, died in 381 during the Second Ecumenical Council. St. Gregory of Nyssa, before the council, honoured the memory of St. Meletius with a eulogy, and St. John Chrysostom did the same upon his entry into the priesthood. From St. Meletius there survives a homily treating chiefly of the consubstantiality of the Son of God with God the Father, and a letter to the emperor Jovian, setting forth his confession of the Holy Trinity. The relics of St. Meletius were transferred from Constantinople to Antioch.

17. The father of St. Alexis the Metropolitan, the boyar Theodore Byakont, moved to Moscow because the land of Chernigov, laid waste by Batu, did not cease to suffer attacks from predatory raids. Under the protection of the strong and pious Prince Daniel Alexandrovich he found a peaceful and tranquil life. St. Alexis was born in 1300.

when Eleutherius was twelve years old, he was setting nets in the field to catch birds. At that time the youth happened to fall asleep and heard a voice: "Why, Alexis, do you labor in vain? I will make you a fisher of men."

Awaking from sleep, the youth saw no one around him and was greatly amazed at what he had heard. From that time he began to think and reflect much on what this voice might mean. Having loved God from his youth, he left his parents, refused marriage, and, desiring to labor for the One Master Christ, came to the Theophany Monastery in Moscow and here was tonsured a monk, and at his tonsure he was given the name he had heard in the dream vision, Alexis[20]. At that time the hegumen of the Theophany Monastery was Stephen, brother of the great wonderworker Sergius of Radonezh; he himself tonsured St. Alexis, who was then in his twentieth year.

From that time until he reached the age of forty, St. Alexis labored unceasingly; he fasted, prayed every night, and practiced the other monastic ascetic labors, so that many marveled at his zeal. For his God-pleasing life everyone revered and esteemed St. Alexis; even the Grand Prince of Moscow Simeon Ivanovich[21] and Metropolitan Theognostus[22] loved him greatly. For his many virtues he was appointed Bishop of the city of Vladimir[23].

When Metropolitan Theognostus reposed, the Grand Prince of Moscow John Ivanovich[24], who had taken up the reins of government after

18. Prince Daniel Alexandrovich, the youngest son of St. Alexander Nevsky, founder of the independent Moscow principality and progenitor of the princes of Moscow (1261–1303). Afterwards he was numbered by the Russian Church among the saints, and his relics, found incorrupt in 1652, rest openly to this day in the church of the Danilov Monastery he founded on the bank of the Moskva River.

19. Later Grand Prince of Moscow Ivan Danilovich Kalita, from 1328 to 1340.

20. This was in 1320. The Theophany (first-class) monastery in Moscow was founded in 1296 under the Moscow prince Daniel Alexandrovich.

21. Grand Prince of Moscow Simeon Ivanovich the Proud reigned from 1340 to 1353.

22. St. Theognostus governed the Russian Church from 1328 to 1353. He finally established the residence of the Russian metropolitans in Moscow instead of Vladimir.

23. Vladimir on the Klyazma, the metropolitan see until Saints Peter and Theognostus. St. Alexis was consecrated Bishop of Vladimir at the end of 1352. Twelve years earlier, Metropolitan Theognostus had ordered Alexis to live in his episcopal residence and to manage the judicial affairs of the Church; through his constant direct dealings with the Greek hierarch, St. Alexis had both the need and the means to become thoroughly acquainted with the Greek language.

his brother, Grand Prince Simeon, by conciliar decision chose St. Alexis as metropolitan and sent him for consecration to Constantinople to the most holy Patriarch Philotheus[25]. Philotheus consecrated St. Alexis as Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia. On his return from Constantinople St. Alexis took upon himself the governance of the Russian Church[26], and labored yet more, adding other labors to those he already bore, and he was a lamp for all, giving example by word, deed and life, by faith and purity, by spirit and love.

The fame of Hierarch Alexis spread not only among the faithful Christians but even among the unbelieving Muslims, who did not know Christ. The wife of the Tatar khan Janibeg, Taidula, had lost her sight three years earlier. Hearing that God worked many miracles through the prayers of St. Alexis, Janibeg sent to the Grand Prince of Moscow Demetrius Ivanovich[27] with a request that he send this man of God to him, so that, having prayed to God for his queen, he might restore her sight. At the same time Janibeg added:

"If the queen receives healing through the prayers of that man, you shall have peace with me. But if you do not send him to me, I will lay waste your land with fire and sword."

When this petition of Janibeg reached Moscow, St. Alexis grieved, considering the matter beyond his strength. But at the entreaties of Grand Prince Demetrius, he nevertheless set out for Khan Janibeg. Before his departure from Moscow he performed a prayerful service with the clergy in the cathedral church in honor of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. During this supplication a candle at the tomb of the holy wonderworker Peter lit itself, and all saw this miracle. From this St. Alexis understood that the Lord was pleased to signify that his journey would be successful. Taking some of the wax from that candle

24. Grand Prince of Moscow Ivan II Ivanovich reigned from 1353 to 1359.
25. Patriarch Philotheus governed the Constantinopolitan Church from 1354 to 1355, and then again from 1362 to 1376.
26. St. Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow, governed the Russian Church from 1354 to 1378.
27. Dimitri Ivanovich, Grand Prince Donskoy, was born on October 12, 1350; from 1362 he received the grand principality; he built the stone Kremlin in Moscow; he reigned for 27 years and lived 40 years. He defeated Khan Mamai on the Don on September 8, 1380; he died on May 19, 1389.

and making from it a small candle, the hierarch, together with his clergy, began to prepare for the road, firmly hoping in the mercy of God.

Even before the blessed man arrived in the capital of the Mongols, the queen saw in a dream vision the holy hierarch of God Alexis in archpastoral vestments, accompanied by priests. Awaking, she at once ordered precious vestments made for the hierarch and the priests according to the pattern she had seen in the dream vision. When St. Alexis was approaching the capital of the Tatars, Janibeg came out to meet him with great honor and led him into his palace. The hierarch, beginning the prayer service, ordered lit that small candle which he had brought with him. After a long prayer he sprinkled the queen with holy water, and she at once regained her sight. The khan with his nobles, and all who were there, greatly marveled at this wondrous and glorious miracle and offered praise to God. Having honored Alexis[28] and those who were with him, and having rewarded them generously, Janibeg dismissed them in peace.

Having returned from the Horde, St. Alexis, after some time, was again compelled to journey to the Horde. Khan Janibek had died, and upon his throne ascended his cruel and blood-thirsty son Berdibek. Having put to death his twelve brothers, he intended to march with his army against the Russian land. Then, at the request of Grand Prince John, St. Alexis went to the Horde to Berdibek and, by his gentle and wise discourse, calmed the fury of the cruel khan. Having obtained peace for the Christians from the dread sovereign, St. Alexis returned to Moscow, for to this city had been transferred by St. Peter, Metropolitan of Kiev, the see of the Kievan Metropolis, owing to frequent wars and incursions of barbarian peoples.

When the Grand Prince John died, the guardianship over the minor Prince Demetrius Ivanovich of Moscow fell upon the shoulders of the hierarch. The authority of Grand Prince was obtained for himself in the Horde by Prince Demetrius Konstantinovich of Suzdal.[29] The hierarch

28. The grateful khan gave the hierarch, as a mark of honour, a ring, which to this day is preserved in the patriarchal vestry.
29. Dimitri Konstantinovich was Grand Prince from 1359 to 1363.

was obliged to bless the Prince of Suzdal for the grand princedom, but he firmly refused to comply with the request of the Grand Prince to reside in Vladimir, remaining a caring father to the young Prince Demetrius Ivanovich. Meanwhile, disorders reigned in the Horde; every year several khans appeared, destroying one another; in 1362 two rival khans appeared. The young Demetrius obtained from one of them the title of Grand Prince of Russia and compelled Demetrius Konstantinovich to withdraw from Vladimir. St. Alexis joyfully blessed his ward for the grand princedom with the wonderworking Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God. He was the soul of the counsels and undertakings of Prince Demetrius; through the labors of the hierarch, the power of the Grand Prince of Moscow grew and strengthened.

Meanwhile St. Alexis occupied himself with the building of monastic communities. Thus, he built on the bank of the river Yauza a church in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in honor of His Image Not Made by Hands, established at this church a monastery and introduced into it the cenobitic rule.[1359] The leadership of the new community he entrusted to Andronicus,[30] a disciple of St. Sergius the Wonderworker. Besides this monastery, St. Alexis built other churches and monasteries in Moscow and in other Russian cities. Thus, he built in Moscow a stone church in the name of the holy Archangel Michael, in honor of his glorious miracle at Chonae,[31] and established a monastery, still called by the name of Chudov;[32] at this place the hierarch commanded that his body be laid. Many other deeds worthy of remembrance, glorious and wondrous, did St. Alexis accomplish to the glory of God, and he faithfully shepherded his rational flock until his very death.

Foreknowing his departure to the Lord, the hierarch celebrated the Divine Service and partook of the Holy Mysteries. Desiring that all should abide in peace, he gave the last kiss to all and peacefully committed his soul to the Lord on February 12, 1378.[33] This great servant occupied the hierarchal throne for 24 years; the total years of his life

30. The memory of the Venerable Andronicus is celebrated on June 13. His relics rest in the Monastery of the Saviour-Andronicus, which he founded together with St. Alexis.

31. The commemoration of the miracle that occurred at Chonae is celebrated on September 6.

32. The Chudov Monastery (cathedral) was founded in 1365 in memory of the miraculous healing of the Tatar queen Taidula.

were 85. With befitting honor his body was buried in the church he had built in the name of the Archangel Michael, in the side-chapel of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Virgin.

Many years later his holy and healing relics were discovered wholly incorrupt.[34] Even the vestments upon the reposed hierarch were completely intact, as though they had been put on the day before. After this, these holy relics were translated to a church built in the name of this servant of God.

From them even to this day many healings flow forth, as from an inexhaustible spring, and by his holy prayers aid is granted to all who with faith come to them, through the ineffable mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

As co-throned with the Apostles, and a most good physician, and a favorable servant, we who have come together to thy honorable shrine, O Alexis, God-wise Hierarch and Wonderworker, in love keep thy memory brightly, rejoicing in songs and hymns, and glorifying Christ, Who hath granted thee such grace of healings and a great establishment for thy city.

Another Troparion, Tone 4:

Keeper of the dogmas of the Apostles, pastor and teacher of the Russian Church, let us celebrate the memory of the most blessed Hierarch Alexis, and let us hymn with worthy songs Christ our God, Who gave us His servant as an abundant spring, pouring forth healings, and to the city of Moscow a glory and establishment.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Let us all, the faithful people, sing of the divine and most honorable Hierarch of Christ, the new wonderworker Alexis, and in love bless him as a great pastor, and a wise servant and teacher

33. In spiritual literature St. Alexis the Metropolitan left behind letters, instructions, and translations. In the Chudov Monastery in Moscow is preserved a Gospel translated by him from Greek and written in his own hand.
34. This was on May 20, 1431.

of the land of Russia. Today, coming together in his memory, let us joyfully cry out to the God-bearer this song: "Having boldness toward God, deliver us from manifold distresses; therefore we call to thee: Rejoice, establishment of our city."

* * *

Life of the Venerable Mary, who ascetically labored in male guise under the name Marina, and of her father the Venerable Eugenius

Житие преподобной Марии, подвизавшейся в мужском образе под именем Марина, и отца ее преподобного Евгения

In Bithynia[35] there lived a pious man named Eugenius. His wife was also God-fearing and had the fear of God in her heart. They had a single daughter, Mary. When her mother died, Eugenius raised his daughter in the commandments of the Lord. When the young maiden had grown, the father said to her:

"Beloved daughter, behold, I bequeath to you all my property, and I myself will go to a monastery to save my soul."

But the maiden answered her father:

"Father, you yourself wish to be saved; surely you would not neglect to save me also. For you know that the Lord said in the Gospel: 'The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep' (Jn. 10:11); for he who saves anyone's soul, as it were, builds it."

Hearing this, Eugenius was very glad that his daughter was so pious. And the young Mary, conversing with her father, wept.

"Dear daughter," said Eugenius, "I do not know how to act toward you. You are of the female sex, while I shall go to a men's monastery. How can you remain there together with me? The devil may by your appearance lead someone into sin."

Hearing this, the maiden said:

"Father, I will not enter a men's monastery in the form of a woman. I will cut off my hair, put on men's clothing, enter the monastery together with you, and no one shall know that I am a woman."

35. The northwestern province of Asia Minor.

Hearing this, the blessed Eugenius rejoiced even more; having distributed all his property to the beggars and the poor, the orphans and the widows, he tonsured his daughter, gave her men's clothing, and named her Marinus instead of Mary.

"My daughter," he said to her, "you must keep yourself and conceal your sex; you know that women do not enter a monastery; you will be among men as though in the midst of fire; keep your virginity. If we fulfill our vow, we shall be made worthy to be heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Having prayed to God, Eugenius together with his daughter, clothed in men's garments, entered the monastery. They both began to labor among the other monks. Day by day his daughter advanced more and more in the virtuous life. She was distinguished by her obedience and humility, and always strove for great ascetic feats. Several years passed. The monks of that monastery considered her a eunuch, for she had no mustache or beard, and her voice was thin. Others thought that Marinus' voice was such because of his great ascetic labors and fasting, for Marinus took only a little food, and that not every day, but every other day.

After some time the Venerable Eugenius reposed in the Lord in the monastic rank, so that his daughter Mary, or as the youth Marinus, was left an orphan. From this time she labored even more, mortifying her body by many labors and abstinence. By the grace of God she advanced so far in the virtues that she received even power over the spirits of wickedness: the sufferers from unclean spirits were often brought to her; the saint laid hands on them, by her prayer cast the demons out of them, and the sick became completely healthy.

In this monastery there were only 40 brethren, adorned with every virtue and spiritual wisdom. Each month from among the brethren 4 monks were sent to the gardens for the monastery's needs, for that monastery had villages situated at a considerable distance from the community. Midway, on the road between the monastery and the gardens, there was an inn, where the brethren going to work or returning from it stopped to rest. The host of that inn himself treated the monks with love, assigned them a special room, and cared for them. The en-

emy of the human race, unable to endure the so virtuous life of the young maiden in male guise, her love for God, her zeal in labors and monastic feats, and her unwavering patience, rose up against her. He wished to hinder her in her ascetic struggle and to dishonor her. By his cunning deceit he arranged the following. Once the abbot of that monastery called the monk Marinus to himself and said to him: "Brother Marinus, I know your virtuous life; I know that you labor in obedience. Do not refuse; go to the monastery's labors. For some of the monks are displeased that you remain constantly in the monastery and never go out to the gardens to work, which are needed for our community. Go there, child, and you shall receive a very great reward from the most good God, for He Himself did not disdain to serve His disciples." Hearing this, Marinus fell prostrate before the abbot and said: "Bless me, honorable father: I will go wherever you command."

Together with three other monks, Marinus set out for the monastery's labors. On the way he spent the night at the aforementioned inn. The innkeeper had a daughter, already fully grown. A certain soldier, lodging at that inn, seduced her, and she conceived. The same soldier taught her to tell her parents that Marinus was guilty of her fall. When her parents asked their daughter who had seduced her, she pointed to Marinus. Her father was deeply grieved. He went to the monastery and began to shout in anger:

"Where is that deceitful and false Christian among you, the one who passes himself off as a monk?"

The monastery's steward came out to meet him, saying:

"You have come at a good hour, but why are you so sorrowful, and why do you cry out with such anger? Calm yourself, I beg you."

To this the innkeeper replied:

"Cursed be the hour when I became acquainted with your monastery. Woe is me! What misfortune has befallen me. I do not know what to do."

The abbot, hearing of this, summoned the innkeeper and asked what had happened to him, why he was so grieved, and what he desired.

"What do I want?" said the innkeeper. "I want never, anywhere, to see a single monk or speak with one."

When the abbot asked why he spoke so, the innkeeper answered:

"I had an only daughter. I thought she would comfort me in my old age, and this is what Marinus, whom you consider a good and virtuous Christian, has done to her: he dishonored my daughter, and she has conceived by him in her womb."

Hearing this, the abbot was greatly astonished and answered the innkeeper:

"What am I to do? Marinus is not in the monastery now, for he has not yet returned from the monastery's labors. When he comes, I will at once expel him from the monastery."

Meanwhile Marinus returned to the monastery together with the other three monks. The abbot immediately summoned him and said:

"Is this, brother, your way of life, is this your ascetic labor: that, lodging at an inn, you seduced the daughter of the innkeeper, and now she is with child. Her father came here and reviled us in every way on your account."

Hearing this, Marinus fell at the abbot's feet and said to him:

"Father, forgive me a sinner, forgive me for the Lord's sake. I have sinned as a man."

Then the abbot, greatly angered by this, expelled Marinus from the monastery with disgrace.

After his expulsion from the monastery, the innocent Marinus remained before the gates of the monastery; sitting there without clothing, he patiently endured both heat and cold. Those entering or leaving the monastery asked him:

"Why, Father, do you sit here naked, enduring these deprivations?"

"I have sinned," Marinus answered, "and for that reason I have been expelled from the monastery."

Meanwhile the innkeeper's daughter bore a son. Her father, taking this infant, came to the monastery and, finding Marinus sitting before the gates, threw the infant down before him and went away. Taking him up, Marinus said weeping: "Woe is me, wretched and rejected. Truly I, a sinner, receive what is worthy of my deeds, but why should this poor infant suffer and die through me?"

Marinus began to ask the shepherds for milk and fed the infant with it, as a true father would. Besides enduring constantly heat and hunger, mockery and want in everything, even the care of the infant brought him many labors and anxieties. Often the infant soiled his garments, but the Venerable Marinus bore all this without murmuring for three years, enduring and giving thanks to God. After three years had passed, the brethren began to pity Marinus. The monks, gathering together, came to the abbot and said to him: "Honorable Father, the penance of Marinus is sufficient; now we ask you to receive him into the monastery. For he has repented and before everyone has told of his fall."

But the abbot did not wish to heed their request and receive Marinus again. Then the monks began to ask him again and said:

"If you do not receive Brother Marinus into the monastery, then we will all leave. For how can we ask the Lord to forgive our sins when we ourselves do not forgive our brother, who for three years has been suffering without shelter before the gates of our monastery."

Hearing this, the abbot answered the monks:

"Truly, because of the sin that Marinus committed, he is unworthy to enter here; but for the sake of your love and your entreaty, I receive him."

Summoning Marinus, the abbot said to him in the presence of all the monks:

"Brother, because of the sin you have committed, you are unworthy to hold your former first place among the brethren. But for the sake of the love of the brethren, who have pleaded for you, I give you the last place in the monastery, and you shall be the last among the monks."

With tears Marinus said to the abbot:

"Most honorable Father, it is already much for me that you allow me to enter the monastery, where I may serve all the brethren."

Having received Marinus, the abbot ordered him to perform the hardest and lowliest labors in the monastery. St. Marinus performed them with great diligence, with a contrite heart and in complete humility. With him was also the child, who, following Marinus constantly, called him father and asked him for food. The Venerable Marinus took

care of the child's upbringing. When he grew up, through the prayers of his supposed father, he advanced in humility and prayer; he was loved by all for his virtue and received the monastic rank. But this happened only after the death of St. Marinus, whose blessed repose took place as follows.

Christ saw the faith and patience of His bride, who had labored in His name in male guise, endured such great afflictions and sufferings. And the Lord desired to console her in her sorrows, to give her rest from her many labors, and to settle her in the mansions of Paradise. By God's will she fell asleep in her cell, and no one knew of it. The abbot, seeing that Marinus had not come to church or to the monastery's labors for three days, asked the monks: "Three days have now passed since I have seen Marinus. He always comes first, at the beginning of the services, but now he is not here. Go to his cell and find out whether some sickness has befallen him."

The brethren went and found that Marinus had yielded up his soul to the Lord; beside him sat the weeping boy. The brethren at once reported to the abbot that Marinus had died. Hearing this, the abbot was astonished and said:

"His soul has left his body; what answer will he give the Lord concerning his sins?"

After this he ordered, according to custom, that Marinus's body be prepared for burial. At this time the monks saw that Brother Marinus was of the female sex. They were horrified and all with one voice began to cry out: "Lord, have mercy!"

The abbot, hearing their cries, was astonished and said:

"What is this?" They answered him:

"Our brother Marinus is by nature a woman."

The abbot, drawing near to the Venerable woman, saw this wondrous and unexpected thing, fell to the ground, and touching the saint's feet cried out: "Forgive me, Lord Jesus Christ, that in my ignorance I have sinned and have so grievously saddened Thy holy and pure bride."

And again, falling at the saint's feet, he cried: "Here will I die at thy honorable feet, or I will keep calling out until I receive forgiveness for my sins, by which I have offended thee."

Thus he wept and sobbed for a long time. Suddenly a voice sounded from heaven: "If you had done this knowingly, this would not have been forgiven you; but you sinned in ignorance, therefore your sins are now forgiven you."

Then the abbot, rising from the honorable relics, sent word to the innkeeper: "Come to us at once, I have something to tell you."

When the innkeeper came to the monastery, the abbot said to him:

"Brother Marinus has died."

He answered:

"May God forgive him his sin!" But the abbot interrupted him, saying:

"Repent, brother, for you have sinned before the Lord and have beguiled me with your words, and I have sinned because of you. Marinus is a woman!"

Hearing this, the innkeeper was struck with terror and remained silent, as though he were mute. The abbot, taking him by the hand, led him to the place where the holy body of Blessed Mary lay, and told him that he had wrongly accused Marinus of the seduction of his daughter. Seeing such a wondrous miracle, the innkeeper began to weep and to repent of the malice he had previously borne against the saint. Meanwhile the abbot, together with the monks, singing the funeral hymns, honorably laid the pure virginal body of the undefiled bride of Christ in a specially prepared place in the monastery. There also came the innkeeper's daughter, who had been tormented by an unclean spirit. She openly told everyone the whole truth. When she was brought to the coffin of St. Mary, the unclean spirit at once left her, and from that hour she became perfectly healthy. All who witnessed this miracle glorified the most merciful God and His holy servant Mary, who, unknown to all, kept the secret until death and endured much for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven[36].

Let us also, brethren, imitate her martyrdom, steadfastness and patience; then we too shall receive in the life to come the grace of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory and domin-

36. The Venerable Mary, who renamed herself Marinus; her father Eugenius died at the beginning of the sixth century.

ion, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of St. Anthony, Patriarch of Constantinople

Память святого Антония, патриарха Константинопольского

The homeland of St. Antony was Asia, but his whole life, from infancy until his blessed end, passed in the capital of the Greek empire, Constantinople[37]. In this city the Venerable Father was nurtured, spent his childhood and youth, received his education, and at last became a bishop. There were very many foreshadowings of the saint's high service in the Church in the rank of bishop. Among other things, while still an infant he would watch attentively how the Proskomedia was performed, how the censer was held, and in general how the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the church. Thus the grace of God prepared the Venerable Father, from his infant years, for the celebration of the divine services. Having attained his majority, St. Antony took the monastic tonsure in one of the Constantinopolitan monasteries and valiantly began to undergo the ascetic labours of the monastic life. By the severity of his labours he soon drew attention to himself, and, against his own wish, he was ordained first to the rank of presbyter and then, by command of the patriarch, was also appointed hegumen. At this time the Venerable Father's own father also entered the monastic state. Bearing the new burdens of the hegumenate, St. Antony nevertheless continued unchanged in his customary labours, remaining in constant vigil, fasting, and unceasing prayer. While passing his time in this way, he also occupied himself with distributing alms to the poor with his own hands. And it happened that while this great ascetic, carrying on his laborious monastic life, was performing works of mercy, someone once brought him a bag of gold and, handing it to him, said: "Take this for distribution to the beggars."

At these words there appeared to the Venerable Father only a hand holding the bag of gold, while the one who had offered it remained in-

37. St. Antony was born around 829.

visible. From this time the Venerable Father began to distribute alms in abundance to all who were worthy of them.

The time came when the patriarchal throne in Constantinople became vacant, and the Venerable Antony, by the unanimous election of the episcopal council and the emperor, was raised to the throne of the Patriarch of Constantinople[38]. At this time he was already advanced in years, but, notwithstanding the weakness of his aged strength, strong with the power of the Holy Spirit, he visited all the churches of his patriarchate, overcoming his temporary infirmities, as far as his age allowed, by the power of prayer. Seeing the straitened condition of the clergy, owing to a lack of material means, the Venerable Father delivered them from their difficulties by generous monetary assistance. On his entering the churches, thousands of beggars always met him, and he dispensed alms to them all. In general he was a servant to many in many things. Having performed many miracles, the Venerable Antony, in deep old age, passed to the Lord.

* * *

NOTES

1359. This monastery was founded by vow. When St. Alexis set out for Constantinople to be consecrated Metropolitan of Kiev and of All Russia, on the return journey he was exposed to peril, so that his very life was in danger: a terrible storm arose on the sea, and the ship every moment seemed ready to disappear beneath the waves. All who were with the metropolitan despaired of being saved. Meanwhile the hierarch prayed fervently to God, and made a vow to build a church in the name of the saint whose feast fell on the day the voyagers should reach the shore. The Lord heard the hierarch's prayer. A calm came, and the ship put in to shore on August 16. In fulfilment of this vow, St. Metropolitan Alexis founded, around 1360, the aforementioned monastery in honour of the All-merciful Saviour, of His Image Not Made by Hands. In the building of the monastery the Venerable Andronicus, a disciple of St. Sergius, gave much help to the hierarch, for which reason it received the name of the Monastery of the Saviour-Andronicus (Andronievsky); today it is a second-class monastery. In the monastery to this day is pre-

38. St. Antony II (surnamed Kauleas) ascended the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople in 893 and was Patriarch until his death, which followed in 895.

served the Image of the Saviour Not Made by Hands, brought by St. Alexis from Constantinople and adorned with a rich vestment.



THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 13

13 февраля

New Calendar February 13 · Old Calendar February 26 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Martinian, and the Memory of the Holy Women Zoe and Photinia

Житие преподобного отца нашего Мартиниана, и память святых жен Зои и Фотинии

In Palestine, near the city of Caesarea[1], there is a mountain called the Place of the Ark. Many hermits struggled upon it, and among them the blessed and praiseworthy monk, filled with divine grace, Saint Martinian. From his youth he loved God and began to live the monastic life. Martinian, handsome in appearance, at the age of eighteen left the city and his kinsfolk, renounced worldly vanity, and came to this mountain for a life of silence and solitude. Living as the incorporeal Angels live, he remained here for twenty-five years. For his virtuous life he was granted by God the gift of healing infirmities and diseases. Many were healed of various ailments through his holy prayers; many who were possessed by an evil spirit, coming to him on the mountain, were freed from the snares of the wicked one. God worked many other miracles through the prayers of His servant. Day by day Martinian advanced more and more in his ascetic labors; the fame of his virtuous life spread far beyond the bounds of that land, and all who heard of him came to him for the benefit of their souls. But the enemy of the human race, the devil, could not endure the virtuous life of this young ascetic, who had so adorned himself with spiritual struggles. At first he began to tempt the blessed Martinian in every way and sought to frighten him in various manners. Then the ancient enemy of the human race em-

1. *Caesarea* – a large city in Palestine, on the Mediterranean; there the Roman procurators had their residence.

ployed that same weapon with which he had once driven Adam out of Paradise, desiring to drive this ascetic also out of his silent desert and deprive him of eternal blessedness.

Once, while the blessed Martinian was chanting the Psalms of David, the devil assumed the form of a great serpent and, approaching the wall of the saint's cell, began to dig vigorously in the ground. He wished to undermine the earth and bring the cell down upon the blessed man. But Martinian, without fear or confusion, having finished his chanting, looked out of the little window of his cell and said to that serpent:

"Truly, it becomes you to crawl upon the earth; why do you labor in vain? Your snares will not terrify me. For my Lord Jesus Christ helps me: He will overcome your snares and put your power to shame."

Hearing this, the devil, changing into a dark whirlwind, fled in shame, saying:

"Wait, wait; I know how to overcome you. I shall make you my slave; I shall scatter all your hopes. I shall bring upon you such a temptation as you cannot bear; I shall tear you out of your cell and cast you down like a leaf driven by the wind. Then I shall see who will help you."

Having said this, the devil disappeared. But Martinian was so steadfast in faith that he remained without any fear or dread, as if he had seen no apparition at all. He only praised the Lord, occupying himself with meditation on God and with the reading and understanding of Holy Scripture.

After this the following occurred. Some inhabitants of Caesarea were once conversing among themselves about the virtuous life of Martinian. They greatly marveled at his courage and endurance. A certain harlot woman happened to overhear this conversation. At the devil's instigation, she approached these men with the following words:

"Why do you so marvel at the life of this ascetic? Is he already so firm in virtue? If I only wish it, I can shake him as the wind shakes a leaf on a tree. And what worthy of praise have you found in him? Is it perhaps that, like a wild beast, he has withdrawn into the desert, being unable to struggle in the city with the lust of the flesh and worldly

temptations? And what is so remarkable if he remains dispassionate, never seeing a single woman? You yourselves know well that without fire the hay does not burn; but it would be very remarkable indeed if the hay placed near the fire did not catch alight. So one should reason also about this man. If I go to him, and he remains equally dispassionate and is not seduced by my beauty, then he will be great not only before men but also before God and His Angels."

After these words she made a wager for money with those men and went to her house. There she took off her rich garments, clothed herself in poor and torn garments, covered her head with sackcloth, and girded herself with a rope. And all her rich apparel, rings and earrings, gold rings, necklaces, and everything that delights the minds and eyes of young men, she put into a bag and took it with her. In the evening she left Caesarea, and at night came to that mountain in the desert where the Venerable man lived. The night was rainy and stormy. Approaching Martinian's cell, the woman, feigning distress, began with groans to beg the saint:

"Have mercy on me, servant of God! Do not leave me, a wretch, to be devoured by the beasts. I have lost my way in the desert and do not know where to go. Show mercy, have pity on me in such distress, and do not disdain me, a sinner, for I too am a creature of God. I implore you, holy father, do not leave me without help."

She said this and much like it, with weeping and wailing. The blessed Martinian opened his little window, looked out, and seeing her in such poor attire, standing in the heavy rain, he thought within himself:

"Woe is me, wretched sinner. Now a temptation stands before me: either I must fulfill the commandment of God, which bids me to be merciful, or I must break my monastic vow. If I do not take this woman into my cell, she being in such a wretched state, the beasts will devour her or she will die of the great cold. Then I shall defile my soul and be like a murderer. But if I bring her into my cell, I fear that a temptation may befall me. Then I shall defile both my body and my soul and be an impure fornicator before my Lord. I do not know how to act."

And raising his hands to heaven, the blessed Martinian cried out:

"'To Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul' (Ps. 24:1). Do not permit me to fall into temptation and become a slave of the deceitful devil. But preserve me in this hour and cover me from the snare of the enemy, for Thou art blessed forever."

Having prayed, he opened the door, brought that woman into the cell, and, kindling a fire, offered her to warm herself. Then he brought date fruits, which he had picked from a tree standing not far from his cell, gave them to her, and said:

"Woman! Eat, and warm yourself here by the fire; in the morning leave my cell in peace."

After this he left her in the outer part of the cell, and he himself went into the inner part and locked the doors behind him. At the third hour of the night he began, according to his established custom, to chant psalms and prayers. After this he lay down on the ground and fell asleep. But Satan troubled him that night with carnal lust. At midnight the woman rose, took from her bag all her adornments, and put them on to seduce the saint. Having stowed away her poor garments in the bag, she waited until Martinian should come out to her. In the morning the saint came out of his part, wishing to send the woman away from his cell. Seeing her in rich apparel and adorned, he did not recognize her. In terror he stopped and for a long time was silent. At last he said to her:

"Who are you, and whence have you come, and where did you get such devilish garments?"

She answered him that she was the very woman whom he himself had admitted into his cell.

"Why have you changed your clothes?" asked Martinian. "In the evening you were in a poor rag, but now you are in rich apparel."

Then she said:

"I am from Caesarea in Palestine; I have heard much about you, about your beauty, and my heart has burned with love for you. I have made so long a journey for your sake. What is the use of your abstinence, why do you wear down your body with so strict a fast? In what books have you found that one should neither drink nor eat nor marry?

Did not the Apostle Paul say: 'Let marriage be held in honor among all, and the bed undefiled' (Heb. 13:4)?

Which of the prophets lost the Kingdom of Heaven merely because he had a wife? Was not the great and wondrous Enoch married? Yet he was taken up into heaven and has not tasted death even to this day (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5). The forefather Abraham had three wives, and was even called a friend of God; more than this, he was granted to receive God Himself, in Three Persons, beneath his tent (Gen. 18). Isaac also, that prefigurement of Christ, was married (Gen. 24:67). Jacob had two wives and two concubines, and was able to wrestle with an Angel and was granted to behold the glory of God (Gen. 22). Was not the great Moses, the chief prophet and servant of God, married (Ex. 2)? Yet he spoke with God, freed the Hebrew people from the heavy bondage of foreigners, and was granted the Heavenly Kingdom. Likewise David, the other prophets, and the holy men had lawful wives and children, and all of them dwell in the Heavenly Kingdom.

Speaking thus, the sinful woman sought to confound the saint and shake him; she seized his hands and began to draw the saint toward perdition.

"But if I make you my wife," said Martinian, "how am I to be with you? How shall I support you, when I have nothing? You see my life; from my youth I have not sought to acquire any perishable goods."

To this the woman answered:

"Master, only remain with me and let me enjoy your beauty, and do not be concerned about the rest. I have a house and much property: gold and silver, and servants and maidservants. All of this you will be master of."

Hearing the words which this woman spoke, or rather, which the devil himself, the ancient murderer of men, spoke through her lips, Martinian began to waver, pondering the committing of sin. At last he said to the woman:

"Wait a little: some people commonly come to me for a blessing. I will go and see whether anyone is there, lest we be seen. We cannot hide our sin from God; let us at least hide it from men, lest we be reviled and reproached."

Having said this, he went out of his cell and, standing upon a stone that lay there, began carefully to watch the road. But God, the Lover of mankind, wills the destruction of no one. He did not disregard the labors which St. Martinian had undertaken from his youth; He remembered his prayers, gave him His help, and turned his evil thought to good. Coming down from the stone, Martinian found some dry brushwood, took it, and carried it into his cell. He laid it in the middle of the cell and set it alight. When the fire had grown strong, the saint took off his sandals, stepped into the flames, and stood there until the fire began to scorch his whole body. Then he came out of the flames and spoke, as though reproaching himself:

"What is it, Martinian? Is this passing fire pleasant? Is this torment agreeable? If you can endure it, then go to this woman. She—or the devil through her—will prepare eternal fire for you. No, she is not to blame, but the devil, who put this thought into her mind; he does this because he wishes to draw you into the pit of destruction. Consider, unworthy Martinian, the torment that awaits you; remember the eternal fire. This passing fire can be quenched with water. It also gives light. But the fire of hell has no light at all; all the seas and rivers that exist beneath the heavens cannot quench it. If you can endure this unquenchable fire, then go to the woman and fulfill your desire."

Thus he spoke to himself. When his pain had begun to abate somewhat, he again stood in the fire and remained there a long time, as long as he was able. Coming out of the fire, he fell to the ground and, with a contrite heart, sighing and weeping, cried out to the Lord:

"O Lord, my God, be merciful to me, a sinner; forgive the darkening of my mind and my inclination toward sin. Thou Who searchest hearts and inward thoughts, knowest my heart also; Thou knowest that I have loved Thee from my early youth and that for Thy sake I scorched my body with fire. Forgive me, my Master and Lord, for Thou alone art good and merciful, for blessed art Thou forever."

Thus the saint prayed, lying face down upon the ground, for his severe burns made it impossible for him to stand. After this he began to sing: "How good God is to Israel, to those who are pure in heart! But my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped"[2] (Ps. 72:1–2).

Seeing this, the woman marveled that the saint, for the sake of his salvation, had himself exposed his body to the flames. She, too, remembered her sins and was stirred in spirit, as though awakening from sleep. She tore off her clothes and all her ornaments, cast them into the fire, and, again clad in poor rags, fell at the feet of St. Martinian and began to say to him with tears:

"Forgive me, wretched and sinful woman, servant of God. You, master, know how strong and manifold are the devil's snares and deceptions. He also put into my mind the thought of tempting you. Pray for me, holy father, that through your prayers I, too, a great sinner, may receive salvation. Know, father, that I shall no longer return to the city, enter my house, or see my relatives and acquaintances. No, I have firmly resolved to abandon my defiled deeds; I shall care only for the salvation of my wretched soul. And know this also, my master: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I shall wage war against the devil by the very means through which he prompted me to rise up against you. I hope to put him to shame: this ancient deceiver, by stirring me up against you, has stirred me up against himself. He wished to overcome you through me, but with the help of our Master, Who calls even harlots to repentance, he himself shall be overcome by me."

She spoke these words through her tears. But the blessed one answered her:

"May my Lord and God forgive you, woman, your sin. Go in peace, and, as you have said, care for the salvation of your soul. Wage war against the passions by laying repentance upon yourself, and thus you will be able to put the evil one to shame."

In answer, she said to the blessed one:

2. That is, he was in danger of abandoning the sound thoughts that sustained me, and of being exposed to the greatest temptation. – By "feet and steps" the prophet means, as Blessed Theodoret explains, thoughts.

"I beg and beseech you, father, guide me in the way of salvation; tell me how I may be saved."

He answered:

"Go to Bethlehem, and there seek out a holy virgin named Paula[3], who built a holy church there. When you come to her, tell her everything that has happened, and find salvation with her."

The woman rose, bowed before him, and said:

"Pray for me, father, a sinner!"

The saint, oppressed by severe pain, could rise from the ground only with great difficulty. He gave the woman some dates for her journey, led her out of his cell, and, pointing out the road to Jerusalem, said:

"Go in peace, save your soul, and labor in repentance. See that you do not turn back: 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God' (Lk. 9:62). Watch over yourself, lest you again be mocked by the enemy; persevere unceasingly in repentance, for God receives those who repent."

Hearing this, the woman wept still more bitterly and said:

"I, too, hope in Him in Whom the nations hoped and were not put to shame. I firmly believe and hope that henceforth the devil will find no servant in me."

The blessed Martinian signed her with the sign of the Cross and said:

"May the Lord my God preserve your soul and keep you to the end."

The woman bowed before the saint and departed, while the saint returned to his cell and began to pray to the Lord with tears. Meanwhile, she went on her way, praying to God with tears that He would guide her in the way of salvation. Night had already fallen, and she was still walking in the desert. There she stopped for the night. Rising in the morning, she continued on her way, praying and shedding tears. It was only late the following evening that she arrived in Bethlehem. Entering the monastery built by the blessed Paula, she bowed before her and told her all that had happened. Hearing her story, the blessed Paula glorified God, the Lover of mankind, joyfully received her into her monas-

3. The Venerable *Paula*, a widow, labored in Bethlehem for 20 years, from 384; she reposed on January 26, 404.

tery, and every day instructed her and guided her in the way of salvation. The woman began to labor and fast so earnestly that the blessed Paula often said to her:

"Spare your flesh, child, lest it grow weak; take care that you may be able to persevere in ascetic fasting to the end."

But she did not slacken her ascetic labors. Shortly before her death, the blessed Zoe—for that was the woman's name—asked the Lord to reveal to her whether her repentance had been accepted. As a sign of His mercy, God, the Lover of mankind, gave her the gift of healing. A woman who suffered greatly from her eyes came to the monastery, hoping to receive healing. The blessed Paula, wishing to learn of Zoe's repentance, said to her:

"Pray for this woman, child; perhaps through your prayer the Lord will grant her healing."

A little while later, as Zoe prayed for the sick woman, she was healed. In gratitude for her healing, the woman was tonsured in that monastery and began to pursue the monastic ascetic life with great zeal.

For twelve years the blessed Zoe labored in ascetic fasting and peacefully gave her soul to the Lord. Throughout all the time of her repentance, she tasted neither wine, nor oil, nor vegetables, but only a little bread and water. She ate only once a day, in the evening, and sometimes only every two days; the bare earth was her bed. Such was the ascetic life of the saint, such was her end.

But let us return to the account of the blessed Martinian.

The Venerable Martinian recovered from his burns only after seven months. Then he began to reason thus:

"If I do not leave this place for somewhere else, the evil enemy will not leave me alone or give me rest. Besides, I ought to live in a place where women have no access at all."

Having considered this, he rose and prayed to God:

"Master of heaven and earth and Creator of the sea! Do what will be for my good; do not abandon me, nor allow me to perish utterly; be my helper and protector. O Lord of hosts, show me the way of salvation."

Signing himself with the sign of the Cross, the blessed one went out of his cell and set out toward the sea. Seeing the ascetic leave that place, the devil cried out:

"May my name be glorified, for I have driven you, Martinian, from your cell, scorched your body, and made you a fugitive and my captive. Why, Martinian, are you fleeing from here? Know, however, that wherever you go, I shall follow you everywhere. As I drove you from this place, so shall I drive you from every place where you settle. I shall not leave you until I have utterly overcome you and made you my slave." But the blessed one answered:

"Weak and wretched one! Do you suppose that you, who have no strength of your own, drove me from this cell, or that I left it in despair? No, I came out from here in order to fight you better and overcome you. If those two temptations you brought upon me were not enough for you, then try to tempt me further. With the help of my God I have destroyed your wicked craft, and I suffered not for your sake, but for the name of the Lord my God. Even that very woman whom you prompted to tempt me now knows your nothingness and likens you to smoke: she has trampled your impious and evil snares underfoot, so that you dare not approach even her shadow."

Hearing these words of the saint, the devil vanished. The blessed one began to sing the psalm: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered; let them that hate Him flee from before His face" (Ps. 67:2). Singing this psalm, he made his way toward the sea. When he reached a harbor, he found there a certain God-fearing shipmaster and said to him:

"Brother, do you know of any small, uninhabited island in the sea?"

The shipmaster answered him:

"Why do you ask? What do you need it for?"

"I wish to withdraw from this vain world and take upon myself the labor of silence," answered Martinian, "but I do not know of a place suited to it."

That man said:

"There is one such place, but it is terrifying: in the midst of the sea there stands a high rock of stone, from which one cannot even see land."

"Such a place is suitable for me," answered the blessed one. "I desire to dwell there, for there can be no access for women."

"But who will bring you your sustenance?" asked the shipman.

Martinian said:

"I wish to ask this of you. You will bring me food, and I will pray for you. And if you bring palm branches, I will occupy myself with weaving; when you come, you will take my handiwork and sell it, and with that money you will buy me bread. Bring me also water in a vessel. I ask you to come to me with bread and water two or three times a year."

Hearing this, the shipman understood that a holy man stood before him; he promised to fulfill everything the blessed one asked. They went aboard the ship and sailed to that desolate place. With a favorable wind they reached the stone rock by evening. Seeing it, the blessed one rejoiced in spirit and glorified God. Having blessed the shipman, he climbed onto the rock and began to sing: "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry; He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Ps. 39:2). (The pit of passions, according to the explanation of St. Athanasius, is vice and ignorance; and the miry clay is the mud of sins, in which those caught by them sink as in mire.)

Having finished the psalm, he prayed and said to the shipman:

"Go in peace, brother, and bring me bread, water, and branches, that I may make baskets."

"If you wish," answered the shipman, "I will also bring you timber. Here we can build you a small hut."

But the blessed one did not desire this: he remained to live on that rock under the open sky, patiently enduring both the heat of day and the cold of night. Two or three times a year the shipman brought him bread and water, as the saint had asked. Living on the rock, the blessed Martinian was exceedingly glad that he had fled the worldly vanity. Day and night he glorified God and unceasingly was instructed in con-

templation of God. But the crafty devil did not wish to leave the saint even here, and he sought in every way to vex him. Once at night he stirred up a great storm upon the sea and raised a huge wave over the head of the blessed one. It rose above the rock by fifteen cubits. At this the devil cried out:

"Now I will drown you, Martinian!"

The blessed one answered without dismay:

"In vain you labor, feeble and wretched one: your snares will not frighten me, your plots will not disturb me. I trust in my Lord Jesus Christ, and by His name I will put you to shame."

Having said this, the blessed one began to sing: "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me" (Ps. 68:2).

Having finished this psalm, Martinian began to pray:

"O Lord Jesus Christ," he cried, "Only-begotten Son of the invisible Father, Thou didst come down to earth for our salvation; Thou hast dominion also over the sea, and Thou commandest the winds. All things hearken to Thee with fear. Hear me, O Master, in this hour, and stay this storm; put to shame the devil who wishes to destroy me. All things are possible to Thee, O Lord; all things are in Thy power." At these words of the saint the devil vanished. The storm ceased without causing the saint any harm. After this the saint remained on that rock for six years more, enduring for his salvation rain, cold, and heat. But the devil did not cease his snares. He led the saint into another, still more grievous temptation and subjected him to an even greater affliction.

Once the devil saw a ship sailing on the sea, on which there were both men and women. He raised a storm, and a strong wind, driving the ship against a rock, broke it apart. All who were on it perished; only one maiden managed to seize a plank and on it drifted to the rock where Martinian lived. Clutching the stone, the maiden began to cry out:

"Have mercy on me, servant of God; give me your hand, save me, and do not leave me to perish."

Seeing that no one but he could save the maiden, the blessed one said:

"This too is a snare of demons, but now, devil, you cannot conquer me."

Reflecting on this, the blessed one said:

"Woe is me, a sinner, for again a temptation confronts me: what am I to do? If I do not give the maiden my hand and draw her out of the water, she will drown, and a heavy sin will then lie upon my soul, for I shall be her murderer. But if I draw her out, I cannot remain here with her. Then there will be a calamity for me, greater than the first. Before, when I was on the earth, I could flee; but now where shall I flee? For there is only this one small rock, and all around it is the sea."

Then, stretching his hands toward heaven, the blessed one began to pray:

"Lord, do not let me perish, but order everything for the good of my soul."

Having said this, he gave the maiden his hand and drew her out of the sea onto the rock. Seeing that she was very beautiful, Martinian said:

"Truly, hay and fire cannot be together; it is impossible for you and me to live here together. Remain here and fear nothing: here there is bread and water, which a certain shipman brings. In two months he will come here. Tell him everything that has happened, and he will ferry you across the sea."

After this the saint signed the sea with the sign of the Cross and said:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Thou didst command the winds, which hearken to Thee with trembling; look upon me and have mercy, and do not let me perish. In Thy name I will cast myself into the sea, for it is better for me to die in the waves than to be inflamed with bodily passion for a woman."

Then, turning to the maiden, Martinian said:

"Be saved, maiden; God will keep your soul from all the snares of the enemy and preserve you to the end!"

With these words he threw himself into the sea and swam. By the providence of God, two dolphins lifted him upon their backs and carried him. Seeing this, the maiden watched him until he disappeared from view. The dolphins bore the blessed one to firm ground. Coming ashore, Martinian began to give thanks to the Lord:

"I glorify Thee, Lord my God, for Thou hast wondrously shown Thy mercy upon me, a sinner and an unworthy servant of Thine. Do not forsake me to the end."

After this he began to reflect thus:

"I do not know what to do. The enemy does not leave me, either in the mountains or in the deserts. He did not leave me even on the sea. But I must always keep in my heart the words of the Gospel: 'But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come' (Mt. 10:23)."

Having said this, the blessed one began to move from one place to another, from one city to another, and spoke thus:

"Flee, Martinian, lest some calamity overtake you."

Thus, constantly wandering, he spent his life. He carried with him neither staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor two garments, nor money, in a word nothing that is necessary for our life. When he entered a city or some village, he asked who among the inhabitants was distinguished by piety, and with that person he lodged and took food. He spent the night wherever night overtook him: in the wilderness or in the field; and he lay down to rest only for the briefest time. Wandering thus, he visited one hundred and sixty-four cities in two years, and at last came to Athens[4]. The bishop of that city was granted by God to learn everything about the blessed Martinian. Here, feeling the approach of his death, the saint, already ill, entered the church, lay down upon the ground, and said to those standing around:

"Call the bishop here quickly!"

4. A city in Greece; now the capital of the Greek kingdom; in antiquity this city was renowned for its learning.

Those around thought he was out of his mind. But when Martinian again asked them, they obeyed him, went to the bishop, and said to him:

"A certain man lies in the church; we do not know whether he is out of his mind or something else. He asked us to summon you to him."

The bishop answered them:

"It is in vain that you call this man out of his mind: he is far better and higher than I!"

Rising, the bishop went to the church. The blessed one, seeing the bishop, could not get up. Stretching out his hands to him, he wished by this to render the due honor to God's archpastor. The bishop also strove to show him honor and said:

"Once God promised to show me His servant. Now His promise has been fulfilled. When you are found worthy of the Heavenly Kingdom, remember me as well."

The blessed one answered:

"Bless me, Father, and pray to the Lord for me, that I may stand before His righteous judgment without condemnation."

Having said this, the saint raised his eyes to heaven and said:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Into Thy hands I commit my spirit!"

And crossing himself, he said to the bishop:

"Bury me, Father, for the Lord's sake!"

At this the blessed one's face was lit with a smile, and so he committed his soul to the Lord[5]. Thus Saint Martinian completed his earthly course with honor, kept the faith, and was found worthy to receive the crown prepared for him in the Kingdom of Heaven. The bishop, with great honor, laid his holy body to rest in that church.

Who would not marvel at this ascetic, who would not bless his memory! He labored until the end of his days to save his soul. He even subjected himself to torments of his own accord. At that time no persecution had yet been raised against the Christians, but the saint devised a martyrdom for himself. He overcame the devil and broke all his snares. He was a persecutor of himself and imposed sufferings upon

5. St. Martinian reposed at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century.

himself willingly. Truly he ought to be called a martyr and a good sufferer; by the temporal fire he overcame the eternal fire. The devil raised up a woman against him, but this blessed man turned her to the right and good way.

But let us turn to that maiden whom Martinian left on the rock, and we shall see that the prayer of the blessed man greatly profited her.

Remaining on the rock, Photinia (such was the name of this maiden) fed on bread and water, as the blessed man had instructed her. According to custom, after two months the boatman made his way to the rock, bringing bread and water for the Venerable. Drawing near the rock, he saw a maiden in place of the monk and thought it was an apparition. In terror he began to pull away from the rock. But Photinia cried out to him:

"Fear nothing. I am indeed a woman, and a Christian. Do not go away from me, but come and hear what I have to tell you."

But the boatman did not believe her. Then she, adjuring him, began to say:

"I swear to you by Christ that I am a Christian. Come near here without fear and hear my account."

Then the boatman, coming up to the rock, said to her:

"Where is the black-robed monk who was here? How and where could he have gone from here? Who brought you and left you on this stone?"

Crossing herself, Photinia began to recount everything that had happened to her. Hearing her account, the man was greatly astonished and said to her:

"Come, I will ferry you from here to the land, so that you may go to your city."

"No, brother," she answered him, "I beg you, do not take me away from here, but show me this mercy: go to the village and bring me men's clothing of hair-cloth; bring me bread and water, as you did for the blessed man, and you will receive the blessing of God which he promised. For there is no difference between male and female, as the Apostle said: 'There is neither Jew nor pagan, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Je-

sus' (Gal. 3:28). Do not disdain me, a sinful woman, for I too desire to receive salvation. Perhaps God, wishing to save me, by His wise providence has been pleased to settle me on this rock. Do not abandon me merely because I am a woman; remember that God created Adam and Eve, and that He Himself was pleased to be born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. Serve me as you served that righteous man, and bring me everything I asked of you. Bring also wool, that I may occupy myself with needlework. Let your wife come with you here too; she will clothe me in men's garments, and I will do whatever work she bids me. May the Lord and my God abide with you all your life, and grant you grace, mercy, and forgiveness of sins in this life and in the life to come."

The boatman answered her:

"I will do all that you ask of me; only take courage and be strong, and God will fulfill your desire."

With these words he sailed home; two days later he came back here together with his wife, bringing all that the maiden had asked for. Stepping from the boat, his wife climbed up the rock to the blessed Photinia. She kissed her and bowed down to the earth. Then she brought her clothing and bread from the boat. Asking the boatman to step a little aside, the blessed Photinia took off her women's clothing, putting off with it the weakness of woman, and clothed herself in men's garments, girding herself with wisdom and manly strength. As she did so she prayed, crying out:

"O Lord God! You have from of old hearkened to the prayers of all Your saints; hearken also to me, a sinner, and help me in this place to live quietly and piously in man's attire; preserve my soul, establish my heart, strengthen my body, and guide me on the path of salvation; render a worthy reward also to these people who serve me. For You are blessed and glorified unto ages of ages. Amen."

After this she said to the wife:

"My lady, I beg you: bring me wool together with bread and water, so that I may not eat your bread without recompense; and take these garments of mine as a memorial of my humility."

After this she dismissed them in peace. On the third month the boatman and his wife came again to Photinia and brought her bread with them.

Dwelling on the island, the blessed maiden glorified the Lord for her life. Each day she offered twelve prayers to God, and each night she redoubled this pious work and prayed to the Lord twenty-four times. A pound of bread served her as food for two days. Thus, with God's help, she attained the end of her life. When she settled on this rock she was twenty-five years old, and on the rock she labored for six years; therefore she peacefully committed her pure and holy soul to the Lord. Already two months after her death, when at the appointed time the boatman and his wife arrived, they found the blessed Photinia departed; her hands were folded crosswise, and her face was bright: she had the appearance of one sleeping. Bowing down before her holy body and taking it up, they placed it in the boat and sailed to the city of Caesarea in Palestine. Here the boatman went to the bishop of Caesarea and told him everything about the virtuous life of St. Photinia. With the whole clergy the bishop honorably committed her body to burial, offering honor and glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages, with the singing of God-inspired psalms and hymns. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

The flame of temptations thou didst quench with the streams of tears, O blessed one, and thou didst restrain the tossings of the sea and the onslaughts of beasts, crying out: Glorified art Thou, O Almighty, who didst save me from fire and storm.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

As a skilled ascetic of piety, and a sufferer honored by his own choice, and an inhabitant and dweller of the desert, let us worthily extol in hymns the ever-honored Martinian; for he trampled down the serpent.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Symeon the Myrrh-gusher, King of Serbia[6]

Память преподобного Симеона Мироточивого, царя Сербского

The Venerable Symeon was ruler of Serbia, but he renounced the earthly kingdom and devoted his whole life to winning for himself the incorruptible Kingdom in heaven. In his land he founded many monasteries, and on the bank of the river Studenitsa he built in honor of the Most Pure Mother of God a magnificent church, and commanded that it be lined within from the foundation to the ceiling with marble and adorned with gold. Always supplying the poor with all necessities, St. Symeon at last distributed all his countless wealth to the beggars. After this, voluntarily entrusting to his son Stephen the administration of all the lands that had been under his rule, he at once left the world and followed his son, the Venerable Sava, who shortly before had taken the monastic habit in one of the monasteries of Mount Athos. Arriving at the holy mountain, the Venerable, with the assistance of his son, restored here the desolate monastery with its church, called Chilandar, and began to labor in it. Having learned the fear of God and steadfastly fulfilling the rules of monastic life with regard to prayer and fasting, St. Symeon attained dispassion, humbled his sinful mind, and, with the assistance of the grace of God, became a great ascetic. In abstinence and fasting he reached such a height that he became like the Angels.

Therefore, even during his life, many monks gathered to his monastery from various lands to glorify God, and to many of them he was a teacher and guide on the way to salvation. Having lived piously there, the Venerable Symeon, in deep old age, departed to the Lord with joy and a bright hope of eternal blessedness, Whom he had so loved during his life.[7]

After the Venerable's repose, the Lord, for his great virtues, granted him the gift of wonderworking. His body began to exude myrrh,

and through him many miracles were accomplished by the power of God. After this, the saint's son, the Venerable Sava, transferred his father's body to Serbia and honorably laid it in the church in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos on the river Studenitsa, which St. Symeon himself had built at his own expense with such love. And to this day pious Christians take myrrh from the shrine where the relics of the Venerable Symeon rest, anoint themselves with it in various illnesses, and receive healing.

* * *

Memory of St. Eulogius, Archbishop of Alexandria

Память святого Евлогия, архиепископа Александрийского

St. Eulogius was first abbot of the Monastery of the Theotokos of Justinian in Antioch. Emperor Tiberius[8] chose him for the see of Alexandria. Here St. Eulogius acted against heretics with untiring zeal,[9] sending out his writings, one after another, to the Egyptian monasteries, which were heavily infected with Eutychianism. He also had to contend with the Samaritans, who at that time were proclaiming a certain Dositheus to be the prophet of whom Moses spoke. The hierarch convened a council on this matter. Eulogius reposed in deep old age about the year 608, on February 18.[10]

6. St. Simeon, before his tonsure as a monk, was the great Serbian zhupan (prince) and was called *Stefan Nemanja*. He united the greater part of the Serbian lands and secured their political independence. During his reign he labored greatly to defend his people against the influence of Latinism, Arianism and other heresies. The wife of Stefan Nemanja, the pious Anna, followed her husband's example, received the monastic tonsure and settled in one of the women's monasteries.

7. Venerable Simeon reposed at the age of 86, on 13 February 1200.

8. The Emperor Tiberius II reigned from 578 to 582.

9. In the letters of St. Gregory the Great to St. Eulogius we read precious testimony concerning the fruitful activity of the Alexandrian archpastor. According to St. Gregory, the teaching of St. Eulogius "considerably diminished the number of the enemies of the Church and multiplied the flock of the Lord."

10. His writings are now known almost only from the extracts of Patriarch Photius. Almost all of them were written on the occasion of the disputes current in his own time: 1) concerning the union of the two natures in Christ Jesus; 2) six books against the Novatianists; 3) three books against the Samaritans, and others. Of the many homilies of St. Eulogius, only one has come down to us in its entirety: the one for Palm Sunday.

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THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 14

14 февраля

New Calendar February 14 · Old Calendar February 27 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Auxentius

Житие преподобного отца нашего Авксентия

In the reign of Theodosius the Younger[1], in Constantinople, there lived at the imperial court a pious man of high rank, the son of Adda the Persian, named Auxentius. He was honored by all as a nobleman who knew well the Divine Scriptures as well as the secular sciences, and as a man renowned for his good works. This Auxentius was acquainted with the Venerable Marcian, who afterwards served as oikonomos in the Great Church; he knew also the virtuous monk John, who lived at the church of St. John the Forerunner in the suburb of Constantinople known by the name of "Eudom"; and he kept friendly relations with other pious men. Desiring to imitate their way of life, Auxentius abandoned the vanity, glory and turmoil of this world, and became a soldier of the heavenly King Christ, receiving the monastic tonsure. At first he served the Lord in the rank of deacon, and then in that of presbyter, and he was granted such power over demons that he could drive evil spirits out of men, for which reason all in Constantinople glorified him. But St. Auxentius did not seek human glory: it was a burden to him; striving for a life of silence, he left the populous city, journeyed to Bithynia and came to a deserted mountain called "Oxia," which lay ten stadia from Chalcedon. That place pleased him; he climbed the hill, and raising his holy hands, he began there to glorify God, saying: "For Thou, Lord, alone makest me dwell in safety" (Ps. 4:9).

And the saint settled on that mountain, which afterwards was called by his name, "Auxentian," under which name this mountain is mentioned in the Life of the Venerable Stephen, who suffered at the hands of the iconoclasts and who later lived on this same mountain.

While dwelling on this mountain, the Venerable Auxentius was found here by shepherds who were seeking their sheep that had strayed; they found them by the prayers of the Venerable. From that time the fame of the saint spread, so that many people began to come to him: some to obtain bodily healing, for by the saint's prayers they were cured of all manner of diseases, and others for the benefit of their souls. Afterwards pious people from the surrounding villages, gathering together, built a cell for the Venerable on the very summit of the mountain. Shut up in it, the saint spoke through a small window with those who came to him, teaching virtue and healing the sick, for he was as it were a healing spring, filled with the grace of God, so that people from various cities came to him as to a physician who took no fee. Once there came to Auxentius from Nicomedia the wife of a certain comes[2], who had lost her sight, and she began to beseech him:

"Have mercy on me, servant of the Most High God!"

To this the Venerable replied, addressing all who were present there:

"I am a sinful man; like you, I too am subject to passions. But if you believe that He who healed the man blind from birth will not disregard this woman either, then let us all with fervor pray to the Lord for her."

When all prayed, the saint touched her eyes and said:

"Jesus Christ, the true Light, heals you."

Immediately that woman regained her sight, and all began to glorify God. In thanksgiving for her healing, she gave generous alms to the beggars who were at the foot of that mountain and asked alms of those who came to the saint; and he himself cared for them, distributing to them through his disciples the bread that was brought to him. Besides

1. *Theodosius the Younger* reigned from 408 to 450.
2. *Comites* were originally the companions of the highest official in a province, and later the companions of the emperors, who formed their closest retinue. From the time of Constantine the Great, the title belonged to all court and state ranks, even if they did not belong to the imperial retinue.

the gift of bestowing healing, the Venerable had yet another gift, the gift of clairvoyance. Thus once two men came to him, one an Orthodox believer, the other a follower of the heretics; the saint received the Orthodox man with kindness and talked with him for a long time about the benefit of the soul, but to the heretic he said not a word, perceiving his unbelief. When they had departed from the saint, that heretic began to revile and censure the Venerable, calling him a hypocrite. They had not yet reached their homes when a servant met the heretic on the road and informed him that an evil spirit had entered his daughter, who was now tormenting her severely. This news greatly grieved the heretic; he repented of his sins, took his daughter, possessed by an unclean spirit, to the Venerable Auxentius, and began humbly to beseech the saint to heal his daughter; and she was delivered from the torments of the demon, and her father from his heresy.

On another occasion two lepers came to Auxentius, asking him to heal them. The saint asked them:

"What are your sins, that such a punishment has been sent upon you by God?"

They, bowing to the saint, besought him:

"Have mercy on us, servant of Christ, and pray for our healing."

To this the saint answered them:

"Brethren, this illness has befallen you because you are accustomed to swear and to take God's name in vain, and thereby you have kindled the wrath of God upon yourselves."

Hearing these words of the saint, they were greatly astonished that the saint knew their sins; falling to the ground before the Venerable, they repented of their transgression. Auxentius had compassion on them, anointed them with holy oil from head to foot, and said:

"Jesus Christ heals you, and I myself am a sinful man."

Immediately the lepers were healed of their affliction.

Once they brought to the saint on a chariot a paralytic lying on a bed; the parents of this man, falling before the Venerable, said to him with weeping:

"Our son has been struck with paralysis because of the multitude of our sins."

Then Auxentius asked them:

"Do you believe that God can, through me, a sinner, grant healing to your son?"

They answered:

"Truly you are an Angel sent for our salvation, and we believe that all things are possible with God."

To this the Venerable replied:

"According to your faith, so be it unto you."

And taking the holy oil, he anointed the whole body of the paralytic; the latter immediately rose up completely healed, and all who saw this miracle glorified the Lord God. But to recount all the cases in which the saint cast out demons is not possible: a great multitude of people were delivered from unclean spirits by the saint's prayers, so that to the Venerable there constantly came a large number of demoniacs from various, even distant, lands, and some were forcibly brought to the saint, and all of them received deliverance from unclean spirits through his holy prayers. Such great power and authority over demons did this blessed ascetic receive from God.

St. Auxentius was also summoned to the Fourth Ecumenical Council of the Holy Fathers, which was held at Chalcedon[3]; here he labored much, contending against the heresy of Eutyches and the error of Nestorius, for which reason he also suffered much oppression from the heretics. But the pious Emperor Marcian greatly honored him, and all the holy fathers loved him exceedingly; and indeed he was a renowned member of the council, distinguished by his wisdom and his miracles, by his right faith; it was impossible to overcome him in argument, for he knew all the Holy Scripture well. In a word, of him may be said what is written: "A prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Lk. 24:19).

Having confirmed, together with the other holy fathers at this council, the true Orthodox faith, St. Auxentius returned again to his deserted mountain, to his solitary cell. On the way to Chalcedon, both going there and returning, he performed many glorious miracles, casting out

3. The 4th Ecumenical Council took place in 451.

demons from men and healing every sickness and infirmity. Even while in his cell he conferred great benefit upon the world, setting an example of virtuous life, and also by his spiritual teachings, which were enjoyed by all who came to him from various lands, as well as by the miracles he wrought, at which all marveled. With his clairvoyant eyes St. Auxentius saw even distant things with such clarity as if they were before him; he could see both the incorporeal blessed spirits and the souls of the righteous. Thus once, shut up for the night in his cell, he began to offer his customary prayers to God, while his disciples and those who had come to the saint were outside his cell and had not yet gone to sleep; suddenly the Venerable, contrary to his custom, unexpectedly opened his little window and cried out in a loud voice:

"Blessed be the Lord God! Blessed be the Lord God! Blessed be the Lord God!"

With these words he heaved a heavy sigh and bowed his head to the ground. When all stood and did not dare to question him, he said:

"Children! The luminary in the East, our father Symeon, has departed to the Lord."

Having said this, he wept bitterly; then, after some time, he said again:

"Our holy father, the pillar and foundation of the truth, Symeon the Stylite, has fallen asleep; his undefiled and pure soul, passing by, did not disdain to greet me, a sinner and unclean."

Hearing these words, all were astonished and marveled at the power of his clairvoyance, and they noted the hour when the saint gave them this news; afterwards the report of the death of St. Symeon the Stylite was brought to Emperor Leo, who ascended the throne after Marcian, and the rumor spread everywhere. Then Auxentius' disciples, learning of the death of the Venerable, could once more be convinced of the truth of their holy teacher's words: the time of his death indeed coincided with the time of the saint's prediction.

Soon after the repose of the blessed Symeon the Stylite, the blessed end of St. Auxentius drew near, for he had already reached a venerable old age; then this servant of God, who had led a pious and God-pleasing life, having by his blessing founded many monasteries in various places,

having been spiritual leader of the whole region of Bithynia, and having guided many to the path of salvation, also departed in peace to the Lord[4].

Troparion, Tone 1:

O God-bearing Father Auxentius, dweller of the desert, thou didst appear in the flesh as an Angel and a Wonderworker: having received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil and prayer, thou healest the sick and the souls of those who come to thee in faith. Glory to Him Who gave thee strength, glory to Him Who crowned thee, glory to Him Who worketh through thee all healings.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Isaac, Recluse of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного Исаакия, затворника Печерского

It is impossible for a man to escape temptations. If the tempter dared to approach the Lord Himself in the wilderness (Mt. 4:3), he dares all the more to tempt the servant of the Lord. But as gold purified by fire shines before men like the sun, so a man tested by the assaults of the enemy, who is given over to eternal fire, shines before God by his good deeds like a bright daylight luminary. This truth was made clear in our Venerable Father Isaac, Recluse of the Kiev Caves. This Venerable Father, in the world, was a wealthy merchant of Toropets [5]. Resolving to become a monk, he distributed all his property to the needy and to the monasteries, came to the cave of the Venerable Antony, and asked him to receive him among the monks. The Venerable Antony, foreseeing that this man would strive in virtue as the Angels do and would himself become like the Angels, granted his desire. Having become a monk, the Venerable Isaac loved a harsh life. He not only put a hair shirt upon himself, but also ordered a goat to be bought and its skin removed; from this skin, still raw and wet, he made a garment

4. Saint Auxentius died in the reign of Leo the Great, around 470.
5. *Toropets* – a district town of the Pskov Governorate.

for himself and wore it over his hair shirt, so that the skin dried upon his body. At that time Isaac also shut himself into a narrow cave which was only about four cubits [6] in size, and there he prayed to God with tears. His food was a single prosphora, and even that he ate every other day; he quenched his thirst with water, and that only in small measure. The Venerable Antony brought him food and drink and passed them through so narrow an opening that only one hand could fit through it. Moreover, the Venerable Isaac never lay down upon a bed, but sat and refreshed himself with brief sleep. Thus, amid great ascetic labours, he spent seven years without once leaving his narrow cell.

Once, at evening, he began, as was his custom, to make prostrations, chanting psalms until midnight; but when he grew weary, he extinguished the candle and sat down in his place. Suddenly a great light, bright as the sun, filled the cave, and two demons in the form of beautiful youths approached the Venerable; their faces shone like the sun. They said to the Saint:

"Isaac! We are Angels, and behold, Christ is coming to thee with the heavenly powers."

Rising, Isaac saw a multitude of demons, their faces shining like the sun; and one among them shone more than all, and rays went forth from his face. Then the demons said to Isaac:

"Isaac! Behold, this is Christ; fall down before Him and worship Him."

Not understanding the cunning of the demons, and forgetting to sign himself with the sign of the Cross, the Venerable bowed down to that demon, as though to Christ.

At once the demons raised a great cry, proclaiming:

"Isaac, thou art ours now!"

Having seated him, they themselves sat around him; the whole cell and the cave passage around that cell were filled with demons. Then one of the demons, the false Christ, said:

"Take pipes, harps and timbrels and play upon them, and let Isaac dance before us."

6. The *lokot* or *lakot* – a measure of length equal to 10.5 vershoks.

At once the demons began to strike the pipes, timbrels and harps; seizing Isaac, they made him leap and dance with them for a long time. Having wearied the Venerable and left him barely alive, and having thus mocked him, the demons vanished.

On the following day, at the hour when Isaac was accustomed to take his food, the Venerable Antony came as usual to the opening and said:

"Bless me, Father Isaac."

To this there was no answer. Astonished, Antony thought: has the holy Isaac perhaps died? He then sent to the monastery for the Venerable Theodosius and the rest of the brethren. On their arrival, the brethren dug out the cave and carried Isaac out, thinking he was dead, and laid him before the cave; but then they noticed that Isaac was still alive. Then the hegumen, the Venerable Theodosius, said:

"Truly, what has happened to him is the work of demons."

Isaac was then laid upon a bed, and the holy Antony himself attended him. At that time Izyaslav, Prince of Kiev, happened to be returning to Kiev from Poland; Prince Izyaslav began to be angry with the Venerable Antony on account of Vseslav, Prince of Polotsk, who during the Venerable's lifetime had for a time occupied the throne of Kiev. Then Svyatoslav, Prince of Chernigov, sent from Chernigov by night for the holy Antony; the latter, on coming to Chernigov, loved the place called Boldin Mountain; digging out a cave, the Venerable settled there, where the monastery now stands. Learning that the holy Antony had gone to Chernigov, the Venerable hegumen Theodosius took Isaac, carried him into his own cell, and attended him. Isaac was paralysed in mind and body, so that he could neither sit, nor stand, nor even turn over on his other side, but lay only on one side, so that worms often bred under him. The Venerable Theodosius himself washed and tended him with his own hands, and thus served him for two whole years while Isaac lay. Remarkably, for two years Isaac took neither bread, nor water, nor vegetables, nor any other food, yet he remained alive, lying mute and deaf on his bed. The Venerable Theodosius prayed over him day and night until, in the third year, Isaac began to speak; then he asked to be set on his feet and began to walk like a child. But he did not

strive to go to church, so that he had to be brought there by force; afterwards he himself began to come to church. He then began to attend the refectory, where he was seated apart from the brethren; bread was placed before him, but he would not touch it. The brethren began to put bread into his hands, but the Venerable Theodosius said:

"Place bread before him, but do not put it into his hands, so that he may eat by himself."

So for a whole week he did not let the brethren put bread into Isaac's hands; the latter, watching the others, began to eat bread himself, and thus learned to eat. Thus the Venerable Theodosius delivered him from the snares and deception of the devil.

When the Venerable Theodosius reposed and the blessed Stephen became hegumen in his place, Isaac again began to lead a harsh life, saying to the tempter:

"Thou didst beguile me, devil, when I was in solitude in the cave; but now I shall not shut myself away, but with God's help I shall strive to conquer thee by labouring in the monastery."

Then Isaac again clothed himself in a hair shirt; over the hair shirt he put on a thick outer coat [7], and began to help the cooks, to work for the brethren, to enter the church for Matins before all others, and to stand motionless in his place in the church. When winter came, he stood in the church despite the severe frost, in badly torn footwear, so that his feet often froze to the stone, yet he did not move his feet until the service was over. After Matins he went first of all to the kitchen, prepared fire, firewood and water; only then did the other monks, to whom this obedience had been assigned, come.

Once one of these monks, also named Isaac, said to the blessed one in mockery:

"Isaac! Look, a raven is sitting there; go and catch it."

Bowing to the ground, the humble monk went up, took the raven, and brought it to the kitchen to the monks. All were astonished at such a deed and told the hegumen and the brethren about it; and from then on the brethren began to respect him. But not desiring the praise of

7. *Svita* or *svitka* – a plain, coarse outer garment.

men, the blessed one took upon himself the guise of a holy fool, and began to insult now the hegumen, now the brethren, now the laymen, so that many even beat him. Having become a fool, he again settled where he had been before, in the cave of the Venerable Antony, who had by then reposed. Gathering children around him, he put monastic garments upon them. For this he received punishment from the hegumen of that time, the blessed Nikon, and sometimes he received blows from the parents of those children; but he endured all of it with joy, bearing both blows and nakedness and cold.

Once at night the blessed Isaac lit the stove in the cave; the stove was poor, and when the fire blazed, the flame began to rise upward through the cracks. Having nothing to cover these openings, Isaac stood with bare feet upon the flame and remained standing until the stove burned out; then he stepped down, having suffered no injury whatever. He performed many other wonders as well. He gained such power over the demons that he no longer feared them and was not afraid of their threats or delusions; and the demons often troubled him and said:

"Thou art ours, Isaac, because thou didst worship our prince."

He answered them:

"Your prince of demons is Beelzebub; I fear him as the idol of flies (so his name is interpreted) [8]; nor do I fear you, his servants. If you deceived me before, because I did not know your snares and your cunning, now by the power of my Lord Jesus Christ and the prayers of the Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius I shall conquer you."

With this he signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and thus drove them away. Sometimes the demons tried to strike terror into the blessed one by coming to him at night in a great crowd, with mattocks [9] and spades, and saying:

"We shall dig out thy cave and bury thee beneath the ruins."

Others of them said to him:

"Come out, Isaac: they mean to bury thee in the cave."

8. *Beelzebul* – the idol of Accaron in Palestine, chief over the granaries and food supplies, who drove away flies and other pests. In Mt. 12:24 and Lk. 11:15 he is called the prince of demons.
9. *Motyga* – a pickaxe, mattock, iron spade.

To this the blessed one answered them:

"If you were men, you would walk by day; but you are sons of darkness, and therefore you walk in darkness."

In doing so he would make the sign of the Cross over himself, as he did in every temptation, and the demons would immediately vanish. At times, wishing to terrify him, they appeared in the form of bears, lions and other savage beasts; at other times they crept toward him in the shape of serpents, toads, mice and other reptiles. But having accomplished nothing, they said at last:

"Isaac, you have defeated us!"

He answered them:

"Once you also defeated me, appearing in the form of Jesus Christ and of the Angels, though you were not worthy of such a form. Now you appear in your true likeness, in the form of beasts and cattle, serpents and reptiles, for such are you yourselves."

From that time on the demons could do the saint no harm. He wrestled with them for three years from the time he settled in the cave a second time, as he himself testified. After this he began to live an even more austere life, to show still greater abstinence, and to fast and labor more intensely. In the midst of these ascetic struggles the time of his death arrived. He fell gravely ill in his cave, and the brethren carried the sick man into the monastery. There he lay ill for eight days and, in a good confession, departed to the Lord[10]. Hegumen John and the whole brotherhood, having prepared the body of the Venerable Father, buried him honorably in the cave where the other holy fathers also lay. Thus this good soldier of Christ, first defeated by the enemy, afterwards himself defeated the devil and was granted to receive the Heavenly Kingdom. By his holy prayers may we also be granted, having vanquished the enemies of our soul, to reign with the Victor over hell, Jesus, the King of Glory, to Whom belong all glory, honor and worship together with His unbeginning Father and the All-Holy, Good and Life-Giving Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages, amen.

10. The Venerable Isaac reposed in the twelfth century. His relics openly rest in the caves of the Venerable Anthony, and a part of them was transferred from Kiev to Toropets by the hegumen of the Kudin Monastery in 1711.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Maron

Память преподобного Марона

The Venerable Maron chose for himself the ascetic labors of a life without shelter. To this end he climbed to the summit of a mountain which had once been venerated by some of the pagans, found there a pagan temple already abandoned, and, dedicating it to God, lived in it[11]. Later he built for himself a small hut, but made little use of it. Himself sickly by nature, he yielded it to other sick people who came to him in great numbers. And the Bestower of Ascetic Achievement, God, strengthened the holy ascetic by His grace, and through his prayers healed those who came to him for healing. Soon the Venerable became known for healing fevers, agues and many other diseases by prayer alone, and for casting out demons. Throughout his life he founded a multitude of monasteries, and by the ascetic labors of fasting he made many monks well-pleasing to God. Thus, diligently laboring in virtue, Saint Maron at the same time healed the bodies and souls of men. Having endured many different infirmities, the Venerable, after a brief illness, departed this life and went peacefully to the Lord[12].

* * *

Memory of St. Abraham, Bishop of Carrhae

Память святого Авраама, епископа Каррийского

The Venerable Abraham lived in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius the Great[13]. His birthplace and upbringing was the island of Cyprus[14]. Having come to full age, he distributed his prop-

11. This mountain was not far from the city of Cyrrhus in Syria, two days' journey from Antioch in the Euphratesian eparchy.

12. He reposed in the fourth century. – Maron's disciples were: Jacob the Hermit, Limnaeus – 22 February, Domnina – 1 March.

13. Theodosius I the Great reigned from 379 to 395. He governed the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

14. The island of Cyprus lies in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea; it is a mountainous island, very fertile in antiquity. During the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul (Acts 13:4–12). From the sixteenth century the island has been under Turkish rule.

erty to monastic communities, took the monastic tonsure in one of them, and gave himself to the labors of monasticism. By vigil, standing in prayer and fasting he so wore out his body that for long periods he lost the ability to move and was wholly unable to walk. Learning that on the Lebanon mountains[15] there was a place suitable for solitary labors, the Venerable Abraham left the monastery and went there. He built a small cell and spent his time in the labors of the hermit's life. In strict silence he spent three days in his cell, and only on the fourth day did he come out, equally silent. The Venerable suffered much in this place. The pagans, learning of him, first covered him with sand, and then did him other violence, in order to force him to withdraw farther from the place. Moreover, the poor farmers from the nearby village sorely troubled him by coming to him often and asking for alms. But the Venerable bore everything patiently, and to spare himself cruel mockery he gave to those who asked for alms everything that some pious visitors supplied him with. Such loving-kindness of the Venerable so struck the inhabitants of the village that they built a church, and since they were Christians, they insistently asked him to accept the priestly rank and be their shepherd. Saint Abraham fulfilled their desire, and having established his flock in a pious life, left another priest in his place, and himself returned again to the monastery. Soon he became renowned for great ascetic labors, and as a man of high piety he was appointed Bishop of the city of Carrhae[16]. By the example of his strict labors and his God-inspired instructions he in a short time brought his flock to a God-pleasing life. Throughout his time in the sacred rank, Saint Abraham never ate bread, nor food cooked over fire, nor vegetables boiled or pickled in water; his food was only raw vegetables, wild berries and the like. When the report of the Venerable Abraham reached the Emperor Theodosius the Younger[17], the latter invited him to himself. The Venerable went to Constantinople and, having lived there a short time, gave up his soul to the Lord. By the command of the

15. The Lebanon mountain range stretches along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea from the northern borders of Palestine northward.

16. The city of Carrhae lay in Mesopotamia, in the upper reaches of the river Euphrates, on the bank of one of its tributaries (the Khovar), somewhat south of the city of Edessa.

17. The Emperor Theodosius II the Younger reigned from 408 to 450.

pious emperor, his body was solemnly transferred from Constantinople to the city of Carrhae and there given burial.

Translation of the relics of the holy right-believing Prince Michael Vsevolodovich of Chernigov, and of his boyar Theodore

Commemorated 14 February

These martyrs suffered at the hands of Batu in 1244, on 20 September. Their relics were brought from Chernigov to Moscow on 14 February 1578 and laid in the Kremlin, in the church built in their name near the Taynitsky Gates; on 25 August 1770 they were transferred to the Sretensky Cathedral, in the palace vestibule; on 21 November 1774 they were placed in the Archangel Cathedral, where they rest to this day.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, memory of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Cyril, teacher of the Slavs



THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 15

15 февраля

New Calendar February 15 · Old Calendar February 28 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of St. Onesimus, One of the Seventy Apostles

Житие и страдание святого апостола Онисима, одного из лика семидесяти

In apostolic times there lived in the Phrygian city of Colossae[1] a Christian of noble birth named Philemon; later he was granted the episcopal rank and was numbered among the holy seventy Apostles. Philemon, even before his apostleship, had a slave named Onesimus. Having wronged his master and fearing punishment, Onesimus fled from him and came to Rome[2], where he found in chains the holy Apostle Paul; having heard from him the holy preaching and having been taught the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, he was baptized by the Apostle and zealously served him together with the holy Tychicus. The holy Apostle Paul, sending the holy Tychicus with his epistle to the Colossians, gave him the holy Onesimus as a companion, as he himself writes at the end of the epistle: "All my affairs shall Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord, make known to you; whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts; with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here" (Col. 4:7–9).

1. Colossae: a city in the southwestern part of Phrygia, a region of Asia Minor, on the river Lycus, near Laodicea and Hierapolis. In the tenth year of the reign of Nero (A.D. 64) Colossae was destroyed by an earthquake; afterward it was rebuilt, but it never again attained its former glory. Later the city was called *Chonae*. Today it is a small village on one of the slopes of Mount Honas, near which the ruins of the ancient city still remain. One of the epistles of the holy Apostle Paul was written to the inhabitants of this city.

2. The principal city of the Roman state; it lies in the central part of Italy on both sides of the river Tiber where it empties into the sea.

To the Colossians the Apostle wrote through Tychicus, and through Onesimus he sent a special epistle to Philemon, his master; in this epistle the Apostle asked Philemon to forgive Onesimus his transgression and to receive him not as a slave but as he would receive the Apostle Paul himself. In his epistle the Apostle Paul calls Onesimus his child: "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels" (Philem. 1:10–12). Philemon gladly did as the Apostle advised: he not only received Onesimus with love, but also gave him his freedom and sent him again to Rome to the holy Apostle Paul, that Onesimus might serve the Apostle there, for this was the desire of the holy Paul: "Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly" (Philem. 1:13–14).

Thus the holy Apostle Onesimus was in Rome, serving the Apostles until their very deaths; he was appointed by them bishop for the preaching of the word. After the death of the holy Apostles he, leaving Rome, went through many cities and lands, preaching Christ in Spain[3], in Corinth, in Colossae, in Patras[4], and then he occupied the throne at Ephesus[5] after the holy Timothy and the holy John the Theologian. That he served as bishop in Ephesus is clearly attested by the holy Ignatius the God-bearer in his epistle to the Ephesians from Smyrna; when he was being led from Antioch to Rome to be devoured by beasts, the holy Onesimus met him on the way at Smyrna together with some

3. In antiquity Spain embraced present-day Spain and Portugal together. On the north it is separated from France by the Pyrenees; on the east it borders the Mediterranean Sea; on the south, the Mediterranean Sea and the Strait of Gibraltar; on the west, the Atlantic Ocean.

4. Patras: an ancient city on the northern shore of the Peloponnese; it was one of the twelve independent cities of the Achaean region; the emperor Augustus made it a Roman colony; in 1205–1408 it was the principal city of the Frankish Duchy of Achaea; in 1463 it fell into the hands of the Turks; at present it is a city in the Kingdom of Greece, near the entrance to the Gulf of Lepanto (Corinth).

5. Ephesus, on the Aegean Sea, an important commercial city of Asia Minor. Its seaside position, good climate, excellent harbor, and famous temple of Diana made it one of the richest and most renowned cities of Asia Minor. Here the Gospel was preached by the holy Apostle Paul.

inhabitants of Ephesus. St. Ignatius writes of this to the Ephesians as follows:

"I received your whole congregation in the name of God in (the person of) Onesimus, a man of inexpressible love and your bishop in the flesh. Love him, I beseech you in Jesus Christ, and all be like him; for blessed is He who granted you to be worthy to have such a bishop. In his epistle to the Antiochians he again writes:

"Onesimus, the pastor of Ephesus, salutes you."

From this it becomes known that the holy Onesimus, having gone through many lands and cities, came to Ephesus, already being an old man; there he shepherded the Church of God for some time, and then he was seized by unbelievers and brought from that city to Rome, which took place in the reign of Trajan[6]; in Rome he was handed over to torture by the eparch Tertullus. The eparch asked the saint:

"Who are you?"

Onesimus answered:

"I am a Christian."

Then the eparch asked again:

"To what class do you belong?"

To this the saint said:

"Once I was the slave of one man, but now I am the faithful servant of the good Master, the Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ."

The eparch continued to question Onesimus:

"Why then did you pass to another master?"

Onesimus answered:

"Because I came to know the truth and came to abhor idolatry."

Then the eparch asked:

"At what price were you sold to your new master?"

Onesimus answered:

"God's Son, Jesus Christ, redeemed me from perdition by His precious Blood, and transferred me to incorruption, as is written of it in our Scriptures: 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your

6. From A.D. 98 to A.D. 117.

fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Pet. 1:18–19)."

The eparch asked:

"Tell us, what life do your writings call vain?"

"A vain life is lawless adultery, which for a small carnal sweetness prepares eternal fire for the passionate lovers of sin; it also consists in the love of silver, for whose sake people wrong their neighbor; in sorcery, when they dwell with demons—this last evil is the root of every slander and entrapment; it is pride, when by their high-mindedness they exalt themselves over others; envy, which taught Cain and many others fratricide; slander and an unbridled tongue, which spreads mockery over all like a cloud; it is hypocrisy and lying, the opponent of truth, the accomplice of the devil, through which the all-evil foe seduced Eve; it is anger, which prompts to curses and stirs up quarrels and the murders of fathers; drunkenness, which is accompanied by intemperance and gives birth to sensuality, prompting to obscenity; there is in it no good thought, only ugliness. All these vices are the vain life. The source of such a life and the mother of all is the service of idols, which you perform; it is the foundation of fornication, the teacher of ignorance of God, the blinding of the mind, the stirrer of sensual passions; in it there is no honor, it wars against the Lord of all, and seeks to destroy the true worship of God; this service is the leader of death, the servant of the serpent, the food of the wicked, the adversary of virtue, it flees incorruption; it is the preacher of your pernicious law, the ardent partisan of darkness and gloom, the friend of bloodshed, the prince of hatred; it ensnares the simple who know not God, it is alien to the bright grace, it binds its servants with the bonds of dishonorable deeds, teaches vainglory; it fills gray-haired elders with dishonor, inciting them to dance to the sound of the priestly trumpet; it destroys virginal chastity; it celebrates its festivals with sword and iron, with the shedding of the blood of animals and their defilements; it points to the defilements of its shamelessness; it compels men to bare their bodies in the midst of the city and show them naked to their wives; it accompanies its mysteries with murders and adulteries; it tosses human minds with various images of idolatry like boats: now it commands its priests

to eat of poisonous serpents, now, urging them to devour other gods, it inspires them to slaughter an ox, to offer up an ox, to sacrifice a sheep to a sheep, to honor the same thing as god and cattle[7], now it kills a man as a sacrifice to a man made of stone and wood, so that instead of a benefit it works murder, sacrificing the living to the lifeless. But why should I say much? Your faithlessness even pays divine honor to garlic, so that in great blindness and ignorance it may bring men down to hell. Having considered such a vain, impious and foul life, which you hold to in your idolatrous service—a life condemned by Holy Scripture—I fled from it as from a surging sea, and came to a good harbor—to a righteous and venerable life, consisting in the holy faith in the one and true God, in faith and love for one's neighbor. And I exhort you, Tertullus: fulfill the law of love, which commands to love one's neighbor as oneself; then you too, having come to know the truth as I have, will leave temporal vanity and all that passes in this world like a dream or a shadow; then you will draw near to God the Creator of all and be saved, coming to true understanding; God does not rejoice in the death of those who provoke Him, but rejoices in their conversion and repentance and forgives their former sins."

Then the eparch Tertullus answered:

"So you not only do not wish to bow down to the gods yourself, not fearing torments, but you even want to lead us into your delusion."

"Your torments cannot terrify me," answered the holy Onesimus, "however strong they may be, for I, comforted by the expectation of future goods and strengthened by the power of my Christ, shall easily bear the sufferings to which you will subject me."

Then the eparch commanded that Onesimus be cast into prison. The saint remained there 18 days; the prison was for him no place of terror but a bright paradise, full of spiritual joy, where he dwelt rejoicing in his Lord. The faithful came to him, glorified his sufferings, and strengthened him to the struggle by their words. The saint preached

7. Saint Onesimus points here to one of the glaring contradictions that existed in the pagan religion, which was taken as a whole without distinction of place and time: in one locality an animal was worshipped as a god, while in another it was not distinguished from the ranks of quadrupeds and was sacrificed to some deity.

the Word of God to the unbelievers who came there together with Christians, and turned them to the true faith of Christ. After this, the eparch, wishing to show himself merciful before the people, did not condemn the saint to death but sent him into exile at Puteoli.[8] The holy Apostle there likewise zealously preached the teaching of Christ and instructed many in the true way. Tertullus, learning of this, took him again and commanded that he be brought before him for judgment in fetters. He questioned him and learned that the saint, as before, unshakenly confessed the faith of Christ. Then the eparch commanded that the saint be laid down and beaten pitilessly with 4 clubs. The tormentors for a long time struck the holy sufferer without mercy, shattered his shins and his other bones, and at last cut off his head with a sword. Thus Saint Onesimus departed this life.[9] A certain woman of royal lineage took his holy body, laid it in a silver reliquary, and kept the memory of the martyr. By this she earned for herself remembrance before the Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven, through the prayers of the holy Apostle Onesimus; may the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is glory unto the ages, grant the same to us also. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

As a ray, thou didst shine forth upon the world, as the dawns that brighten before the sun, O blessed one, illumining the world with the all-radiant Paul: wherefore we honor thee, glorious Onesimus.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Eusebius the Hermit

Память преподобного Евсевия пустынника

No information has been preserved concerning the birthplace or parents of this Venerable Father. It is known only that at first he entered a certain monastery, but afterward he left it, ascended the summit of a mountain near which lay a village named Asiha,[10] and

8. Puteoli: a seaport city of Campania, a region of central Italy.
9. About the year 109.
10. In Syria.

there, having built himself an enclosure of dry stones, began to waste his body. Throughout his whole life he wore nothing on his body but a garment of leather, and he fed only on pickled peas and beans. Disregarding the infirmity of the flesh, the Venerable Father continued thus until the extreme of old age, when all his teeth had fallen out, so that he could no longer chew his food; and, bravely enduring every kind of weather, he never lived in a house. His face was wrinkled, and all the members of his body were so wasted that a belt could not stay upon him, so thin had his legs and loins become. Since many people began to come to the Venerable Father, he, fearing vainglory, withdrew to a nearby monastery and, setting up a small enclosure by its wall, continued his accustomed labors. The fasting of the Venerable Father reached such a degree that during the 7 weeks of Great Lent he consumed only 15 figs. Living such a strict ascetic life, the Venerable Eusebius lived more than 90 years and, after a grievous illness, departed to the Lord.[11]

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Paphnutius and his daughter Euphrosyne. Their Life is on 25 September.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Paphnutius and his daughter Euphrosyne

11. The Venerable Eusebius died about the year 400.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 16

16 февраля

New Calendar February 16 · Old Calendar February 29 (civil dates)

Sufferings of the Holy Twelve Martyrs, Pamphilus the Presbyter and Those with Him

Страдание святых двенадцати мучеников Памфила пресвитера и прочих с ним

These twelve holy martyrs, who were granted the gift of prophecy and of apostleship, and who were equal in number to the twelve Apostles, suffered for Christ in Palestinian Caesarea[1] during the reign of Diocletian. Of them, the senior in rank and the first in time of suffering was St. Pamphilus, presbyter of Caesarea. He was a native of Berytus[2], and from his youth he had been instructed in pagan philosophy; yet Pamphilus was also filled with spiritual wisdom[3], and he shone with a virtuous life. Afterwards he became renowned also for his courageous confession of the name of Christ. The second of the martyrs was Valens, deacon of the church of Aelia, a man already advanced in years. He was also a learned man, and he was especially distinguished by his excellent knowledge of Holy Scripture. The third, Paul, burning with faith in Christ, was ardent in his zeal for piety. He came from the city of Jamnia[4], and he had earlier suffered for Christ the torment of burning by fire. These three passion-bearers, after various torments for

1. Caesarea was a large city in Palestine, on the Mediterranean Sea.
2. Berytus, the present-day Beirut, the chief city of the Asiatic-Turkish vilayet of Syria, the most important trading point on the Syrian coast between Sidon and Tripoli.
3. One of St. Pamphilus's principal occupations was the collation and correction of manuscripts of Holy Scripture, whose text had at that time been considerably corrupted by copyists. Through his cares and labors a vast library was gathered in Caesarea. Blessed Jerome greatly esteemed the martyr Pamphilus, and, having found some of his manuscripts, considered himself richer than Croesus.
4. The Greek name of the Philistine city of Jabneh, between Ekron and the sea; today it is a large village called Yavne.

the name of Christ, to which the prefect Urban subjected them, were thrown into prison. Here they languished for a full two years, when after Urban, Firmilian became prefect. Under this governor, in Egypt, 130 confessors of Christ were condemned to exile: they were sent to Cilicia[5] to dig for gold ore. At that time some youths, brothers not only in the flesh but also in spirit, having accompanied those martyrs from Egypt to Cilicia, were returning from there to their homeland of Egypt, and were already approaching Caesarea, since their path lay past it; their number was five. As they entered the city gates, the guards asked them who they were and where they were from? The martyrs, not concealing the truth, answered that they were Christians and named the heavenly Jerusalem as their homeland. Then they were seized as malefactors and thrown into prison. On the following day, namely February 16, these youths were brought out of prison together with the aforementioned confessors of Christ, Pamphilus, Valens and Paul, and together with them they stood before the tribunal of the impious tormentor, the prefect Firmilian. The governor at first sought to lead the Egyptian youths astray, frightening them with various tortures. Having set one of them, the eldest in age, in the midst, he asked him who he was? The holy martyr answered fearlessly that he and his companions were Christians. When the governor asked what their names were, this youth named himself Elias, another Jeremias, the third Isaias, the fourth Samuel, the fifth Daniel. For these holy youths, having renounced the pagan names given them by their parents, who did not believe in Christ, called themselves by the names of prophets instead. By this they wished to show plainly that they were servants of the God of Israel, not only in their deeds but also in their names. Not knowing such names, the governor Firmilian began to ask them about their homeland.

Then Elias, recalling the words of the Apostle Paul: "the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26), and his other words: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable com-

5. Cilicia is the southeastern coastal region of Asia Minor.

pany of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn" (Heb. 12:22), called himself a citizen of the Heavenly Jerusalem, understanding by this city his spiritual, not his earthly, homeland. But the governor Firmilian did not know what this city Jerusalem was, or where it was located. For at that time the holy city was not called Jerusalem but Aelia. This name had been given to it by the impious Roman emperor Hadrian. On the site of the former Jerusalem, destroyed by Titus, he built a new city and gave it his own name, for it was called Aelia Hadriana. In naming Jerusalem Aelia, Hadrian defiled in it all the holy places, covered the Lord's Sepulchre with sand and stones, and set up impure idols everywhere. After this he commanded that the city be called by no other name than Aelia. He did all this because he wished to destroy on earth even the very memory of the name of Jesus Christ. After that, for two hundred years, the impious idolaters did not call this city Jerusalem and held it in contempt. So it continued until the time of the pious emperor Constantine and his mother Helena. Therefore Firmilian, who lived in Palestine during the reign of Diocletian, did not know where the city called Jerusalem was, about which the holy youth had spoken to him. He commanded that blessed youth, who had named himself Elias, to be bound with his hands behind him, hung naked at the place of torture, and severely beaten, so that he would say what this city Jerusalem was and in what country it lay.

The pious youth answered that Jerusalem is the homeland of Christians alone, and that no pagan can enter it, and that this city is founded in the east, where the sun begins to pour its first rays upon the earth. Thus the saint spoke to the governor of the heavenly, spiritual Jerusalem, paying no heed to the tortures, as though he were incorporeal. The governor, not understanding that the saint was speaking to him of the spiritual Jerusalem, thought that the Christians had built a city somewhere and wished to resist the Romans. Therefore he commanded that even greater torments be inflicted on the holy youth, so that he would tell in more detail everything about this Christian city and indicate where it was. But when the governor could hear from him nothing more than the confession of the name of Christ, he commanded that the holy youth's head be struck off with the sword. Then he subjected the

other youths, Jeremias, Isaias, Samuel and Daniel, to torments too. But having heard from them the same thing as from the first, he commanded that they also be beheaded. Having also learned, upon investigation, that the holy presbyter Pamphilus, deacon Valens and Paul had already been held for a long time in prison two years earlier by his predecessor, the governor Urban, Firmilian did not wish to torment them further. He commanded only that they be asked whether they would obey the imperial command; and when he learned that they remained unyielding, he condemned them to death as well.

One of Pamphilus' servants, named Porphyrius, a youth of about eighteen years, very beloved by his master, the holy presbyter Pamphilus, for his chastity and prudence, hearing the sentence of death pronounced upon the holy martyrs, cried out loudly from the crowd:

"I beg you, give me the bodies of the saints, that they may be buried."

With these words he came out of the crowd and stood before the governor. Learning that Porphyrius too was a Christian, the governor commanded that he be hung naked in the same place where he had tormented the five holy youths, and ordered that he be severely beaten. The impious tormentors beat him until his whole body was covered with wounds and pieces were already falling away onto the ground, so that one could see even his bones and entrails. But the holy Porphyrius bore these torments patiently; he seemed to feel nothing: he did not even groan or cry out, but was silent, as though the torturers were striking not him but some pillar or wall. All this increased the governor's fury even more: Firmilian commanded that his wounds be torn with a prickly and rough hair-shirt, and after this he condemned him to be burned. The tormentors set up a post, bound the holy martyr to it, piled wood about him, and set it alight. When the fire had already enveloped him on all sides, the martyr cried out loudly, calling upon Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for help; then he fell silent and committed his holy and pure soul to the Lord. Thus he suffered for his Lord after his master, yet he was granted the crown of martyrdom before him, for at the time when the holy Porphyrius, having given up his soul in the fire,

departed to the Lord, the holy Pamphilus and the other martyrs had not yet been beheaded with the sword.

At the time when the holy Porphyrius was being burned on the pyre, among the people there was a pious man named Seleucus, who had formerly been a soldier. When Porphyrius had already committed his soul to the Lord, he followed the holy martyrs, who were being led to the place of suffering. He found them still alive, for the saints had asked their tormentors to allow them a little time for prayer. Seleucus, approaching the holy Pamphilus, told him everything about the torment of the holy Porphyrius; Pamphilus rejoiced and began to offer thanks to God. Here Seleucus gave the martyrs a last kiss, they being already ready to bow their heads under the sword. The soldiers present there, seeing this and learning that Seleucus was a Christian, seized him and brought him to the governor. Firmilian commanded that Seleucus too be executed by the sword without delay. This saint came from Cappadocia and had been a brave and renowned soldier in the Roman army; at the beginning of the persecution of Christians, for confessing Christ he was severely beaten, deprived of his military rank and honor, and expelled from his regiment. But he tended the sick lying in the city streets, cared for the poor and orphans, and then, having joined the holy martyrs and confessors, departed rejoicing to his Master, Christ the Lord.

About the same time, after St. Seleucus, St. Theodulus was also added to the number of the martyrs. He was one of the servants of the hegemon Firmilian; this man was respected by all for his advanced age, for he already had great-grandchildren. Being a secret Christian, he approached one of the holy martyrs who was being led to suffering, kissed him, and asked that the holy martyr of Christ pray together with him to the Lord God on his behalf. Some of the hegemon's servants, seeing this, reported to their master about Theodulus and said that he too was a Christian. When Firmilian began to question St. Theodulus and learned that this man was indeed a Christian, he was greatly enraged against him and ordered that St. Theodulus be crucified.

Completing the number of twelve Apostles, after all of them, St. Julian was also added to the number of the martyrs. He too was from

Cappadocia and was an honest and virtuous man. He had to travel to Caesarea in Palestine on his affairs. Approaching the city, Julian noticed that the bodies of the holy martyrs had been cast outside the city to be eaten by dogs and birds. He rejoiced in spirit, and, falling down before them, he kissed the bodies of Christ's sufferers and glorified their martyric death, after which they were granted to share eternal life with Christ. But at a distance soldiers had been posted, who were to watch that none of the secret Christians might steal their bodies. Seeing that a man was falling down before the bodies of the saints and kissing them, they understood that he too was a Christian; then the soldiers seized him and led him to the hegemon. After questioning him, Firmilian condemned the holy man to be burned; and so St. Julian suffered for Christ in exactly the same manner as St. Porphyrius.

Thus these twelve martyrs, equal in number to the Apostles, together with them were also made worthy to stand before the throne of God in the Heavenly Kingdom, adorned with the victorious crowns[6]. Their holy bodies lay cast out in the dust beyond the city for four days. The impious, seeing that neither dogs, nor beasts, nor birds touched them, announced that whoever wished might take them and give them burial; then the Christians, taking these holy bodies, reverently buried them, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The noble sufferers of the Lord, with terrible torments lying before them, rejoiced in fearless resolve and conversed with these, having no regard for the flesh; therefore they inherited everlasting glory, ever praying for us who praise their struggles.

* * *

6. This took place in 309.

Commemoration of St. Maruthas, Bishop, and of the holy martyrs who suffered in Martyropolis

Память святого Маруфа епископа и святых мучеников, пострадавших в Мартирополе

St. Maruthas was Bishop of Tagrit[7], the chief city of the region of Mesopotamia-Sophene: this region lay on the borders of the Greek Empire and pagan Persia; in it the pious bishop shone like a lamp with the light of his knowledge of God: he converted the pagan Persians to Christianity by his preaching, interceded for Christians before the Persian kings, and everywhere strove to establish peace and tranquility. Thus, under Theodosius the Younger, Maruthas was twice sent to Yazdegerd[8] to conclude peace between the two empires, and by his piety and wisdom he gained complete respect from Yazdegerd. The Persian magi were greatly displeased by the king's favor toward St. Maruthas, and so they resolved to destroy the pious bishop; after Maruthas healed Yazdegerd of a dangerous headache, which the magi had been unable to cure, it was decided to take measures against him. Once, when the king, as was his custom, entered the temple to worship fire, he heard a voice:

– Away with the king! Impious is his love for the Christian priest!

After this, the astonished Yazdegerd wished to dismiss Maruthas from his presence, but the deception was soon discovered, and the magi were put to death; after this the Christian faith began to spread among the fire-worshippers.

In 414 Maruthas again served as envoy at the court of Yazdegerd. The magi again rose up against the holy bishop, but their scheme again failed, and Maruthas gained still more the confidence of the Persian king. At this same time St. Maruthas, together with Bishop Abdas, by the prayer of faith healed the demon-possessed son of Yazdegerd; after this Yazdegerd even intended to accept baptism and permitted the Christian faith to be freely professed in Persia.

7. *Tagrit*, or in Greek *Martyropolis*, belonged to the Greek Empire until the time of Justinian and was its border city with the Persian Empire.
8. The Persian king Yazdegerd I reigned from 399 to 420.

Taking advantage of this favor of the Persian king, St. Maruthas spread the teaching of Christ everywhere, restored the churches overthrown during the persecution of Shapur, and convened councils.

At this same time he gathered the remains of the holy martyrs who had suffered under King Shapur and transferred them to Tagrit, the city he had founded, where he himself also reposed about the year 422[9].

* * *

9. Maruthas left behind a fairly large number of writings in the Syriac language, not all of which have yet been published. Particularly worthy of note are: 1) his unpublished *Commentary on the Gospel*; 2) *History of the Persian Martyrs*; 3) Maruthas's *Canons*; 4) his *Liturgy*; and 5) the *73 canons* of the Council of Nicaea with a description of the acts of that council. The relics of St. Maruthas were later transferred to Egypt and placed in the Skete Monastery of the Mother of God.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 17

17 февраля

New Calendar February 17 · Old Calendar March 1 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Tyro

Страдание святого великомученика Феодора Тирона

The impious emperors Maximian and Maximin[1] sent throughout all their realm a decree that all who had embraced the law of Christ should be released from execution if they would eat of the sacrifices offered to idols, and that those who refused to do so should be brought to trial. At that time St. Theodore Tiro[2], recently enrolled as a soldier, had been assigned to the Marmarite regiment, which was under the command of a praepositus[3] named Vrinka; this regiment was then stationed at Amasia, a city of Pontus[4]. When St. Theodore was brought to that regiment, the unbelievers began to compel him to offer sacrifice to the idols; but Theodore, a true soldier of Christ, faithful to God and filled with the Holy Spirit, declared before all:

"I am a Christian, and I have been commanded not to offer sacrifice to the abominable pagan gods, for I worship Jesus Christ, the True God and the Heavenly King."

Then the praepositus Vrinka began to persuade the saint:

1. By Maximian is meant Maximian Galerius, son-in-law of the emperor Diocletian (284–306), his co-ruler in the East, and afterwards his successor (305–311). Maximinus Daza was a co-ruler of Maximian Galerius, to whom he was a nephew. From his uncle he received possession of Syria and Egypt with the title of Caesar. He reigned almost simultaneously with Galerius (305–313).
2. *Tiron* is a Roman word, meaning *recruit, new soldier.*
3. *Praepositus* is a Latin word, meaning commander.
4. *Amasia* was a strongly fortified city in Pontus, on both banks of the Iris, formerly the capital of the Pontic kings. *Pontus* is the north-eastern region of Asia Minor, stretching along the shore of the Black Sea, or Pontus Euxinus, as this sea was called in antiquity. Thus the Pontic region received its name from the sea.

"Listen to me, Theodore: take all your weapons with you, and, as a soldier, come and offer sacrifice to the gods."

St. Theodore answered him:

"I am a soldier of my King Christ, and I cannot be a soldier of any other king."

To this the praepositus Vrinka said:

"Look, all these soldiers are Christians, and yet they are soldiers of the Roman emperor."

"Each one knows whom he serves," answered St. Theodore, "but I serve my Heavenly King and Lord, God and His Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ."

Then the centurion Posidonius, who was standing there, asked:

"Does your God, Theodore, have a Son?"

St. Theodore answered:

"Truly He has a Son, the Word of Truth[5], through whom He created all things."

The praepositus asked him:

"Can we come to know Him?"

To this the saint replied:

"I would wish that God grant you such understanding, that you might know Him."

Then Posidonius asked him:

"If we come to know Him, can we leave our emperors and draw near to Him?"

"Nothing prevents you," answered St. Theodore, "from leaving darkness and temporal earthly kings and drawing near to the living God, the eternal King and Lord, and becoming His soldiers, as I am."

Then the praepositus Vrinka said to the centurion:

"Let us leave him (Theodore) for a few days; let him reflect and decide for himself what to do."

During all the time that was given to Theodore for reflection, he prayed without ceasing and glorified the Lord. But the impious, breath-

ing fury against some other citizens who believed in Christ, seized them and led them to prison; as they were being led away, St. Theodore, following after them, instructed them in faith and patience and urged them not to renounce their Heavenly King, Christ. When they had been shut up in prison, St. Theodore, choosing a convenient time, set fire at night to the shrine of the Mother of the gods[6]. Some citizens saw the saint setting fire to the temple and denounced him to the authorities. Then the city governor Cronides, fearing that he himself would have to answer for Theodore, took him, brought him to the eparch Publius, and said:

"My lord, this man, recently enrolled as a soldier, is a harmful person; with evil intent he came to our city, burned the temple of the Mother of our gods, and dishonored the gods. I have taken him and brought him before your Excellency, so that, by the divine command of the rulers of the world, by the orders of the emperors, he may receive a punishment fully worthy of his audacity." The eparch, summoning the praepositus Vrinka, asked him:

"Did you permit the soldier Theodore to burn the temple of the Mother of our gods?"

He answered:

"Often I admonished him, and at last I set him a time, that he might reflect and offer sacrifice to the gods. If he has acted in this way, then he has utterly turned away from our gods and despised the imperial command; therefore you, as judge, carry out what the emperors have ordered."

Then the eparch, seating himself on the judgment seat, summoned the blessed Theodore and asked him:

"Why, when it was necessary to offer the goddess sacrifice and incense, did you bring her fire?"

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5. The name of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, *Word*, is borrowed from the Evangelist John the Theologian. The evangelist John begins his Gospel with inspired lines about God the Word, who existed with God the Father before the ages—the Word, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (Jn. 1:1–3).

6. Here is meant the pagan goddess Cybele, daughter of heaven (Uranus) and earth (Gaia); she was worshipped as the great mother of the gods, since Greek mythology considered her the mother of the Olympian gods with Zeus at their head.

St. Theodore answered:

"I will not conceal why I did this. I lit the wood so that the fire would scorch the stone. Is your goddess so powerless that fire can touch her and scorch her?"

Angered by these words, the eparch ordered him beaten, saying:

"My gentleness makes you bold. But I advise you not to speak at length. For if you do not carry out the imperial command of your own accord, we will compel you to do so by cruel torments."

To this the saint answered:

"I fear neither you nor your torments, however cruel they may be. Do what you wish; I trust in my Lord, I hope to receive from Him my reward in Heaven, and I am ready to suffer for Him."

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, Theodore," said the judge, "and you will be freed from the torments that await you; otherwise a terrible death awaits you."

But St. Theodore bravely replied to him:

"Your torments do not frighten me. For before me stands the Lord and my King Jesus Christ. He will deliver me from your torments. But you cannot see Him, since you cannot look with spiritual eyes."

The judge, filled with fury like a wild beast, ordered the saint thrown into prison, and, sealing the doors, left him there to die of hunger. But the Holy Spirit strengthened the blessed one with His grace. Moreover, one night the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and said:

"Take courage, Theodore, I am with you; do not take earthly food or drink, for eternal life with Me in the heavens is prepared for you."

After this the Lord vanished from the saint's sight. Comforted by the vision, the blessed Theodore began to sing psalms and rejoiced in his soul. A great multitude of holy Angels listened to him. The prison guards, hearing this sweet singing, came to the doors of the prison. Seeing that the doors were locked and the seal intact, they looked through the window and saw a multitude of men in white robes singing together with St. Theodore. In fear they reported this to the eparch Publius. He at once hastened to the prison, and on arriving at the place he found the doors locked and the lock and seal intact. And since the eparch heard the voices singing within together with St. Theodore, he

ordered armed soldiers to surround the prison on all sides. He thought that some Christians were with Theodore in the prison. But on entering the prison he found no one there except the faithful servant of God, St. Theodore, who was bound. Fear and trembling seized the eparch and all who were with him. Leaving the prison, they again locked the doors and went away. The judge ordered that each day the saint be given a small portion of bread and a little water. But in confirmation of the words of Holy Scripture, "the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17), St. Theodore would not accept bread or water, saying:

"My Lord and King, Jesus Christ, nourishes me."

In the morning the judge ordered the saint brought to the judgment seat and said to him:

"Heed my counsel and do not force me to order that you be tortured and tormented: offer sacrifice to the great gods. I will then write about you to our emperors, the rulers of the world, and they will make you chief priest of the gods, so that you will then receive honors equal to my own."

Looking up to heaven and making the sign of the cross over himself, St. Theodore answered his tormentor:

"Burn my body with fire, subject me to various torments, cut me with swords, give me to the beasts to devour, but I will not renounce my Christ, to the end of my life."

After consulting with the praepositus, the tormentor commanded that the saint be hung on a tree and his body scraped with iron combs. The saint was tormented in this way until his bones became visible. The blessed one said nothing to his tormentor during this, but only sang:

"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written: the righteous shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps. 33:2). "The gaining of wisdom is far better than gold, and the gaining of understanding is more desirable than choice silver" (Prov. 16:16).

The tormentor, marveling at the courage and endurance of St. Theodore, said to him:

"Are you, most wretched of all men, not ashamed to trust in a Man called Christ, who Himself was executed by a shameful death? Do you, for the sake of this Man, so senselessly expose yourself to torments?"

The martyr of Christ answered this:

"May the same dishonor fall to my lot, and to the lot of all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!"

Then the people began to shout and demand that the execution of St. Theodore be carried out quickly. Hearing the cry of the people, the judge asked Theodore through a herald:

"Do you wish to offer sacrifice to the gods, or do you intend to endure still greater torments?"

The martyr of Christ boldly answered:

"Impious man, full of all filthiness and flattery, servant of the devil, do you not fear God, who gave you such power and strength? For by Him "kings reign, and rulers decree justice" (Prov. 8:15). How can you compel me to forsake the living God and bow down to a lifeless stone?"

After reflecting, the judge said to Theodore:

"What do you want: to be with us, or with your Christ?"

With great joy the saint answered:

"I was, am, and will be with my Christ; you do what you want."

The judge, seeing that nothing could overcome the steadfastness of Theodore, pronounced the sentence of death.

"Theodore," he said, "who does not obey the authority of the great emperors, does not acknowledge the great gods, and believes in Jesus Christ, who was crucified, as the Jews say, under Pontius Pilate, I command that he be given over to the fire."

The command of the tyrant was quickly carried out: his servants gathered a great quantity of firewood from the nearby houses and bathhouses, piled up an enormous pyre, and brought St. Theodore to the fire. The pyre, kindled on all sides, blazed up in bright flames. Entering upon the pyre, St. Theodore made the sign of the Cross, and suddenly the Holy Spirit descended and in the midst of the flames gave coolness to the holy Passion-bearer. The saint, singing and glorifying God, surrendered his spirit to Him in peace.

"And we saw," writes one eyewitness of the blessed end of the Great Martyr, "his honorable and holy soul ascending to heaven like a lightning flash."

A pious and virtuous woman named Eusebia asked for the body of the holy and glorious Great Martyr Theodore. When the honorable relics of the saint were given to her, she anointed them with fragrant myrrh, wrapped them in a clean shroud, and buried them in her house in the city of Euchaïta,[7] in the Metropolis of Amasea, and each year she celebrated the holy memory of the martyr. The holy Great Martyr of Christ Theodore reposed on 17 February, about the year 306, in the reign of the emperor Maximian.

On the miracle of the holy Great Martyr Theodore Tiron.

After Constantine the Great's son Constantius, Julian the Apostate[8] ascended the imperial throne. He renounced Christ, began to worship idols, and raised a great persecution against the Christians. Julian persecuted the Christians not so much openly as secretly, for he did not dare to subject all Christians openly to cruel and inhuman tortures, fearing that many of the pagans, seeing the courageous endurance of the tormented Christians, might themselves turn to Christ. Therefore this impious emperor planned to defile the Christians in secret. He knew that during the first week of the Great Fast Christians observe a special purity and repent of their sins. And so he summoned the prefect of Constantinople and ordered him to defile daily, throughout the first week, the provisions sold in the marketplaces with the blood of idol sacrifices, from which Christians are always obliged to abstain (cf. Acts 15:29). The emperor's command was carried out, and on all the marketplaces were laid out foods defiled by the unbelievers. But the All-knowing Lord, putting the pagans to shame and caring for His true servants, brought to nothing this secret treachery. He sent to the Archbishop of Constantinople Eudoxius[9] His holy Passion-bearer Theodore, who had suffered for Christ many years before and now dwelt in glory

7. Euchaïta was an insignificant city in the Pontic region, near Amasea.

8. Julian ascended the throne in 361 and reigned until 363. Brought up in the Christian faith, as soon as he became emperor he renounced Christianity and went over to the side of paganism. For this he is called "the Apostate."

9. St. Eudoxius occupied the Constantinopolitan see from 340–341.

in the Heavenly Kingdom. St. Theodore appeared to Eudoxius, not in a dream but in waking vision, and said to him:

"Gather at once the flock of Christ, and command all the Orthodox that none of them buy foods in the marketplaces, for by the order of the impious emperor they have been defiled with blood from idol sacrifices."

The hierarch, perplexed, began to ask what could replace the foods bought in the marketplaces for poor people who lacked household provisions:

The saint answered:

"By giving them kollyva you will free them from their difficulties!"

But the bishop continued to show perplexity, since he did not know what kollyva was. Then St. Theodore said:

"Kollyva is wheat boiled with honey.[10] This is what the dish is called in Euchaïta." Then the bishop asked the saint:

"Who are you, and why do you care so for the Orthodox Christians?"

To this the saint answered:

"I am the Martyr of Christ Theodore; by God's command I have been sent to you to help."

Having said this, the saint became invisible. The bishop at once gathered all the Christians and told them what he had seen and heard. Preparing kollyva, he preserved his flock from the enemy's treachery. The impious emperor, seeing that his schemes had been thwarted, was greatly ashamed and commanded that unpolluted food be brought to the marketplaces. And the Christians, thanking the Lord for His unspeakable mercy and praising the Martyr of Christ St. Theodore, on the Saturday of the first week of the Great Fast celebrated the feast of the holy Great Martyr, blessing kollyva in honor and memory of him as food for the faithful to eat. From that time even to this day the Church, on the first Saturday of the Great Fast, performs the blessing of kollyva in memory of the miracle that occurred to Archbishop Eudoxius, and glorifies the Passion-bearer of Christ Theodore, that she might give the faithful a constant reminder of God's merciful providence over His ser-

10. Kollyva, otherwise *kutia* or *sochivo*, is a meagre dish. It consists of dry grains of wheat, lentils and barley, which, soaked in water, are eaten with honey.

vants, and of the help of the holy Great Martyr Theodore to Christians.[11]

Troparion, Tone 2:

Great are the achievements of faith! In the fiery fountain, as in waters of rest, the holy Martyr Theodore rejoiced; for, wholly consumed by fire, he was offered to the Trinity as sweet bread. By his prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

The faith of Christ, as a shield, thou didst take within thy heart, and thou didst trample down the opposing powers, much-suffering one; and with the heavenly crown thou wast crowned forever, O Theodore, as one invincible.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Mariamne

Память святой Мариамны

The holy Mariamne was the sister of the holy Apostle Philip. Having made a vow of virginity, she joined her brother together with the Apostle Bartholomew, when St. Philip, preaching the Gospel in the regions of Asia Minor, came to Lydia and Mysia.[12] From that time the holy Mariamne was a helper of the holy Apostles Philip and Bartholomew in their apostolic labors, and together with them bore all the hardships and sorrows of the apostolic calling. Preaching the word of God, they came to Hierapolis in Phrygia.[13] Here, as soon as they arrived—so the ecclesiastical historian Nicephorus Callistus relates of

11. The celebration in memory of the miraculous appearance of the Great Martyr Theodore to Archbishop Eudoxius begins on the eve of the Saturday—on Friday, at the liturgy after the prayer behind the ambo. At this time the blessing of kollyva is performed together with the singing of the moleben canon to the Great Martyr, composed by St. John of Damascus. On Saturday the Church has appointed the reading of a eulogy to St. Theodore and the singing of the canon of John, Metropolitan of Euchaïta.

12. Lydia and Mysia are the north-western regions of Asia Minor.

13. Hierapolis in Phrygia was situated in the southern part of Phrygia (in the central part of Asia Minor); in antiquity it was a fairly significant city, renowned for its marble quarry and its hot springs. Today there are only ruins here, and the site serves as a refuge for lepers.

them on the basis of ancient tradition—the worship of idols immediately ceased, the viper worshipped by the inhabitants of Hierapolis was cast out of the sanctuary, and those who had honored it were covered with shame and vexation. To check the success of their preaching, the city prefect ordered Philip, Bartholomew, and Mariamne to be seized and cast into prison. Then the Apostle Philip was put to death by hanging on a cross. Mariamne and Bartholomew, after a miraculous manifestation of God's wrath upon the prefect and the priests of the viper (the earth swallowed them), were set free. Lovingly kissing the body of her martyred brother, taken down from the cross, the holy Mariamne glorified the Lord and set out to preach the Gospel in Lycaonia.[14] Here, amid the successful proclamation of the Gospel, she peacefully reposed, at rest from her labors.

* * *

Uncovering of the Relics of the Holy Martyr Mina Kallikeladas

Обретение мощей святого мученика Мины Калликелада

A native of Athens, the holy Mina received an excellent education and was renowned for his eloquence, for which reason he received the surname Kallikeladas (the Fair-spoken). Under the emperor Maximinus[15] he suffered a martyr's death about the year 313.[16] The uncovering of his relics took place under the Byzantine emperor Basil the Macedonian.[17]

* * *

14. Lycaonia is one of the central regions of Asia Minor, bordering on Phrygia.
15. Maximinus Daza is meant, who reigned in Syria and Egypt from 305 to 313.
16. See the detailed account of this in the Lives of the Saints for 10 December.
17. The Byzantine emperor Basil I the Macedonian reigned from 867 to 869.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 18

18 февраля

New Calendar February 18 · Old Calendar March 2 (civil dates)

Memory of Our Holy Father Leo, Pope of Rome

Память святого отца нашего Льва, папы Римского

The great hierarch and shepherd of the Church of God, Leo, Pope of Rome, was a native of Italy; his father was named Quintianus.

From his youth St. Leo was instructed in all manner of book-learning, became acquainted with external philosophy,[1] and was schooled in the Christian virtues. Loving the spiritual life more than the worldly, he first served as archdeacon[2] under Pope Sixtus III.[3] For his great chastity and purity he was, after the death of Sixtus, unanimously chosen as first hierarch of the Church of Rome. As a good shepherd, St. Leo diligently tended the rational sheep of Christ, laying down his soul for them.

At that time the fierce tyrant Attila, leader of the Huns,[1436] who was called the scourge of God, having conquered many lands, came also into Italy, intending to lay it waste with fire and sword. Seeing that no one could resist the dread conqueror, Pope Leo turned with diligent prayer to God, and, imposing a fast upon himself and calling upon the

1. *External philosophy* was the name given to the writings of the pagan philosophers – Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras and others, that is, those writers who, according to the faith, stood outside the Church of Christ.

2. An archdeacon is the senior or first deacon. At each episcopal see there was one archdeacon. In the ancient Church the office of archdeacon was held in great honor, and the archdeacon was one of the bishop's closest associates. Archdeacons were often elected to the episcopate, as may be seen in the examples of St. Athanasius the Great, Leo, Pope of Rome, and many others. Today archdeacons are the foremost hierodeacons, that is, monastic deacons in the larger monasteries, especially stauropegial ones, and in cathedral churches. This title gives only precedence of honor, not of authority, for the archdeacon is not the head of the deacons but only the first of them in place in the service and in assemblies.

3. Pope Sixtus III occupied the Roman see from 432 to 440 A.D.

holy first of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, for help, he implored the Lord with tears that He would defend His servants from the savage enemy. Having drawn courage and steadfastness from prayer, St. Leo resolved to go to the tyrant, to quiet his wrath and stop his fury, ready, should need arise, even to lay down his soul for his sheep. With wise, sweetly-speaking and God-inspired words he conversed with Attila and turned him from a fierce wolf into a meek sheep; the dread and untamable warrior humbly and gently heeded the words of the servant of God, marveling at his episcopal dignity and standing in awe before the holiness of his honorable countenance. Having done everything as St. Leo desired, the dread Attila withdrew from the borders of Italy into his own lands.

Attila's voivodes greatly marveled how Leo could so quickly and so strangely make Attila, from so fierce a prince, so meek; they asked Attila:

"Why did you fear a single Roman who came without weapons? Why did you obey him? Why, as if defeated, did you flee, leaving in Italy such a multitude of riches?"

"Have you not seen what I saw?" Attila answered them. "I saw two angel-like men standing on either side of the pope (these were the holy first of the Apostles, Peter and Paul); in their hands they held drawn swords and threatened me with death if I did not obey the hierarch of God."

Such was the great servant of God Leo, inspiring fear not only in invisible enemies but even in visible ones, dearly loved by the sheep, for whose sake he did not shrink from going to the dread conqueror, ready, should need arise, even to suffer at his hands.

During his episcopate, after the heretic Nestorius,[4] there came forward Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, and Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria,[5] shameless blasphemers, who merged the two

4. Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who occupied the see from 428 to 431, preached the heretical teaching that Jesus Christ is not the true God but a man, the son of Joseph and Mary, who, on account of the holiness of his life, was granted a special grace of God, and who saves us not by His redemptive death but by His teaching and the example of His life. For this heresy Nestorius was excommunicated by the Third Ecumenical Council and died in exile in 436.

5. He occupied the Patriarchal see of Alexandria from 444 to 451.

natures in Christ our Lord, the divine and the human, into one. By their heresy they greatly disturbed the Church of God. Gathering at Ephesus[6] their unrighteous assembly,[7] they unjustly condemned and tortured St. Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, a defender of Orthodoxy, and did much harm to the Orthodox. Then St. Pope Leo used all his zeal to strengthen and pacify the Church, troubled by the heretics; he wrote to the emperors, first to Theodosius,[8] then to Marcian,[9] that they should convene an Ecumenical Council. At last, in the reign of Marcian and Pulcheria, there was convened against Eutyches and Dioscorus, who preached in Christ our Lord a single nature, a single operation and will, the Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon,[10] the fourth in number, at which there were 630 holy fathers.[11] At this council the most holy Pope Leo could not be present, both on account of the length of the journey and his advanced age, and because he could not leave Italy, since invasions of enemies into that land were then frequent; therefore he sent his legates: the bishops Paschasinus and Lucentius, and the presbyters Boniface and Basil. During the disputations with the heretics at that council, many were seized by strong doubt; then, by command of the holy fathers, in answer to the heretics' objections, there was read the letter of St. Leo, Pope of Rome, written to St. Flavian, the Patriarch of Constantinople who had been before, who had convened a local council in Constantinople against Eutyches. Of this letter it is told that the holy first of the Apostles, Peter himself, corrected it with his apostolic hand; we find the testimony of this in the Limonarion of St. Sophronius of Jerusalem:

"Abba Mina, abbot of the cenobium called Salaman's, situated near Alexandria, related to us," writes St. Sophronius, "that he had heard

6. Ephesus was a city on the western coast of Asia Minor, originally the center of the Greek colonies of Asia Minor, and in the times of the emperors one of the principal cities of Asia Minor. In Ephesus the holy Apostle John the Theologian spent the remainder of his life and died, and there also the Third Ecumenical Council held its session.
7. This was in the year 449.
8. He reigned from 408 to 450.
9. He reigned from 460 to 467.
10. Chalcedon was a suburb of Constantinople, located opposite it, on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus.
11. The sessions of the council opened on 8 October 451.

such an account from Abba Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria. When I (Eulogius related) came to Constantinople, I lived with Lord Gregory, archdeacon of the Roman Church, a man truly outstanding and virtuous, and I often conversed with him. It was he who told me of the most blessed and most holy Leo, Pope of Rome; concerning him it is recorded in the Roman Church as follows: when St. Leo wrote the letter to St. Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, against the impious Eutyches and Nestorius, he laid this letter upon the tomb of the first of the Apostles, Peter, and himself with prayer and fasting besought that Apostle:

"If I, as a man, have erred in anything, or have not explained something, then you, to whom from the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ the Church and this throne have been entrusted, correct it."

After forty days, while he was at prayer, the Apostle appeared to him and said:

"I have read it and corrected it." Taking his letter from the tomb of the blessed Peter, Leo opened it and found it corrected by the hand of the Apostle. This St. Sophronius reports to us.

When this letter of St. Pope Leo was read at the fourth Ecumenical Council, all the holy fathers cried out:

"St. Peter the Apostle speaks through the mouth of Leo."

Thus the fathers of the council, in their judgments, relied upon the letter of St. Leo, and by this letter they put the heretics to shame. Not only then but afterward this letter, which affirms Orthodoxy and stops the mouths of heretics, was held in great honor by the holy fathers and, among others, by the aforementioned blessed Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria. This Eulogius, at a time when the heretics greatly reviled Leo's letter and contradicted what was written in it, vigorously defended it; therefore he was pleasing to St. Leo, who by then had already departed from this life and stood before God together with the saints.

Of this the same St. Sophronius tells: "St. Theodore, bishop of the city of Darnis in Libya,[12] related to us the following: when I was chamberlain[13] of the holy Patriarch of Alexandria, Eulogius, I saw in a

12. Libya was a province in northern Africa, adjoining Egypt, stretching westward from it along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea and inland into Africa.
13. A *cubicularius* was a chamberlain, a bedchamber attendant.

dream a man of priestly beauty and radiance, who said to me: 'Tell Patriarch Eulogius about me.'"

I asked:

"Who are you, master, and how shall I tell him of you?"

He answered me:

"I am Leo, Pope of Rome."

Going in to Patriarch Eulogius, I said to him:

"The most holy and most blessed Pope Leo, first hierarch of Rome, wishes to come in to you."

Hearing this, Patriarch Eulogius quickly rose and went out to meet him; having offered prayer, they kissed each other and sat down. Then the blessed Leo said to the holy Patriarch Eulogius:

"Do you know why I have come to you?"

He answered:

"No."

Leo said to him:

"I have come to thank you for defending my letter well and strongly, for expounding my meaning, for stopping with it the mouths of the heretics, and so explaining my letter, which I wrote to my brother Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, to expose the impious heresy of Nestorius and Eutyches. Know, brother, that not only did I labor and toil over this letter, but the holy first of the Apostles, Peter, read it and corrected it, and above all it was sanctified by Christ God Himself—the Truth which we preach."

Such a vision (the bishop Theodore relates) I saw not once but twice and thrice: the blessed fathers Leo and Eulogius three times came together before my spiritual eyes and conversed with one another; of this vision, repeated three times, I told St. Eulogius. Hearing this, St. Eulogius shed tears and, stretching his hands toward heaven, gave thanks to God, saying:

"I thank Thy great and unspeakable goodness, Lord Christ our God, that Thou hast vouchsafed me, unworthy as I am, to be a preacher of Thy truth, and, through the prayers of Thy servants Peter and Leo, hast been pleased to accept my small boldness, likened to the two mites of the widow."[14]

Such is the report of Sophronius. The vision here described took place many years after the repose of St. Leo, for St. Eulogius lived much later, namely in the reigns of the emperors Maurice and Phocas,[15] whereas St. Leo, Pope of Rome, had died earlier, in the reign of the emperor Leo the Great, who bore the same name.[16]

This is what is known of the last days of the life of St. Pope Leo:

Having reached deep old age and drawing near to the end of the days of his earthly life, St. Leo was informed by God of the forgiveness of his human infirmities. This came about in the following circumstances: Pope Leo spent forty days at the tomb of the holy Apostle Peter in prayer and fasting, beseeching the holy Apostle to ask the Lord that the all-good God would forgive him his transgressions; after forty days the holy Apostle Peter appeared to him and said:

"I have prayed for you, and all your sins are forgiven you, except the sins you committed in ordaining others to the sacred orders. Only for this will you have to answer: whether you ordained anyone lawfully or not."

After this notification, St. Leo redoubled his prayers, intensified his fasting, multiplied his almsgivings, crying out with a contrite heart until he received the comfort of complete forgiveness. Then, having duly prepared himself for his departure, he commended his holy soul into the hands of God and was joined to the choir of the saints who had gone before, the great hierarchs and teachers[1450]; with them he now stands before the throne of Christ our God, glorified and worshipped together with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

14. Cf. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much" (Mk. 12:41–44).

15. The Emperor Maurice occupied the throne from 582 to 602. The Emperor Phocas – from 602 to 610 A.D.

16. The Byzantine emperor, St. Leo I, reigned from 457 to 474.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Seated upon the throne of the priesthood, O glorious one, and having stopped the mouths of the rational lions, thou didst illumine with the Divinely-inspired dogmas of the Honorable Trinity the light of divine knowledge for thy flock. Wherefore thou wast glorified as the Divine mystagogue of the grace of God.

* * *

Memory of our holy father Flavian the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople

Память святого отца нашего Флавиана Исповедника, патриарха Цареградского

Works

• Epistle of Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, to Leo, Pope of the city of Old Rome, concerning the errors of the impious Eutyches

• Copy of the (statement of) faith of Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, written in his own hand and presented to the emperor at his request

• Epistle of Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, to Leo, Archbishop of the holy Church of Rome

Our most holy father Flavian was first a sacristan and presbyter in the holy, great Church of Constantinople[17]; then, upon the repose of the most holy Patriarch Proclus, he was raised to the patriarchal throne on account of his blameless and God-pleasing life. This took place in the reign of Theodosius the Younger and of his sister Pulcheria. The emperor had a eunuch named Chrysaphius, full of guile and malice; holding heretical views, and knowing that Flavian was pious and firmly held the Orthodox faith, Chrysaphius disliked him and in every way opposed the saint's elevation to the patriarchate. When, despite his opposition, St. Flavian was installed as patriarch, Chrysaphius sought some pretext to do harm to the patriarch. He was very skilled in his crafty deeds, for he enjoyed the emperor's favor and held great power.

17. Here is meant the church of holy Sophia, the Wisdom of God – the cathedral church of the capital, in which the see of the Patriarchs of Constantinople was established.

Making use of his influence over the emperor, Chrysaphius soon found an occasion to stir up the emperor's displeasure against the holy patriarch. According to the testimony of the church historian Nicephorus[18], he advised the emperor to send word to the patriarch that, as a newly installed patriarch, he should prepare a gift for the emperor worthy of his imperial rank. Then the most holy Flavian, having prepared loaves of pure flour, sent this gift to the emperor for blessing, a gift truly worthy of the emperor's hands. Chrysaphius, however, cast these loaves aside, saying that the patriarch ought to have sent the emperor a gift not of bread but of gold. The most holy patriarch replied through the messengers that he had no such gift.

"I have no gold," he said, "for I have despised all the treasures of this world. Shall I give anything from the treasures of the Church? But the silver and gold of the Church belong to God and ought to be given to no one except the poor, which should be well known even to Chrysaphius himself."

Afterwards, however, as the historian Evagrius adds[19], when Chrysaphius began insistently to demand that a precious gift be sent, the patriarch sent him several golden vessels, taking them from the sanctuary; by this gift the patriarch wished to shame Chrysaphius and expose his insatiable passion for gold.

Chrysaphius was greatly enraged and began to stir up the emperor against the patriarch, telling him that the newly installed patriarch was mocking his power. But this crafty courtier could not do great harm to the patriarch, since the pious Empress Pulcheria, the sister of Emperor Theodosius, who then governed the whole Greek realm, protected the patriarch and defended this innocent and holy man. Then Chrysaphius began to plot also against the pious Pulcheria, cunningly turning the Empress Eudocia against her, as is set forth at length in the life of St. Pulcheria. Chrysaphius even succeeded in having the emperor's sister removed from the imperial palace and deprived of her power. This

18. Here is meant a monk of the Sophia Monastery in Constantinople – *Nicephorus Callistus*, who died around 1350; his "Ecclesiastical History" is brought down to the death of the Byzantine emperor Phocas (611).

19. *Evagrius Scholasticus*, author of an ecclesiastical history covering the period from 431 to 594, between 537 and 594.

happened as follows: Emperor Theodosius, on the counsel of his wife Eudocia and of Chrysaphius, desired that the patriarch should persuade his sister to accept the monastic tonsure, hoping in this way to remove her from imperial authority. Therefore a secret council was convened by the emperor, to which the most holy patriarch was also invited; at the council the patriarch gave the appearance that he would fulfil the emperor's wish, but in his heart he did not approve of it, for he considered it unjust to remove from the governance of the Greek state Pulcheria, who was distinguished by wisdom, prudence, chastity and holiness, who had taken the place of a mother to the emperor when his parents died during his childhood, and who, moreover, was a defender of piety and a wise ruler of the realm. Honoring and revering Pulcheria, St. Flavian secretly informed her of everything that took place at the emperor's secret deliberation. Then the pious princess Pulcheria, perceiving the enmity of the empress and of Chrysaphius and seeing her brother's intention, herself gave up the governance of the realm, left also the imperial palaces and the city, and devoted herself to quiet solitude. After that the crafty Chrysaphius, waiting for a favorable time, again began to plot against the most holy Patriarch Flavian, turning the emperor himself against him and saying that he had not kept the imperial secret and took the side of Pulcheria rather than of the emperor. For soon everyone learned that the patriarch had informed Pulcheria of the imperial intention. Thus Chrysaphius succeeded in making the emperor very angry with Patriarch Flavian.

At that time there lived in Constantinople the archimandrite Eutyches, who had gained sorrowful notoriety through his blasphemous teaching, for he merged the two natures in our Lord Jesus Christ, the divine and the human, into one nature. This Eutyches was the spiritual father of Chrysaphius, for he had been his sponsor at holy baptism. Having convened a local council in Constantinople[20], the most holy Patriarch Flavian summoned Eutyches to it so that he might openly declare his confession before all. But Eutyches did not wish to go to the council, devising various pretexts for his unwillingness: at one time he

20. This was in the year 448.

asserted that he could not leave his monastery, as one cannot leave a grave, because he had made a vow to that effect; at another he said that he was old and gravely ill. But the most holy patriarch again sent archimandrites, presbyters and deacons to him, lovingly invited him to the council, did everything to promote his repentance, and strove to have him renounce his heretical teaching before all and join the holy Orthodox Church, hoping that others, following his example, would abandon their error and turn to the true faith. Only after repeated summons did Eutyches consent, and even then reluctantly, to come to the council. On setting out for the council, he first went to the imperial palace, seeking protection and help from the emperor. Through Chrysaphius he obtained the emperor's consent to have chosen dignitaries and several soldiers accompany him to the council. The emperor sent with Eutyches the patrician Florentius and other dignitaries together with soldiers. Thus Eutyches went to the council as if to some battle, surrounded by soldiers and imperial dignitaries. The latter sent word to the council fathers:

"We ourselves will not come to the council, and we will not let Eutyches come, unless you first promise us that you will let him go from the assembly free."

The fathers gathered at the council gave their promise. When Eutyches presented himself before the council, first his books were read, full of heretical dogmas, which he had sent out to various monasteries and by which he had won many to his pernicious error. Then, after Eutyches' long evasions, the council fathers compelled him to state his confession orally. Eutyches said:

"I confess that our Lord Jesus Christ had two natures before His incarnation, but after the incarnation there became in Him one nature[21]."

Then the fathers present at the council demanded that he anathematize his heretical teaching and accept the Orthodox dogmas, but he refused to do so before the whole council, at which thirty-two bishops,

21. The meaning of Eutyches' words is evidently this: that at the moment of *conception* the two natures – divine and human – each had an independent significance and were distinct; but this was only one moment; when, however, at the Incarnation of God, the Godhead was united with humanity, the latter was swallowed up by the former, and in Christ there became one nature.

twenty-three archimandrites, and a multitude of presbyters and deacons were present. Then the most holy Flavian and all the holy fathers present at the council deposed Eutyches from the sacred rank and wrote the following letter: "Eutyches, formerly a presbyter and archimandrite, has shown in his earlier writings and in his present oral confession that he shares the heresy of Valentinus and Apollinaris[1456]; steadfastly following the error of these heretics, he has not heeded our admonition and, not accepting the true teaching, has refused to follow the right dogmas. Therefore we, weeping and lamenting his final perdition, have resolved in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he blasphemes, to remove him from the priestly rank, from the governance of the monastery, and from our communion. Let this be known to all who afterwards converse with him or visit him; let these people know that they will bring punishment upon themselves and be subject to excommunication, if they do not turn away from his errors."

This letter was signed by Flavian, bishop of New Rome[22], as well as by all the other bishops and archimandrites.

Having been deposed, Eutyches sought support at the imperial court, since the influential Chrysaphius helped him greatly in all things. This wicked eunuch bore great fury and wrath against the most holy Flavian; he strove by every means to depose the holy archpastor, for thereby he wished both to avenge Eutyches and, above all, to cause grief to Pulcheria, who honored St. Flavian. Taking advantage of his influence with the emperor—which was so great that he could do whatever he pleased—Chrysaphius wrote a letter to Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria,[23] a man capable of every evil, skilled in treachery, and distinguished by his impiety. In his letter Chrysaphius sought to set Dioscorus against Flavian, commending Eutyches to his protection and promising him great favor with the emperor. The letter was written in the emperor's name, by whose authority Chrysaphius commanded the Patriarch of Alexandria to gather whichever like-minded bishops under his authority he wished, go as quickly as possible to Ephesus, and hold an Ecumenical Council there concerning the dogmas

22. Constantinople was called New Rome.
23. Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, held the patriarchal see from 444 to 451.

of the faith, since Flavian was introducing certain heretical opinions into the Church and troubling the faithful. "Therefore," Chrysaphius wrote, "let Dioscorus examine the whole matter at the Council and depose Flavian; but Eutyches, if he be found innocent, let him absolve from the conciliar anathema and restore to his rank." Chrysaphius also won Empress Eudocia over to Eutyches' side, so that she too aided the heretic against Flavian. Dioscorus, taking with him more than ten bishops of like mind, and a certain archimandrite named Barsumas, arrived at Ephesus accompanied by 1000 monks. There, by imperial command, a council was assembled under the presidency of Dioscorus,[24] attended by 128 bishops who had come from various lands; the most holy Flavian also came to this Council, having been summoned there for judgment. The emperor—or rather, Chrysaphius in the emperor's name—wrote a letter to the count[25] Elpidius and the other counts who were there with the troops, ordering them not to admit to the Council those bishops who, together with Flavian, had condemned Eutyches at the local Council held in Constantinople and had signed the document deposing him.

When that wicked assembly, presided over by Dioscorus, had gathered, Eutyches came forward and presented a confession of faith written by his own hand, in which he set forth his heretical teaching, cunningly concealed beneath ambiguous expressions. No sooner had Eutyches finished reading his confession of faith than disagreement and uproar arose among the members of the Council: some defended Eutyches and asserted that he was innocent, since he confessed the holy faith rightly; others stood with Flavian. But the latter were few, for all loved darkness more than light and falsehood more than truth, seeking to please the earthly emperor rather than the heavenly one. For Emperor Theodosius, though pious, nevertheless sinned through ignorance, as a man, not understanding the treachery of Eutyches, Dioscorus, and Chrysaphius. The latter constantly flattered the emperor deceitfully,

24. The Council opened on 8 August 449. It was held in the same church at Ephesus in which the Third Ecumenical Council had sat eighteen years earlier.

25. The companions (retinue) of the highest-ranking official in the provinces were called *comites*, and later the companions of the emperors were called so as well.

striving to ensnare his soul in his treacherous nets. In his ignorance, the emperor regarded the heretics as Orthodox and trustfully heeded falsehood, accepting it as truth, for his wise sister, the blessed Pulcheria, was no longer with him. Thus, after long disagreement and dispute, the party opposed to true Orthodoxy prevailed at the impious assembly in Ephesus. The lawless assembly proclaimed the dogma that in Christ there are not two natures, but one, and declared Eutyches innocent and a true believer, whereas in reality he was a heretic; but the Orthodox and pious Patriarch Flavian the Council unjustly condemned as a heretic. He was not even allowed to say anything in his own defense. Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria and president of the Council, declared him deposed from his rank, deprived of his episcopal dignity, priesthood, and all spiritual authority, and a written decree to this effect was drawn up. Moreover, at this lawless Council it was decided to send the holy Patriarch into exile. Then Onesiphorus, Bishop of Iconium,[26] rose and, together with other bishops convinced of Flavian's innocence, touched the knees of Dioscorus and began to entreat him:

"Do not carry out your intention, most honored father, for Flavian has done absolutely nothing deserving of deposition. If he must be punished, then punish him, but do not depose him."

Dioscorus rose from his seat and, standing on a raised place before the throne, said:

"Even if they threaten to cut out my tongue, I shall not alter the sentence."

Then Barsumas, the archimandrite close to Dioscorus, began to cry out loudly:

"Whoever confesses that there are two natures in Christ, let him be cut in half."

When the bishops began to entreat Dioscorus not to lay hands upon Flavian, the president asked:

"Where are the counts?"

Immediately the counts, led by Elpidius and accompanied by a great number of troops, entered the church, bringing heavy iron chains pre-

26. Iconium is a city on a high, fertile plain in the interior of Asia Minor; it was once the chief city of Lycaonia, a province lying in the central part of Asia Minor.

pared for St. Flavian; Barsumas' monks entered with the soldiers as well. Then the bishops began to declare loudly:

"Barsumas is a brigand; he has devastated all Syria and brought his monks against us too. Barsumas is a brigand; anathema to Barsumas!"

But Barsumas shouted:

"Kill the heretic Flavian, kill him!"

In their mad audacity, the impious men rushed upon the saint and began to beat him, some with their bare fists, others with sticks. Dioscorus himself even threw himself upon Flavian, cast him to the ground, and trampled him underfoot. They beat him for some time, and then put chains upon him while he was scarcely alive. Dioscorus compelled the bishops to sign the document deposing Flavian. The supporters of Dioscorus signed it at once; but those bishops who saw the injustice and brigandage taking place before them refused to sign the document. Then the armed soldiers posted around the church would not let them leave, while Barsumas' monks shouted furiously and reviled them. They kept those bishops in the church until night, until at last, frightened by threats, they signed the document against their will. Thus ended that godless assembly, known in history as the Robber Council.

But the holy Confessor of Christ, Flavian, on the third day after suffering cruel blows, surrendered his holy soul into the hands of the Lord, for Whom he had suffered innocently, like Abel; thus, instead of being sent into exile, he departed to the heavens. Anatolius was chosen Patriarch of Constantinople in his place.[27]

After some time, Chrysaphius' evil deeds and treachery were exposed, and he was ignominiously expelled from the imperial palace and perished a shameful death. Empress Eudocia, his accomplice, fearing the wrath of Theodosius, went to Jerusalem. Thereafter the emperor himself earnestly and at length entreated his sister, St. Pulcheria, to return to the palace and assist him once more in the affairs of state. Fulfilling her brother's wish, the saint returned from her seclusion. Soon after taking the reins of government into her hands, St. Pulcheria

27. St. Anatolius held the patriarchal see in Constantinople from 449 to 458.

set about restoring the Orthodox teaching and honoring its defenders. She translated the relics of the holy Confessor of Christ, Flavian, to Constantinople with great honor.[28] But Dioscorus and Eutyches, anathematized at the Fourth Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon,[29] brought upon themselves eternal destruction. And the Church of Christ, which the gates of hell could not overcome, flourished, glorifying Christ, known in two natures without confusion and without division, praised and exalted with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Agapitus the Confessor, Bishop of Synada

Память святого Агапита Исповедника, епископа Синадского

The Venerable Agapitus was born in Cappadocia[30] during the reign of Emperors Diocletian and Maximian.[31] His parents were Christians. While still young, he embraced monastic life and entered one of the monasteries of his native land, where more than a thousand monks struggled in ascetic labors. Having learned from them the good practices of monastic life, the Venerable one soon became a skilled fulfiller of the Lord's commandments. He labored so zealously in fasting, vigils, and prayer that he was the wonder of all, and for his strict ascetic endeavors he was loved by all in the monastery. He wore clothing made of tree bark, often ate ashes instead of bread for 80 days, refused sleep, and, esteeming and calling all the monks of the monastery his masters, strove to serve them in various monastic tasks. For such labors, the Lord deemed the Venerable one worthy of the grace of

28. This was in 451.

29. The sessions of the Council opened on 8 October 451. By this time Theodosius had died, and the imperial throne in Byzantium was occupied by Marcian (reigned 450–457), who, upon becoming emperor, married Pulcheria.

30. Cappadocia, an eastern region of Asia Minor within the Roman Empire, bordered Armenia on the east, Pontus on the north, and Cilicia on the south.

31. The Emperor Diocletian (284–305), in order to govern the vast Roman Empire more successfully, at the beginning of his reign chose co-rulers for himself, among whom from 285 was Maximian Herculius.

working miracles. Once, by prayer, he killed a serpent, and afterward healed a maiden who was suffering from a grievous illness.

The Emperor Licinius[32], learning that the Venerable Agapitus possessed great bodily strength, commanded that he be taken from the monastery and, against his will, enrolled among his soldiers. While fulfilling the duties of military service, the Venerable did not abandon the ascetic labors of monastic life, and he was granted by the grace of God to heal grievous epileptic ailments by his mere appearance. Moreover, he miraculously cured various diseases not only in people but also in horses, oxen and other animals. At that time Licinius raised a persecution against the Christians, and when the glorious martyrs Victor, Dorotheus, Theodulus, Agrippa[33] and many others were subjected, by his command, to cruel tortures for their faith in Christ, the Venerable Agapitus also desired to be among them. After they had received a martyr's death for Christ, the Venerable was wounded with a spear, but the Lord preserved his life so that he might afterwards save many.

Soon Licinius died, and by the will of God the Emperor Constantine the Great took power over the whole Roman Empire. Among the emperor's servants there was one favorite servant who was possessed by an unclean spirit. Having learned of the Venerable, the emperor summoned him, brought the sick servant to him, and asked him to heal him. The Venerable prayed, and the servant immediately received healing. The emperor wished to reward the saint, but the Venerable asked for no other reward than that he be permitted to leave military service and return to the monastic life he loved. The emperor assisted him in this, and he, laying aside his military rank, returned to the same monastery where he had labored before.

Some time after this, the bishop of the city of Synnada[34] summoned the Venerable Agapitus to himself and, against his wish, ordained him to the rank of presbyter; and then soon afterwards the bishop died.

Then, by the will of God and by the election of the clergy and people, the holy Agapitus was appointed Bishop of Synnada. With the

32. The Emperor Licinius, successor of the Emperor Galerius from 311, was ruler of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, co-ruler with Constantine the Great.
33. Their memory is celebrated in the same way as the memory of the Venerable Agapitus.

acceptance of the episcopal rank, the Venerable was granted by the Lord the gift of prophetic insight. This gift was manifested on the following occasions. A woman, having heard of the newly appointed bishop, came one day to him to receive his blessing. When she stood before the hierarch, he related to her everything that had happened to her throughout her whole life, from childhood, and gave her instruction, and she departed from him with a firm resolve to live piously. Afterwards the Venerable reproved a servant of a deacon of Heraclea[35] for the defilement of a maiden, when the servant came to him to ask for a blessing. Possessing the gift of prophetic insight, the Venerable Agapitus also worked miracles. Thus, the bishop of the city of Silandus[36] once came to him and reported that the river flowing near the city, during the winter months, swells with water so greatly that it floods the fields and meadows and spoils the crops. Then the Venerable prayed to God, and the course of the river was turned in another direction. The holy Agapitus performed many (more than a hundred in number, as the record about him reports) other miracles, healing those afflicted with the falling sickness by a single word, by the touch of his hand, and by the shadow that fell from his body. Having completed his pious and God-pleasing life, the Venerable, in deep old age, fell asleep in the Lord, our Savior Jesus Christ[37].

* * *

NOTES

1436. The Huns, an Asiatic people, who invaded Europe at the end of the 4th century and caused considerable devastation there, destroying cities and whole kingdoms. In Europe the Huns established their residence in the valley of the river Tisza, a tributary of the Danube, in what is now upper Hungary. The reign of Attila (433–454) represents a brilliant period of Hunnic power. Attila kept the Byzantine emperor in constant fear, forced him to pay an enormous tribute and to yield to the Huns all the lands south

34. The city of Synada was located in Phrygia.
35. The city of Heraclea, or Herakleia, was located in Bithynia on the shore of the Pontus Euxinus, now the Black Sea.
36. The city of Silandeia, or Selena, was located in the Phrygian region at the source of the river Maeander, which flowed into the Aegean Sea.
37. The repose of St. Agapitus belongs to the fourth century.

of the Danube. In 440 Attila, at the head of an army of 500,000, moved westward. Putting everything to fire and sword, he traversed all of Germany as far as the Rhine, then crossed that river and destroyed a whole series of cities. In southern France he met with resistance, however, and was compelled to return to Germany. In 452 he undertook a new raid, this time against Italy. Rome and all Italy were threatened with becoming the prey of the enemy; but Attila halted his victorious advance and, after negotiations with Pope Leo the Great, returned back. Soon after this campaign Attila died.

1450. The repose of St. Leo, Pope of Rome, took place in 461. His relics rest in the chapel of his name in the Vatican Basilica of the holy Apostle Peter. After Pope Leo there remain up to a hundred discourses and up to 140 letters of dogmatic and moral content. All these writings are marked by the spirit of a strictly maintained Orthodox teaching. Thus in the well-known epistle to Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, at the 4th Ecumenical Council, St. Leo expresses such thoughts about the Incarnation of God: "The Godhead took upon itself our weakness without violating the properties of either nature. The true God appeared in the true and perfect nature of true man, entire in what is proper to Him, and entire in what is proper to us. Man is not annihilated by the majesty of the Godhead. Each nature acts in communion with the other in the manner proper to it." The moral teaching of Pope Leo also deserves particular attention. St. Leo often exhorted his flock to perform works of mercy. The duty of mercy, he said, is determined not by the measure of goods but by the disposition of the heart. The rich themselves should seek out the poor man and help him. God gives riches precisely so that they may flow to the poor. Speaking of prayer, St. Leo urged that help be sought through the intercession of the saints, and he enjoined the veneration of holy relics.

1456. *Valentinus* was a heretic who lived in the first half of the second century. He did not acknowledge the existence of a bodily nature in the Savior, and thus did not regard Him as a full and perfect man. *Apollinaris* lived in the fourth century. In contrast to Valentinus, he taught that Christ has a body, but he conceived the union of the Divinity with humanity in Him in a very peculiar way. Thinking that a perfect man and a perfect Divinity could not be united in one person, Apollinaris taught that Christ had only two parts of the human being, the body and the soul, while in place of the third part, the spirit, the Divine Logos (Word) took His place. Thus he also did not regard Christ as a perfect man. Eutyches has points of contact both with Valentinus and with Apollinaris. Since, according to his teaching, humanity is swallowed up in Christ by the Divinity, Christ is only God and not the God-man; His humanity is no longer actually existing but something imagined. This comes rather close to the notion of Valentinus, who taught that the human body of Christ was not real but only phantasmal. On the other hand, the teaching that humanity is swallowed up by the Divinity very much recalls the teaching of Apollinaris that in Christ the higher part of the human being, the spirit, was replaced by the Divine Logos.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 19

19 февраля

New Calendar February 19 · Old Calendar March 3 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Dositheus, Disciple of Venerable Dorotheus

Житие преподобного отца нашего Досифея, ученика преподобного Дорофея

Our blessed father Dorotheus, zealous for a God-pleasing life and having come to love the monastic life, set out for the coenobium of Abba Seridus[1], where he found a multitude of great ascetics who struggled in silence. Among them two great elders were especially outstanding: the holy Barsanuphius, and his disciple and fellow faster, Abba John, who bore the name of prophet, for he had received from the Lord the gift of clairvoyance. St. Dorotheus entrusted himself to the guidance of these ascetics and with all zeal began to imitate them. Together with the holy father Seridus, the Venerable Dorotheus often came to the great elder Barsanuphius and conversed with him, and he was granted the privilege of ministering to Abba John, who was distinguished by the gift of prophecy. Thus the blessed Dorotheus remained in the coenobium of Abba Seridus, exercising himself in the ascetic labor of obedience. At that time the aforementioned holy fathers resolved that Father Dorotheus should establish a hospital and himself have charge of it, for the brethren suffered greatly when they fell ill, there being no one to care for them and tend them. With God's help the

1. *Venerable Seridus* lived in the sixth century and was the founder of the Palestinian monastery near the city of Gaza. His memory is observed on the Saturday of Cheesefare. The monastery founded by him was a form of coenobitic monastery, in which the brethren not only lived together, but also received clothing and the like from the monastery, by the disposition of the abbot, while on their part they were obliged to devote all their labor and its fruits to the common needs of the monastery. Such monasteries were called cenobies (from the Greek word meaning "common-living").

Venerable Dorotheus built a hospital with the assistance of his brother according to the flesh, who, being pious and loving the monks, furnished St. Dorotheus with the means necessary for the construction. From that time Abba Dorotheus, together with some other reverent monks, served the sick and the strangers, regarding this as the obedience laid upon him by the fathers of the monastery[2]. Once the Venerable Dorotheus was summoned by the abbot Seridus; coming to the superior, Dorotheus found with him a certain youth in military dress, very young and beautiful in appearance. He had come to the monastery together with some of the servants of a prince, who enjoyed the love of Abba Seridus and often came to him. When Father Dorotheus arrived, Abba Seridus invited him to come to him alone and said to him:

"These people have brought this youth; they say he wishes to enter our monastery. But I fear that he is the son of some nobleman who may perhaps have stolen something or committed some evil and now wishes to hide himself; then, if we receive him, we shall be in direct danger. I think so because neither his garb nor his appearance reveals in him a man desiring to lead the ascetic life."

The youth was indeed a kinsman of a voivode; having lived hitherto amid wealth and accustomed to a pampered manner of life, he had never before heard the word of God. Some of that voivode's servants would sometimes speak in his presence of the holy city of Jerusalem, so that the youth desired to see the holy places and asked the voivode to let him go to see the holy city. Not wishing to grieve him by a refusal, the voivode turned to a close acquaintance of his who intended to visit the holy places, and began to beg him:

"Show me your favor: take this youth with you, that he may be able to see the holy places."

The man setting out took the youth, showed him every honor, and took great care for his comfort.

When the travelers reached the holy city and venerated the holy places there, they came also to Gethsemane[3]. There was an image of

the Last Judgment of God, where various kinds of torments of hell were depicted. Seeing this image, the youth looked at it attentively and marveled. Not far from him he saw an honorable woman clothed in purple; she began to explain to him the torment of each of the condemned, and in teaching him she added a few words of her own. Hearing her account, the youth was silent and wondered, for, as was noted before, he had never heard the word of God and knew nothing of the Last Judgment. At last, turning to the woman, he said to her:

"Lady, what must each person do to be delivered from these torments?"

In reply she said to him:

"Fast, do not eat meat, pray as often as possible, and you will be delivered from these torments."

Having given him three such commandments, the woman clothed in purple became invisible.

The youth went all around that place, carefully seeking to meet her; he thought she was an ordinary woman, and nowhere could he find her, for it was the Most Pure and All-Holy Virgin Mary, the Theotokos herself.

The instruction of the mysterious woman made a strong impression on the youth: moved in heart, he began to observe strictly the three commandments that the Woman whom he had seen in Gethsemane had given him. The voivode's friend, on the return journey, seeing that the youth was fasting and not eating meat, began to grieve, fearing the voivode, for he knew that the voivode loved that youth greatly. The soldiers who were with them, seeing such abstinence in the youth, began to say to him:

"Master, you are doing what people living in the world do not do. Such things are done only in monasteries. Go there, and there you will save your soul."

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2. With what love the Venerable Dorotheus performed such obedience is shown by his own words: "At that time I had only just risen from a grievous illness. And so pilgrims came in the evening; I spent the evening with them – and there were camel drivers there too – and I prepared what they needed; many times, when I went to bed, another need arose and woke me, and then the hour of vigil drew near."

Knowing nothing of God and having no notion of what a monastery was, the youth answered:

"Take me and lead me to some monastery. I myself do not know where to go."

Some of the soldiers accompanying the youth held Abba Seridus in special esteem. Therefore they came to his monastery together with that youth.

The abbot sent the blessed Dorotheus to speak with the youth and learn who he was. To all the questions of the Venerable Dorotheus the youth gave one answer:

"I wish to be saved."

Then Dorotheus came to the abbot and said to him:

"If you wish to receive him, receive him without any fear. One cannot expect anything evil from him."

The abbot answered:

"Show him mercy, father, and take him to yourself, that he may receive salvation under your guidance."

But the humble monk refused and said:

"I cannot take him to myself, for this is beyond my strength; I cannot lead him on the path of salvation."

To this the abbot replied:

"I am concerned both for your salvation and for the salvation of all of you; yet you do not wish to take care for the salvation of one youth."

"If you wish that, father," observed Dorotheus, "let us ask counsel of the great elder Barsanuphius."

"Good," answered the abbot, "I will tell him."

Going to Barsanuphius, the abbot related to him everything that had happened. Then the holy Barsanuphius said to Dorotheus:

"Receive this lad, for the Lord is pleased through you to save him."

After these words the blessed Dorotheus received the youth with great joy, placing him together with himself in the hospital. The youth's name was Dositheus. When the time for the meal came, Abba Dorotheus said to Dositheus:

"Go and strengthen your powers, only tell me how much food you have taken."

Returning, Dositheus said:

"I ate a loaf and a half-loaf, and each loaf was four pounds."

Dorotheus asked him:

"Is that enough for you?"

The youth answered:

"Yes, my master, that is quite enough for me."

"And you are not hungry?" asked Dorotheus.

"No," answered Dositheus.

"Next time," said Abba Dorotheus in reply, "you shall eat a loaf and a quarter of a loaf, and divide the other quarter into two parts, and eat one of them as well."

Dositheus did so the next time.

"Are you hungry?" Dorotheus asked him.

"Yes, I feel some hunger," answered Dositheus. After a few days the blessed Dorotheus asked him again:

"Do you feel hunger, child?"

The youth answered:

"No, my master, by your prayers I feel very well."

"Now eat only bread and a half-quarter of another."

Dositheus did so. After some days the Venerable Dorotheus asked him again:

"Do you not feel yourself hungry now, my son?"

"No, I am quite satisfied."

"Divide," said St. Dorotheus, "the other quarter into two parts as well; one of them you may eat, and keep the other."

Dositheus fulfilled the words of his teacher. Gradually, with God's help, Dositheus came to eat, instead of six pounds, only eight lots, for, as in everything, in food habit is important: each person eats the quantity to which he has managed to become accustomed.

The blessed Dositheus did every task quietly and meekly; he ministered to the sick in the hospital, and everyone thanked him for his care, for he strove to keep everything clean. If, however, out of weariness he happened to say something to some sick person with anger, he at once left the hospital, went into the cellar, and wept there. The other hospital servants tried in such cases to comfort him, but their efforts

remained fruitless: Dositheus remained implacable toward himself. Then they went to Father Dorotheus and said:

"Show us mercy, father, learn what Brother Dositheus is weeping about; we do not know it and cannot comfort him."

The Venerable Dorotheus came in and found his disciple sitting on the ground and weeping. He asked him:

"What is the matter with you, Dositheus, why are you weeping?"

To this Dositheus answered:

"Forgive me, father, I spoke an evil word to my brother in anger."

Then Abba Dorotheus said to him:

"Why do you get angry, Dositheus, why do you allow yourself to speak to your brother in anger? Do you not know that by offending him you offend Christ?"

Dositheus bowed his head to the ground and answered nothing. But when Dorotheus said to him:

"God will forgive you; rise, and from this day let us make a beginning of your correction, let us redouble our zeal for doing good, and God will help us."

Then Dositheus rose and with joy set to his work, as if he had received forgiveness from God. Those in the hospital soon came to know Dositheus's custom, and when they saw that Dositheus was weeping, they said:

"Something has happened to Dositheus, he has sinned in something."

And then they turned to the blessed Dorotheus:

"Father, go to the cellar, there is a task there for you."

When Dorotheus came in and saw his disciple weeping, he understood that Dositheus had again spoken an unkind word to someone, and said to him:

“What is the matter with you, Dositheus? Have you again offended God? Have you again yielded to anger? Have you forgotten your resolve to amend yourself?”

When Venerable Dorotheus saw that his disciple had already shed many tears, he said to him:

"Rise, Dositheus, and may God forgive you; for your part, strive once more to make a beginning of amendment."

Comforted by these words, Dositheus put aside his sorrow and went to make the beds, which he now did with meekness. Constantly confessing to his instructor all his deeds and thoughts, blessed Dositheus, as he made soft beds for the sick, would often say to Dorotheus as he passed by:

"Father, my conscience tells me that I make the beds well."

To this Abba Dorotheus answered him:

"A remarkable thing, Dositheus: you are becoming a good servant and an excellent bedmaker, but you are not turning into a good monk."

Venerable Dorotheus never allowed Dositheus to become attached to anything, and the disciple fulfilled all the counsels of his teacher. When Dositheus needed clothing, Abba Dorotheus instructed his disciple to sew a garment for himself and gave him the cloth. Blessed Dositheus withdrew and carried out this task with great diligence. When he had finished the work, Abba Dorotheus summoned him and said:

"Have you finished your work, Dositheus?"

"Yes, my father; I have sewn the garment well," Dositheus replied.

"Go and give it to such-and-such a brother"—he named him—"or to a sick man."

Dositheus gladly carried out this instruction from his instructor, and blessed Dorotheus gave him another garment to sew. When he had finished that one too, his instructor said to him:

"Give it to such-and-such a brother!"

And Dositheus gave it to him. He never murmured or said, "He takes my garment and gives it to someone else," but performed with zeal and love everything his instructor commanded him.

One day the monastery's builder[4] brought a good, sharp knife from the blacksmith. Dositheus took it, brought it to Abba Dorotheus, and said:

"Father, the brother-builder brought this knife; I took it to keep in the infirmary, if you permit."

4. *Builder* – otherwise a steward, house administrator, treasurer, bursar, or keeper of the keys. Thus were called the monks who had charge of the monastery's household!

Blessed Dorotheus, however, always kept in the infirmary what was of inferior quality; therefore he answered Dositheus:

"Show it to me; I will see whether it is good." Dositheus handed the knife to his instructor. Although St. Dorotheus saw that the knife was good, not wishing his disciple to become attached to any object, he said to him:

"Is this how you wish, Dositheus, to become the slave of this knife? Do you not fear that this knife, and not God, will have power over you?"

Hearing these words, Dositheus was silent. Having sufficiently put him to shame, Venerable Dorotheus said to his disciple:

"Go, put this knife somewhere, and do not touch it."

Blessed Dositheus faithfully carried out this instruction; he did not even dare to hand the knife to anyone else, though the other attendants took it: he alone did not touch it. Never did he even think:

"Why was I alone told not to take it? Am I not equal to the others?"

Venerable Dositheus never thought in this way, but always performed with joy everything his instructor commanded him.

Even when Abba Dorotheus, rebuking him, spoke figuratively, St. Dositheus would in such a case also strive to understand and fulfill his instructor's wish. Thus, an incident of this kind occurred in his life. At first Dositheus had a habit of speaking very loudly. Blessed Dorotheus, wishing him not to speak so loudly, said:

"Dositheus, we must bring a cup of unmixed wine. Go and fetch a vessel!"

He immediately went and brought a full cup of wine and bread. As he handed these to his instructor, he wished, as was customary, to receive his blessing. Seeing this, Dorotheus was astonished and asked him:

"What are you going to do, Dositheus?"

"Father," his disciple answered him, "you commanded me to bring a vessel of unmixed wine; so give me your blessing."

"Foolish one," Abba Dorotheus replied, "you speak very loudly, like the Goths[5] when they are drunk with wine. That is why I told you to fetch a cup of wine, for you shout as loudly as the Goths."

St. Dositheus bowed, put back what he had brought, and from that time on began to speak softly.

One day he came to Venerable Dorotheus and asked him to explain a passage from Holy Scripture, for, zealous to enlighten his mind, he had begun to reflect upon certain passages of Holy Scripture.

But his instructor did not wish Dositheus to occupy himself with the study of Scripture, for he feared that he might then become conceited and fail to preserve a humble awareness of his spiritual poverty. Therefore, in answer to his disciple's question, Venerable Dorotheus replied:

"I do not know."

Another time, when Dositheus again came to his instructor and asked him about another passage of Holy Scripture, he received this answer:

"Go to the abbot and ask him about it; I cannot explain it to you."

Obeying his instructor's command, blessed Dositheus went to the abbot. But Abba Dorotheus had warned the abbot:

"If Dositheus comes to you, Father, and begins asking about various passages of Holy Scripture, strike him."

When Dositheus came to the abbot and asked him to explain the obscure passages of Holy Scripture, the abbot began to strike him, saying:

"Why do you not keep silent, if you understand nothing? Why do you dare to ask about this? Should you not care more about your own purity, instead of occupying yourself with searching the Scriptures?"

Then, after striking him twice more on the cheeks, the abbot sent him away. Returning to Father Dorotheus, the Venerable One showed him his cheeks, reddened from the blows, and said:

"The abbot struck me on the back too"—and he added nothing more. He did not reproach his instructor or say to him, "Why did you

not admonish me? Why did you send me to the abbot?" No, blessed Dositheus said nothing of the kind; he received in faith everything his instructor commanded him and immediately carried out his instructions without question. When Abba Dorotheus asked his disciple about his thoughts, Dositheus told them to his instructor and humbly listened to all his counsel. He strove to keep his teacher's commands with such exactness that St. Dorotheus never had to repeat his instructions. Thus he acted throughout his brief stay in the monastery, where he remained only about five years. Thus also he ended his life, never departing from obedience to his instructor and father, having utterly renounced his own will and being attached to no thing.

Venerable Dositheus took no care at all even for his own health. When he fell gravely ill, so that blood came from his throat, he heard that undercooked eggs might help his illness. Venerable Dorotheus, who made every effort to cure his disciple, had also heard of this remedy, but had forgotten it at that time. Then one day St. Dositheus said to his instructor:

"Father, I wish to tell you something. I know a remedy for my illness, but I want you to command me not to use it, for I fear that otherwise the vain thought of recovery will trouble my spirit."

"Tell me, child, what remedy is it?" Venerable Dorotheus asked.

"Promise me beforehand that you will not give it to me," blessed Dositheus again entreated Father Dorotheus.

"Very well," his instructor replied, "I will do as you wish."

Then the sick man said to him:

"I have heard from some people that undercooked eggs are beneficial for those who are ill as I am, but I beg you, do not command me to eat them, lest the vain thought of recovery trouble me."

"Very well, my son; I will not compel you, as you yourself have asked me. Only do not grieve or lose heart."

And indeed, instead of undercooked eggs, Venerable Dorotheus gave his disciple other remedies that helped his illness. Thus St. Dositheus,

even when stricken with a grave illness, strove to renounce his own will.

The Venerable One always kept the remembrance of God in his mind and upon his lips. His spiritual father advised him constantly to say, "Lord Jesus Christ, my God, have mercy on me," and, "Son of God, help me." St. Dositheus always had these prayers upon his lips. When his illness grew worse, Father Dorotheus said to him:

"Dositheus, do not forget your prayers, and redouble your supplications!"

"Pray to God for me, Father," the sufferer replied. When the illness grew still worse, Dorotheus asked:

"Well, Dositheus, do you say your prayers as before?"

"Yes, Father; through your prayers, I do not leave off this practice." When his illness grew worse still, so that Dositheus could no longer rise by himself and had to be carried on a sheet, Venerable Dorotheus asked him:

"Do you continue to pray, Dositheus?"

"Forgive me, Father," the sick man answered, "I can no longer pray."

"Then leave off prayer," Dorotheus replied, "only remember the name of God and keep Him always before your eyes."

St. Dositheus's sufferings continued to increase, and one day he made this request of the elder Barsanuphius:

"Release me, Father; I can no longer live."

St. Barsanuphius sent him this message:

"Endure, child, for the mercy of God is not far off."

Seeing that St. Dositheus was grievously ill, Venerable Dorotheus was deeply grieved by this. After a few days the sick man again sent word to St. Barsanuphius:

"My master, I can no longer live."

To this the great Barsanuphius answered:

5. *Goths* – were a semi-savage people of Germanic origin, who originally lived to the southeast of the Baltic Sea. In the era of the great migration of peoples (5th century) the Goths spread southward, and for some time threatened the Byzantine Empire. At this same time, and also later, there were many Goths among the mercenaries serving in the armies of the Greek emperor, and therefore this people was known even in Palestine.

"Go in peace, stand before the All-Holy Trinity, and intercede for us before the throne of the Almighty."

Hearing these words of the great Varsonophius, the monks began to murmur; they said to one another:

"What great thing has Dositheus done? Wherein was his ascetic labor? Why did he receive such an answer from the great elder?"

They indeed saw no particular ascetic feats in Venerable Dositheus. They did not see him eat only every other day, as some of the monks there did; they did not see him come to church before all the others, nor did they see him exercise any special abstinence. They all saw him take food, though in small quantity. They knew that St. Dositheus sometimes sustained himself on the juice left over after the distribution to the sick, or on fish heads, or other such dishes. And in this monastery there were many monks who for a long time had zealously labored in abstinence, ate only every other day, and prayed constantly; these, hearing the answer of the great Barsanuphius given to the sick man, who had been in the monastery not more than five years, were troubled; for they did not know the uncomplaining and complete obedience of St. Dositheus, and could not understand his great labor. Therefore they began to murmur when they heard the words of St. Barsanuphius addressed to him.

But it pleased the Lord to show the glory prepared for Dositheus because of his great obedience, and at the same time to reveal before all how wisely and swiftly Venerable Dorotheus had guided his disciple on the path of salvation. Shortly after the repose of Dositheus[6] there came to the monastery a holy elder, an experienced ascetic, and he was received with honor. This elder, desiring to see the fathers of the monastery who had departed before him, prayed to the Lord that He would reveal something to him about them. His prayer was heard, and he was granted to behold all the fathers of the monastery standing in a bright place, among whom was a youth with a cheerful face. After this vision the elder began to inquire who this youth was whom he had seen among the holy fathers. When he described his outward appearance, all

6. Reposed in the 7th century.

understood that it was the blessed Dositheus. Then all glorified God and marveled at His ineffable mercy.

Thus Venerable Dositheus in a short time attained great glory in the Kingdom of Heaven, because he labored in obedience, renounced his own will and subjected it to the will of his teacher as though to God Himself. For this he now stands with all the holy fathers in heaven before the God who lives and looks upon the humble and obedient, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Archippus, Philemon and Apphia

Память святых апостолов Архиппа, Филимона и Апфии

According to the testimony of the blessed Ambrose, St. Apostle Archippus, one of the seventy, was bishop after St. Epaphras in the city of Colossae[7], in Phrygia; St. Apostle Paul in his epistle to Philemon calls St. Archippus his fellow-soldier (Philem. 1:2). St. Philemon was a notable citizen of Colossae; St. Apphia, according to the testimony of John Chrysostom, was the wife of Philemon. The latter, having believed in Christ, made his house into a church; thus all the believers in Colossae gathered in the house of Philemon, and here the Divine services were celebrated as in a church[8]. Afterward St. Philemon was ordained bishop, to help the Apostles in spreading the Gospel.

In the times of the holy Apostles, some bishops had a permanent residence and occupied one definite see, while others, not having this,

7. *Colossae* – a city in the southwestern part of Phrygia (a region of Asia Minor), on the river Lycus, near Laodicea and Hierapolis. In antiquity it was a large, populous, and wealthy city. At present it is a small village on one of the slopes of Khokas, near which the ruins of the ancient city of Colossae still remain.

8. In the times of the Apostles, Christians had no special places for prayer assemblies. Usually for this purpose some best upper room was used, most often in the house of some well-to-do believer, and in it all the Christians of the city gathered to perform the mystery of the Eucharist and common prayers. Thus a simple upper room served as a kind of church. The prototype of such an upper-room church we have in the well-known Upper Room of Zion, in which, according to tradition, the Last Supper was celebrated by the Lord Jesus Christ before His sufferings, and in which, after the Lord's ascension, the Apostles gathered, receiving in it, on the fiftieth day after His resurrection, the gifts of the Holy Spirit who descended upon them.

traveled through various cities and villages; these were called apostolic bishops, since they were sent out for apostolic preaching. St. Philemon was such a bishop, and he was granted to be counted, like some diocesan bishops, among the seventy holy Apostles; he traveled through the cities of Phrygia and certain others and everywhere zealously preached the word of God. There has come down to us the report that he was also bishop in Gaza[9].

St. Apphia, having established a church in her house in Colossae, zealously served the Lord day and night, laboring in prayer and fasting; she gladly received and gave shelter to those who toiled in proclaiming the teaching of Christ; she provided food for the poor, the needy and the wayfarers, so that her house was not only a church but also a hospice, a hospital and a refuge for all who had no place where they might rest and find peace.

Once in Colossae an abominable festival was being celebrated in honor of the pagan goddess Artemis[10]. At this time the holy Apostles Archippus and Philemon, who were in that city, gathered all the believers into the house of Philemon and Apphia, and offered up their customary prayers to the Lord and performed the Divine service. Meanwhile the idol-worshippers, who harbored a strong hatred for the believers, learned that all the Christians had gathered in the house of Philemon. Taking advantage of this, the pagans suddenly attacked the faithful, scattered the whole flock of Christ, beat some and killed others; then, seizing the holy Apostles Archippus and Philemon, as well as St. Apphia, they brought them before the governor of Ephesus, Artoclis, and at his command subjected the saints to torments: first the tormentors stretched them out on the ground and dragged them about, mercilessly striking them as they did so; then they buried each of them

9. *Gaza* – one of the most ancient Philistine cities, which 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 considerable city once existed here. Not far from here is situated a new city, of later origin, of the same name.

10. *Artemis*, otherwise Diana – a well-known pagan goddess among the Greeks and Romans, who personified the moon and was considered the patroness of forests and of the hunt. The worship of this goddess was carried out with great splendor and brilliance; she was especially honored in the city of Ephesus.

separately in the earth up to the hips and began to stone them. St. Philemon and St. Apphia they stoned to death entirely; and St. Archippus, barely alive, they left to be mocked by children; a multitude of boys gathered here, who began to tear the saint with knives. Thus these three saints stood in Heaven before the throne of the Most Holy, Life-Giving, Divine and Indivisible Trinity[11].

Kontakion of the Apostle Archippus, Tone 4:

The Church, having thee as a great star, O Archippus, and illumined by the rays of thy wonders, calleth unto thee: Save by faith those who honor thy memory.

* * *

Commemoration of Venerable Rabbula

Память преподобного Равулы

St. Rabbula was born in the city of Samosata[12]. He received his education under the guidance of a famous scholar well versed in the Syriac language, named Varipsabas. Living a virtuous life from his youth, the venerable man, on reaching mature age, took the monastic vows and chose for himself extraordinary feats.

Like the holy Prophet Elijah, he dwelt alone in the mountains and caves, and in the manner of his life he imitated St. John the Baptist.

After some time the venerable man, together with another monk, set out for Phoenicia[13], and, laboring here, drew attention to himself by his high virtues, so that soon, against his will, he became known to all. Having received a monetary grant from the emperor Zeno[14], he, with

11. The Apostles Archippus and Philemon and the holy woman Apphia died in the reign of the Roman emperor Nero (54–68 A.D.). Their memory is also celebrated by the Church on November 22.

12. The city of Samosata was in Syria and was situated on the right, western bank of the river Euphrates, in its upper reaches.

13. Phoenicia lay to the north of Palestine and was situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Lebanon mountains.

14. Zeno reigned, with a small interruption, from 474 to 491. During his reign there was a struggle of the Orthodox with the Monophysite heretics, and he took an active part in this struggle, striving to give the advantage and triumph to the representatives of the Orthodox teaching of the Church.

the assistance of John, bishop of Berytus[15], built a large monastery in one place among the mountains and filled it with monks. In the surroundings of the monastery there lived many hardened pagans. Venerable Rabbula and the monks who labored with him in the monastery, imitating the holy Apostles Paul and Barnabas, and also Peter and John, began to rebuke their errors, often entering into dispute with them, and at other times to instruct them in the faith, and soon led them all to the knowledge of the true God. This was the first glorious deed of the venerable man.

After the death of the emperor Zeno, the rule of the empire was assumed by the emperor Anastasius[16]. Venerable Rabbula went to Constantinople, and by his efforts achieved that the emperor granted him a new monetary grant, which he used for the building of a second monastery. Afterward he built many other monasteries in various places. St. Rabbula was always diligent in every good work, meek, merciful, and loving toward man; he never gave himself over to anger, always abided in prayers, and regarded everyone with goodwill. And when the devil, stirring up passions in him, entered into struggle with him, then, knowing and understanding the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to perfection, he set against him both the word of God and works of piety, and thereby drove the adversary away from himself. The venerable man lived until the reign of Justinian the Great[17], who built the famous church of St. Sophia in Constantinople[18]. Having reached eighty years of age, he once heard a voice from heaven saying to him: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28); after this, having been slightly ill for a short time, he departed to the Lord[19].

15. Berytus, now Beirut, was a seaport city of Phoenicia, situated near the mouth of the river Magora.

16. Emperor Anastasius governed the empire from 491 to 518.

17. Justinian ascended the throne after Justin in 527 and reigned until 565.

18. The principal great cathedral of Constantinople, in the name of Sophia – the Wisdom of God, which was originally built by Constantine the Great. Under the emperor Justinian it was magnificently restored and enlarged in 537. In 1453, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks, it was converted into a mosque. The Justinianic church of St. Sophia still represents the most remarkable and most majestic monument of Christian architecture of the Byzantine style, of its most flourishing period of development.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Confessors Eugenius and Macarius

Память преподобных Евгения и Макария исповедников

When Julian reigned in the Roman empire, all Christians went into hiding, because by the emperor's command sacrifices to the pagan gods were offered everywhere, and the pagans, pleasing their sovereign, defiling themselves and not fearing the Judgment of God and eternal punishment, forcibly compelled the Christ-confessors who were steadfast in the faith to take part in these sacrifices. At this time two presbyters of the Church of Antioch, Eugenius and Macarius, were seized and brought to trial before Julian. At the trial they confessed Christ as the true God and the Judge of the living and the dead, and they denounced the apostate emperor as an impious man and murderer, a transgressor of the commandments of God, a pagan and a servant of idols, and they said to him:

"Woe to you, impious one and heir of eternal, unending fire! Woe to your vanity! How did you dare to seek darkness instead of light?"

At these words Julian was filled with rage and commanded first that the saints be bound with thin cords and hung head downward, and that they be fumigated with a poisonous and foul-smelling dung; then he had an iron plate heated to a great heat, and, stripping them, had them laid upon it. Subjected to these tortures, the holy Eugenius and Macarius raised their eyes to heaven, and, preserved by the power of God, they remained unharmed, their faces shining with joy, and thus exposed the malice of the tormentor. After this Julian ordered them put in chains and banished to Oasim in Arabia[20]. On their way to the place of exile the saints rejoiced that they suffered banishment for Christ, and sang: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Ps. 118:1).

19. St. Ravula died about 530.

20. *Arabia* – a rocky peninsula in the southwest of Asia. Oasim was one of the oases of the Arabian desert.

With joyful spirit they arrived at Oasim, ascended a certain mountain, and began to live there alone. The rulers of the country said to them:

"Brethren, leave this place, for not far from here dwells a fierce serpent, which devours all who come near it."

To this the saints answered:

"Show us the cave where this serpent dwells."

They were led to the dwelling place of the serpent and shown from a distance the cave where it lay. Then the saints, kneeling, prayed to God, and suddenly a thunderclap came from heaven and struck the serpent. The slain serpent was enveloped in flame and immediately burned up, and together with it the sand that was in the cave burned, and over the cave a violent, foul-smelling whirlwind of dust arose. Seeing such a miracle, the rulers of the country, who were pagans, believed in Christ.

Meanwhile the holy Eugenius and Macarius entered the cave where the serpent had dwelt, and spent thirty days in prayer, having with them neither food nor drink. At last they heard a voice saying to them:

"Servants of the true God and of our Savior Jesus Christ, approach the stone which lies near you."

The saints fulfilled the command, and when they came to the stone they first saw light in it, and then the stone split in two, and water flowed from it in abundance. Taking this water, they drank their fill, and thereby satisfied both their hunger and their thirst. Remaining in the cave, the saints prayed that the Lord would grant them to die at the same time and to be together with Christ, and the Lord heard their prayer: they both together departed to the Lord, giving thanks and glorifying Him[21].

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Maximus, Theodotus, Hesychius, and the holy martyr Asclepiodota, who suffered under the emperor Maximian Galerius at Adrianople[22].

21. The death of the saints is dated to 363.

22. The memory of three of them, Maximus, Theodotus, and Asclepiodota (otherwise Asclias) is also celebrated on September 15.

* * *



THE TWENTIETH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 20

20 февраля

New Calendar February 20 · Old Calendar March 4 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Leo, Bishop of Catania

Житие святого отца нашего Льва, епископа Катанского

The servant of God Leo was the son of noble and pious parents, and came from the region of Ravenna[1]. For his pure life and wisdom he was deemed worthy of all the sacred degrees in order, and after the repose of the blessed Savinus, Bishop of Catania, he was raised by the election of God to the episcopal throne. The city of Catania lies on the island of Sicily, not far from Mount Etna, which to this day casts forth fiery lava. Having taken up the episcopal throne, St. Leo also took upon himself all the labors belonging to his new rank. He cared for orphans, the poor, widows, the sick and strangers, feeding and clothing them at the expense of the church properties, and healed their infirmities by his prayers; he was a merciful father to his children and a faithful shepherd to his flock, yet to the demons and their servants he was terrible, as a lion is to wolves. In his days there was in Catania a certain sorcerer named Heliodorus; he was the son of believing and pious parents, and was himself enlightened by holy Baptism, but afterwards secretly renounced Christ and began to serve the demons, having learned sorcery from a certain Jew. Thus he was counted a Christian, but in truth he was a pagan, a servant of demons and a great magician, in no way better than that ancient magician Simon, whom the holy chief Apostles Peter and Paul brought to death by their prayer. In everything Heliodorus was like him: performing wondrous magical marvels, he by his suggestion brought it about that people seemed to see rivers flowing over dry land, along the roads and streets,

1. Ravenna: now an Italian province on the Adriatic Sea.

so that citizens of both sexes, stripped naked, crossed in the midst of the city what seemed to them a river; he turned stones into gold, but only for a short time; in the marketplaces, by his sorceries, he caused great losses to merchants; and noble maidens, daughters of honorable and distinguished citizens, he so roused to fleshly sin by his enchantments that they, forgetting shame, abandoned their homes and parents and ran about to various places for the sake of fornication. When the magistrate Lucius made a report about him to the emperors Leo and his son Constantine Porphyrogenitus[2], the emperors sent a command to seize him; but Heliodorus himself gave himself into the hands of those who sought him; he boarded a ship with them at Catania and on that same day landed at Constantinople, sailing in one hour a distance of which only those know who cross from the West—from Sicily to the East—to Thrace. Appearing before the emperors, he was condemned by them to death, but at once, before the imperial eyes, he became invisible and again appeared in Catania; being summoned a second time to Constantinople and condemned to be beheaded by the sword, the sorcerer again became invisible at the very moment when the soldier, raising the sword over his head, struck with force, so that the sword struck only the air; and again this sorcerer found himself in Catania.

Often the Hierarch of Christ, Leo, urged him to desist from such evil deeds and, repenting, to turn to God, but Heliodorus could not be persuaded, just as one cannot make an Ethiopian white or turn hard stone into soft wax. The impious man not only did not amend himself, but conceived an even greater evil: he extended his sorcery to the very bishop of God, desiring by his magic to mock him. Once, on the solemn day of a certain feast, the hierarch, in the presence of the whole people, was celebrating the Divine Service with all his clergy in the church; Heliodorus the sorcerer also entered the church, as a hypocritical Christian, and began secretly to perform his enchantments; through them he brought it about that some of the people began to stamp in the church with their feet like horses and to roar like beasts; others began to laugh uncontrollably, and others became angry; and the sorcerer

2. Leo IV the Wise (717–741); his son Constantine reigned from 741 to 775.

boasted that he would also bring it about that the bishop himself, with all his presbyters and clergy, would, interrupting the service, leap and dance right there, as if to the sound of music and organs. The holy hierarch of God, discerning the intention of Heliodorus, bowed his knees before the Holy Table of God and, after fervent prayer, rose, went out from the sanctuary, and, taking the sorcerer by the neck with his omophorion, bound him, and led him out of the church into the middle of the city; he commanded the people to bring at once a great quantity of wood and kindle a strong fire. When his command had been carried out, the saint questioned Heliodorus about all his sorceries and enchantments, and afterwards, holding him bound with his omophorion, entered the fire with him, and standing in the midst of the flames held him and did not leave his place until the impious sorcerer was entirely burned; after this the hierarch of God Leo, returning to the church, completed the Divine Service. This glorious miracle struck all with terror, for while holding the sorcerer in the flames, the hierarch himself was not only not scorched by the fire, but even the fire did not touch his hierarchal vestments: the dew of the Holy Spirit surrounded him in the flames and protected him from being scorched; the report of this went through all the ends of the earth; the emperors, learning of such a miracle, summoned the saint with great honor to Constantinople and, falling at his honorable feet, begged him to pray for them. And when the blessed one entered the imperial palace, he carried burning coals on his garment, and his garment was not scorched. And many other miracles did this great servant of God work: he gave sight to the blind, healing to the sick, cast demons out of men, shattered an idol's temple by his prayer, and overthrew idols by his word; finally, in old age, he reposed in the Lord. At this same time a woman suffering from a flow of blood, of senatorial family, from the district of Syracuse[3], came to the city of Catania to the saint; for a long time she had suffered from the affliction of bleeding; the physicians had already refused to treat her; hearing that the holy bishop Leo by his prayer gave healing to people from their diseases, she came to ask the saint to pray for her;

3. *Syracuse*: one of the first Greek colonies on the eastern shore of the island of Sicily, founded, according to tradition, by the Corinthians about 735 B.C. Now an Italian province.

as she was entering the city gates, she heard the tolling of a bell for one who had died, and when she asked who had died, she was told that the holy bishop Leo had reposed; filled with deep compassion, she went to the one who had departed, and as soon as she touched his bier, the flow of blood at once ceased, and she was completely healed. The holy body of Bishop Leo was laid in the church of the holy martyr Lucia; and it healed various infirmities to the glory of Christ our God.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a great lamp, the Church has thee, O all-blessed one, shining more brightly than the sun; by thy prayers preserve it, O blessed one, unconquered and unshaken by every heresy, and undefiled, as thou art ever-memorable.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Sadoc, Bishop of Persia, and with him 128 Martyrs

Страдание святого священномученика Садока, епископа Персидского, и с ним 128 мучеников

St. Sadoc ascended the episcopal throne in the Persian cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon after St. Simeon, Bishop of Persia, had suffered there. Once St. Sadoc saw a terrible dream; awakening, he summoned his clergy, presbyters and deacons—at that time they were all hiding, fearing the king—and began to say to them:

"This night I saw in a dream a ladder whose top touched the heavens; upon it, in great glory, stood the holy bishop Simeon, and I stood on the earth; St. Simeon called to me loudly: 'Come up to me, Sadoc, and do not fear—I went up yesterday, and you go up today.' After such a vision and such words of the saint, I believe that I shall be taken to torment for Christ; the words of St. Simeon, 'I went up yesterday, and you go up today,' signify that he suffered last year, and that for me in the current year there remains to undergo torment and death."

After this St. Sadoc began to instruct the clergy thus:

"My beloved brethren and fathers, let us love God with all our soul and our Lord Jesus Christ with all our mind; clothed in the armor of

faith, let us not fear any evil, let us not be terrified if torment and death overtake us—let each of us be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. If we must die, let us die as is fitting for the perfect; if we are destined to live, let us live as the righteous. Even if we die, we shall die for our Savior, and let us not fear the sword, if through the sword eternal life is opened to us. While it is yet day[4], let us zealously labor for the salvation of our souls, that we may be enriched with incorruptible blessings, be deemed worthy of honor and glory without end in the Heavenly Kingdom, and that our name may remain glorious in the memory of the Christian race. Brethren, let us pray to our God that He quickly fulfill what was shown to me in the vision. For he who is of the spirit strives with joy and great love to endure torment and death for Christ, and does not fear, since he is always ready for such a feat. But terrible and dreadful is the hour of death for him who is of the flesh; virtuous people themselves, with diligence and magnanimity, seek such a death, that through it they may inherit eternal life; while the lazy and negligent hide themselves, seeing death before them. For those who love God ascend to God, and those who love the world remain in the world; the former leave the body for joy and gladness, the latter remain in this life for suffering and sighing."

In the second year of the persecution, the Persian king Shapur arrived at the aforementioned cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon. At that time, St. Sadoc, the bishop, was slandered before him. His name signifies "the king's friend," and indeed he loved the heavenly King, Christ, with all his soul and all his strength. He was distinguished by great abstinence, and was full of righteousness and faith. He imitated St. Simeon, after whom he had ascended the episcopal throne. Then Shapur sent soldiers to take the bishop together with his clergy. Together with them were seized many other Christians and monks, 128 in all. All of them were bound with iron fetters and confined in a dungeon, in a place dark, foul-smelling and terrible. There, for five months, they languished in unbearable sufferings, for the impious servants of the

4. An allusion to the words of Christ: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him" (Jn. 11:9–10).

godless king bound each martyr throughout his whole body with thin cords and bent him by means of wood, so that the bones of the sufferers cracked and their skin split. Such severe torments did the saints endure.

The tormentors meanwhile said:

"Bow down to the sun and to fire, fulfil the will of the king, and you shall remain alive."

But St. Sadoc answered on behalf of all:

"We are Christians, and we worship the One God, the Creator of heaven and earth. To Him alone we render service with all our soul and with all our strength; but the sun and fire we do not worship nor honour, for they were created for the service of men. We will not obey the royal command, nor will we turn away from our God. We will not fear death, which leads us out of this temporal and vain life into the eternal Kingdom. Therefore do not delay: kill us, and spare not our blood, which has already been shed more than once before your eyes."

After this the royal command was given a second time to the saints:

"If you do not obey my order and do not fulfil my will, then a swift and evil destruction will overtake you."

The saints, however, answered as with one mouth:

"We shall not perish with our God, nor shall we die in His Christ, for He quickens us with a blessed and eternal life and gives us the immortal Kingdom as our inheritance and rest. Do not postpone our death, for we are eagerly ready to suffer for our God. We will not bow down to the sun and fire, nor will we listen to the impious royal commands, which are full of death and destruction."

The king, seeing their firm steadfastness in the faith, issued a decree that all of them should be beheaded with the sword. The saints, hearing of the king's order, all joyfully began to prepare themselves for death. They were led outside the city. On the way there they joyfully sang:

"Judge us, O God, and plead our cause; deliver us from an impious people, from men unrighteous and deceitful (cf. Ps. 42:1), who shed blood; deliver us, for Thou, O Lord, art our hope."

When they came to the place of execution, they all with one accord began to cry out:

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who hast vouchsafed us this grace; Thou hast not despised our prayers, but hast granted us this most precious crown, martyrdom. Thou, O Lord, knowest how we have desired it. Blessed is our God, Thine Only-begotten Son, O Father, who has saved us and called us to eternal life. Do not forsake us, O Lord, to suffer affliction in this world, but establish us before Thee forever for Thy goodness' sake; wash us in our blood from our sins, for Thou art the One God, glorified, and Thine Only-begotten Son and Thy Most Holy Spirit, forever. Amen."

While the saints offered this prayer to the Lord, the impious cut them down, but the martyrs continued to glorify God until the last of them was slain. As for the honourable and glorious passion-bearer Sadoc, the tormentors led him in fetters to another city, called Bethlapat, and there they cut off his honourable and holy head. Thus in peace all these saints and glorious martyrs reposed, praising and glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom belong all glory, honour and worship, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of St. Agathon, Pope of Rome

Память святаго Агафона, папы Римского

This Venerable Father was born in Italy of wealthy parents, who believed in Christ and led a pious life. Loving their son, they taught him all useful and God-inspired books. In knowledge of Holy Scripture the Venerable Father advanced so far that, after the repose of his parents, he gathered together the wealth they had left behind (about 1633 litras[5]), and, calling together the poor, orphans and widows, he distributed it all to them in a single day.

After this he became a monk in one of the monasteries and devoted himself to monastic labours, toiling without slackness day and night to

5. Litra: a unit of weight. The Hebrew litra contained 72 zolotniks. See 3 Kgdms. 10:17.

please God and praying for the whole world. He so zealously laboured in virtue that he was vouchsafed by the Lord the gift of great miracles. The virtuous life of St. Agathon could not remain hidden from people, and he was appointed Archbishop of the city of Rome. Having instructed his flock in virtue and become famous for miracles, the Venerable Father, in the episcopal rank, departed to the Lord.[6]

* * *



6. Agathon, Pope of Rome, governed the Roman Church from 679 to 682. Buried January 10.

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 21

21 февраля

New Calendar February 21 · Old Calendar March 5 (civil dates)

Memory of Our Venerable Father Timothy, Hermit in Symbola

Память преподобного отца нашего Тимофея, пустынника в Символах

Near Mount Olympus[1] there was a desert place called Symbola, where a monastery stood. Its archimandrite was the Venerable Theoctistus, a man of great virtue, under whom the Venerable Confessor Plato was instructed in the monastic life. Among the disciples of the blessed Archimandrite Theoctistus was also the Venerable Timothy. From his youth he dedicated himself to monastic labors; he persevered in fasting and abstinence, and gave whole nights to prayer. Having fully mortified the flesh, he was free from the passions and attained spiritual perfection, and until his death he kept virginity of soul and body, for from his earliest age he had resolved never to look upon the face of a woman. For this reason he was counted worthy to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, and he received the gift of healing and power over demons. Through his prayers many miracles took place: the saint healed all manner of diseases and cast unclean spirits out of men. For many years he wandered over mountains and deserts, living alone in the Lord and shedding abundant tears in unceasing prayer, watering his soul with them as with dew. Living in this way he reached deep old age and went to the Lord.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

1. In Asia Minor, on the border of Phrygia and Bithynia.

As a most bright star rising from the east, thou didst illumine in the hearts of the faithful the virtues of thy wonders, O most blessed wonderworker Timothy.

* * *

Memory of St. George, Bishop of Amastris

Память святого Георгия, епископа Амастридского

The parents of the Venerable George, Theodore and Migephusa, were pious people, of noble family and distinguished by a virtuous life[2]. Being childless, they fervently prayed to God for the gift of children, and only in deep old age did the Lord fulfill their prayer. A voice from heaven announced to them the birth of a son, named him, and foretold that the child to be born would be counted worthy of the grace of the episcopate. A son was born. This was the Venerable George. When he reached boyhood, what had been foretold of him began to come to pass, for he showed brilliant progress in secular and sacred learning, and his parents, seeing this, glorified God. Having come to mature age and completed his education, the Venerable George left his homeland and withdrew to the Sirikian mountains. There he met a pious elder, received monastic tonsure from him, and under his guidance began to follow the monastic life. After the death of the elder, the Venerable went to Vonissa and gave himself here to severe ascetic labors of fasting. The pious life of St. George soon became known to all, and when the bishop of the city of Amastris[3] died, by the providence of God he was chosen by the clergy and people to be bishop. Arriving at Constantinople for his ordination, he won the favor of the Emperor Constantine VI and his mother Irene, and was consecrated by Patriarch Tarasius. Thus was at last fulfilled all that the Lord had once foretold to his parents: the Venerable was raised to the cathedra of the Bishop of Amastris, like a lamp which is not hidden under a vessel but

2. They lived in the city of Kromna, in Paphlagonia, by the Red Sea.
3. The city of Amastris was located in Paphlagonia, one of the northern provinces of Asia Minor of the Roman Empire, situated between Bithynia and Pontus along the shore of the Pontus Euxinus, now the Black Sea.

set on a stand (Mt. 5:15). When he came from the capital to his cathedral city, he established his flock in the divine teaching, increased the church vessels and adornments in the churches, and drew up church canons concerning the sanctuary. At the same time he was always a defender of widows and orphans, a feeder of the poor, and a releaser of debts, and for all he was an example of a truly God-pleasing life. The Venerable performed many miracles: for instance, by his prayers he drove the Saracens who were laying waste the surrounding land away from the city; and he miraculously saved the Amastrian merchants who had been seized at Trapezus and unjustly condemned to death. Having lived his earthly life in such piety, the Venerable George left it and peacefully yielded up his spirit to the Lord, to Whom be glory now, always, and unto ages of ages[4].

* * *

Life of Our Holy Father Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch

Житие святого отца нашего Евстафия, епископа Антиохийского

Among the host of great hierarchs of the Church of Christ, St. Eustathius, bishop of the ancient capital of the Asia Minor East and of the Graeco-Roman Empire, Antioch[1505], is one of the most glorious Christian confessors and champions defending the true faith in God.

St. Eustathius[5] lived from the end of the third to the middle of the fourth century. He was born in the city of Side[6] in Pamphylia, and first served as archpastor in Beroea[7] in Syria, from where, for his merits and services to the Church, he was transferred to Antioch by the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council at the wish of the people.

The time of St. Eustathius's archpastoral activity was an extraordinary time and unique in the succession of the ages of the life of

4. St. George died on 3 March in the reign of Nicephorus Logothete (802–811). Many miracles took place at his tomb.
5. The name Eustathius is Greek; it means "steadfast," standing firm.
6. Side was an important port city in Pamphylia, a region forming the coastal part of Syria, in the southern part of Asia Minor, at the foot of the Taurus Mountains.
7. Beroea was a city in Syria, in the Asia Minor region east of the Mediterranean Sea.

the Church of Christ. It was an especially light-bearing age, both in the number and in the greatness of the luminaries of the Church, universal teachers. The ages that followed, though also glorious for teachers of the faith, were already imitators and disciples of the God-wise fathers of the fourth century. The struggle of Christianity against paganism, which had been waged during the first three centuries under the sign of the Cross of Christ, ended at the beginning of the fourth century in complete victory over paganism, and there was no longer any need to defend the Christian faith against paganism throughout the universal Graeco-Roman Empire, nor any need to prove the superiority of Christianity over paganism. The external peace that then came upon the Church of Christ made possible a universal uniform ordering of the internal affairs of the Church and unhindered teaching conversations of pastors with their flocks. But precisely then arose an even greater need for a struggle, still more difficult, with the internal enemies of the Church, the heretics[8].

The chief of the heretics who troubled the Church at that time proved to be a learned presbyter of the Alexandrian[9] church in Egypt named Arius[1511]. In the proud infatuation of his limited reasoning, Arius, reviving the pagan teaching about the imparting of divinity not to gods, blasphemously maintained that:

1) God the Father is eternal, but there was a time when He was not Father and had no Son;

2) The Son was created, made by the Father before all things, and through the Son the world was created;

3) The Son is not eternal but higher than all creatures; the Son is like the Father – God by name, but not in essence;

4) God the Father, out of goodness, communicated wisdom to the Son; but the Son does not fully know God the Father;

8. In the canon of St. Basil the Great it is said that the ancient Fathers of the Church called heretics "those who have wholly broken away and become alienated in the faith itself."

9. Alexandria is a famous city in Egypt, founded three hundred years before the Nativity of Christ by Alexander the Great on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Alexandria was renowned for science and commerce, and from the beginning of the fourth century it became an important center of Christian Church and theological learning. The famous Alexandrian theological school drew listeners not only from among Christians but also from among pagans.

5) The Holy Spirit is also not a Person of God, but was created by the Son[10].

Outraged by such blasphemous false teaching, the Alexandrian bishop Alexander[11] urged Arius to renounce such heresy. When Arius did not submit to the meek admonitions of the bishop, a local council of a hundred bishops of Egypt and Libya was convened. This local council of the Alexandrian church excommunicated Arius, as a blasphemous heretic, together with several presbyters and deacons who shared his views, and they zealously set about to gain support not only among the pastors of neighboring churches but also among the people. To this end they sent their like-minded adherents and letters with their intricately woven false teaching to all the churches of the East, and in the spirit of the Arian teaching they composed songs, sung to popular melodies. So great was the passion for theological discussion and disputation in the East at that time that religious questions were debated not only in homes but also in public squares and at crossroads; the pagans even mocked these disputes in their theaters and turned the disagreements of the Christians to the advantage of the rejected paganism.

Thus troubled by the crafty heretics, the Arians, the churches in Syria, including those where St. Eustathius was archpastor, were in turmoil, disputing over the resolution of theological questions and perplexities... St. Eustathius, distinguished by profound theological knowledge and secular learning, was a firm, fearless confessor[12] of the Orthodox faith of Christ, both in Beroea during the last pagan persecution of the Christians and now, when the Church was disturbed by Arianism; one of the first hierarchs, he zealously rose up, both orally and in

10. Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, ed. 1865, part 1, p. 164. And *The Teaching on the Fathers of the Church*, ed. 1859, vol. 2, p. 13.

11. St. Alexander, a zealous defender of Orthodoxy, who was Bishop of Alexandria from 313 to 328 and who became renowned for his firmness in the faith. At the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 he was an influential champion of Orthodoxy together with St. Eustathius of Antioch and St. Athanasius, whom he afterward appointed as his successor in Alexandria. To St. Eustathius, as a well-known defender of Orthodoxy, St. Alexander wrote an epistle about Arius.

12. In the Christian Church, confessors are those persons who, during persecutions for the faith, openly confessed Christianity and endured torments for it, yet remained alive. They enjoyed special respect among Christians, and the reconciliation with the Church of those who had fallen away and renounced the faith was entrusted to them in particular.

writing, against the blasphemous false teaching of Arius and the Arians.

Even the equal-to-the-apostles Emperor Constantine the Great attempted, but could not, to restore agreement and peace between the Orthodox and the Arians in Alexandria, in Syria, and in other churches. Therefore, to put an end to the discord, the emperor resolved to have recourse to the episcopate of the whole Christian Church and convened the First Ecumenical Council of the Church at Nicaea[13].

The Emperor Constantine, in convening this council, desired, according to Eusebius, the historian of that time, to offer to Christ the Savior "a priestly crown of fair flowers, woven and bound together by the unity of peace." At the emperor's summons there gathered at the city of Nicaea, from Asia, Africa and Europe, as many as three hundred bishops; there were even bishops from lands not subject to the Greco-Roman Empire, for example from Persia and Scythia.[14] The number of presbyters, deacons and other clergy who accompanied them was far greater still than the number of bishops. Of the laity, apart from the highest officials, many philosophers[15] and scholars came to Nicaea. And at this council there was given to Saint Eustathius, by reason of his great piety and his profound theological and secular learning, joined to an unshakable zeal for keeping the purity of Orthodox doctrine, a particularly outstanding and weighty significance among the hierarchs of the Church. To Saint Eustathius was entrusted the first presidency[16] of the great Ecumenical Council; he occupied the place of

13. Nicaea was the chief city of Bithynia, a north-western province of Asia Minor, conquered by the Romans seventy-five years before the Nativity of Christ. In antiquity Nicaea was a rich and flourishing city; today, on its site, stands the poor little town of Iznik.

14. St. Athanasius the Great, Bishop of Alexandria, affirms that the First Ecumenical Council represented "the whole" of our world, because the invitations of the Emperor Constantine to this council were communicated to bishops who lived even beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire; this explains the presence at the council of bishops from Persia and Scythia, countries that did not belong to the Roman Empire.

15. *Philosopher* means: lover of wisdom. Philosophers are those persons who have dedicated themselves to the investigation of the highest questions of being: concerning God, concerning the beginning and laws of the world and of man, concerning the final ends of being, and the like.

16. At the First Ecumenical Council the bishops of the most renowned sees presided in turn, and the first of these presiding bishops was St. Eustathius of Antioch. (More on this in the *History of the Church* by D. B. Vl. Gette, ed. 1875, vol. 3, pp. 6–7 and 10.)

the first bishop, seated on the right side of the emperor, and he was granted the honor of addressing the equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine with a speech on behalf of the whole Ecumenical Council. Here is that eloquent speech of Hierarch Eustathius, strong in faith and in spirit:

"Right-believing Sovereign!

Blessed be God, who chose thee to be emperor of the earth, who by thy hand has destroyed idolatry and through thee has established peace in the hearts of the faithful. The power of the spirits of evil is already trampled down; the altars of polytheism are overthrown; the darkness of impiety is dispersing; and the light of the Divine teaching illumines the whole universe. The Father is glorified, the Son is worshipped, the Holy Spirit is proclaimed: the Consubstantial Trinity; the one Godhead in three Persons or hypostases is preached everywhere. Upon this teaching, Sovereign, the greatness of thy piety is founded. Preserve it for us whole and inviolate, lest any heretic, having crept into the Church, should sever the unity of the Triune God and expose our faith to outrage! The cause of the present gathering and of our deliberations is the frenzied Arius, who, having received the office of presbyter in the Church of Alexandria, has proved estranged from the teaching of the most blessed prophets and apostles. For he does not acknowledge the Only-begotten Son and the Word of the Father as consubstantial and equal to the Father, and, a worshipper of the creature, he wishes to number the Creator among the creatures. Command, Sovereign, that he, abandoning his error, cease to oppose the apostolic teaching; or, if he remain obstinate in his impious opinion, cast him out from the fellowship of the Orthodox Church, that he may no longer by his impious opinions disturb the faith of weak souls."[17] Thus spoke Saint Eustathius.

To this First Ecumenical Council there came to Nicaea many pagan philosophers, some in order to become better acquainted with the Christian teaching, and others, out of hatred for that teaching, hoping by means of intricate reasonings to confuse the speeches of the bishops

17. *Acts of the Ecumenical Councils*, published in Russian translation at the Kazan Theological Academy, ed. 1859, vol. 1, pp. 86–87.

and to refute the Christian teaching. Church writers record that to one most vain of these philosophers, named Phaedon, who defended the impious Arius and his blasphemous teaching, the first refutation in the name of the whole council was given by Hierarch Eustathius of Antioch,[18] as one possessing high philosophical learning. And this philosopher, at the end of his disputes with the holy council, was so struck by the answers of the hierarchs that he cried out aloud: "Glory to Thee, O God, who hast revealed to Thy saints the mystery of the pure, boundless and uncreated Godhead, which surpasses every mind. I beseech Thee, O Christ, all-good Son of the all-good Father, forgive me all that I have sinned against Thee, being carried away hitherto by the impious opinions of Arius... Henceforth I consign to eternal anathema Arius and his impious opinions, and all who think alike with him and blaspheme against the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..."[19]

But Arius himself, with a few of his adherents, remained unyielding in his opinions. Then the fathers of the council, among whom so honorable a place was held by Saint Eustathius, solemnly and unanimously confessed the Son of God to be consubstantial with God the Father; and the teaching of Arius, as contrary to the Word of God and to the paternal tradition, together with all who held the Arian false teaching, they anathematized and cut off from the Church of the orthodox. And that the right confession of faith might be preserved exactly for all subsequent times, the fathers of the council set forth this confession in the Symbol of Faith, as given by God.[20] Arius and two bishops in agreement with him, Theonas and Secundus,[21] after their excommunication from the Church, the emperor sent into exile.

Many also of the patrons of Arius subscribed to the Christian confession of faith approved by the Ecumenical Council; but Eusebius,

18. *Acts of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. 1859, vol. 1, pp. 104–106.

19. *Acts of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. 1859, p. 145.

20. *Acts of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. 1859, pp. 157, 22, 29 and passim. The Council of Nicaea, the First Ecumenical, was, according to the church historians, held "in the consulship of Paulinus and Julianus, on the 20th day of the month of May, in the 636th year from Alexander the Macedonian king"; this was the 20th year of the reign of Constantine the Great and the year 325 A.D.

21. Theon, Bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus, Bishop of Ptolemais, who refused to sign the Symbol of Faith approved by the whole council.

Bishop of Nicomedia, and Theognis of Nicaea, having subscribed to this conciliar Symbol, refused to subscribe to the condemnation of Arius. For this, as defenders of the Arian heresy, the emperor declared them deprived of their church sees and sent them into exile, from which, however, they sent a written repentance of their error, and therefore they were forgiven and returned to their dioceses.

The church historian of that time, the blessed Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus,[22] describing the First Ecumenical Council, cites, among other things, the following passage from a work of Saint Eustathius of Antioch written against the Arians: "When for the consideration of matters of faith the great Council gathered at Nicaea, at which about 270 bishops were united (I say about, because by reason of the large number of those assembled I cannot determine their number exactly, and moreover I did not investigate this with especial care), and when they began to establish the Symbol (of faith), into the midst (of the council) there appeared a writing of Eusebius (of Nicomedia), filled with blasphemous teaching. When it had been read aloud to all, it at once caused the hearers inexpressible grief at its monstrosity, and covered the author himself with unbearable shame. Now the work of the Eusebians[23] was revealed, and the impious writing (the Eusebian symbol) was torn in pieces before all... Fearing lest by the sentence of so great a Council they should be cast out of the Church, the adherents of Arius[24] also

22. The well-known Church historian Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, was born at Antioch on the Orontes in 390, was made Bishop of Cyrrhus in the Patriarchate of Antioch in 423, and died in 457; he was among the most learned archpastors of the Eastern Church of the fifth century.

23. Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, together with the bishops Menophantus of Ephesus, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, Theognis of Nicaea, Narcissus of Neronias, Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, presented a draft of the Symbol of Faith composed in accordance with Arian errors, which they sought to conceal under ambiguous expressions; but this stratagem was immediately detected by the confessors of the right teaching of the faith, and the Symbol of Eusebius of Nicomedia was rejected without hesitation as heretical. A second draft of the Symbol, presented by another Eusebius, of Caesarea in Palestine, was approved on condition that the word "consubstantial" be included in it. The statement of faith presented by Hosius, Bishop of Corduba, a man especially beloved by the emperor, was accepted by the council, and it is called the Nicene Symbol of Faith.

24. These were: Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicaea, Theonas of Marmarica, Secundus of Ptolemais, Theodotus of Laodicea, Paulinus of Tarsus, Athanasius of Anazarbus, Aëtius of Lydda, Gregory of Berytus, Menophantus of Ephesus, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, Maris of Chalcedon, and Narcissus of Neronias.

rose (at the council) and anathematized the teaching (of Arius) condemned by the Council... Thus, through many intrigues, they retained for themselves their standing in the Church (that is, their episcopal sees), whereas they ought to have been under penance; and (after the Ecumenical Council) they now secretly, now openly, began to favor the opinions rejected by the council, and even to confirm them. Besides this, wishing to make the planting of tares take root, they avoided meeting with men learned (in Holy Scripture), shunned supervision, and thus, as it were, trampled down the preachers of piety. But we believe that godless men cannot overcome the Divine: 'For if they again prevail, they will again be defeated...'"[25]

Returning from the Ecumenical Council at Nicaea to Antioch, Saint Eustathius convened a council of bishops and presbyters from the many church districts subject to his Antiochian metropolis,[26] communicated to them the acts of all the decisions of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, and exhorted them to hold steadfastly to these decisions, and especially to the right confession of faith expressed in the Symbol approved by the council of the representatives of the whole Christian Church.[1529]

In the following year, 326, Saint Eustathius was charged to go to baptize the inhabitants of the Georgian land, ancient Iberia,[27] who desired to accept Christianity, and to establish the Orthodox Church there. The tribes inhabiting ancient Iberia (Georgia), or Georgia, were idolaters and fire-worshippers; they were in a certain dependence upon the Greco-Roman Empire, but had their own kings and their own civil

25. *Ecclesiastical History* of the blessed Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, Russian edition, St. Petersburg, 1852, ch. VIII, pp. 46–47.

26. Following the example of the holy Apostles, and on the basis of the 31st canon of the Holy Apostles, from ancient times in the Orthodox Church the first-ranking bishops of the principal cities convened "local" councils, private councils of bishops and presbyters subordinate to the bishop of the chief city of that country, to resolve, according to the canons and the tradition of the Church, questions and matters arising within that region concerning doctrine and governance. The decisions of such councils have binding force only in the country or region whose representatives made up the membership of such a local council.

27. Georgia, or ancient Iberia, is a country in Transcaucasia forming a quadrilateral, washed on the east and west by the Caspian and Black Seas, bounded on the north by the Caucasus mountains, and on the south limited by the river Araxes and Mount Ararat. Georgia comprised Kakheti, Guria, Imereti, Kartli, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, Svaneti, Ossetia and Dagestan.

order. Christ the Savior was first preached to some of the coastal tribes of Georgia by the holy Apostle Andrew, according to local tradition, and with Simon the Cananaean. Most of the inhabitants, and the royal family, were converted to Christianity by the holy maiden Nina, who came from Syria in the first quarter of the fourth century.

When, following the preaching of St. Nina, which was attended by miracles, the most zealous idolaters, the Georgian queen Nana and King Mirian, came to believe in Christ, they sent an embassy to the Emperor Constantine the Great, asking him to send to Georgia clergy who might baptize them and their people. The Emperor said that he rejoiced at the conversion of the Iberians to Christianity more than at the annexation of an entire kingdom to his empire, and he immediately commanded St. Eustathius of Antioch[28] to go to Georgia with several priests, deacons and other clerics. They also brought with them to Georgia all the church liturgical vessels and furnishings. Upon St. Eustathius's arrival in Mtskheta, the capital of Georgia, King Mirian sent an order to the rulers of the provinces, the voivodes and the courtiers that they all should come to the capital. When they had gathered, King Mirian, in the presence of all, received holy baptism from Bishop Eustathius, and after him the queen and their children. At the bridge over the river Kura, where formerly there had stood a pagan priests' shrine, a baptistery was established, where St. Eustathius baptized the rulers of the Georgian provinces, the voivodes and the courtiers; for this reason the place was called "Mtavarta sanatlavi," that is, the font of the nobles. A little below this font, the priests who had come with St. Eustathius baptized the people who flocked to baptism, moved by the preaching of St. Nina: "If anyone is not born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he shall not see life and eternal light..." The priests afterward went through the cities and villages to baptize and instruct the other inhabitants of Iberia. Thus, by the help of God, almost the whole

28. Although the arrival in Iberia-Georgia of Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, specifically is not mentioned by Greek writers, it is undoubtedly attested both by the universal tradition in Georgia and by written charters, granted by the Constantinopolitan Emperors and the Georgian kings to the Iveron Monastery on Mount Athos, where they are preserved to this day. (*Brief History of the Georgian Church*, compiled by P. Iosselian, 2nd ed., St. Petersburg, 1843, p. 13; *Life of St. Nino, Equal-to-the-Apostles*, ed. Athos Monastery, 1900.)

country received baptism, and the Gospel preaching was established in Iberia through the labors in this matter of St. Nina and St. Eustathius of Antioch. In Mtskheta, St. Eustathius consecrated the church in honor of the twelve apostles, which had been built in the royal garden just before his arrival, and he gave the newly established Georgian Church the order of worship and the teaching of the Orthodox Greek Church. The first bishop of the Georgian Church was ordained, the presbyter John, subject to the Metropolis of Antioch, for which reason even to this day the Patriarch of Antioch is styled in his title "and of Iberia"[1532]. Thus, with the present union of the Georgian Church with the Russian, St. Eustathius is the first hierarch of the whole ancient Orthodox Exarchate of the present All-Russian Orthodox Church.

Having completed the establishment of the then new Georgian Orthodox Church, St. Eustathius bequeathed peace to the young Church of Christ and returned to Antioch.

In Antioch, the zealous hierarch Eustathius was already awaiting heavy labors and grievous trials. The confidence that after the Ecumenical Council peace and complete unity would reign throughout the Church proved vain. It turned out that the aforementioned bishops inclined to Arianism had agreed with the majority of the council's members not sincerely but only outwardly, from their personal considerations and calculations. When, after the Council of Nicaea, Emperor Constantine went to the western part of the empire, the Arian-minded again raised their heads. First they began, through a presbyter close to the emperor, to work for the return from exile of Arius together with the bishops who openly supported him; persuading the emperor that they had become victims of an erroneous opinion, and that the exiled would give the emperor a written declaration of acceptance of the decrees of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, they achieved their return. Wishing by every means to establish peace in the Church, the emperor showed signs of his favor even to those returned from exile, and they used this to spread Arian errors and, under various plausible pretexts, set about persecuting the chief champions of orthodoxy, the holy bishops Alexander and then Athanasius of Alexandria, and St. Eustathius of Antioch.

The adherents of Arius hoped that after the Council of Nicaea, owing to the emperor Constantine's insistent demand for complete peace in the Church from all without exception, no one would any longer struggle against the spread of Arian errors. But the hierarch Eustathius continued to oppose the spread of Arianism with even greater zeal and denounced it still more strongly, relying on its condemnation by the Ecumenical Council. Knowing that Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, who was partly subject to the bishop of Antioch, had held Arian views even before the Ecumenical Council, and that his own creed was not free of them, St. Eustathius wrote to Eusebius also, admonishing and denouncing the Arian errors. Eusebius was greatly indignant at this; he answered with a condemnation of St. Eustathius's concepts, which the council had confirmed, calling them Sabellian[29], and, continuing to hold to the Arian concepts, complained of St. Eustathius to his friend Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had been returned from exile. This Eusebius of Nicomedia was the most crafty and treacherous of the Arian-minded bishops. Even the Emperor Constantine, calling God to witness, wrote to the Nicomedians that Eusebius had been an ally and helper of Licinius, the cruel persecutor and tormentor of Christians, that Eusebius had shamelessly defended the Arian falsehood, refuted from every side, and had deceived and grossly misled even him, the Emperor Constantine[30]... And it was this crafty Eusebius of Nicomedia who, together with his friends Theognis of Nicaea and Eusebius of Caesarea[1535], resolved to rid the Arians of St. Eustathius, the tireless zealous denouncer of their errors.

Before the building of Constantinople, Emperor Constantine was very often in Nicomedia, and in order to flatter him and carry out his plan of removing St. Eustathius, the crafty Eusebius of Nicomedia ex-

29. Sabellius was a heretic. Information about his life is very scanty. He lived about the middle of the third century; he was a native of Ptolemais in Libya. Sabellius taught that God is a Trinity only in name: Father, Son and Holy Spirit are only three names and three activities of one and the same Person of God. In the Old Testament God appears as the Father giving laws to men; in the New Testament God appeared as the Son, saving men, and continues to appear as the Spirit sanctifying men. By councils of the Fathers of the Church in Alexandria and in Rome in the second half of the third century, the teaching of Sabellius was condemned as heretical.

30. The letter of the Emperor Constantine to the Nicomedians against Eusebius and Theognis is in the *Acts of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. 1859, vol. 1, pp. 199–203.

pressed to the emperor a burning desire to see the splendid church that Constantine had just then built at the Lord's Tomb. Flattered by this desire, the emperor placed at Eusebius's disposal his imperial chariots, which gave Eusebius's journey particular honor. Under the plausible pretext of venerating the Jerusalem shrine, Theognis of Nicaea, his faithful accomplice in his evil designs, also joined him. Arriving in Antioch with the mask of piety, they were received by St. Eustathius cordially and with the honor due to bishops. When they reached Jerusalem, the ancient historian continues,[31] and met with their like-minded (Arian-minded) colleagues Eusebius of Caesarea, Patrophilus of Scythopolis, Aetius of Lydda, Theodotus of Laodicea and others, who were infected with the teaching of Arius, they disclosed to them their secret intention to remove St. Eustathius. Under the pretext of showing honor to Eusebius of Nicomedia, these like-minded men escorted him to Antioch, where they also showed great respect to St. Eustathius, so that he would not suspect the treacherous nets laid for him. And since at that time some of the Orthodox bishops were still in Antioch, the Arian-minded proposed to convene a fraternal council to discuss certain common matters and affairs of the Church, to which St. Eustathius and the other bishops agreed.

And at the very time when the bishops had gathered, suddenly a woman appeared before them with a child in her arms and cried out that the father of her infant was Eustathius. Not in the least disconcerted, the hierarch of Antioch demanded that the woman produce witnesses who knew what she had asserted and that she report what proofs she had of it. But she answered that she had no witnesses. To this the Arian-minded bishops declared that it would be sufficient if the woman confirmed her accusation by oath. The Orthodox bishops, however, did not agree to this, reminding them that according to the ancient rule and the apostolic instruction (1 Tim. 5:19), to accept an accusation against a priest at least two or three witnesses are required; therefore they opposed the decision which the Arian-minded wished to pass condemning St. Eustathius of Antioch[32].

31. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. 1852, ch. 21, pp. 84–86.

Meanwhile the Orthodox people of Antioch, having heard of the insult, through the intrigues of the visiting bishops, to their beloved archpastor Eustathius, became agitated and were ready to take up arms against the adherents of Arianism. Then Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicaea, seeing the failure of their ecclesiastical plan against St. Eustathius, hastened to leave for the emperor and reported to him that in Antioch a popular disturbance was taking place, which Bishop Eustathius of Antioch had supposedly incited in defense of his religious opinions, thereby breaking the so-desired peace of the Church; to this they added a new slander, that Bishop Eustathius had spoken insultingly of the mother of the Emperor Constantine[33]. They had to resort to such an outrageous slander in order to incite the emperor against St. Eustathius more resolutely, because the woman who had slandered St. Eustathius in Antioch, struck after this slander by a grievous illness, summoned many priests and Orthodox citizens and before everyone confessed that the Arian-minded had bribed her to slander Bishop Eustathius; she further explained that her oath before the bishops had not been entirely false, since the father of her child, a local coppersmith, was also named Eustathius. By this confession of the woman's bribery by the Arians, the enemies of St. Eustathius were disgraced by their own accomplice, and their plan to remove Bishop Eustathius on the woman's accusation proved unsuccessful, for which reason they resorted to the outrageous slander of the Antiochian hierarch's insult to the emperor's mother.

The emperor, deceived and indignant, who by every means sought to preserve peace among the Christians, and above all to bring to an end the disturbance of the people of Antioch, summoned St. Eustathius to Constantinople.[34]

St. Eustathius, foreseeing his expulsion from Antioch, gathered the Orthodox citizens ever more often before this, and with all the force of

32. *History of the Church*, published from the original monuments, by D. B. Vl. Gette, St. Petersburg, 1875, vol., pp. 64–65.
33. *Historical Teaching on the Fathers of the Church*, Archbishop Philaret of Chernigov, ed. 1859, vol. II, p. 25. The same testimony, and Prof. N. Barsov.

his heartfelt eloquence and profound learning urged them earnestly not to be seduced in his absence by heretical sophistries, but to remain steadfast in their faithfulness to Orthodoxy.[35]

St. John Chrysostom bears witness to this as follows:[1541] "St. Eustathius, watchful and observant, foreseeing from afar all that was to come to pass (the assault of the Arians upon Orthodoxy), like a wise physician, before the disease had invaded the city, while still present there, prepared remedies and steered the sacred ship of the Antiochian flock with great foresight, visiting every place, encouraging all and rousing them to attention and vigilance, as though pirates were attacking and seeking to seize the treasure of the faith... And, calling all together, he exhorted them not to depart (from the true faith), not to yield to the wolves nor to deliver the flock to them, but to remain within, stopping their mouths and exposing them, and strengthening the simpler of the brethren... And everywhere he sent men who would teach, persuade, counsel, and bar the approach of the adversaries..."

And the greater part of the Antiochian flock remained faithful to Orthodoxy, despite the appointment to Antioch, in place of St. Eustathius, of a bishop from among the Arian partisans; for the people shunned such bishops, and together with many Orthodox priests formed assemblies separate from the Arianizers, on account of which the Arians called them "Eustathians,"[36] because they were faithful to the universal apostolic Orthodox doctrine.

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34. *Historical Research "found in the Acts of the Saints"* (ed. of the Bollandists), July, book IV; and the Anglo-German-French edition of the *Lives of the Holy Fathers and Martyrs*, translated and adapted by Butler, Ress and Weiss, part 9, German ed., 1824.

35. "The striving to preserve and to guard from injury those foundations which were laid in the period of the undivided Church, embracing East and West, is precisely that which in the Eastern Church is called Orthodoxy." "The Orthodox Church is that which rightly or unchangeably preserves the teaching of the ancient universal Church, and remains faithful in all things to those principles which were established for it by its founder, Jesus Christ, and His Apostles." (Introduction to Orthodox Church Law. D. B. M. A. Ostroumov. Vol. 1, ed. 1893, pp. 27–28 and 670).

36. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, Ecclesiastical History. Ed. 1852, ch. 22, p. 87. History of the Church, ed. Wl. Gette, ed. 1875, vol. 3, p. 65. Afterwards the Arians began to call the Orthodox Antiochians also "Campensians" (from the word *campus*, "field"), since they gathered for worship, among other places, in the open field, because the Arians, with the support of the secular authorities, had seized and occupied the churches of the Orthodox. See the works of Blessed Jerome of Stridon. Ed. 2, 1893, pt. 1, pp. 55–56 (Life).

But this division of the people, owing to the devotion of the greater part of the Antiochians to the Orthodox teaching of St. Eustathius, further roused the emperor against the hierarch and served as the occasion for an imperial decree to banish St. Eustathius, without trial and without deprivation of his episcopal dignity, in the year 331, into exile in Thrace.[37] The Confessor of Christ, however, continued there also to preach the true Orthodox faith, exposing the heretics. "He," according to the testimony of Chrysostom, "had been well taught by the grace of the Spirit that the president of the Church ought to care not only for that one Church which was entrusted to him by the Spirit, but for the whole Church throughout the world; this he learned from the sacred prayers. 'If,' said St. Eustathius, 'we ought to offer prayers for the universal Church, from the ends to the ends of the universe, then so much the more ought we to show concern for it as a whole, to care equally for all (churches) and to tend all...' Eustathius was cast out, but his voice was not silenced; the man was banished, but the word of teaching was not banished."[38]

The Arianizing heretics, who under the successors of the Emperor Constantine had already gained full influence, insisted, in order to further restrict St. Eustathius and to supervise his activity, upon yet another imperial decree for his transfer from Thrace to the Macedonian city of Philippi.[39] There, about the year 345, St. Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, who throughout his life had tirelessly contended against heretical error and preached the right faith in the true God, reposed.[40]

37. St. Jerome writes that this was an exile "for" the Orthodox faith. (Chronicle of Jerome, year 332). In antiquity Thrace was the name of the whole country on the Balkan Peninsula north of Macedonia, the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara, where today lie part of Hungary, Transylvania, Bessarabia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and the eastern part of Rumelia. Thrace was renowned for its wealth of metals, for song and for music. The Romans conquered it some 20 years before the Nativity of Christ.

38. Encomium on our Holy Father Eustathius of Antioch, works of St. John Chrysostom, 1896, vol. 2, bk. 2, p. 647.

39. Philippi was a city on the river Maritsa in Macedonia. It had been an ancient Greek colony, which Philip of Macedon seized and named Philippi. Today it is Philippopolis, in Bulgarian Plavdinograd. To the Christians of this city, the Philippians, the Apostle Paul wrote his well-known epistle.

40. No entirely precise information about the year of St. Eustathius' death is found in the ancient monuments. Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov, and Professor N. Barsov consider 345 to be the year of his death.

Soon after the II Ecumenical Council, held in 381 at Constantinople, which confirmed the confession of faith of the I Ecumenical Council of Nicaea with a renewed anathematization of Arianism, semi-Arianism and all heresies that had arisen against the Orthodox Christian teaching, the time became favorable for the glorification of St. Eustathius of Antioch, martyr for the true faith. And in the year 382[41] his holy relics[1548] were transferred to Antioch with great solemnity, to the consolation of the Antiochians, who venerated him fervently.

Beloved of the people, highly esteemed by all the Orthodox Fathers of the Church, and extolled by the church writers, St. Eustathius belongs to the most renowned, by his labors and merits for the Church, of the bishops of the glorious fourth century. The holy Fathers of the VII Ecumenical Council[42] called St. Eustathius of Antioch "a steadfast champion of the Orthodox faith and destroyer of Arian impiety."[43] The most celebrated of the Fathers and teachers of the ancient Western Church, St. Jerome,[44] bears witness that St. Eustathius was the first to write against Arius, marvels at the learning of the hierarch, and says that he was very well educated in both sacred and secular sciences, especially in philosophy, and wrote an innumerable multitude of epistles on the faith. St. Athanasius of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Basil the Great,[1552] Epiphanius of Cyprus,[45] Anastasius of Sinai[46] and others

41. Complete Menologion of the East. Archbishop Sergius. Ed. 1876, vol. II, pt. 2, p. 58. Notes for February 21. Of this translation of relics writes Theodore the Reader, the known historian of the 6th century, who wrote 4 books of Church History, the first two after earlier historians and the last independently.

42. The VII Ecumenical Council of the Church was convened in 787, in the reign of the Empress Irene with her son Constantine, in the same place where the I Ecumenical Council was held, the city of Nicaea in Bithynia. It established the dogma of the veneration of icons against the iconoclasts. The authentic acts of this council have been preserved in full, and were published in Russian at the Kazan Theological Academy in 1891.

43. The Acts of the Ecumenical Councils, published in Russian translation at the Kazan Theological Academy in 1891, vol. VII, p. 233.

44. Venerable Jerome of Stridon was born in 330 in the small town of Stridon in Dalmatia and Pannonia; his father was a pious nobleman. Jerome died in 420, at the age of 90. By his broad, many-sided learning, by his tireless activity and great written labors for the benefit of Christian scholarship and the Church of Christ, and by his truly ascetic and instructive life, the blessed Jerome belongs to the most renowned Fathers and Teachers of the ancient Western Church. He spent the greater part of his life in the East. Works of the blessed Jerome, published at the Kiev Theological Academy, ed. 2, 1894, pt. 2, p. 266 (Letter 68 to the presbyter Evangelus) and pp. 251–252 (Letter 65).

likewise attest to the high education and religious zeal of St. Eustathius. The well-known historian of that time, Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, calls St. Eustathius the greatest pillar of the Church and of piety, as was St. Athanasius of Alexandria and the other chief champions of Orthodoxy of that time.[47] And the historian of the middle of the fifth century, Sozomen, says that "his contemporaries were exceedingly amazed at the art of preaching and the eloquence of St. Eustathius. This (art) may be seen in the books of Eustathius, which are still intact," Sozomen asserts.[48] "Unfortunately," observes Archbishop Philaret of Chernigov,[49] "it cannot now be said that the books of Eustathius are intact; but even in what has reached us all those qualities are visible which the ancients praised in the writings of Eustathius." Only the above-mentioned "Address to the Emperor Constantine at the I Ecumenical Council" and that on the Witch of Endor have survived com-

45. St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, or more precisely of the city of Salamis on the island of Cyprus, a Jew by birth, received baptism at the age of 16, and was ordained bishop at the age of 60. A strict ascetic, he was distinguished by childlike trust, kindness and beneficence. He founded in Palestine a monastic community, of which he was superior for about 30 years. He was endowed with the gift of wonder-working, possessed knowledge of many languages, and was a fiery zealot of Orthodoxy. He died in 403 at an advanced age. His principal works "on heresies" are *The Anchor against Arianism and the Spirit-Fighters* and *The Medicine Chest against Eighty Heresies*, both ancient and contemporary with him. His memory is celebrated on May 12.

46. Anastasius the Sinaite, or Cenobite, of the Sinaite ascetics of the second half of the sixth century, was Patriarch of Antioch, a zealous champion of Orthodoxy against heretics (at court), for which he incurred the wrath of the Emperor Justinian and, despite the holiness of his life, was exiled, where he remained for more than 20 years. In this confinement he wrote many theological works, especially on the questions of the two natures and the two persons in Jesus Christ. St. Anastasius the Sinaite calls St. Eustathius of Antioch "Divine," and writes that he regards him as a man perfect in the ways of God, as a wise preacher, holy martyr and teacher, as his own father and defender, as a God-inspired man.

47. Church History of the blessed Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus. Russian ed., St. Petersburg, 1852, bk. 1, ch. VIII, XXV, etc. Also in *Ecclesiastical Historiography*, D. B. A. P. Lebedev, ed. 1898.

48. Hermias Sozomen of Salamis, by his family name, a Greek church historian, from Palestine, a jurist. His Church History covers the period from 323 to 439. His upbringing took place under the influence of monks, in the middle of the fifth century. His history of the first three centuries of Christianity has not been preserved. The Church History of the fourth century, in Russian translation, was published in 1851; there, concerning Eustathius of Antioch, see pp. 22, 121, 123, etc. But that Eustathius of whom Sozomen writes (on p. 404), that he was restored by Jovian and ordained Evargius as bishop, was another, not a holy man. (*Historical Teaching on the Fathers of the Church*, pp. 25–26).

49. *Historical Teaching on the Fathers of the Church*. Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov. Ed. 1859, vol. 2, p. 26.

plete; of his many other writings of St. Eustathius there have come down to our time only the excerpts made by ancient writers.[50]

From the surviving excerpts from his books against Arius it is evident that St. Eustathius wrote eight of them. These excerpts show that the defender of the truth first of all determined to distinguish those passages of Holy Scripture which speak of the humanity of Christ Jesus from those which depict Him as the Son of God and God, and St. Eustathius accomplishes this with particular success, rightly explaining the meaning of both kinds of passages.[51] By this he dealt the Arians their most decisive defeat, for they deliberately sought out passages relating to the humbled state of Christ Jesus and turned their attention away, and especially the attention of others, from passages of the other kind. Against the Arians were written also the remarks on the Proverbs of Solomon (8:22) and on the Psalms of David (15–56 and 92). Both the first passage and some words from the psalms indicated were used by the Arians as testimony to the truth of their teaching. St. Eustathius here again employs the same means against them: he joins and explains the sayings of Holy Scripture which relate to the human and the divine nature of the Redeemer. By thus explaining Holy Scripture, St. Eustathius showed the Arians that in Christ the Divinity and the humanity were united without change of their properties, and that the Son of God was under the law only in order to save the slaves of sin and condemnation. "It was not the Word that was subject to the law, as the blasphemers think," writes St. Eustathius; "the Word Himself is the law; nor did God have need of purificatory sacrifices; by a single nod He purifies and sanctifies all things. But since He bore a human instrument, taken from the Virgin, He was under the law, that He might free from the bondage of the law those given over to condemnation under the curse..."

50. These extracts, and a whole work on the Witch of Endor with an address to the Emperor Constantine, were published in the fourth volume of the Holland library and in Migne, *Patrologia*, vol. 18. Also in Fabricius' Greek library (vol. 9, p. 133, fol. 68, 170). *Historical Teaching on the Fathers of the Church*. Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov, 1859, vol. II, p. 26.
51. *Historical Teaching on the Fathers of the Church*. Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov, 1859, vol. II, p. 27.

Such a direction of the writings of St. Eustathius fully explains why, in the "collections of interpretations" of Holy Scripture, the interpretations of St. Eustathius of Antioch very often occur.[52]

The work "On the Soul" was a philosophical-theological discourse of St. Eustathius on the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ, and was likewise directed against the errors of the Arians.

Finally, the work of St. Eustathius "On the Witch of Endor" is an exemplary composition both in the elevated presentation of thoughts and in the beauty of style and imagery, justifying the praise with which all the writers and Fathers of the Church who had these writings in their hands noted the works of St. Eustathius. In this work St. Eustathius, among other things, makes stern but just remarks to Origen[1561] for his excessive love of allegorical interpretation of Holy Scripture, that is, not according to the direct, not according to the literal sense of the words. Thus Origen "interprets allegorically, differently from the literal sense of the words," writes St. Eustathius, "the wells dug by Abraham and what else relates to that, in a lengthy discourse, giving the whole matter another meaning, whereas those wells can to this day be seen with ordinary eyes in that land"... And concerning the Witch of Endor[53] (1 Kgdms. 28), St. Eustathius proves, contrary to Origen, that she could not, and did not, summon the soul of the prophet Samuel;[54] but that by her spells there appeared only a phantom, representing Samuel, for deception and to the ruin of Saul.[55] Here St. Eu-

52. For example, in his compendium of commentaries on the Book of Genesis (Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca*, vol. 8, pp. 641, 643–645), on the Books of Kingdoms, and on the Proverbs of Solomon (*Bibliotheca Coisliniana*, pp. 43–45, 60, 247).

53. Aendor, or Endor (the spring of the dwelling), was a small town by the stream Kishon in Palestine. Near Endor lived the sorceress mentioned in (1 Kgdms. 28), to whom the Hebrew king Saul came by night and asked her to call up for him the deceased Samuel. Travelers are shown even now, near Nazareth, a cave in which that sorceress is said to have lived. Today on the site of Endor there is a small, poor village called Endur.

54. Samuel was the last and most famous of the judges of Israel, eleven centuries before the Nativity of Christ. He founded the prophetic companies, or schools, as religious and moral societies for awakening patriotism and enlightenment among the people. He ruled the people wisely; he died in his 88th year, having set up the first king, Saul. The life of Samuel is described in the first chapters of the first Book of Kingdoms.

55. Saul, son of Kish, the first king of the Hebrew people, anointed to the kingdom by Samuel, reigned for 40 years, at first virtuously and afterwards with lust for power and cruelty, when he ceased to follow the counsel of Samuel. His life is described in (1 Kgdms. 9:31).

stathius teaches that in the Old Testament the souls of the righteous rested in the bosom of Abraham,[56] but could not ascend to heaven before Jesus Christ opened the doors of the Heavenly Kingdom by His Resurrection; the righteous of the New Testament are happier than those righteous: at their separation from the body they already attain to heavenly glory, already to a certain communion with the Lord Jesus Christ.[57]...

The life and work of St. Eustathius of Antioch is most instructive not only for the pastors of the Church, but also for all the circumstances of life of Orthodox Christians. Concerning this, beyond what has been cited above, there are also some general indications which Chrysostom, the universal teacher of the Christian faith, gives to all Orthodox in his extended "Encomium" on our Father among the saints, Eustathius of Antioch.[58]

"Do not be surprised that, beginning a word of praise for St. Eustathius of Antioch, I called this saint a martyr; he ended his life by death, so how is he a martyr? I have often said to your love that it is not death alone that makes a martyr, but also the disposition of the soul. The crown of martyrdom is often woven not for the end of the deed alone, but also for the intention... St. Eustathius suffered death for Christ not in his own country, but in a foreign land. This was the work of his enemies; they expelled him from his fatherland to put him to shame, but through his exile to a foreign land he became still more glorious and renowned, as the outcome of his deeds also showed... St. Eustathius, like the Apostle Paul, was ready for countless deaths, and he endured them all in disposition and zeal; he bore many dangers that befell him and also experienced them himself. They expelled him from his fatherland, and at that time they raised many other things against

56. "In the bosom of Abraham," or "on the lap (on the breast) of Abraham" is a biblical expression signifying the place of the post-mortem abode of the righteous of the Old Testament (Lk. 16:22–23). The image of this expression is taken from the reclining at meals among the Jews, for reclining on the breast, on the lap, was a sign of particular closeness between those so reclining.

57. *Historical Teaching on the Fathers of the Church* by Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov. Published 1869, vol. II, p. 28.

58. *Works of our Holy Father John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople*, in Russian translation. Published by the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, 1896, vol. 2, bk. 2, pp. 642–650.

this blessed man, though they had no just cause for accusation, except that, in the words of the Apostle Paul, his enemies 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator' (Rom. 1:25), while he withdrew from impiety and feared lawlessness; but this is worthy of crowns, not of accusation."

"Why, then, was St. Eustathius expelled, and why did God permit his persecutors to do so? Why? Do not think that these words will serve to resolve only this one perplexity; no, if it should happen that you have to speak of such things even with pagans or heretics, what is said here will be sufficient to resolve every perplexity of this kind. God permits His true and apostolic faith to be subjected to many attacks, while He permits heresies and paganism to enjoy tranquility; why? So that you may know their weakness, when, undisturbed, they collapse of themselves, and so that you may be convinced of the strength of the faith, which endures attacks and is multiplied through its very opponents... Do you see that God permits the angels of Satan to attack the servants of God and to inflict on them countless calamities, so that His power may be made manifest? Truly, whether we argue with pagans or with wretched Jews, it will be enough for us to prove the divine power by the fact that the faith of Christ, subjected to countless wars, prevailed; and when the whole universe opposed it and everyone with great zeal persecuted those twelve men, that is, the apostles, they, scourged, pursued, and enduring countless calamities, were able in a short time to overcome with complete superiority those who inflicted these things. For this reason God also permitted the blessed Eustathius of Antioch to be sent into a foreign land, so that He might show us still more the power of the truth and the impotence of the heretics."

"By the prayers of St. Eustathius may the Lord God save His Church from every falsely named knowledge and division, and preserve ecclesial unity and peace in the spirit of meekness and Christian love, and have mercy on and save all of us who believe."

"And, having given thanks to God for all things, let us imitate the virtues of the saints, that we may share with them also in the crowns, by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, through

whom and with whom to the Father with the Holy Spirit be glory, honor, and dominion, unto ages of ages. Amen."

* * *

NOTES

1505. The city of Antioch has a particularly important significance for the Christian Church, as the second great center of Christianity after Jerusalem, and because it was in Antioch that the first Christian Church from among the pagans arose. Antioch was founded three hundred years before the Nativity of Christ by the Syrian king Seleucus Nicator, who founded more than ten other cities bearing the name Antioch, desiring thereby to perpetuate the name of his father Antiochus. This capital Antioch, to distinguish it from the others, was called Antioch-Epidaphne, that is, near the temple and grove of Daphne; it was also distinguished by the name Antioch on the Orontes, after the river on whose bank it stood, some 10 versts from its outflow into the Mediterranean Sea. The Syrian kings and the Roman emperors took great care to adorn this Antioch, so that it struck the eye by the splendor and luxurious brilliance of its buildings, through which, from east to west, for a distance of 15 versts, ran an avenue adorned with two rows of columns, forming a covered way on both sides of an open paved road... The population was mixed: there were also Jews; life was gay and lively; poets, rhetoricians, philosophers, scholars, and soothsayers offered their intellectual labors there in abundance; in general pagan culture flourished there, though perverted... At the very beginning of its appearance, Christianity illumined Antioch with the divine light of its teaching; there found refuge those first Christians who, after the murder of the archdeacon Stephen, fled from Jerusalem to avoid his fate; and the preaching begun by them in Antioch was judged so necessary that the Jerusalem Church entrusted the Apostles Barnabas and Paul with confirming the faith there; they "taught a considerable number of people, and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:20–26). It was in Antioch too that the first Christian mission arose; the Apostle Paul made his missionary journeys from there; the Apostle Peter also governed the Church there. And after the fall of Jerusalem, Antioch took first place in the Asian Church, and its significance equaled that of Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria. In Antioch the famous theological school flourished, which gave many outstanding teachers of the Church who defended Christianity against paganism, Judaism, and heretics; there too many councils of Church pastors took place in the times of the heretical disputes... In the thirteenth century Antioch was entirely destroyed by the Egyptian sultan, and now in its place stands the wretched, filthy Turkish town of Antakya, which by its distorted name alone recalls the glorious existence of Antioch on the Orontes for sixteen centuries... Yet even at the present time the Patriarch of Antioch occupies an important third place among the patriarchs of the Eastern Church and bears the title "Patriarch of the whole East."

1511. Arius, while still a deacon of the Church in Alexandria, was excommunicated by St. Peter, Bishop of Alexandria; but Arius was pardoned by St. Peter's successor, the aged Bishop Achillas, restored to the diaconate, and even ordained a presbyter. Arius

then occupied an important place in Alexandria; in the populous parish of Baucalis he was the presiding teacher who instructed in Christian doctrine. Arius was learned, blameless in the morality of ordinary life, had a stern appearance, was tall, had a dignified bearing, and his whole outward aspect contributed to the seduction of many. His dress resembled a monastic one; he always wore a sleeveless tunic and a very narrow mantle, and his soft speech, feigned courteous manner, and flattery, lavished when it suited him, attracted listeners to him. When, after Arius's excommunication, it was again decided by the Ecumenical Council, through the intrigues of his like-minded followers, to readmit him into the bosom of the Church in the year 336, Arius, before reaching the church, suddenly fell ill, his bowels burst forth, and he died in the square.

1529. Here is this Symbol of Faith according to the translation of the Holy Synod, as set out in the book of the Rules of the Holy Apostles, Holy Councils and Holy Fathers: "We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down, and was incarnate and was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens and sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit. As for those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before He was begotten He was not, or that He came into being out of nothing, or who maintain that the Son of God is of another hypostasis or substance, or that He is mutable or changeable, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes." The text of the Symbol of Faith now in use was established by the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381.

1532. *Life of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Nino of Georgia*, ed. 5, 1900, pp. 23–25; *Brief History of the Georgian Church*, compiled by Iosselian, 2nd ed., St. Petersburg, 1843, pp. 12–14 and 20. After some years, King Mirian sent a second embassy to the Emperor Constantine, asking that still more priests and skilled church-builders be sent to Georgia. Fulfilling this request, Constantine the Great sent much gold and silver, the foot of the life-giving Wood of the Cross of Christ, and one of the nails with which the Lord Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross. There were also given to the Georgians many icons of Christ the Savior and of the Most Holy Theotokos, and relics of holy martyrs for the foundations of churches. At that same time the son of Mirian, and heir to the kingdom, who had been a hostage in Rome, was released to his father; he became a zealous promoter of Christianity, building churches everywhere and establishing the faith.

1535. Eusebius of Nicomedia was a friend and fellow-student of Arius in the Antiochene school of Lucian, who had been excommunicated from the Church for heresy. Eusebius of Caesarea was a friend of both, and not only at the council but both before and after it he everywhere took their side; he is considered the leader of the moderate Arians. Caesarea in Palestine was the chief city of Palestine on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea; it received its name in honor of the Roman Caesar (Octavian) Au-

gustus from the Jewish king Herod, who built cities in honor of the Caesar. The beginning of Christianity in Caesarea was laid by the holy Apostle Peter through the conversion of the centurion Cornelius with all his household (Acts 10). After the destruction of Jerusalem, Caesarea was the seat of a bishop, to whom the Church of Jerusalem was subject until 451. Today nothing remains of splendid Caesarea but heaps of ruins.

1541. Complete Collection of the Works of St. John Chrysostom. Ed. 1896, vol. 2, bk. 2, pp. 646–647 and 649. Encomium on the Holy Father Eustathius, Archbishop of Great Antioch. St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, the famous father of the universal Church in the middle of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century, became renowned especially for his sermons and his interpretation of Holy Scripture. For his exceptionally brilliant eloquence he was called Chrysostom. He was born in 347 in Antioch and was baptized at the age of 23. He labored for the greater part of his life in the rank of presbyter in Great Antioch, and at the end of the 4th century he was ordained Bishop of Constantinople. During this last period of his priestly ministry he endured many persecutions through the influence of the Empress Eudoxia, wife of the Emperor Arcadius, and he died a martyr's death in exile in Armenia in 407. To him belongs the rite of the Liturgy which is celebrated in the Orthodox Church for the greater part of the year. His memory is celebrated on January 30 and November 13.

1548. Under the name of relics in the Holy Church, in the broad sense, is understood the body of every deceased Christian. Thus in the rite of burial of the departed it is said: "Taking up the relics of the departed, they go (with them) into the church." But properly, the holy relics are understood to be the honorable remains of the Saints of God. Yet here too the word "relics" has different meanings. Relics are called first of all the "bones" of the saints. Thus the ancient Christians venerated the bones of the holy martyrs Ignatius the God-bearer and Polycarp of Smyrna. The church historian Eusebius, speaking of the translation in the 4th century of the relics of the holy Apostles Luke and Timothy, adds that the patriarch held them on his knees in small "caskets or boxes." Evidently, only the bones of the holy apostles could fit into these caskets. The word "relics" among our ancestors also meant chiefly "bones." Some relics of saints, however, represent whole bodies of the departed and are preserved to such a degree that they are even distinguished by the softness and flexibility of their limbs; for example, on the island of Corfu the relics of St. Spyridon of Trimythous have lain for more than fifteen hundred years in a damp and hot climate, preserving the flexibility of their limbs. (Missionary *Shield of Faith*. Compiled by I. Smolin. St. Petersburg ed. 1904, p. 64 and following).

1552. St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, was born about 330 in Caesarea, the chief city of Cappadocia, into a noble and highly educated family. At about the age of 18 he went to Constantinople and Athens, where he brilliantly completed his scholarly education, and, returning to Caesarea, at about the age of 25 he received baptism and was made a "reader." In 364 he was ordained presbyter, and in 370 bishop. He died in 379. He zealously defended the Orthodox teaching of the faith against Arianism, but suffered enmity not only from the Arians but also from zealots of orthodoxy, who considered that he acted too conciliatorily toward the Arians. He firmly

resisted the efforts of the then emperor Valens, a fervent adherent of the Arian heresy, to draw the Church of Caesarea into Arianism. St. Basil the Great left a richly abundant contribution to patristic literature through his numerous marvelous writings, and the rite of the Liturgy, for which he received the title "Universal Teacher" of the Christian faith. His memory is celebrated on January 1 and January 30.

1561. Origen was the famous Christian teacher of the Church of Alexandria in the middle of the third century (he died in 254) and the outstanding catechist of the Alexandrian conciliatory school; afterwards, in Caesarea of Palestine, he served in the rank of presbyter. Origen was born in Alexandria at the end of the second century and was left a 17-year-old youth after his father, who was put to death for confessing Christianity. In the persecution of Decius he was cast into prison, which ruined his health, so that he died at about 70 years of age. For his tireless labor he was called "Adamantine." Many of the holy Fathers of the Church owed to Origen their first instruction and their conversion from paganism to Christianity; for example, St. Gregory of Neocaesarea. His numerous writings are directed to the defense of Christianity against heretics and enemies of the Christians, and his works on Holy Scripture are especially remarkable, in which he tried to reconcile faith with knowledge and philosophy. Yet Origen often expressed arbitrary interpretations and opinions not shared by the whole Church, for example concerning the Persons of the Holy Trinity and the creation of souls, although he set them forth as his own personal suppositions, which his admirers developed to extremes and into heresy. In the sixth century Origen was accused of ten heresies, and at the local Council of Constantinople in 543 Origen was condemned as a heretic, anathematized, and his writings were declared subject to destruction as heretical.



THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 22

22 февраля

New Calendar February 22 · Old Calendar March 6 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Maurice and of His Son Photinus, and with Them Seventy Soldiers

Страдание святого мученика Маврикия и сына его Фотина и с ними 70 воинов

The lawless and impious emperor Maximian[1] supposed that by serving his false gods he would obtain their help and the exaltation of his kingdom; therefore he commanded that all his subjects should offer sacrifices to the impious idols. He himself strove to set an example of zealous and diligent service to the demons, compelling others also to offer abominable sacrifices. It was not enough for him, as it had been for earlier emperors, to be content with dispatching decrees to the governors of provinces, in which they were charged to see to the veneration of the idols: he himself, without any slackness, went about his dominions in person, performing services before the demonic altars. The godless emperor hoped that, through his coming, all who had renounced the pagan error and had been granted to know the truth of Christ would return once more to their former unbelief. With this intention he left Rome and proceeded through the eastern provinces; among other places he arrived at the Syrian city of Apamea. Here the priests of the idols approached him and began to slander the Christians, saying:

– Most mighty emperor, since the gods have granted us the freedom to speak with thee, we declare to thee that every one of us reveres with fear and zeal the great gods of our fathers, and especially Zeus[2] and the

1. Maximian Galerius, Roman emperor – from 306 to 311 A.D.
2. Zeus or Jupiter – the Greco-Roman god, venerated as ruler of heaven and earth, father of all gods and men.

wondrous Apollo[3], the chief gods of ours, the defenders and protectors of thy realm. But Maurice, and with him seventy other of thy soldiers, puffed up with honors and enriched by thy great gifts, despise our gods and resist thy great and invincible power; they have been seduced by the Christian error.

Hearing this, Emperor Maximian was greatly angered; his fury blazed more fiercely than the fire burning in a furnace; he was especially indignant that such soldiers had been found in his legions. On one of the solemn days he commanded that a tribunal be prepared on the site of the spectacles called Amaxica; it lay between the northern city gates. Maximian chose this place so that the whole people might see the trial; here he commanded that the holy martyrs be brought. On the appointed day, when a multitude of people had gathered at the designated place, even the maidens, who did not remain at home, Emperor Maximian sat upon the high tribunal. Then the seventy holy soldiers of Christ were brought there by attendants, together with their commander, St. Maurice. Looking upon them, the emperor said to Maurice:

– We hoped, Maurice, that you, as men not abandoned by our imperial favor, who were fed from our pay and granted by us the highest honors, would follow our pious example, and by your valiant deeds and wise counsel would bring to reason those who reject the law pleasing to the gods, would heal the opinions of those in error, would set right what stands in need of correction, calming those who stir up dissension; in a word, we were confident that you would correct everything done not at our command, against us and contrary to our will. But we hear that you act precisely the opposite: not only do you not restrain those who rise against our law, but you yourselves are opponents of our all-powerful gods; you despise them, do them no honor, offer them no sacrifices or oblations; more than that, you have even become leaders for others and lead them into the abyss of perdition, if indeed there is truth in what has been reported to us about you.

To this St. Maurice answered:

– Emperor, the outrage which we offer to your insensate gods prepares for us the glorious crown of victory from our true God. We do not

dishonor or despise, as thou in thy madness supposest, the God who created us, but we glorify Him who alone is the true God, who created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them. Nor is it fitting to call the foul and unclean demons, who lead men to perdition, gods, nor their idols deaf, blind and insensate.

Then the emperor said:

– Is this how thou, Maurice, repayest the gratitude owed to the gods who have honored thee and given thee the first place in the army?

But St. Maurice answered:

– I have never received any honor from your gods, and I do not wish to worship them. For who among men who know God would wish to render worship to insensate things, other than those who are without understanding and have become like senseless beasts (Ps. 48:13)? Only such men worship stones and trees as gods, supposing that they have reason, and revere them as gods.

But the emperor said:

– Thou hast received the first place among those who serve us; therefore thou speakest so boldly and without any fear before us.

Having said this, the emperor commanded that St. Maurice be separated from the seventy soldiers, and addressed the latter with gentle words:

– Who has seduced you, brethren, and put into your minds the thought of turning away from your saviors, our gods, and of sharing the error of those who worship a Crucified Man, some criminal?

Then the blessed Theodoret, together with Philip, answered on behalf of all the holy martyrs:

– Godless tormentor, we not only are not in error ourselves, but we desire to free thee also from the error from which we have been delivered, by worshipping the One True God, the Father Almighty, and His Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, the true God, and the Wisdom of God and His Holy Spirit, who has breathed into us knowledge and understanding, that we might confess the Consubstantial Trinity. We abhor thy impious faith; we lay down the rank of temporal

3. Apollo was venerated as the god of the sun and of intellectual enlightenment, as well as of public well-being and order, guardian of the law, and deity of the prediction of the future.

soldier, that we may be granted to become soldiers of God, the King of Hosts.

Then Maximian said:

– I see, Philip, that thou hast already attained venerable old age, but in understanding thou art far behind the young; turn rather to our gods, and show a good example to the rest of thy comrades in service, that they may do likewise; then thou shalt receive great honor and gifts from us.

But St. Philip answered:

– Know, emperor, that I shall not lead into evil those who have of their own will come to know the fear of God, for it is written: "Woe to that man through whom the offense comes" (Mt. 18:7).

To this Maximian said:

– You are bold, Philip, thanks to our patience and gentleness. Abandon, then, your impious belief, lest you rouse our anger and fury; you will be subjected to cruel torments if you dare to confess a Man whom you count among the gods.

Then the holy seventy martyrs answered the tormentor:

– Thy vain and empty threat, abominable emperor, gives us strength and firmness; we fear no torments, for there is no fear in the soul of one who loves the Lord.

Maximian was angered by this answer and commanded that their belts and military garments be taken from them, and said:

– See what glory and honor you have lost, and what dishonor you have brought upon yourselves by your disobedience.

The holy ones answered:

– Thou, by stripping us of our garments and belts, hast deprived us of military rank; but there is a God in heaven whom we worship: He will clothe us in garments and belts of incorruption and will grant us to share His eternal glory, which thou art wholly unworthy to behold, since in thee speaks and acts thy father, Satan.

Then the emperor, angered still more, said to the saints:

– Accursed ones, unworthy of the gifts of our gods, you have brought dishonor upon yourselves: we bestowed great honor upon you,

but you have dishonored the mighty gods and scorned our favor; receive now what your deeds deserve.

The saints answered to this:

– Emperor, to be a soldier in thy service is a vain and passing thing, and thy honor is dishonor, for thou hast forgotten the God who gave thee imperial power, and in thy madness thou worshippest as gods vain and soulless idols, though they bring thee no benefit and do not perceive whether anyone honors or dishonors them.

Then the emperor said:

– Desiring, by my imperial mercy, to preserve your lives, I still give you time.

After this he commanded that they be confined in a prison for three days, so that, having considered, they might choose for themselves what they desired. The saints, shut up in prison and bound in fetters, said thus:

– Beloved brethren, let us turn our souls to prayer and earnestly beseech our good and merciful God that He send us, through His Holy Spirit, wisdom and understanding; let us ask Him to put into our mouths what we are to answer the emperor, so that the tormentor may be astonished at the truth of our faith.

After this they began to pray, crying out with one accord:

– Lord, Jesus Christ, Almighty God, whose power is eternal and whose kingdom is without end, send down upon us Thy Holy Spirit; let Him instruct us and fill us with joy and gladness; let Him grant us victory over the malicious error, and let us be strengthened in the faith by Thy Holy Spirit, who speaks in us according to Thy true and unfailing promise (Mt. 10:19–20). In exchange for the taking from us of worldly honor, grant us to be soldiers in Thy heavenly city and to abide among the citizens on high with all Thy saints who from of old have been well-pleasing to Thee. Thou alone art God, and to Thee belong glory and power for ever, amen.

Three days later the emperor Maximian again sat upon the same tribunal by the Amaxican gates and commanded that the holy martyrs be brought; and all the inhabitants of that city also gathered to watch

the trial. The tormentor, restraining his anger, addressed the saints gently:

– Men, choose for yourselves what is profitable for you: come forward and offer sacrifices to the gods, and then you shall receive life and escape a bitter death.

Then the saints answered:

"We have considered the matter well, O emperor: hear us attentively, and do not compel us any longer to offer sacrifices to your gods. For we have firmly resolved to hate this temporal life and to prefer the death that awaits us, for the love of Christ, from Whom we hope to receive eternal life. Therefore deal with us as you please: we shall not turn away from our God, and we shall never worship your demons. Condemned to temporal death, we thereby escape eternal condemnation."

Such was the answer of the saints. The tyrant, noticing among them a youth, asked him:

"Tell me, youth, what is your name, and where are you from?"

The youth answered:

"My name is Photinus; I received this name from the true Light. I am a warrior of my Christ, Who has put to shame your father the devil. I am a Roman by birth, the son, not only in the flesh but also in soul, of the most illustrious Maurice. For I was begotten by him and received the knowledge of God; he raised me in the holy faith in the Lord Christ, Whom you, O emperor, by rejecting Him, have made yourself like senseless beasts."

To this the tyrant replied:

"You are foolish, youth, and your words betray your age. But it is time for you to know what is good for you: come forward and offer sacrifice to the great Zeus; spare your youth."

Then the youth said:

"You call me foolish only because I do not do your will and do not worship idols. No, I am wiser than all of you, for I believe in my Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom you do not believe and do not wish to know."

Then the tyrant again said to the saints:

"How long must we endure your madness, wretches? How long, yielding to our excessive pity, shall we postpone your torments? Offer sacrifice to the gods; do not bring upon yourselves our righteous judgment, and do not provoke us to pitilessness and cruelty."

The saints answered:

"Foul and impious servant of demons, if you have even a little understanding, you have already learned of our faith and its strength from Photinus. Although he is young in years, he has by his right faith and his confession of Christ put your impiety to shame. All the more do we strive to endure torments, to put to shame your father the devil, and to please Christ our God."

Then the tyrant, filled with rage, ordered the saints to be stripped and beaten with ox sinews. The servants began to carry out what they had been commanded: they stretched out each of the warriors of Christ and, without any mercy, struck them on the whole body. The saints were tortured until their holy bodies were crushed, and the whole place was stained with the much blood that was shed. The saints, amid their torments, called upon Christ the Lord, asking for His help. The Lord did not leave them, but with His invisible power eased their suffering and strengthened their hearts in patience and divine love. When the servants were completely exhausted, the emperor addressed the saints:

"Have you learned, bold and foolish ones, how easily we can take your lives? So offer sacrifices to the gods, that you may not bring upon yourselves even more severe punishments!"

The saints answered:

"Know, impious emperor who do not know our God, that just as you are far removed from the love of Christ and the true Light, being darkened by the gloom of demonic error, so we do not feel the torments you inflict upon us, for our mind is enlightened by the faith and love of Christ our God. Devise, then, O tormentor and servant of demons, some new and more grievous torments with which to deliver us. Our soul thirsts, and the love of Christ in us desires to be released from the body through suffering and to see the living God, who reigns forever."

Hearing this, the tyrant was kindled with still greater fury and ordered a great fire to be lit, to cast the holy martyrs into it.

Then a great fire was kindled. The saints did not wait for the tyrant's servants to cast them into the fire, but themselves approached it as though it were water, and entering the midst of the blaze, walked unharmed in the fire, reproaching the tyrant and putting his gods to shame. All who were present marveled at so glorious a miracle. But the tyrant, like a vessel of perdition, would not recognize that the power of God was helping the saints, by which they overcame the power of the fire; and with even greater rage he sought to destroy the saints. He ordered the holy sufferers, whom the strong flame had not harmed at all, to be brought out of the fire and tied to those trees on which criminals were usually tormented, and their bodies to be pitilessly scraped with iron claws. The saints bore even this cruel torment bravely, not fearing bodily sufferings. Even the people marveled at the fury and madness of the emperor. Then St. Maurice, turning to the emperor, said to him:

"Impious and foul tormentor, do you not see your weakness? Do you not recognize your insignificance? For Photinus, a small youth, was able to endure so many cruel torments; by this he has crushed and broken the power of your lawless kingdom. How, then, can you overcome us all, when you yourself have been defeated and put to shame by a young youth?"

Maximian looked at the saint with fury, and gnashing his teeth, ordered the holy youth Photinus to be beheaded with the sword at once, before his father's eyes. In this way he wished to avenge himself upon Maurice; he thought that by the death of the son he would greatly grieve the father, the holy Maurice. But the holy man was filled with joy and gladness, beholding his son's martyr's death and his dying for Christ our God.

When the holy Photinus, beheaded by the sword, had yielded up his soul to the Lord, Mauricius said to Maximian:

"You have fulfilled our desire, lawless tyrant, by sending Photinus ahead to Christ our God. Now our departure to heaven is surely not far off. Who among us will not imitate Christ's warrior Photinus, who has already entered the mansions of paradise and put Satan, your father, to

shame? Devise, then, still greater and most severe torments, and strive in every way to test whether our faith in Christ is firm."

When Maximian saw that the holy martyrs were enduring all the torments without murmuring and with courage, not turning away from their faith, he gathered all his wicked and godless counselors and began with them to devise by what most cruel death to destroy the martyrs, to strike terror into all Christians wherever they might live. Some advised one thing, others another; at last one of them, the most cruel and impious, extremely inhuman and malicious, said to Maximian:

"Now, O king, it is summer; the month of July is underway. Outside our city, to the west, between two rivers and a lake, there is a place marshy and overgrown with grass. There are now a multitude of gnats, horseflies, wasps, and hornets, so that it is difficult for a man even to pass through that place, and impossible to remain there for an hour. Order men to be brought there; command that they be stripped and tied to the trees, and that their bodies be smeared with honey. Then the gnats, hornets, and all kinds of flies will torment them cruelly. This is the strongest and most dreadful of all the torments that can be devised; then they will understand that one must not revile our invincible and eternal gods."

Such counsel greatly pleased the impious emperor and all his foul counselors, and the holy passion-bearers of Christ were condemned to this torment. Then the soldiers, taking them, bound them and led them to the aforementioned place. There they firmly tied the saints to trees growing over a spring and by the marsh, smeared their naked bodies with honey from head to foot, and cast the body of the blessed Photinus down before his father's eyes. After this they withdrew. Every kind of fly, gnats, horseflies, wasps, and hornets swarmed upon the saints; like a dense cloud they surrounded the passion-bearers, stinging them without mercy. The saints endured this unbearable torment for ten days and ten nights. Lifting their eyes to heaven, they prayed, saying:

"Lord, our God, Thou hast created us in Thine image and likeness, hast granted us to know Thy truth, and hast been pleased to reveal to us Thy Divinity, Thine Only-begotten Son, and the All-holy and Life-giving Spirit. We commit our souls to Thee and beseech Thee: number

us with all Thy saints, who from of old have been well-pleasing to Thee. For we have loved Thee and have striven toward Thee with all our soul; for Thy sake we have been delivered to this torment. Thou alone art the good and merciful God, and to Thee belongs glory forever. Amen."

After this they yielded up their holy souls to the Lord and were granted the crowns of eternal glory. But the lawless tyrant Maximian still raged against the saints even after their death, when they were already enjoying immortal life (for those who have died in God are alive before God, though they have left this world). Hearing that the saints were already dead, Maximian ordered their honorable heads to be cut off and their bodies left unburied. Then the saints' bodies and heads were scattered over the meadow and the oak grove there, to be eaten by birds and beasts. Some of the faithful, coming by night, with fear and trembling gathered the scattered relics of the holy martyrs and buried them in that place, glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

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Memory of the Venerable Thalassius, Hermit of Syria

Память преподобного Фалассия, пустынника Сирийского

While still in his youth, the Venerable Thalassius built himself a dwelling on a certain mountain and settled in it. Being by nature sincere of heart and humble of mind, he soon felt a drawing toward the ascetic labors of monastic life. He withdrew to the summit of a mountain situated near the village of Targala, and spent thirty-eight years there in ascetic struggle, having no dwelling at all: neither a cell, nor a tent, nor even any kind of shelter, but having built only a small enclosure of stones and having the sky alone as his covering, he remained in it at all times. For such labors the Lord granted the holy ascetic the grace of working miracles. The Venerable Thalassius cast out demons, healed various diseases, and through the power of his wonder-working gift became like the holy Apostles. Once a serpent attacked him and sought to devour him, but he prayed and by his prayer

saved himself from death. On another occasion he was seized by a stomach ailment which caused him cruel suffering, but he called upon the name of God and was healed of the painful sickness. Great multitudes of people always flocked to the Venerable to see his labors, and many of those who came asked him to accept them among his companions. The Venerable did not resist such requests. Having built cells for those who desired to labor with him, he allowed them to live in them, and he distributed to them the food which his admirers brought to him from various places. Having lived out his life in such labors, the Venerable Thalassius reposed in peace.

Memory of the Venerable Varadatus, Hermit of Syria

Память преподобнаго Варадата, пустынника Сирийского

The Venerable Varadatus was a native of Antioch[4]. Having chosen for himself the labors of the contemplative, solitary life, he first enclosed himself in a hut, and then, after some time, withdrew to a very high mountain and lived there continually in a cell which he had built with his own hands. The Venerable purposely constructed this cell so that its dimensions were less than his height, and therefore he always stood in it stooped, and lay in it bent. The cell had no windows, only a single door, and even that the saint always kept shut in order to guard himself from outside visitors; and in place of windows, to let daylight into the cell, he made openings in the wall which were so wide that in his dwelling he never had protection either from rain or from the heat of the sun. In such a cramped and uncomfortable dwelling the holy Varadatus lived for many years. Afterwards, yielding to the persuasion of Theodoret, bishop of Antioch, he came out of his dwelling, but from that time he began to wear a garment of stitched hides, which covered his whole body from head to foot, with only small slits left about the mouth and nose for free breathing. Being unable to walk in such a garment, the Venerable stood continually on his feet with his hands raised to heaven, glorifying God. Thus the holy Varadatus always remained in

4. Here Syrian Antioch is meant, once the vast and wealthy capital of the Syrian kingdom, now an insignificant town in Asiatic Turkey.

enclosure. He bore this struggle not for the gratification of the flesh, but in order to compel himself to endure bodily pains and thereby subdue his flesh, since he was beset by strong passions and was constantly inflamed by burning, unrestrained lusts. When the Venerable, for the sake of the reward promised to ascetics in eternity, had brought his flesh to exhaustion, he departed to the Lord and received from Him eternal rest.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Athanasius the Confessor

Память преподобного Афанасия Исповедника

The Venerable Athanasius was born in the city of Constantinople to pious parents, who lived a God-pleasing life and were very wealthy. From childhood he was distinguished by a reverent disposition of soul, and the beloved dream of his youth was to spend his life in the monastic state. Therefore, upon reaching full age, he withdrew to one of the monasteries of Nicomedia[5] and there received monastic tonsure. In his monastic labors the Venerable attained such a height that his piety became known even to the emperor. In the reign of Leo the Iconoclast[6], a denunciation was made against the Venerable that he venerated the holy icons, and for this he was subjected to various tortures, endured grievous exiles, and bore many sufferings. But, despite all this, the holy Athanasius remained unshaken. Having preserved the Orthodox faith to the end of his life, he departed to the Lord[7].

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5. The city of Nicomedia was located in Asia Minor on the shore of one of the gulfs of the Propontis, now the Sea of Marmara, and was the beloved residence of the emperor Diocletian and the site of the sufferings and death of many holy martyrs in his reign. The monastery where the Venerable was tonsured was known by the name of Paulopetrion, because it was dedicated to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

6. The persecution against the venerators of the holy icons lasted about a hundred years. Of the three emperors of this period bearing the name Leo, the title of iconoclast is here ascribed to Leo the Armenian, who reigned from 813 to 820.

7. Venerable Athanasius reposed in 821.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 23

23 февраля

New Calendar February 23 · Old Calendar March 7 (civil dates)

Life and Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Поликарпа, епископа Смирнского

In the city of Smyrna, situated in the region of Ionia in Asia Minor, during the times of the holy Apostles, St. Bucolus was bishop. In the days of this bishop there lived a pious, God-fearing widow named Callista. The Angel of the Lord appeared to her in a dream and commanded her to take in the orphan boy Polycarp. Since Callista had no children, she gladly took the boy and reared him in piety as her own son. When he had grown up and come to mature understanding, the widow entrusted to him all that she had in her house. Once, at that time, she needed to go far from home on an errand concerning her estates, and she did not return for quite a long while. During her absence, blessed Polycarp, who was exceedingly merciful to the poor, began to give generously to the needy, orphans, and widows; he gave bread, wine, oil, and every kind of food to all who asked, so that the storehouses of his adoptive mother were emptied. As Callista was returning, one of the servants came out to meet her and began complaining about Polycarp, saying that he had foolishly squandered the entire estate, so that, he slandered, there was now utter poverty in the house. Callista was deeply grieved by this; when she came home, she went at once to the storehouses and found there a great abundance of every kind of treasure. For blessed Polycarp, before Callista's arrival, had turned to the Lord with this prayer: "O Lord my God, Thou didst fill the vessels of the widow of Sarepta in the days of Thy prophet Elijah (3 Kgdms.

17:10–16); hear me at this hour, and grant that in the name of Christ all the storehouses of this house may be filled."

And the Lord immediately heard his prayer and filled the house of his benefactress with every good thing. Seeing that the house now had far more of everything necessary than before, Callista grew angry with the servant who had complained of the depletion wrought by St. Polycarp: she thought that the servant was either mocking her or had slandered Polycarp out of hatred. In her anger, she wished to punish him. But St. Polycarp began to defend him, saying to his foster mother: "I beseech you, mistress, do not punish another in my place, but rather punish me. This servant deserves not punishment, but praise for his faithfulness and devotion to you; he told you the whole truth: indeed, all our wealth had been depleted and all the storehouses emptied, for, seeing our brethren who were hungry, poor, and needy, I gave everything to them and exhausted all the supplies. They themselves then entreated God, and He sent His Angel, who replenished all your possessions, so that you too, according to your custom, might give alms generously to those in need."

Hearing and seeing all this, Callista was greatly astonished, and from then on became even more zealous in good works and in good faith, giving abundant alms. She loved St. Polycarp still more, as her own son, marveling at his virtue. At last, having ended her God-pleasing life, she gave her soul into the hands of the Lord, leaving all her possessions to her adopted son, St. Polycarp, as heir. Blessed Polycarp gave everything to the poor, and himself devotedly applied himself to reading the divine books, giving himself earnestly to contemplation of God and to prayer. He led a life of great abstinence and spotless virginity, laboring unceasingly for the Lord by day and by night, and serving the sick, the weak, and the aged with love. For such a life, St. Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna, loved him greatly. First the bishop made Polycarp a cleric, then a deacon; according to St. Pionius, who wrote the life of blessed Polycarp, St. Bucolus, while Polycarp was a deacon, also charged him with preaching the word of God, for St. Polycarp was distinguished for his good judgment and eloquence, and so the holy ascetic was obliged to instruct the people both in the church and elsewhere.

Not only St. Bucolus, but also the holy Apostles Paul and John the Theologian, together with the other disciples of Christ, loved St. Polycarp. St. Polycarp accompanied the holy Apostles on their journeys, was their disciple and fellow-laborer, and imitated their lives. The Apostles sent him back to Smyrna to St. Bucolus, who ordained him presbyter. St. Polycarp also wrote many discourses and epistles useful to the Church of Christ, but most of his writings perished during the persecutions, and only a small portion of them remained. It had been foretold to the holy Bishop Bucolus that after his death the episcopal throne of the Church of Smyrna must be occupied by the presbyter Polycarp, and by no other. Therefore, as he lay dying, St. Bucolus took Polycarp's right hand and placed it upon his own breast, entrusting to him the care of his rational flock; then, with the words, "Glory to Thee, O Lord," he departed in peace to eternal life. The apostolic bishops who had gathered for the burial of St. Bucolus consecrated St. Polycarp; and many of them were vouchsafed awesome visions. When the consecration to the episcopacy began, divine light illumined all who were in the church. Some of the worthy saw a white dove, shining like lightning, flying about the head of St. Polycarp; to others the holy ascetic appeared clothed like a warrior, girded with a soldier's belt and armed as if for battle; others saw him in a royal purple robe[1], his face radiant. To one maiden he appeared much taller than he actually was, and his vestment upon the right shoulder was red. When St. Polycarp bent his knees to receive the consecration, he saw before him the feet of Christ the Lord Himself, invisibly present at his consecration. Thus, ordained by Christ Himself and by the Holy Spirit, Polycarp governed the Church of God according to the ordinances of the holy Apostles. He endured many labors in saving the souls of men and wrought many wondrous miracles during his episcopacy.

Once St. Polycarp happened to be in one of the cities of the same region of Ionia, Teos, which lay near the hot springs called Levedia. He stayed with the bishop of that city, named Daphnus, whom St. Ignatius the God-bearer mentions in his epistle to the inhabitants of Smyrna.

1. Porphyra – a costly purple garment in the form of a long mantle, worn by sovereigns on solemn occasions.

Seeing the poverty and need in the bishop's house, St. Polycarp prayed to God for him, that the Lord might bless his household; from that hour Bishop Daphnus suffered no further want. His fields and vineyards, which until then had been unfruitful, yielded extraordinary harvests and became exceedingly fertile; by his prayer the saint increased the wine, which had been in small supply, until it was abundant. Once, as Polycarp was returning to Smyrna, he turned aside from the road with the deacon accompanying him and went into an inn along the way. It was already evening, and the weary travelers wished to rest. After eating a little, Polycarp and his companion fell asleep; but their sleep did not last long. At midnight the Angel of the Lord nudged Polycarp in the side and said to him:

"Polycarp!"

Then the saint asked:

"What is it, O Lord?"

"Arise," the Angel said to him, "and leave the inn at once, for it will soon be destroyed: those who dwell in that inn do not believe in Christ God and commit many iniquities."

Then the saint arose and began to rouse his deacon, commanding him to get up; but the deacon, who had been sleeping soundly, did not wish to rise. He began to dissuade the saint:

"The first sleep is not yet over, holy father. Where shall we go? In your constant meditation upon the divine Scriptures, you do not sleep yourself, and you will not let others sleep."

Hearing these words, St. Polycarp fell silent; but the Angel appeared to him a second time and commanded him to go out. Then the saint again urged the deacon, saying that the building must be destroyed; but the deacon replied:

"I believe in God, and I think that this building will not fall while you, father, are in it." Polycarp answered:

"I too believe in God, but I do not put my trust in this stone building."

Meanwhile the Angel appeared a third time and repeated the same command. Only then did the bishop persuade his companion to leave the inn. As soon as they had gone out, the building immediately collapsed

to its very foundations, and all who were in it perished, every one of them. But St. Polycarp stood gazing toward heaven and prayed thus: "O Lord, Almighty God, Father of Jesus Christ, Thy blessed Son, Thou didst foretell to the Ninevites through the Prophet Jonah the destruction of their city, but in Thy mercy Thou didst spare them. Truly I bless Thee, for through Thine Angel Thou didst lead us out of this building and deliver us from sudden death, even as Thou didst lead Lot out of Sodom. Thou continually preservest Thy servants from every evil; Thou art good and merciful unto the ages."

After their arrival in Smyrna, one night an unclean spirit suddenly entered a servant of the prince of that city, who did not believe in Christ. The servant cried out loudly and made a great commotion, so that the whole household was seized with terror, and fear and trembling fell upon all who lived there. At daybreak a large number of Jews came to the prince's house, wishing to cast out the demon. But the servant possessed by the unclean spirit rushed upon them, and although they were many and he was alone, he struck them all severely. No one could overcome him, and no one could escape his hand, so that they left him barely alive and badly bloodied: the demoniac tore off all the clothing they wore and bit their bodies with his teeth. In that house there was one Christian, who said to the prince: "If you command it, master, I will summon a man who will heal your servant without any difficulty."

When the prince agreed to this proposal, that servant went to the holy Bishop Polycarp and invited him to the prince's house. Before the blessed one had entered the prince's house, the demon began to cry out: "Woe is me! Polycarp is coming here, and against my will I shall be compelled to flee from this place."

No sooner had the saint entered than the demon, trembling, came out at once and fled from the prince's servant; and the prince, seeing this, was greatly amazed. After that miracle, a fire broke out in Smyrna at night. Since everyone was asleep, the fire spread widely and engulfed a large part of the city in flames. As always happens, a great din, outcry and wailing arose, and terror seized everyone. The whole people set about putting out the fire, but could do nothing: the fire grew stronger

and stronger. The Jews, who practiced incantations against fire, also gathered, but all their attempts proved futile. Then the prince remembered the holy Polycarp and said to his chief men and counselors: "No one can stop this fire except the teacher of the Christians, Polycarp, who recently cast the demon out of my servant."

Sending for him, they invited him to come, and they asked him to help the city that had suffered such a misfortune. Raising his honorable hands, the saint at once began to pray before them, and the fire, as if drenched by a mighty stream of water, was extinguished, and the blaze ceased. Seeing such a miracle, the people began to think that the saint was one of the gods. But Polycarp, before them all, preached the One true God, who is in heaven, of whom he himself is only a servant; so that many believed and joined the holy Church of Christ. On another occasion there was a long period without rain, and drought came, followed by famine. Then all the people, together with the prince and his counselors, began to beseech the saint to take pity on them and to obtain rain for the earth from his God. When the saint prayed, a heavy downpour came at once, so that the earth was filled with moisture, and that year's harvest was far better than before. Through such and many other miracles of the saint, and likewise through the healing of various sick people from their infirmities by the laying on of his hands, many turned to the Lord Jesus Christ. Day by day the Church of Christ grew, and idolatrous faith diminished in Smyrna, where the holy Polycarp accepted the ministry of the word by the apostolic command. As the holy Irenaeus attests, Polycarp was not only a disciple and friend, and a companion of many who had seen Christ with their eyes, but was also sent by the apostles to Asia, to occupy the episcopal throne in Smyrna after the holy Bucolus. (Irenaeus adds:) "We too saw him in our youth, when he was already a very aged elder, and what he had learned from the apostles he taught to others, and he handed on to the Church only what is true and not false." The bishops who came after him in the Asian Church likewise bear witness concerning the holy Polycarp that he was truly a steadfast and faithful champion of the truth, unlike Valentinus and Marcion and all the heresiarchs who introduced such harmful errors into the Church of Christ. This blessed

Polycarp, coming to Rome when Anicetus was pope there, turned many away from the heresy of the Marcionites and led them to the true Church and faith, openly preaching the truth which he had received from the apostles.[1576] Among other things he also told the following: the disciple of the Lord, John, once went into a bath while he was in Ephesus. There he saw the heretic Cerinthus bathing. The apostle at once left the bath and urged those who were with him to follow him, lest, he added, the bath in which Cerinthus, the enemy of God's truth, was bathing should suddenly collapse. Once this same Polycarp met the heretic Marcion, who said to him insolently:

"Acknowledge us."

To this Polycarp replied:

"I know that you are the firstborn son of the devil. From heretics the apostles themselves and their disciples so carefully kept themselves that they did not even wish to converse with those who tried by their crafty empty talk to obscure the truth; and the holy Paul commands: 'A heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject, knowing that such a man is perverted and sins, being self-condemned' (Titus 3:10–11)."

There also survives the epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians,[1577] written with extraordinary profundity, which cannot fail to be noticed by those who care for their salvation and approve his faith and preaching.

Such is the testimony of the holy Irenaeus concerning Polycarp. After the twenty-two-year reign of Antoninus, his son Marcus Aurelius[2] ascended the throne and shared his power with his brother Lucius. At this time a severe persecution of Christians was raised in Asia, and then the holy Polycarp sealed his confession with his blood. Accounts of the sufferings and death of this righteous man are found in the epistle of the Smyrnean Church,[3] where the holy Polycarp occupied the episcopal throne. The content of this epistle is as follows.

"The Church of Smyrna to the church in Philomelium and to all the other holy catholic churches among the various peoples: may the

2. From 161 to 180 A.D.

mercy, peace and love of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. We have written to you, brethren, about the holy Polycarp, who extinguished the fire of persecution by the shedding of his blood, and about the other martyrs. Many holy martyrs then showed invincible courage; some were beaten for so long a time that all their joints and sinews were crushed and their entrails were visible; others were dragged over stones and sharp tiles, and they endured with astonishing calm all the most cruel torments that the tormentors could devise; others were given to be devoured by beasts. The impious were deeply astonished and greatly amazed, seeing before them such manly suffering of the saints. Among the other passion-bearers, by God's help, a young man named Germanicus showed outstanding courage, with a fearless heart and an unwavering mind; he bravely went to a death that by nature is so terrible to all. The judge long entreated Germanicus to spare his youth and not to destroy this sweet life with so bitter a death; but he, as soon as he saw the beasts let loose against him, himself rushed upon them, provoking them, so that they might tear him to pieces. A man from Phrygia named Quintus, seeing the beasts and the terrible torment, at once became afraid and fell away from his salvation; from which it became clear that he had come to the tribunal of the impious rashly and not from a pure heart, but out of levity, as if driven by a sudden gust of wind, and had dared to deliver himself to torment. He served for all as an example that such a great matter as delivering oneself to torments should not be undertaken without discretion. Polycarp, hearing of these torments, learned that the unbelieving Hellenic people, looking upon the torments of the other passion-bearers too, openly cried out to the judge: 'Seek out Polycarp, destroy these godless men.'"

Hearing this, Polycarp, though he wished to remain in the city until he was seized, yielded to the entreaties of the Christians, left the city and hid in a village, where, as was his custom, he prayed day and night

3. The circular epistle on the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, from the church over which he was presiding and among which he suffered, is one of the most ancient monuments of Christian antiquity. Eusebius included almost this entire epistle in his history (Book IV, ch. 14). Translation in our Menaion of St. Demetrius of Rostov.

for peace in the Church. Three days before he was taken by the impious, he saw in a dream that his pillow burst into sudden flame and was consumed. Awaking from sleep, the saint said to those with him: "I shall be burned in fire for the Lord Jesus Christ."

Three days after this, men sent by the governor to search for Polycarp came to that village. Seizing two servant boys, they beat them with rods to make them say where Polycarp was, and the boys pointed him out in a room upstairs. He could have escaped from there, but he did not wish to, saying: "The will of the Lord my God be done."

Hearing the servants coming after him, he himself went down the stairs to meet them and greeted them cordially with a joyful face. The servants, who had not seen him before, looking upon his gray hair and old age, and upon the gentleness and calm joy of his noble face, were astonished and said: "Was it really necessary to take so much trouble and effort to find this old man?"

Straightway Polycarp ordered a meal to be prepared for them, and asked them to eat and drink, while he himself asked for one hour to pray. And he prayed fervently to God, offering thanksgiving for all the care of God that had been over him, for the small and the great, from the days of his youth, and committing to God the holy Church scattered throughout the whole world. After his long prayer, the men who had been sent took the old man, set him upon an ass, and led him to the city of Smyrna; it was the day of the Great Sabbath. On the way they met him, the two honorable senators Herod and Nicetes, who took him into their chariot and urged him, while at the judgment, merely in word to renounce his faith: "Is it so hard to say, 'Lord Caesar, I will sacrifice'? Thus you will escape death."

Polycarp was silent at their words; but when they insisted, he answered: "I will never do what you advise."

They were angered, reproached him, and threw him down from the chariot; in the fall the old man injured his shin, yet he gave no thought to this. When he was brought to judgment, the impious crowd shouted, rejoicing that Polycarp had been taken; but he heard the voice of our Lord from heaven, saying to him: "Be strong, Polycarp, and act manfully!"

Others of ours also heard this voice (says the Smyrnaean epistle).

The judge asked him:

"Are you Polycarp?"

"It is I," he answered.

"Spare your old age," said the judge, "renounce Christ, swear by the fortune of Caesar." The judge, speaking this and the like, said:

"Come to your senses, Polycarp, and say: Destroy the godless."

Then Polycarp, lifting his eyes to heaven and stretching out his hands toward the impious crowd, said toward God:

"Destroy the godless!" The judge said:

"Renounce Christ, revile Him, and I will release you free."

"Eighty-six years," answered Polycarp, "I have served Christ, and He has done me no evil; how then can I blaspheme my King, who has preserved me even until now, with dishonorable words?"

The judge said:

"I will let wild beasts loose upon you."

"Let them loose," answered Polycarp, "but what is best I will not change for the worse."

"I will deliver you to the fire," said the judge. He answered:

"You threaten me with a fire that is extinguished, but you know nothing of the unquenchable fire, where the godless and the unbelieving shall be burned forever. Do not delay any longer, but do quickly what you have planned to do with me."

Then the judge ordered the herald to proclaim to the people that Polycarp confessed himself a Christian. Hearing this, the pagans and the Jews cried out loudly: "He is the corrupter of all Asia, the father of the Christians, he overturns our gods; burn him alive!"

And the people, together with the Jews, insisted that Polycarp be burned. When a great quantity of wood and brushwood had been prepared, Polycarp took off his belt and began to remove his garments, and also took off his sandals, while the tormentors prepared iron implements and nails, intending to nail Polycarp so that he could in no way escape the fire. But the saint said to them: "It is not fitting to nail me, for He who gives me endurance in the flame of fire will also give me strength to remain motionless in the pyre, not moving to either side."

Then the tormentors did not nail him but only bound him, and placed upon the fire this old man gray with age, like a choice ram from the flock, bound for sacrifice, for a sweet-smelling savor to God. And Saint Polycarp prayed, saying: "I thank Thee, O Lord God, that Thou hast deemed me worthy to be numbered with Thy martyrs and confessors, and to drink the cup of the sufferings of Thy Christ and to be a partaker of His passion, so that in the resurrection of eternal life I may be with Him. Accept me, therefore, as a fat and acceptable sacrifice before Thy eyes, which Thou Thyself hast foreordained and foreshown, and which now the true God, whom I glorify and praise, has fulfilled. Thee and Thy Son, the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, with Him and with the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory and worship are due, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen."

And when he had said "Amen," the servants immediately set fire to the pyre; when the wood caught fire all around and the flame rose high, there occurred a wonder that amazed everyone: the flame surrounding the saint and rising above his head did not touch or approach the saint, but, like sails of a ship swollen by the wind, it spread out from him and joined together above him on high. Saint Polycarp stood in the midst of the fire, like gold refined in the crucible, and the fire did not scorch his body; we smelled, say the Smyrnaeans in their epistle, such a fragrance coming from the fire that it incomparably surpassed all perfumes. The impious, seeing this, cried out to the spearman that he should approach and with his weapon reach the saint through the fire and kill him. Approaching, the spearman pierced the saint with a long weapon, and from the wound there flowed a remarkable quantity of blood; like a stream issuing from a spring, it completely extinguished the fire; the whole multitude of people marveled, perceiving how great is the difference between believers and unbelievers. Polycarp was an outstanding man of our time, bishop of the Catholic Church of Smyrna, a teacher descended from the apostles, and a holy prophet; everything he said came to pass.

Then the Jews began to ask the judge not to give the Christians the body of Polycarp. "They will begin," said the Jews, "to regard him as their god, just as they do the Crucified One."

The godless did not know that it was impossible for Christians to forsake Christ the Lord, who died on the Cross for the salvation of the whole world, or to consider anyone else a god: to Him, as the true Son of God, we render divine honor, while the martyrs we worthily honor as disciples and imitators of Christ, who suffered for Him out of love for Him; we embrace them with love and desire to imitate them in piety, and in eternal glory we wish to be their partakers. The centurion, however, by the command of the judge whom the Jews had importuned, gave the body of Polycarp to the flames, according to the pagan custom; while this ascetic was alive, his body had not suffered from the fire, and after his death it yielded to the power of the fire. We (say the Smyrnaeans) gathered up his bones, purer than gold and far more precious than costly stones, and placed them in a fitting place, where we shall celebrate with joy the day of his suffering, both in memory of one who suffered such a contest for Christ and for the confirmation of those who shall confess and glorify Christ, the true God of ours, by a like death. We have sent this to you through the brother Marcus; and when you have read it, send this epistle also to the other scattered brethren, so that they too may glorify the Lord, who has shown us so great a chosen one among His servants, able to fill us all with His grace and to bring us into His eternal Kingdom through His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, honor, and worship forever. Amen. Kiss all the saints; those who are with us kiss you, and Evarestus, who wrote this epistle, salutes you together with all his household. Polycarp completed his suffering on the seventh day before the Kalends of May, that is, on the 25th of April, on the Great Sabbath, at the eighth hour of the day, under the high priest Philip, during the governorship of Trallian, unto the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ. We wish good health to the brethren who walk in the good tidings of the word of Jesus Christ, with whom glory to God for the salvation of the chosen saints, as the holy Polycarp accomplished his suffering; may we too be his heirs in the Kingdom of Christ. This epistle was copied by Gaius, a disciple of Saint Irenaeus, who was a disciple of the blessed Polycarp; from him Socrates of Corinth copied it; and I, the presbyter Pionius, again received all this from the persons mentioned above, and compared

it with the revelation given to me by Saint Polycarp, who appeared to me in a vision. And I wrote it down, renewing all that had been effaced by the passage of time, so that our Lord Jesus Christ may also receive me together with His chosen ones into His Heavenly Kingdom; to Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen."

Kontakion, Tone 1:

Offering the fruits of words to the Lord, O wise Polycarp, a sacrifice of virtues, thou wast glorified as a hierarch worthy of God. Therefore, today, enlightened by thy words, we sing thy praiseworthy memory, glorifying the Lord.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable John, Antiochus, Antoninus and Moses

Память преподобных Иоанна, Антиоха, Антонина и Моисея

Of these venerable fathers, Saint John knew the Venerable Limneus[4], who lived and ascetically labored in the vicinity of the village of Targala; he was his disciple and in the manner of his ascetic life imitated him. Finding on the bank of a river a hill exposed on all sides to the wind and devoid of all vegetation, he, having no dwelling whatever, spent twenty-five years on it in ascetic labors. During all this time he nourished himself only with bread and salt, and wore clothing made of sheep's wool, while his whole body was covered with heavy iron chains. Burdened by the latter and constantly scorched by the burning rays of the sun, he never entered into shade and never sought coolness. Once someone among the usual visitors of the venerable man planted a almond tree beside the path leading to his place of dwelling; but when the tree grew and began to cast shade upon him, he ordered it cut down, so that there might be no coolness for him anywhere. In the midst of such labors the venerable man departed to the Lord.

4. The memory of the Venerable Limnaeus is celebrated on 22 February.

The Venerable Moses was fired with love for the manner of ascetic life of Saint John and labored in the same way on the summit of a mountain that rose above a village called Rama.

The Venerable Antiochus, already advanced in years, built himself an enclosure in a certain desert place and labored in it also through the ascetic labors of a life without shelter. Near him labored the Venerable Antoninus, likewise an elder, and in all things he imitated him: in food, in clothing, in wakefulness, and in daily and all-night prayers. Neither advanced years, nor old age, nor the natural infirmities of that age could overcome these Venerable Fathers in patiently bearing all the hardships of their ascetic life. They labored to please God with such zeal, as though they felt in themselves the strength of youth. Amid such labors they gave up their souls in peace to the Lord. In the labors of bodily fasting they toiled no less than the Venerable John.[5]

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Zevinus, Polychronius, Moses and Damian

Память преподобных Зевина, Полихрония, Моисея и Дамиана

The Venerable Zevinus labored on a certain mountain. Having made a dwelling for himself upon it, he spent his whole life, until deep old age, in monastic labors in one and the same place. The inhabitants of the surrounding places always came to the Venerable Father and received great benefit from his unceasing prayers. Having reached advanced years, he could no longer stand because of his old-age infirmity, yet he unfailingly continued his labors of prayer, leaning upon his staff. Having spent his life in wondrous and God-pleasing labors, the Venerable Zevinus reposed.

The Venerable Polychronius was a disciple of St. Zevinus and, like wax that keeps the impression of a finger that has touched it, he was in his life a full reflection of his teacher's virtues. He resembled him both in diligent vigil, and in patience, and in labors of prayer. The Venerable Father did not wish to put chains upon himself, since, having no ex-

5. All these Venerable Fathers lived in the fifth century in Syria.

ample of this in the life of his teacher, he feared to lead anyone into temptation; instead of chains he carried upon his shoulders a root of a great oak which he had torn from the earth, so heavy that it could not be moved from its place with two hands, and with this he burdened his body. For such labors the Venerable Polychronius was granted by God the grace of working miracles. Once, in a time of drought, by his prayer he brought rain down upon the earth, and at another time he filled an empty stone vessel with oil. Having worked many other miracles, he departed to the Lord.

The Venerable Moses and Damian were disciples of St. Polychronius. The Venerable Moses labored together with his teacher and, having received his virtues, lived, imitating him in all things. The Venerable Damian withdrew to a monastery called Iera, and finding there an empty cell, he lived in it, imitating the life of his teacher. There was nothing else in his dwelling except a small box with a small quantity of lentils, on which he fed. Such great benefit did these Venerable Fathers receive from living together with St. Polychronius, and they ended their lives in piety.[6]

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Alexander the monk, first founder of the monastery of the "Sleepless Ones."[7]

* * *

NOTES

1576. In solicitude for the welfare of the Church, St. Polycarp, in the time of Pope Anicetus (157–168 A.D.), undertook a journey to Rome to contend against the false teachings of the Gnostics Valentinus and Marcion. Concerning the difference between the churches of Asia Minor and the Western churches in the understanding and celebration of Pascha, the bishops of Smyrna and of Rome did not agree to depart each from his local custom. That is, St. Polycarp held it correct that Eastern Christians celebrate Pascha on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan and dedicate it to the memory of the Lord's Last Supper with His disciples and of the Eucharist, the mystery established at it; while Anicetus, on the contrary, held correct the understanding of Pascha established in the West as the annual feast of the Resurrection of Christ, celebrated on the

6. The time of life of the Venerable Zevinus, Polychronius, Moses and Damian is the fifth century; the place of their labors is Syria.

7. For his Life, see 3 July.

first Sunday after the spring full moon. But this difference of opinion did not disturb the peace between the bishops, as a sign of which Anicetus allowed St. Polycarp to celebrate the Eucharist in the Roman church.

1577. Of the many epistles of St. Polycarp, written, according to St. Irenaeus, to churches or to individual persons, only this one has come down to us. Concerning the epistle of St. Polycarp to the Philippians, St. Irenaeus says that from it "those who desire and care for their salvation may learn the character of (Polycarp's) faith and his preaching of the truth." The father of church history, Eusebius (263–340 A.D.), quotes several passages from the epistle, remarking that it was still circulating among Christians. Blessed Jerome reports that in his time the epistle of St. Polycarp to the Philippians was read in the churches of Asia Minor during the Divine Service. The epistle was written shortly after the death of Ignatius the God-bearer (107 A.D.) and was called forth by the request of the Christians of the city of Philippi for the sending to them of the epistles of Ignatius to Polycarp and to other Christians which he had. Fulfilling their request, St. Polycarp in a separate epistle imparts to the Philippians a series of Christian instructions: he warns against heretics, indicates the duties of presbyters and deacons, of youths and virgins, of spouses and widows, urges them to avoid love of money, to exercise themselves in prayer and fasting, and inspires patience and love toward enemies. In translation this epistle may be read in the book of Archpriest Preobrazhensky, *Writings of the Apostolic Men*, St. Petersburg, 1895.



THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 24

24 февраля

New Calendar February 24 · Old Calendar March 8 (civil dates)

First and Second Finding of the Precious Head of the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John

Первое и второе обретение честной главы Предтечи и Крестителя Господня Иоанна

When the precious head of St. John the Forerunner was cut off (Mt. 14:11), the daughter of Herodias received it on a platter and carried it to her mother. That impious woman pierced with a needle the tongue of the Saint, which had rebuked her lawlessness, and, outraging the precious head, did not allow it to be buried together with the body of the Saint: Herodias feared that if his body were buried together with the head, John would rise again and once more rebuke her. The disciples of St. John the Baptist secretly took his body and at night buried it (Mt. 14:12; Mk. 6:29) in Sebaste, a city of Samaria.[1] But the head of the holy Forerunner Herodias buried deep in her palace, in a secret and dishonorable place. Only the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, named Joanna, of whom the holy Evangelist Luke speaks (Lk. 8:3), knew that place. Grieving in her heart over the murder of the great holy prophet John and over the outrage done to his precious head, she secretly took that head by night, placed it in an earthen vessel,[2] and buried it on the Mount of Olives,[3] in one of Herod's

1. Sebaste is the principal city of Samaria, given as a gift by Augustus to Herod the Great, who completely restored and adorned it and, in gratitude to Augustus, named it Sebasta or Sebastia, meaning the city of Augustus. According to tradition, the holy evangelist Luke, preaching Christ in Sebaste, asked the inhabitants for the right hand of John the Baptist and transferred it to Antioch. In the 10th century the right hand of the Baptist was transferred to Constantinople, and in 1798 the Order of St. John brought it as a gift to Emperor Paul I, and it is still kept in the church of the Winter Palace. (More on this is told on October 12.)
2. *Skudelny* means earthen; *skudelnik* means potter.

estates. Meanwhile rumors about Jesus Christ had reached Herod. He, together with his wife Herodias, began to think that perhaps this was John, risen from the dead. They sought the head of John and, not finding it, were perplexed. Herod even said to his household about Jesus: "This is John, whom I commanded to be beheaded. He has now risen from the dead, and therefore miracles are wrought by him" (Mt. 14:2; Mk. 6:16).

After a long time a certain very noble man named Innocent came to believe in Jesus Christ. Forsaking the world, he came to Jerusalem, bought on the Mount of Olives the place that had once belonged to Herod, built for himself a cell there, and became a monk, fulfilling the commandments of Christ. Desiring to build for himself a small stone church, he began to dig a trench for the foundation. And behold, by God's providence, he found the earthen vessel with the head of the Forerunner of Christ hidden in the earth. Through various gracious signs and miracles, and by revelation from God, he understood that this head belonged to St. John, and he began to keep it with great reverence. Before his death unbelief spread throughout that land: the kings honored idols instead of the true God, and everywhere in Jerusalem they set up their images and offered impure sacrifices to them. Seeing this and foreseeing his own end, this monk again hid the holy head of the Forerunner in the depths of the earth: he feared that after his death someone might treat it dishonorably. He laid it in the very place where his cell and church had been. After his death that church fell into decay, collapsed, and was even leveled with the ground, so that for a long time no one knew where the precious head of John the Baptist was.

When the great Emperor Constantine ascended the throne and enlightened his land with holy baptism, his mother, St. Helena, began to restore and cleanse all the holy places of Jerusalem.[4] She also brought the holy mountain to a flourishing condition. At that time two monks who labored in the East agreed together to go to Jerusalem to venerate there the Precious Cross found by Empress Helena and the Tomb of the Lord, and to see all the holy places of that land. Having reached

3. The Mount of Olives, or Olivet, is one of the Judean mountains east of Jerusalem; it received its name from the many olive trees growing on it.

Jerusalem, they began to go round the holy places, venerating them and praying to the Lord. There, in a dream vision, St. John the Forerunner appeared to one of them, revealed the place where his precious head had been buried, and commanded that it be taken from the depths of the earth. Awakening, the monk told the vision to his companion, but the latter, considering it all a mere dream, did not believe it himself and persuaded the other likewise. On the following night St. John appeared a second time, but now to each monk separately, and said: "Rise up, abandon your unbelief and sloth, and do what has been announced to you."

Awakening, both began to tell each other what they had seen, and then they went to the place that had been indicated to them in the dream vision. They began to dig the earth there and found an inestimable treasure: the holy head of the Baptist of Christ. Placing it in a sack made of camel's hair, they returned home.

At this time a poor potter from the city of Emesa[5] was compelled by poverty to leave his homeland and his wife and go to another country. On the road he met those two monks who were carrying the head of the Baptist; he joined them and continued his journey with them. The monks, having found a traveling companion, gave him to carry the sackcloth[6] with the head of the Baptist. And he, not knowing what he carried, continued his journey calmly. Suddenly St. John the Forerunner appeared to him and said: "Leave your companions and flee from them with that sackcloth which you hold in your hands."

The Saint commanded this because he saw the sloth and negligence of those monks who at first did not believe his appearance, and after-

4. Constantine the Great, holy and Equal-to-the-Apostles, was proclaimed emperor in 306; in 312 he declared the Christian faith dominant in the Roman Empire; in 325 he convened the First Ecumenical Council; he died in 337. St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, became renowned for her zeal in spreading the Christian faith and for the beautification of the churches of God; in 326 she travelled to Jerusalem, discovered there the Cross of the Lord, and adorned with holy churches the places in Palestine made famous during the earthly life of the Savior; she died in 327. The memory of the holy Equals-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helena is celebrated on May 21.

5. Emesa is a city in Syria east of the river Orontes, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea in northwestern Syria.

6. *Vretishche* is a sack of coarse cloth or sackcloth, a rag garment, a hair shirt.

ward did not wish themselves to carry his precious head, but entrusted it to a simple man unknown to them. At the same time the Saint wished to bestow a benefit on this poor man and to direct him onto the path of a good and God-pleasing life. This man, obeying the Saint, escaped from the monks, fled from them, and returned home to his wife, reverently bearing, as though some most precious of all earthly treasures, the precious head of the Baptist. And the Lord, for the sake of the head of John the Baptist, blessed his house with every sufficiency. The potter began to live in abundance, forgetting his former misfortunes. But he did not grow proud: he gave generous alms from his wealth to the poor and the needy. Firmly remembering that he had received all this out of reverence for the Forerunner of Christ, he always honored his holy head, daily burned incense before it, lit lamps, prayed, and strove to pass his whole life honorably and to act according to the commandments of Christ. When the time of his death drew near, by the command of the Baptist of Christ himself, he placed the holy head in a water vessel, enclosed that vessel in a reliquary, and, sealing it, entrusted this treasure to his sister. At the same time he told her in detail how, for the sake of this precious head, he had been delivered from extreme poverty and had become a wealthy man. He bequeathed to his sister that she should always reverently and honorably keep this holy head and never open the reliquary until St. John himself should be pleased to permit it. Before her death she was to hand over this treasure to some God-fearing and virtuous man.

Thus the holy and precious head of the Forerunner of Christ, passing for a long time from one person to another, was successively kept among pious Christians; at last it was entrusted to a certain priest-monk, Eustathius, who lived not far from Emesa in a certain cave. He had been infected with the heresy of Arius and had no fear of God. The sick who came to him received healing from the miraculous grace that proceeded from the head of John the Forerunner, which he kept in secret. But Eustathius began, like a thief, to ascribe this grace to himself and to his heresy, seeking to hide from people the true cause of those miraculous healings, and through this he led many into his heresy. But at last the inhabitants of Emesa learned of his heretical

perversity. The prince of Emesa, having consulted with the bishop, ordered him expelled from the cave and from the bounds of that region. Eustathius began to beseech those sent to leave him in the cave for that day, promising to depart the next morning. When those sent agreed to this, he secretly hid the vessel with the holy head deep under the earth in that cave; for he hoped that after some time he would return, take this treasure, and, performing wonders by means of the holy head of the Forerunner, again spread and establish his heresy. But the heretic's hopes were not fulfilled. When he left the cave, certain pious and virtuous monks settled in it, so that he could not enter it and take the treasure he had left.

After some time a brotherhood gathered at that place, and a monastery was founded. But no one knew that the precious head of the Forerunner was hidden in that cave. Only after a long time did the archimandrite of this Emesene monastery, Marcellus, a man full of virtue, discover it, of which he himself relates as follows:

"Blessed be God Jesus Christ! He vouchsafed me, His servant Marcellus, to behold a vision during a night's sleep. This was on February 18, in the middle week of the holy and great Lent.[7] I saw that all the gates of our monastery were open. Terror seized me, and I wished to go out to close the gates. But at that time I saw a river pouring through the gates of the monastery. I marveled and thought, whence such strong water? Reflecting on this, I suddenly heard the voice of many ranks, which with noise were processing along the water toward us from the east. All of them, each in his own special language, were proclaiming: 'Behold, St. John, the Baptist of Christ, appears.'"

With such exclamations they entered the monastery. I, seized with fear, had already forgotten even to think of the water; leaving the gates, I went up to the top of the stairway. Standing on it, I seemed to see two courtyards in the monastery: one to the west, the other to the south; in their midst stood a great church. Each rank, entering the western courtyard, proceeded to the church; having venerated it there, it went out through the southern door. When the procession of ranks

7. The Midfast Week is the name given in the Church Typikon to the middle (fourth) week of the Great Lent; this week is also called the Week of the Veneration of the Cross.

ceased, I again heard the voice of others, who cried: "Behold, the great holy John the Baptist."

Looking up, I saw him in the church. Two men were standing beside him. At that moment the ranks began to approach St. John and receive his blessing from him. I resolved to go up to the Baptist and receive his blessing as well. With fear and trembling, I came last of all through a special door, made a prostration before the Baptist, and touched his feet. He, however, bade me rise, embraced me with love, touching my face, took a vessel filled with honey, and gave it to me, saying: "Receive the blessing!"

Having said this, he withdrew. When I had started to follow him, I noticed a pillar of fire preceding the saint. Terrified by such a vision, I awoke. When the following evening came, I bade the brethren sing the verses of the psalms prescribed in the usual rule. During this singing, a brother named Isaac, glancing upward, saw through the window that in the cave church, where the venerable head of St. John had been hidden, a fire was burning. Seeing this, he cried out: "Father! Look, a fire is burning in the holy cave!" "Do not be afraid, brother," I said to him, "but, making the sign of the Cross, keep silence about this."

After this five days passed. On the night of the sixth day, when I had fallen asleep, a certain hand thrice struck me in the right side, and a voice said: "Behold, I have been given to you; rise and follow the star which will go before you, dig in the place to which it leads you, and you will find me."

With trembling and fear I rose from my sleep, sat on my bed, and – behold: before the doors of my cell a star was shining. I was astonished, but, making the sign of the Cross, I went out; the star went before me; following it, I entered the cave; when I came to the place where the venerable head of the Forerunner was, the star suddenly became invisible. I fell to the ground and gave praise to the Lord. After long prayer I lit a candle, burned incense, and began to dig, calling upon the name of the Lord. As I dug, a great noise and knocking was heard, and the earth was hard as bronze. I labored long; at last I found bricks; removing them, I saw a stone slab; with great difficulty I was able to lift it out of the pit – and there I found the holy vessel in which

the venerable head of the Forerunner rested. Rejoicing, yet at the same time trembling, I took the candle and incense, ventured to take the vessel, bowed down, and, closing it again, went out of the cave. At the door I was met by Archimandrite Gennadius, who had come to our monastery. He led me into the cave, and, after offering a prayer, began to tell me about his vision.

"I saw," so he began his account, "that we both were standing in the very place where we are now. Here there was a multitude of barley bread, which was purer and brighter than the sun. A multitude of people entered the cave and received this bread from our hands. Yet its quantity not only did not diminish but, on the contrary, kept increasing."

This is what Gennadius told me. Then I understood that this vision had been given to him by God, and that it signified the inexhaustible grace of Christ's Baptist, which would be abundantly dispensed to all in that place. Therefore I too told him of my vision and showed him the priceless treasure I had found. Seeing this, he rejoiced, and we began to consult how it would be best for us to act. I advised that at first we should tell no one about it, not even the chief pastor of the church, Bishop Uranius of Emesa, but first inform the blessed elder Stephen, who, dwelling in the monastery of Daromius, practiced the ascetic feat of fasting. He too was to report this to the bishop, with whom he was on close friendship. But on coming to the monastery of Daromius we did not find Stephen there, for he had gone to visit his other monasteries. Then we sent for the deacon Cyriacus, who held the first place in the cathedral church of that city. Coming to us, Cyriacus greeted us in Christ and told us of his own vision. It was entirely similar to the one Gennadius had seen. Then we told him our secret. Both of them, Gennadius and Cyriacus, began to say that the matter should be reported to the bishop, but I decided to wait for Stephen's return. Already five days had passed. On the sixth – it was a Saturday – we were all sitting together and conversing. Suddenly I fell to my knees: some sickness had struck me unexpectedly. I could neither rise nor move. My companions, marveling at this occurrence, began to pray to the Lord for me. When

they had finished the prayer, they said to me: "Did we not tell you that the secret had to be told to the bishop?"

I myself then recognized that I had acted wrongly in not telling the bishop of such a secret, which ought to have been proclaimed for the glory of God; and meanwhile my sickness did not pass. In the evening, after the usual prayerful singing, Gennadius and Cyriacus came to me and said:

"We have made a resolution: to tell the bishop of your secret during Matins, before sunrise."

I answered them:

"Good is your decision; let it be as you have said."

At the very moment that I agreed with them, I felt completely well: my sickness had passed. In the morning we all went together to the city and found the bishop at the very time he was coming out of the church after Matins, and we told him everything about the finding of the venerable head of Christ's Baptist John. The bishop rejoiced greatly at this news. However, he forbade us for the time being to tell others about it, and ordered us to return to our monastery. In the morning he himself came there with presbyters and deacons. Having celebrated the Divine Liturgy together with the clergy, he approached the place where the vessel with the venerable head had been. When the deacon proclaimed: "Let us bow our knees, let us pray to the Lord," all fell prostrate. Bishop Uranius at that time offered a prayer; having finished it, he took the vessel with the venerable head and brought it out of the earth. One of the presbyters who were with the bishop, named Malchus, did not believe it, saying: "How could the head of the Forerunner have appeared here?"

Saying this, he boldly laid his hand upon the vessel and touched the hair of the venerable head of the Baptist. Suddenly, because of his unbelief, his hand withered and stuck to the vessel. Seeing this, all were greatly terrified. The bishop, with all those standing by, began earnestly to offer prayer to God. Then Malchus, with great difficulty, was barely able to pull his hand from the vessel, but he himself remained ill. Uranius, with the whole church clergy, took the holy vessel with the treasure lying in it, carried it into the holy church, and placed it in the

sanctuary, in the diaconicon.[8] Here this relic was kept until a special church, splendidly adorned, was built in Emesa in honor of Christ's Forerunner.[9] Shortly before the transfer of the holy head to this church, John the Baptist appeared in a vision to the unbelieving presbyter Malchus and bade him, at the transfer of the head, touch the holy vessel with his hand. The presbyter, doing so, received healing." Here ends the account of the blessed Marcellus.

Another writer, St. Symeon Metaphrastes,[10] in the Life of St. Matrona, relates further the following concerning the finding of the venerable head of the Forerunner. "At that time a certain man, plowing his field, noticed that in one place – namely there, where there had once been a cave and a monastery – fire came forth from the earth. He saw this more than once: for many days fire came forth unceasingly from the earth. On the Sunday, that same day when Marcellus together with Gennadius and Cyriacus came to the bishop, this man also came to the city of Emesa and told Bishop Uranius about the miraculous fire. The bishop, together with the clergy, went to that place – it was the cave where the heretic Eustathius had once lived. Having offered a prayer, the bishop ordered digging to be done in that place. When his command had been carried out, a vessel was found in that place. There was in it no gold and no silver, but there was kept a treasure far more precious than all earthly treasures – the head of the holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John. The report of this spread everywhere: not only the inhabitants of Emesa, but also the dwellers of all the surrounding cities and villages began to gather here. There came also from her monastery, to venerate the venerable head, the venerable Matrona together with all the sisters. The venerable head of Christ's Baptist ex-

8. The *diakonikon* is the southern section of the sanctuary, in which is arranged the place for keeping the sacred objects under the care of the deacon, namely: vestments, sacred vessels, altar Gospel books and crosses, the tabernacle, and so forth.

9. The second discovery of the head of St. John the Forerunner took place in 452. According to the testimony of Archimandrite Marcellus, the holy head was revealed to him on February 18; it was brought out by Bishop Uranius into the church's diakonikon on February 24, and on October 26 of the same year, 452, it was translated into the church built in honor of his name.

10. Symeon Metaphrastes was a well-known church writer of the 10th century (†940), compiler and collector of the Lives of the saints; his labors in this field later served as the principal source for the Menaia of St. Demetrius of Rostov.

uded fragrant myrrh, with which the priests anointed in the form of a cross the heads of the people who had gathered. The venerable Matrona took into a small reliquary some portion of that myrrh, desiring to carry it to her monastery for a blessing. But a multitude of people pressed around her: all wished to receive a blessing from the priests and to be anointed with the myrrh. Some, noticing that the venerable Matrona was carrying myrrh in the reliquary, asked her to anoint them with it, since they could not themselves reach the priests, and she fulfilled their request. Among the people there was a certain blind man, who from birth had not seen the light of day. He turned to the venerable Matrona, asking her to sign him with the holy myrrh. She anointed his eyes, and he immediately received his sight. Thus St. Symeon Metaphrastes relates the finding of the head of the Forerunner."

After some time the venerable head of John the Baptist was transferred from Emesa to Constantinople. There, in a place called Hebdomon, by the Emperor's command a splendid church was built, in which the honorable head was laid. During the heresy of the iconoclasts, when many holy icons were burned, others thrown into the sea and the rivers, trampled underfoot and variously dishonored, certain pious Christians, fleeing from Constantinople filled with heretics, secretly took with them the head of the Baptist and brought it to Comana[11], where St. John Chrysostom had once reposed. Here they hid it again in the bosom of the earth, placing it in a silver vessel. This precious relic remained here in obscurity until the time of Emperor Michael, son of Theophilus, and of his mother, the Empress Theodora, who restored the Orthodox faith[12]. In the reign of Michael this relic was once again discovered[13] by divine providence and was transferred to Constantinople by Patriarch Ignatius, to the honor and glory of Christ our

11. Comana was a city in the province of Pontus, in northeastern Asia Minor.

12. Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast. After his death she ruled the state jointly with her son Michael. Emperor Michael III reigned from 842 to 867; he ascended the throne at the age of four, and therefore his mother, the Empress Theodora, governed the state until 855. At the Council of Constantinople of 842, under the Empress Theodora, the veneration of icons was restored and the triumph of Orthodoxy was established, which is celebrated in the first week of the Holy Great Fast.

God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Shining forth from the earth, the head of the Forerunner sends forth rays of incorruption and of healings for the faithful; from on high it gathers a multitude of Angels, and below it calls together the human race to offer with one voice glory to Christ our God.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O Prophet of God and Forerunner of grace, having found thy head as a most sacred rose-bud from the earth, we always receive healings, for again, as before in the world, thou preachest repentance.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Erasmus of the Kiev Caves

Память преподобного Еразма Печерского

"The crown of the wise," says Solomon, "is their riches" (Prov. 14:24). But it is especially fitting to use one's wealth for the adornment of the churches of Christ, for through this it is possible to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven. Such a beautifier of the churches of God was our Venerable Father Erasmus, a monk of the Kiev Caves. For this he was granted to receive the crown of the Kingdom of Heaven. Having great wealth, he judged that it was not fitting for a monk to possess earthly treasures; loving the beauty of the church, he expended all his substance on the adornment of the church: he overlaid with gold and silver many icons in the Church of the Caves.

13. This third discovery of the head of the Baptist took place around 850; the Church celebrates it on May 25. The honorable head of the Forerunner, transferred a second time to Constantinople, was at first placed in the imperial palaces, and afterward a part of it was placed in the Studite Monastery of the Forerunner; the top of the head was seen in this monastery by the pilgrim Antony in 1200; another part of the head was in Petra, in the monastery of the Prodromos; by the Crusaders it was transferred to Amiens in France; a part of it was transferred to Rome and is in the church of Pope Sylvester. Other parts are in the Athonite Monastery of Dionysius and in the Wallachian Monastery of Kaluia.

Praying before them and gazing upon them in faith, he adorned his own soul, this temple of the Living God, not with material silver and gold, but with purity, love and the other virtues fitting for a monk. Together with the Prophet he could cry out concerning his own adornment: "The law of Thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver" (Ps. 118:72).

With the Venerable Erasmus there befell such a temptation. When he had spent his property and became a poor man, everyone began to pay him little attention. Then the crafty demon began to suggest to his heart the evil thought that, having spent all his property on the adornment of the church, he had received no recompense or reward for this. "It would have been better," the demon said to him, "to distribute all the property to the poor." Not discerning that these thoughts were being suggested to him by the devil, Erasmus fell even into despair, began to live negligently, and ceased to care for the salvation of his soul. But the bountiful and righteous Lord, remembering Erasmus's former virtues, saved him. He sent upon him a grievous sickness; Erasmus already pondered his speedy end, and in his illness he lay for seven days without speaking, with closed eyes; only by his breathing could one see that he was still alive. On the eighth day all the monks gathered to him, and seeing him were struck with horror and said: "Woe, woe to the soul of this brother; he lived in sins and sloth; now his soul sees some vision and is in turmoil, not being able to depart from the body."

Suddenly the blessed Erasmus, as though he had never been ill, rose up, sat, and said to the monks: "Fathers and brethren! Your words are true. I am a sinner and have not repented. But now there have appeared to me our Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius, and they said: 'We have prayed to the Lord for thee, and the Lord has granted thee time for repentance.' After this I beheld the Most Pure Lady Theotokos, as She is depicted on icons; in Her honorable hands was the Preeternal Infant, and with Her was a multitude of saints. And She said to me: 'Erasmus! As thou hast adorned My church and enriched it with icons, so will I adorn and exalt thee in the Kingdom of My Son. The poor are with you everywhere, but My church is not everywhere with you. Arise, repent, receive the great angelic image; and on the third day

I will take thee to Me, after thy repentance, for having so loved the beauty of My house.'"

Having said this, Erasmus began, before the whole brotherhood, to confess his sins, concealing nothing and not ashamed. Then, rising, he went to the church, was tonsured into the schema, and on the third day joyfully delivered his soul to the Lord and to His Most Holy Mother, as She Herself had foretold.

From this it is evident how pleasing to God is the adornment of churches with icons, and that the Lord places such persons in the choir of His saints.

By the prayers of St. Erasmus may the Lord also help all who adorn the holy churches to obtain eternal blessedness in the life to come with Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen[14].

* * *

14. The repose of the Venerable Erasmus took place around 1160. His relics rest in the Cave of St. Anthony.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 25

25 февраля

New Calendar February 25 · Old Calendar March 9 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Tarasius, Archbishop of Constantinople

Житие святого отца нашего Тарасия, архиепископа Константинопольского

St. Tarasius was born in Constantinople; his father George and his mother Eucratia were persons of noble birth and belonged to the patrician class[1]. Having reached maturity and received a good education, Tarasius held various offices at the imperial palace; because of his prudence and kindly disposition, everyone there loved and respected him, and he was made one of the imperial counsellors. At that time the imperial throne was occupied by Constantine Porphyrogenitus[2], son of Leo the Khazar[3], grandson of Copronymus[4]; he reigned not alone but together with his mother Irene[5], since at the time of his accession he was only ten years old. The patriarch at that time was Paul of Cyprus[6], a man virtuous and pious, but too weak-willed and timid. He had been raised to the patriarchate during the reign of the above-mentioned Leo the Khazar, son of Copronymus, under whom the heresy of the iconoclasts, which had its beginning with Leo the Isaurian[7], grew more and more powerful. Seeing that many were suffering great torments from

1. The patricians were the highest estate in the Roman and later the Byzantine Empire, corresponding to our hereditary nobility.
2. Constantine VI Porphyrogenitus reigned from 780 to 797.
3. Leo IV the Khazar reigned from 775 to 780.
4. Constantine V Copronymus occupied the imperial throne from 741 to 775.
5. The mother of Emperor Constantine was the wife of Leo the Khazar. After her son's accession she governed the state in his place for 10 years, until 790; then, after Constantine's deposition, she reigned until 802.
6. This was Paul IV, who occupied the patriarchal see from 686 to 693.
7. Leo III the Isaurian reigned from 716 to 741.

the wicked emperor for venerating the holy icons, the patriarch grew afraid and began to conceal his piety, and even held communion with heretics. After the death of Leo the Khazar, the patriarch wished to restore the pious custom of venerating the holy icons, but could not, because he had no helper, while the heresy of the iconoclasts continued to grow both in the capital itself and in the other regions of the state. This greatly grieved the patriarch. Seeing that he could do nothing for the triumph of Orthodoxy, Paul resolved to leave the patriarchal throne, which he had occupied for no more than four years. Falling ill, he secretly left the patriarchal residence and arrived at the monastery of St. Florus, where he received the holy schema. The news of the patriarch's tonsure soon spread everywhere, and everyone was greatly astonished at this event. Empress Irene was deeply distressed, since the patriarch had left the throne without informing her of his intention beforehand. And so she went to him with her son, Emperor Constantine, and asked him:

"What have you done to us, Father? Why have you so unexpectedly left the patriarchal throne?"

Paul answered:

"My illness and the expectation of imminent death, and especially the state of affairs in our Church, have moved me to leave the patriarchal throne and receive the holy schema. The Church suffers greatly from the iconoclasts, and, as a consequence of the long triumph of the iconoclastic heresy, she has received an incurable wound. Like many others, I, a wretch, could not escape the snares of the false-believing and sank into them, for which I now bitterly repent; for three times I personally signed heretical decrees. But what especially grieves and oppresses me is this: I see that all the regions subject to you, keeping the rules of the faith inviolate and following the Orthodox teaching, shun our Church, and, considering themselves the flock of Christ, drive us away from themselves, as though we were sheep not of the same flock. Therefore I refuse to be a shepherd in a heretical assembly, and prefer to die rather than be subjected to anathema by the primates of the four apostolic thrones. God has given into your hands the power of the emperor, that you may care for the Christian flock living on earth. Look,

then, upon the sorrow of your mother, the Church; do not allow her to remain in inconsolable grief, but take care that she may regain her former splendor. Do not permit the God-abominable heresy, like a swine that has come into the meadows, to lay waste and destroy the vineyard of Christ during your reign, and to defile it with its impious opinions. You have a skilled workman who will help you in your good undertakings. He can cultivate the cluster of true confession, and, placing it in the wine-press of the Church of God, fill the cup of wisdom with it and prepare for the faithful the drink of the true Orthodox faith."

After these words of the patriarch, Empress Irene asked him:

"Of whom are you speaking, Father?"

"I mean here Tarasius, who holds the first place in your imperial council," the patriarch answered. "I know that he is fully worthy to govern the Church, since he can, with the staff of his reason, repel the false teaching of the heretics, be a good shepherd of the verbal flock of Christ, and gather it together."

Having heard this from Patriarch Paul, the pious Empress Irene and her son Emperor Constantine left Paul with sorrow. He said to some senators who remained with him:

"Oh, would that I had not occupied the patriarchal throne at a time when our Church of Constantinople was in turmoil from its oppressors and was drawing upon itself the condemnation of the four ecumenical patriarchs: of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. If the Seventh Ecumenical Council is not convened and the heresy of the iconoclasts is not condemned, it will be impossible for us to be saved."

Then the senators asked him:

"Why, at your consecration as patriarch, did you sign the decree of the iconoclasts?"

Paul answered:

"That is precisely why I now repent that I signed then, and I fear that the Lord may punish me, since out of fear I kept silent and did not oppose the heresy. Now I repent and affirm that it is impossible for you to be saved if you remain in the heresy."

Soon after this, Patriarch Paul departed in peace to the Lord. At that time the inhabitants of Constantinople began to converse and dispute with the heretics about the holy icons without any fear or apprehension, whereas until then, from the time of Leo the Isaurian, no one had dared to speak in defense of the holy icons[8].

The pious Empress Irene, together with the whole imperial council, began to seek a man fully worthy and wise to succeed Paul, who could put an end to the church turmoil; but they found no one other than Tarasius. Tarasius was then a layman; but since they recalled that Paul too had advised choosing him, the choice of all fell upon him. But Tarasius strongly refused. Then Empress Irene gathered people of every rank, both secular and clerical, and the whole people, into the palace called Magnaura — it stood in the suburb at the place of Edom — and, before the whole Sacred Council, said: "You know that Patriarch Paul has left us; now we must choose for his place another good shepherd and teacher of the Church."

To this all cried out loudly:

"No one other than Tarasius can be such a one."

The blessed Tarasius, stepping forward into the midst, said:

"I see that the Church of God is divided and separated. Both Eastern and Western Christians curse us; this separation is grievous and the excommunication from the Kingdom of God is terrible. Let an Ecumenical Council be convened, where we shall be united in the faith; let our faith be one, just as we have been enlightened by one baptism; for nothing is so pleasing in the eyes of God as the abiding of all in unity of faith and love. This is what I, unworthy and inexperienced, demand, accepting the governance of the Church. If an Ecumenical Council is not convened, if the iconoclastic heresy is not subjected to a worthy condemnation, and if there is no unity of faith between the Orthodox Eastern and Western churches, then I will not consent to accept the patriarchate, lest I draw upon myself curse and condemnation, for then no

8. This is explained by the fact that Irene then issued a decree proclaiming general freedom of conscience. By the Empress's order the icons were again set in their places, and among the rejoicing people many accounts of past sufferings and miracles circulated.

earthly emperor can deliver me from the judgment of God and eternal punishment."

Having heard this, all resolved to convene the Seventh Ecumenical Council and begged St. Tarasius not to refuse to be their shepherd. They promised him obedience in all things, just as sheep heed the voice of their shepherd, for they were firmly assured that St. Tarasius could lead the verbal flock onto the true path. Thus they induced Tarasius to receive the first-hierarchal rank and the governance of the Church of Constantinople. Ordained successively to all the hierarchical degrees, the saint was raised to the patriarchate[9], having a firm hope that the Lord would help him to destroy the heresy of the iconoclasts.

With the change of position, St. Tarasius also changed his manner of life, although even before, while in the world, he had been a monk in spirit. Now, having taken the hierarchal throne, he gave himself with still greater zeal to spiritual exploits and became an Angel in the flesh, burning in spirit, labouring zealously before the Lord, subjecting his flesh to the spirit and attaining through its mortification the undefiled purity with which the Angels are clothed. Wondrous was his abstinence, great his fasting, and unfailing his vigilance. He gave few hours to sleep, spent whole nights in prayer and contemplation of God, had no soft bed, and avoided soft garments. None of the attendants of the Patriarch ever saw Tarasius take off his belt and clothing when he wished to refresh his strength with a brief sleep; the holy man never had anyone else remove the shoes from his feet, remembering the words of the Savior: "The Son of Man came not to be served" (Mt. 20:28), and he was always his own servant, giving others an example of humility. He was very merciful to beggars and the poor: he fed the hungry, clothed the needy, established hospitals, and each day dispensed food from his patriarchal court; on the day of the Resurrection of Christ and on other festal days he arranged a meal for the destitute, during which he himself waited upon the poor. Besides this, St. Tarasius established hospices for strangers, and with the means left him by his parents he founded a monastery on the Thracian Bosphorus[10], in which he gathered a

9. St. Tarasius occupied the patriarchal throne from 784 to 806.

choir of virtuous monks; many of them attained such perfection that they were called to episcopal thrones and became unshakable pillars of the Catholic faith. St. Tarasius was especially concerned to restore the veneration of the holy icons and to overthrow the blasphemous iconoclastic heresy. For this reason he constantly reminded the emperors that they should convoke an Ecumenical Council.

And so Emperor Constantine and the Empress Irene, his mother, who during her son's minority was then governing the whole realm, together with the most holy Tarasius, wrote letters to all the patriarchs and bishops, calling them to the council. Bishops gathered from various places in Constantinople, and the patriarchs sent their deputies: Pope Adrian of Rome[11], because of the difficulty of so distant a journey, did not himself come to the council; and the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem at that time were already under the yoke of the Agarenes, so that they could not personally attend the council; therefore, as their representatives, they sent clergy distinguished for piety and wisdom.

The great church[12], erected by Constantine the Great and magnificently adorned by the Emperor Justinian[13], was chosen as the place for the council's deliberations; in this church gathered, together with the most holy Tarasius, the bishops and the deputies of the other patriarchs; here too the young Emperor Constantine was present with his mother Irene. Suddenly there burst into the church a numerous detachment of armed soldiers, adherents of the iconoclastic heresy, into which they had been drawn by the emperor's grandfather Constantine Copronymus, and in which they had remained to this day. Secretly incited by some bishops and nobles infected with the same heresy, these soldiers, hardened in iconoclastic error, armed themselves, came to the church and rushed inside with a great outcry. "We will not allow," they shouted, "that you reject the dogmas of Emperor Constantine[14]; let that

10. This is the name of the strait connecting the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara. Constantinople is situated on the shore of the Bosphorus.
11. Pope Adrian I occupied the Roman apostolic see from 772 to 795.
12. The reference is to the church of St. Sophia, the principal cathedral of Constantinople.
13. Emperor Justinian I reigned from 527 to 565.
14. Here Constantine Copronymus is meant, the grandfather of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

which he confirmed and enacted at his council stand firm and unshaken; we will not allow idols (so they called the holy icons) to be brought into the house of God; and if anyone dares to disobey the decisions of the council of Constantine Copronymus[15] and, rejecting its decrees, brings in idols, then this land will be stained with the blood of the bishops."

Seeing such agitation and uproar, the empress and the emperor gave a sign to the bishops that they should rise from their seats, and then all who were at the council dispersed. But after several days the soldiers and their commanders were duly punished by the pious Empress Irene: they were deprived of their military rank and dispatched to the villages to till the land. After this, a place for the sessions of the council was prepared in the Bithynian city of Nicaea[16]. Here the First Ecumenical Council had been held, convened to condemn the heresy of the impious Arius[17], and here it was now resolved to assemble. And so there came the most holy Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and with him the patriarchal deputies, who were: from Adrian, Pope of Rome — the chief Roman presbyter Peter and another Peter, a monk; from Polycian, Patriarch of Alexandria[18] — the priest-monk Thomas; from Theodoret of Antioch[19] and Elias of Jerusalem[20] — the priest-monk John. Besides these, St. Tarasius also took with him a certain man among the imperial counsellors, Nicephorus, who after the death of St. Tarasius was raised to the patriarchal throne for his virtuous life. In all, 367 holy fathers came to this council. Having gathered with them in Nicaea, the most holy Patriarch Tarasius opened the sessions of the council in the largest church of that city[21].

The first session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council took place on 24 September, on the day of the memory of the holy Protomartyr

15. This council took place in 754 in the imperial palace near Constantinople on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus. The council proclaimed that the veneration of icons was the same as idolatry, and determined that all icons be removed from the churches.
16. Bithynia is the northwestern province of Asia Minor, along the shores of the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus and the Black Sea. Nicaea (now İznik) was in antiquity a rich and flourishing city of Bithynia.
17. This was in 325.
18. Polycian, Patriarch of Alexandria, died in 801.
19. Theodoret, Patriarch of Antioch, occupied the patriarchal see from 777 to 794.
20. Elias III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, died in 797.

Thecla. The session opened with an introductory address by St. Tarasius, in which, having set forth the reasons for convening the council, he exhorted the bishops to judge justly and to uproot the unorthodox teachings recently introduced into the Church. There was also read the imperial letter to the council, in which mention was made of how Patriarch Paul, on his deathbed, had advised that a council be convened to root out the heresy of the iconoclasts. The holy fathers blessed the emperor and his mother for their great care for the Orthodox faith. After this they proceeded to hear the expressions of repentance on the part of the bishops who had fallen into heresy, who anathematized their former errors and professed the Orthodox faith. One of them, Basil of Ancyra[22], holding in his hands this scroll, read: "Anathema to those who do not venerate the holy icons; anathema to those who call the holy icons idols; anathema to those who cite the sayings of Holy Scripture against the worship of the holy icons; anathema to those who reject the traditions of the holy fathers, as Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches and Dioscorus rejected them; anathema to those who maintain that the veneration of icons does not proceed from the holy fathers; anathema to those who maintain that the Catholic Church accepts idols."

Many other bishops likewise did so, and to all the bishops who had repented a place was given at the council among the other Orthodox bishops. The judgment upon those who still wavered was postponed for a time. Here St. Tarasius said: "Long-standing diseases are hard to cure, and evil habits are hard to eradicate. But if people who are spiritually sick truly repent, the holy council receives them and does not deprive them of their rank."

The holy council continued for 30 days[23]; during this time the members of the council, gathering together, examined in Holy Scripture and in the teaching of the holy fathers and teachers of the Church those passages which bore upon the dogma of the veneration of the holy icons, and on the basis of Holy Scripture and church tradition they refuted the false reasoning of the heretics. In doing so they cited the

21. This was in 787.
22. Ancyra is a city in Phrygia, the central province of Asia Minor.
23. The last session of the council took place on 23 October.

trustworthy history of the holy towel on which Christ the Lord imprinted His holy face and sent it to Abgar of Edessa[24], who, as soon as he bowed before the image, was at once healed of his illness[25]; they also recalled the tradition of the icon of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, which St. Sylvester, Pope of Rome, showed to the Emperor Constantine; they spoke too of the icon of Christ which the Jews mocked at Berytus, for which they were punished; they recalled this as attested by St. Athanasius. When the account of this icon was read, all the holy fathers wept. Finally they anathematized the heresy of the iconoclasts and confirmed the veneration of the holy icons; great joy on this account reigned in the holy churches, which received with heartfelt rejoicing the confirmation of icon veneration, and the whole people exulted, proclaiming good wishes to the emperors and pastors. Thus, through the great care of the most holy Patriarch Tarasius and the zeal of the pious Empress Irene, the heresy of the iconoclasts was rejected and trampled down, and peace was granted to the Church of Christ.

Saint Tarasius governed the Church of God wisely; he was a defender of the wronged and a helper of those in distress. Thus, the imperial protospatharius[26] John, for some offense, was cast into prison and subjected to the most cruel tortures. Freeing himself from his fetters at night, he fled to a church and took refuge in the church refectory, beseeching mercy and deliverance from death. Then God's hierarch Tarasius protected him and did not hand him over to the soldiers sent after him by the Empress Irene. They kept watch at the doors of that church day and night, waiting for the time when he would come out, for they thought he would in the end be compelled to leave the church. But God's hierarch, sending him food from his own table, enabled him not to leave the church's sanctuary; and when he had to leave the church, Tarasius himself escorted him, hiding him beneath his mantle, and af-

24. Edessa is a city in the northwestern part of Mesopotamia, beyond the river Euphrates. Abgar was the prince or ruler of Edessa.

25. An account of this is given by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine (†383), the famous historian of the ancient Christian Church, who took it from ancient written records preserved in the public archives of the city of Edessa.

26. The protospatharius was the commander of the imperial bodyguards, or armor-bearers, who were called spatharii (from spathi, weapon, sword).

terward returned him to the church with the same precautions. He acted thus for a long time, serving that man as a slave, not disdaining such a task. Thus the good shepherd tended his sheep, defending it from death. At last, by his episcopal authority, St. Tarasius boldly put an end to the efforts of those who wished to kill the man under his protection: he declared to them that he would impose excommunication upon them if they continued to pursue the prisoner. So the protospatharius was freed from judgment and escaped execution, through the intercession of his good shepherd, St. Tarasius.

Meanwhile, Emperor Constantine, having reached the age of twenty, at the instigation of his evil counselors removed from power his mother, the pious Empress Irene, who had wisely governed the whole state, and began to reign alone. Freed from his mother's guardianship, he gave himself over to excesses and began to live an unseemly life. Without any cause he came to hate his lawful spouse, Empress Maria[27], and burned with criminal love for another woman named Theodote; he began to live with her in secret and resolved to make her his wife and empress, and to confine his lawful spouse. Seeking to accuse Maria, he fabricated a false slander, claiming that she wished to destroy him by poison. The emperor presented this lie to everyone as truth and told it to all. The emperor was believed, and the rumor that the empress intended to poison him spread among the people. The news reached the most holy Patriarch Tarasius. The Patriarch was grieved, perceiving the emperor's treachery, for he was firmly convinced of Empress Maria's innocence. He therefore began to consider how to admonish Constantine and disclose to him his sinfulness and injustice. At that time one of the emperor's favorite courtiers came to the most holy Patriarch and began to relay to him the report of how the empress had prepared poison for the emperor, passing off a lie as truth. At the end of his account he added: "Now, most holy father, it is fitting for you to bless the emperor to a new marriage with a more faithful spouse."

These words greatly grieved St. Tarasius; he even wept and began to speak thus: "If the emperor has indeed conceived what you say, if he

27. This pious empress was a granddaughter of St. Philaret the Merciful. Month December, 1st day.

truly desires to cast off Maria, who is joined to him by the law of God and forms with him one flesh, then I do not know how he will bear shame and reproach before all people. I am also perplexed as to how, after that, he can be an example of chastity to his subjects, how he can exhort everyone to abstinence. Will he be able to judge and punish the sins of adultery while himself darkened by such lawless desire? Let us suppose that all you have said is true; yet we must heed the voice of the Lord: 'Whoever divorces his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery' (Mt. 5:32). And is it true that the empress prepared a deadly poison for the emperor? In that case, could she have had another husband more valiant and handsome than our sovereign, who is distinguished by his beauty and flourishing youth? No, I clearly see that all this lie is directed only toward dishonoring an honorable marriage, defiling the undefiled bed, and letting adultery triumph. Such is my answer, and not only mine personally, but that of all pastors and fathers like me. Report to those who sent you that we do not believe what you have said; we are more ready to endure death and grievous torments than to give blessing to such a lawless deed. Let the emperor know that we do not consent to his unrighteous design."

Hearing this, the courtier left the Patriarch in sorrow and told the emperor everything he had heard from the blessed Tarasius. The emperor then fell into reflection and marveled at the Patriarch's steadfastness and fearless zeal; he even began to be somewhat afraid lest St. Tarasius would hinder him from achieving his purpose. Therefore he resolved to summon the holy man and receive him with honor, hoping by his words to soften the Patriarch's heart and win him to his side.

The holy Patriarch Tarasius came to the emperor together with the venerable elder John, who at the Seventh Ecumenical Council had been the representative of the Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem. When Constantine and those who had come to him had, according to custom, seated themselves, the emperor addressed the Patriarch with the following speech: "I have already informed you, most honorable father, through a messenger, of what has happened to us. I honor and respect you as a father, therefore I wish to conceal nothing from you. But it seems necessary to me to tell you in person of the enmity and the

schemes which my spouse is weaving against me. She was not given to me by God; for she ought to have been my helper, but she has proved not a helper to me, but my bitterest enemy. The law itself commands me to separate from her, and no one can hinder this my intention. For her guilt and her evil design are before everyone's eyes. Therefore, by the sentence of judgment, she must either suffer the death penalty or be tonsured into the monastic life. Wishing to show her mercy, I am ready to limit myself to her tonsure into a monastery; let her grieve and repent of her transgression until her very death. For she wished to destroy with poison not an ordinary man, not some stranger, but her husband, the emperor, dreaded by enemies. Had her vile design succeeded, the whole kingdom would have been thrown into no small confusion, and the report of her crime would have spread throughout the whole earth."

At these last words the emperor gave a sign to the servants. They immediately brought a glass vessel containing some cloudy liquid. The emperor showed it to the most holy Patriarch, saying that this was the deadly poison with which the empress had secretly wished to deprive him of life.

Adding to this, he said: "Is any further proof of the empress's guilt needed, when we have in our hands this instrument of her evil design? Is it not clear what she deserves? Why then should we delay judgment upon her? No, father, rather advise her to accept tonsure, if you wish to see her alive. I can no longer live with her in marriage; I cannot look upon her, I cannot endure her, for always before my eyes is this deadly draught which she prepared for me."

Seeing that the emperor was wounded by impure lust, and understanding that he had unjustly accused a guiltless and chaste empress in order to satisfy his desire, the most holy Tarasius, fearing nothing, said to him:

"Emperor, do not wage war against the law established by God Himself; do not rise up with secret treachery against the truth, covering yourself with crafty invention and transgressing and destroying the commandments of God. It is fitting for the emperor to do all things openly, freely, with a clear conscience; he ought undertake nothing

secretly and deceitfully against God, who bestowed upon him the imperial crown, by transgressing the divine commandments. It is clear to all that the empress is wholly innocent of what she is accused of, namely, that she plotted to kill the emperor. For who can compare with you in beauty, whom could she love more than you, that she should conceive the evil thought of poisoning you? Who has more power than you and enjoys greater honor, who is by his nobility and wealth higher than you, honored with imperial authority and dignity and possessing great riches; whom could the empress prefer? Great is your dominion, you surpass all in nobility, for your father, grandfather and great-grandfather occupied the imperial throne; you are renowned in all the corners of the earth, and your treasures cannot be counted. Who then could be better for your empress than you? No, emperor, what you say cannot be; this is a lie, invented to undermine your imperial power and for the mockery of nations, that you should become a byword among the peoples. We do not dare to destroy your lawful marital union, for we fear the judgment of God, and we cannot give credence to the rumors with which they seek to slander the imperial spouse. No, we will not do this, even if we must endure torments and sufferings. We know that you have a sinful lust for a certain woman and even wish to join with her in an unlawful marriage. How can we treat you with reverence, emperor, when we see you openly violating the commandments of God? How can you then enter the sanctuary before the divine throne to partake together with us of the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ? We testify before God Himself that we cannot admit you into the sanctuary for divine communion, though you are emperor. For it was said even to the ancient priests: 'Do not let them trample upon My sanctuary.'"

Having said this, the Most Holy Patriarch fell silent. After him, the aforementioned elder John earnestly admonished the Emperor at length. But the Emperor would not hear them, and fell into great anger and fury. All the dignitaries and rulers surrounding the Emperor were also displeased. One of them, a patrician by birth, even boasted that he would with his own hands thrust a sword into the belly of the elder John for speaking against the imperial will. Filled with wrath, the Emperor commanded that both of them, the Most Holy Patriarch Tarasius

and the honorable elder John, be expelled from the imperial palace with dishonor. And these two men departed from him, banished for the sake of righteousness, imitating St. John the Baptist, who once rebuked Herod's unlawful marriage[28]. Going out, they shook the dust from their feet and said: "We are not accountable for your lawlessness."

The Emperor, for his part, banished his lawful wife from his palace to a women's monastery, forcibly tonsured her there, and himself celebrated a marriage with his concubine Theodote, who was a distant relative of his on his father's side. This unlawful marriage was performed without the knowledge of the Patriarch by the church steward, the presbyter Joseph, who for his audacious deed was afterward excommunicated from the Church. The Most Holy Patriarch strove in every way to dissolve this adulterous union, but could not, for the Emperor boasted that he would again raise up the heresy of the iconoclasts if this marriage were forbidden him. Therefore St. Tarasius left the Emperor to remain in his lawlessness, so that an even greater evil should not befall the Church of Christ. For the holy Patriarch always remembered that the father, grandfather and great-grandfather of this Emperor had been iconoclast heretics who had slain many Christians for venerating the holy icons. The Emperor, angered with the Patriarch, oppressed him in every way, but the hierarch bore all this patiently, giving thanks to God and acting in accordance with his high rank as archpastor. But after some time, the Emperor was struck by the judgment of God. His mother, the pious Empress Irene, had long seen his evil and lawless life; she saw how her son trampled upon the law of God and was ready to raise up iconoclasm anew. Loving God and His righteousness more than her own son, she, having consulted with the chief dignitaries, rose up against her son, took him into custody, and confined him in the palace where he had been born, which was known as the Porphyry Palace. Then she commanded that he be blinded, just as five years earlier he had blinded the three brothers of his father: Nicetas, Anthimus and Eudoxius. Thus the Emperor, receiving punishment ac-

28. Here Herod Agrippa is meant, son of Herod the Great, ruler of Galilee and the region beyond the Jordan, who entered into marriage with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, during the latter's lifetime.

cording to his deeds, died of illness. And Irene again took up the imperial scepter and set right all that had fallen into disorder during the reign of her son.

From that time the holy man of God Tarasius lived in peace and quiet, zealously shepherding his rational flock and governing the Church, now cleansed of heretics. From the very day of his consecration, he himself celebrated the Divine Liturgy every day and never abandoned this custom, except only when ill. When the saint reached advanced age, he fell into bodily infirmity. Even sensing the approach of his death, the Most Holy Patriarch Tarasius did not abandon his custom, until he became so weak that he could no longer rise from his bed. Only then did he cease to celebrate the Divine Liturgy himself.

At his death, St. Tarasius struggled with unclean spirits and victoriously repelled them. When they, examining his life from his very youth, tried falsely to ascribe to him many unrighteous deeds, he answered them: "I am innocent of what you speak of; you falsely slander me; you have no power over me whatsoever."

Present at this was the biographer of his life, Ignatius, then still a deacon and later Bishop of Nicaea. Bending over the sick man, Ignatius heard these words of the saint. When St. Tarasius could no longer control his tongue, he drove off the demons with his hand and overcame them. At the close of the day, when, according to custom, the Psalms of David were being sung and the psalm was begun: "Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear me" (Ps. 85:1), St. Tarasius peacefully delivered his holy soul to the Lord, his face becoming radiant. This hierarch shepherded the Church of God for 22 years and died in the reign of the Emperor Nicephorus,[29] who ascended the throne after Irene. The Emperor, the whole people, the nobles, clergy and laity, and especially the poor and needy, the orphans and widows, mourned him greatly. For he was merciful to all, related to all as a good shepherd, a loving father and an experienced teacher, and helped each one in distress and misfortune.

29. Emperor Nicephorus I reigned from 802 to 811.

The honorable body of St. Tarasius was buried in the monastery he himself had founded on the Bosphorus, and many received healing from his tomb.

Such was, for example, a woman who had suffered a hemorrhage for many years. Since women were forbidden entrance into that monastery, she entered it dressed in men's garments. With faith she touched the tomb of the Most Holy Tarasius, took oil from the lamp hanging before the tomb, and immediately received healing from her ailment. Other women did the same, and all were healed of their infirmities. A certain man who saw with only one eye received healing at the saint's tomb when he anointed his blind eye with oil from the lamp. A man with a withered hand, coming in faith, anointed his hand with the oil and received healing. Many other sick people received healing through the prayers of St. Tarasius; the possessed were also healed of their affliction.

This great zealot of Orthodoxy stood against the iconoclast heretics not only during his life but even after his death. Under Leo the Armenian,[30] Greek emperor, the iconoclast heresy again gained strength, because the Emperor himself favored it. St. Tarasius appeared to Leo in a dream vision and, with great wrath, commanded a certain soldier named Michael to strike the faithless emperor with a sword. He struck and pierced the Emperor. Leo awoke in fear and trembling from such a dream and was greatly perplexed. Thinking that in the monastery of St. Tarasius there was some Michael who plotted against his life, he sent there to find out about this Michael. He did not know that this Michael was at his side; it was a voivode called Valvos, or Travlius,[31] who afterward struck the Emperor with a sword on the very day of the Nativity of Christ. Thus perished this wicked emperor, vanquished by the prayers of St. Tarasius, who established the faith in the Holy Trinity. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

30. The Emperor Leo V the Armenian occupied the Byzantine throne from 803 to 820.
31. The name: Valvos (Balba), Greek, and Travlius, Latin. In Russian both mean: The Stammerer. This Michael afterward became emperor and reigned from 820 to 829.

Having made clear to the Orthodox the dogmas of the Church, and having taught all to venerate and worship the honorable icon of Christ, O blessed one, thou didst rebuke the godless command of the iconoclasts. Wherefore we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Father, wise Tarasius.

* * *



THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 26

26 февраля

New Calendar February 26 · Old Calendar March 10 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza

Житие святого отца нашего Порфирия, епископа Газского

Gaza is a city of Palestine[1], situated on the border of the land of Egypt, which at first belonged to the children of Israel of the tribe of Judah, and afterward was conquered by the Philistines[2]. It is the city in which Samson once carried off the closed gates upon his shoulders (Judg. 16:3). This city was full of idolatrous impiety. After the Incarnation of Christ our God it was in part enlightened by the holy faith preached by the holy Apostles and by the bishops who came after them; yet a greater part of its inhabitants for a long time wandered in the darkness of idol-worship, bowing down to an idol called "Marnas"[3], as well as to Venus[4] and to other impious Hellenic gods. Moreover, Christian blood was shed there repeatedly, especially in the time of the godless emperor Julian the Apostate[5], for at that time the unbelievers mercilessly slew all the priests, monks and virgins dedicated to God.

1. The city of Gaza lies on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and once served as the southern boundary of the Canaanites. In the days of Roman power Gaza was a considerable commercial city of Palestine. Later this flourishing city lost all its importance, and now only sandy hills and wretched ruins bear witness that a great city once stood here.
2. The Philistines were a people who came out of Egypt and settled in Asia on the border with Egypt, along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The land they occupied lay in the south-west of Palestine, precisely between Egypt and the land of Canaan conquered by the Jews. The Philistines waged frequent wars with the Jews, more than once subjugated them, compelled them to pay tribute, and took their cities from them. On the other hand, the Jews also often gained the upper hand over the Philistines.
3. The veneration of the idol Marnas was the exclusive possession of Gaza. The inhabitants of this city regarded him as a great healer of every kind of disease and, moreover, as god and lord of the rains; in time of drought, solemn religious processions were performed to appease him.
4. Venus was the Greco-Roman goddess of love, beauty, sensuality and impure desires.
5. He reigned from 361 to 363.

Such impiety continued in the city of Gaza for a long time, and no one was able to cleanse it of idol-worship and fully enlighten it with holy faith, until St. Porphyry, of whom we shall speak, was chosen as bishop of Gaza. He fully enlightened Gaza, overthrew all the idols, raised a church in the midst of the city, and won the whole city for God with great labor, as the following account will show. The saint was the son of wealthy parents, a native of Thessalonica[6]. Leaving his father's house, his brothers and his wealth, he went, at the age of twenty-five, first to Egypt and then to the Skete[7], where he took upon himself the monastic habit with the intention of living an ascetic life. Having spent five years with the holy fathers in the Skete, he came to Jerusalem, and, after venerating the Life-giving Cross and the Tomb of Christ and visiting all the holy places, departed for the lands beyond the Jordan[8]. Settling here in a certain cave, St. Porphyry lived and labored in fasting and unceasing prayer. After five years he fell ill, and he begged one of his acquaintances to bring him to Jerusalem, since, because of his sickness, he could not walk without outside help. Nevertheless, in Jerusalem, despite his illness, he went every day to the holy places, worshipping the Lord; and when he could not walk because of his infirmity, he crawled on his knees, yet he never let a single day pass without coming to the holy Church of the Resurrection and to the Holy Cross. Seeing him thus laboring each day despite his sickness, a certain young monk named Mark (later the writer of his life) began to serve him for God's sake. This Mark was sent by St. Porphyry to Thessalonica with a letter, to divide among his younger brothers the property left after their parents, and to bring to him the portion belonging to Porphyry, that he

6. Thessalonica (otherwise Solun) is a very considerable, ancient city of Macedonia, situated at the head of the 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 city in European Turkey, with a very numerous population.

7. Here is meant not the known type of monastic dwellings, in the sense of separate cells of solitary hermits, but a locality in the north-western part of Egypt, at a distance of a day's journey (25–30 versts) from the Mountain of Nitria. This was a waterless, stony desert, a favorite place of the Egyptian desert-dwellers, renowned for the ascetic exploits of the monks who lived in it. From this locality the monastic desert dwellings in which the most zealous monks settled for the strictest solitude and unbroken silence later received the name of skete.

8. The Jordan desert is meant, lying along the banks of the river Jordan, in which ascetics settled and there were not a few monastic dwellings.

might distribute it to the poor. Mark, having set out, divided everything as it should be, and sold Porphyry's portion for three thousand gold coins; in addition, from the parents' gold, Porphyry received yet another part—one thousand four hundred gold coins—as well as clothing and silver. All this Mark brought to Jerusalem to St. Porphyry, whom he found in perfect health. Porphyry, having received what was brought, at once distributed it to the poor and to the needy monasteries, and he himself became poor. Afterward the saint related how he had been healed of his sickness.

"When I was at the Sunday all-night vigil in the great church," he related, "there came upon me an attack of illness. Unable to bear it any longer, I went and lay down at holy Golgotha, and from the great sickness I was as if in a trance. And I saw our Savior nailed to the Cross, and one thief with Him, hanging on another cross, and I began to cry out, saying: 'Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom.' The Savior said to the thief: 'Come down from the cross and heal him of his bodily sickness, as I have healed thee of thy spiritual one.' The thief, coming down to me from his cross, embraced me and kissed me, and raised me from the ground, saying: 'Come to the Savior.' Approaching the Lord, I saw Him come down from the Cross, and He said to me: 'Take this wood and keep it.' Taking the Cross of Christ, I began to carry it, and at once I came to myself and was found wholly healthy, as if I had never been ill."

Shortly after this, the blessed Porphyry was ordained presbyter by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and there was entrusted to him for safekeeping the Venerable Wood of the Life-giving Cross, placed in a special closed golden reliquary, while another part of it had been carried to Constantinople by the holy Empress Helena. Thus was fulfilled the vision of Porphyry, in which he saw the Lord giving him to keep His Cross.

Three years had passed since the venerable Porphyry was ordained presbyter. At this time the bishop of the city of Gaza, named Aeneas, reposed. The faithful of Gaza came together with the clergy to Caesarea of Palestine[9], to the metropolitan under whose jurisdiction

Gaza lay, the blessed John, begging him to give them a bishop who could resist the idolaters, who were very numerous in Gaza, both by word and by deed. Metropolitan John, having commanded a fast for all, prayed to God that He would show him a man worthy and capable for this work; and it was revealed to him in a vision concerning the venerable Porphyry, presbyter of Jerusalem, keeper of the Life-giving Wood. At once the metropolitan wrote a letter to the most holy Patriarch of Jerusalem, in which he asked that Father Porphyry be sent to him, without, however, stating the reason for such a request. The Patriarch, summoning Porphyry and showing him the metropolitan's letter, ordered him to go to Caesarea. At first the venerable Porphyry was doubtful, and then he said:

"Let the will of the Lord be done!"

Then, coming out from the Patriarch, he said to his disciple:

"Brother Mark, let us go and worship the holy places and the Wood of the Venerable and Life-giving Cross, for we shall not see it again soon."

The disciple said:

"Why do you say so, Father? I think you will stay in Caesarea no longer than one week?"

The saint answered:

"Last night I saw the Savior, who said to me: 'Give Me back the treasure (the Cross-wood) which I have placed with thee, for I wish to join thee to a bride, indeed poor and despised by men, but of good character; and thou, taking her, adorn her, that she may forget her former poverty, for though she is poor, she is not a stranger to Me, but My own true sister. Take care, however, that in taking her and building a house, thou dost not acquire anything by untruth, or by theft, or unlawfully, for thereby thou wouldst anger Me and wound her. Hope and do not lose heart, and all things will be sent to thee from where thou dost not expect them.' This is what the Lord declared to me in the

9. Caesarea, called Palestinian in distinction from Caesarea in Cappadocia (in Asia Minor), was a large city on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, built by the Jewish king Herod on the site of the ancient city of Straton's Tower, and for a long time the political capital of Palestine, where the governors of Palestine had their residence. This city was repeatedly destroyed, and at present there are only ruins overgrown with wild plants on its site.

night vision, and I fear lest the burden of others' sins be laid upon me, when I already have a multitude of my own."

Having said this to his disciple, St. Porphyry went and worshipped at all the holy places, as well as at the Life-giving Wood of the Venerable Cross; and having locked it in the reliquary, he went and gave the key to the most holy Patriarch. Receiving the Patriarch's blessing, he set out for Caesarea of Palestine with his disciple Mark and with another youth, Baruch, whom a short time before he had found sick on a dunghill and covered with sores, and whom he had healed by his prayer. When the venerable Porphyry came to Caesarea, he was received here with great joy. The most reverend Metropolitan John then began to persuade him to accept consecration as bishop of the city of Gaza. The venerable man wept bitterly and inconsolably, saying that he was not worthy of such a rank, but afterward he committed himself to the will of God, and was sent off to Gaza with the clergy and the people of Gaza. But the impious inhabitants of a village near Gaza, awaiting his arrival, strewed the whole road by which the Christian bishop St. Porphyry was to pass with thorns, dug trenches across it, brought up a multitude of foul-smelling dung, and kindled a great and noisome smoke, so that they made that road impassable: they did this out of hatred for Christians and out of demonic enmity against St. Porphyry. Thus the saint, together with his companions, endured many hindrances on the way, suffering from the trenches, the thorns and the smoke, and laboring the whole day; at last, at night, they came to the city. In the city there was only one Christian church, and that a small one, for there were not many Christians in it. Opposite, there were many idol temples in the city, and idols stood even in the streets; in the middle of the city was the temple of Marnas, their chief god, great and beautiful, built in ancient times, adorning the whole city by its majesty, height and fine construction. And the venerable Porphyry, having taken up his throne, began to shepherd the little flock of Christ that was there.

In the year when St. Porphyry, Christ's hierarch, came to Gaza, there was no rain and a great drought and famine. All the impious citizens said that on account of Porphyry's coming to the city the gods,

angered, had shut up the heavens; and the priests spread a rumor among the people that the god Marnas had declared to them that Porphyry was the cause of all the evil. And so all the idol-worshippers, gathering in the temple of Marnas, offered many sacrifices, praying and crying out to Marnas that he would send down rain, for they said that he was the god of rains. Thus they prayed for seven days, singing their sacred songs and going out of the city in solemn processions; but still there was no rain. Then all the Christians gathered, with their wives and children, so that their number was two hundred and eighty: for so many souls of believers in Christ were then in Gaza. They asked St. Porphyry, their bishop, to make a common supplication, to go out of the city with the crosses and to entreat God for rain, for the famine was already burdensome to all, and besides, they endured reproach and vexation from the impious, who ascribed the lack of rain to the Christian bishop. St. Porphyry commanded a fast and bade all the faithful gather in the church from evening; and having celebrated the All-night Vigil, the next morning he served a litia with the bearing forth of the Precious Cross. Thus the Christians, with a cross procession, went out of the city to an ancient, dilapidated church on the western side, which the most blessed Bishop Asclepius, confessor of Christ, who had suffered much for the Orthodox faith, had once built; from there, singing, they went to the place of martyrdom of St. Timothy, where the relics of other saints had also been laid. Having prayed thus, they returned with the cross procession to the city at the ninth hour of the day and found the gates of the city shut; for the impious idol-worshippers, seeing the Christians who had gone out of the city with their bishop, had closed the gates, not wishing to let the believers in. The Christians, however, stood before the gates for two hours, and no one opened to them. And God, seeing the patience and tearful supplication of His servants, and hearing the prayers of His saint Porphyry, raised up a wind from the south, as once at the time of the Prophet Elijah (3 Kgdms. 18:17–45), and covered the sky with rain clouds, and there were lightnings and thunder, and at sunset a great rain fell. Then some of the pagans, seeing such a miracle, opened the city and, joining the Christians, went along crying out:

"Christ alone is the True God!"

And all entered the church with great joy, and the pagans who had come to faith received the holy blessing from the bishop and instruction for baptism, and having given thanks to God, went home. Among those who came to faith there were one hundred and seven men, thirty-five women, and fourteen children. And the rain was great throughout that night, and on the second and third day, and it watered the earth sufficiently. Seeing this, on the third day another 127 joined the flock of Christ, and after them, in that same year, another 105. And having received holy baptism, all of them were zealous in the holy faith. But the other idol-worshippers did not cease to be hostile to St. Porphyry and to vex the Christians, for when the governor came to the city, they, giving him a great deal of gold, incited him to torment the Christians, and besides this they wearied the faithful with the city's labors, as once the Egyptians wearied the Israelites. St. Porphyry, however, seeing the injuries inflicted on the believers, grieved greatly and unceasingly, day and night, with tears prayed to God that He would turn the erring to the path of the knowledge of the truth.

After that, the above-mentioned disciple of the saint, Baruch, was sent to a nearby village to receive the annual payment for the Christian church from an idol-worshipper who lived on church land. Wishing to postpone the payment to another time, the man began to dispute with Baruch, and a quarrel arose between them. During the dispute other idol-worshippers ran up and began to beat the blessed Baruch with stakes to death; then, thinking he was already dead, they dragged him beyond the village and cast him down in an empty place. And on the next day the deacon Cornelius, with two other Christians, passing that way, found Baruch lying like a dead man, for he could say nothing, hear nothing, see nothing with his eyes, nor move his hands or feet, and only his spirit was in him. Lifting Baruch onto their backs, they carried him toward the city. But some of the idol-worshippers, seeing Baruch being carried, supposed that a corpse was being brought into the city; therefore they rushed at the bearers and began to beat them, saying:

"Why do you commit such an abomination, bringing a corpse into the city?"

For the Gazans had a custom of carrying out the dead for burial beyond the city. Taking Baruch from them, the impious seized him by the feet and dragged him again outside the city. The deacon Cornelius, running, reported this to the holy Bishop Porphyry. And the bishop went quickly, and the rest of the brethren with him, and overtaking those who were dragging him, humbly begged them to give up such cruelty; but they also began to vex the bishop. A crowd of people gathered and, seeing the patience and humility of the bishop, who answered nothing hostile to those who insulted him, they began to argue with the tormentors who were dragging Baruch; and there arose among them a strife and quarrel, so that they raised their hands against one another, beginning to beat each other; and there was great confusion and tumult. Meanwhile the holy bishop with the Christians, taking the blessed Baruch, carried him into the church, when it was already late evening. And when they saw that his spirit was still in him, all the faithful began to take care to heal him. The saint, however, throughout that whole night prayed to God for him with tears. And behold, the sick man opened his eyes and spoke, asking for drink; and when they had given him drink, he began to speak and related all that had happened to him. In the morning, however, the elders of the city came to the church with a multitude of people and began to shout and cry out:

"Why have you brought a corpse into the city, contrary to the ancient ancestral law?"

Then the holy Bishop Porphyry came out to them with all who were with him. Seeing the bishop, they began to revile and dishonor him, and then rushed upon the Christians with him and began to beat them. And suddenly the blessed Baruch, receiving extraordinary strength from God, quickly rose up, as though he had never been ill, and seizing a staff, began to beat and drive away the clamoring impious crowd. The pagans, seeing him alive, were seized with great terror, for they thought he had risen from the dead; and driven partly by fear, partly by the heavy blows, they fled, trampling one another. And Baruch drove them from the church, as once Samson drove the Philistines, all the way to their accursed temple of Marnas. From that time on, all the im-

pious feared Baruch and were afraid even to meet him on the road. And St. Porphyry, giving thanks to God for Baruch's sudden healing, ordained him deacon; to this rank he also raised another of his disciples, Mark.

Seeing the constant persecutions of the unbelievers against the faithful, the hierarch of God Porphyry sent Mark, his deacon, to Constantinople to the pious emperor Arcadius,[10] entreating him to command that the idol-temples in Gaza be overthrown. He also wrote a letter to the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, asking for help and intercession before the emperor. And the emperor commanded that the idol-temples in Gaza be closed and locked, so that foul sacrifices would no longer be offered in them, but he did not command that they be destroyed, so as not to grieve the pagans too much. To carry out this imperial command, a certain courtier, named Hilary, came to Gaza, who, taking many helpers and soldiers from Azotus and Ascalon[11] and showing the Gazans the imperial letter, closed and locked the idol-temples. But the impious, gathering a great quantity of gold, brought it to the imperial official Hilary, begging him not to close their one large temple of Marnas, standing in the midst of the city. Then Hilary, loving gold more than Christ God, left their chief temple of Marnas open for access, and shut the smaller temples, breaking the idols within them. And this lover of gold departed, as though having fulfilled the imperial command: for in truth he was a Christian only outwardly, but inwardly he was full of unbelief and secretly strove in every way to help the pagans. The impious, however, having the great temple of Marnas accessible to them, did not grieve over the other closed temples and did not cease to inflict vexations upon the Christians.

At that time St. Porphyry worked a miracle which brought many people to the holy faith. A certain noblewoman, the daughter of one of the foremost citizens and the wife of a man of rank, named Elias, was

10. The Byzantine emperor Arcadius reigned from 396 to 408.

11. *Azotus* was an ancient city founded by the Philistines on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Gaza. Today there is a small village here, Ezdud. *Ascalon* was also a city known in the history of the Philistines, situated on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, between Gaza and Azotus. At present Ascalon is uninhabited and is visited only for the sake of the ruins of its temples and monasteries.

with child, and the hour of her delivery came; but she could not be delivered of her burden, and each day her sufferings increased, for on the second day she was worse, and on the third worse still. Many midwives, sorceresses and magicians were brought to her, but none could help her. Thus she suffered for seven days. Her husband, together with her father and mother and all her kinsfolk, during all those days offered unceasing sacrifices and prayed fervently for her in the temple of Marnas, begging help from their god with tears. But no help came; on the contrary, her weakness grew, and the most grievous pains multiplied in her, as she could not give birth. And now all despaired of this woman's life, seeing her torment, and they themselves grieved in their hearts, wept and lamented over her, awaiting her death. Among them, however, was one elderly woman of the Christian faith; she ran to the church and, with many tears, prayed to Christ God for that suffering woman. Seeing this elderly woman weeping and praying on her knees, the holy bishop Porphyry asked her the reason for such weeping. Falling at the feet of the hierarch, she told him all that was happening and begged him to pray to the loving-kind God for the woman who was grievously suffering. The hierarch sent her back to the sick woman, instructing her what to do and say. So, coming into that house, the old woman gathered the parents, the husband and all the kinsfolk of the sick woman and said to them:

"Here is a good and skilled physician; he has sent me to you, asking what you will give him if he heals the sick woman?"

Hearing this, the parents said:

"If he wishes, let him take all our property, only let us see our beloved daughter alive and well."

The husband too said the same, being ready to give everything for the life and health of his wife. Then the old woman said to them:

"Raise your hands on high and confirm your word with an oath, so that your word may be sure, that you will not despise that physician."

They, with fervor and tears, raised their hands and said:

"All the days of our life we will be his servants, only let him heal our only daughter, without whom we cannot live: for what life and joy would be ours without her?"

Hearing this, the old woman cried out loudly over the sick woman:

"The great priest of God Porphyry says to you thus: Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, heals you. Believe in Him, and you will live."

And at once the woman, groaning, gave birth to her child, and her illness was relieved. All who were there, amazed, cried out:

"Great is the God of the Christians, great is His priest Porphyry."

In the morning the parents, the husband and all the kinsfolk of that woman came to St. Porphyry and fell at his feet, asking for Christian baptism. The saint catechized them, commanded them to fast and to come to the holy church; after some time he baptized them, as well as the woman who had given birth and the child born, whom he named after himself, Porphyry, since it was a male. And at that time sixty-four persons joined the Church of Christ.

As the flock of Christ grew, the enmity of the idolaters also grew, and day by day they persecuted the faithful more and more, burdening them with unceasing city labors and compelling them, like slaves, by blows to every kind of toil. Besides this, they harassed the faithful in the fields and in the vineyards, so that the faithful lived in great poverty and could not pay the customary public dues and the imperial taxes. Seeing this, and unable to endure the oppression which the unbelievers inflicted on the faithful, the hierarch of God Porphyry went to Caesarea to the blessed John, his metropolitan, and begged him either to release him from the episcopate or to go with him to Constantinople and beg the emperor to command that the idol temples be utterly destroyed and the pride of the pagans overthrown. Metropolitan John consented rather to undertake the labor of the journey, even in winter, than to release the blessed Porphyry from the episcopate. So, boarding a ship, they set out. Having a favorable voyage, within ten days they reached the island called Rhodes[12]; hearing here of a certain monk living a hermit's life in a desert place, named Procopius, a holy man and a seer, they went to visit him. He, foreseeing their coming and knowing their episcopal rank, met them and honored them as is fitting to honor such

12. Rhodes is an island of the Mediterranean Sea, not far from the coasts of Asia Minor.

archpastors, and, learning the reason for their journey, instructed them what they should do in Constantinople to obtain what they desired.

"Apply first," he said, "to the most holy patriarch of the capital, John Chrysostom. True, he himself is not now going to the imperial palaces, because Empress Eudoxia is angry with him, but the empress's chamberlain[13], the eunuch[14] Amantius, is devoted to him; he is a pious and virtuous man, to whom he will entrust you. Through the intercession of this eunuch you will obtain everything; for he will bring you to the empress, and you yourselves will tell her of your need. At the same time foretell to her that she will bear a son who will reign, and she, hearing this from you, will rejoice, for she has now been pregnant for the ninth month. Therefore, hearing your prophecy, she will do everything according to your desire."

The holy bishops John and Porphyry, having received such instruction and assurance, went on their way with joy, and in the course of another ten days reached Byzantium. Obeying the counsel of the Venerable Procopius, first of all they went to the most holy patriarch John Chrysostom. He received them with honor, and, learning the reason for their coming, promised them his help. On the next day, summoning the empress's chamberlain, the eunuch Amantius, he showed him the bishops who had come from Palestine and entrusted them to his care, asking him to intercede for them before the emperor. The eunuch, hearing from the holy bishops a detailed account of all the sorrows which the faithful were suffering at Gaza from the pagans, wept, and, filled with divine zeal, said:

"Do not grieve, holy fathers, for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will defend His faithful servants and deliver them from those who wrong them. Therefore pray to the Lord, and I will speak to the empress, and I trust in the God of all that He will incline her heart to mercy. In the morning I will bring you yourselves to her, and you will tell everything with your own lips."

13. *Cubicularius* was a chamberlain, a bedchamber attendant at the imperial court, a fairly important court rank.

14. *Eunuch* means a castrated man. Later this name was applied to all courtiers in general, even when they were not castrated.

Saying this to the bishops, the eunuch departed. In the morning he summoned the hierarchs of God, John and Porphyry, to the imperial palace and brought them in to the empress. The empress, seeing the hierarchs, was the first to speak:

"Bless me, fathers."

They bowed to her. Receiving the holy bishops, the empress was sitting on a golden couch, and therefore she said to them:

"Forgive me, archpastors of God, that I cannot render you the honor due, bearing a burden in my womb, for it would be fitting for me to meet your holiness at the door; but pray to the Lord for me, that by His grace I may bear the infant who is in my womb."

The holy fathers, amazed at her humility, said:

"He who blessed the womb of Sarah, and of Rebecca, and of Elizabeth, may He bless your womb too, and quicken the fruit borne in it!"

Then the empress, bidding them sit, began to speak:

"I knew why you undertook such a labor of journeying, for Amantius told me everything. However, if you wish, tell it yourselves, so that I may better learn what you require."

And the bishops told the empress in detail of all the oppressions which the Christians suffered from the idolaters, and begged her to give aid to the oppressed. She, having heard what was set forth, said:

"Do not grieve, holy fathers; for I hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that I shall persuade the emperor to grant your request; and now go and rest from the road, for I see that you are weary. And pray to God for me, that He may help my intercession for you."

Saying this to the holy bishops, the empress dismissed them. When the emperor came to the empress, she told him of the Palestinian bishops who had come and of the reason for their coming, and begged him to destroy the idol temples in Gaza. Hearing such a request, the emperor said:

"I know that in this city they serve the idols with great zeal, but it brings us no small wealth, thanks to the tributes collected from there. Therefore, if we destroy at once the temples of the gods of Gaza and thereby embitter its pagan inhabitants, they, terrified, will flee and the city will be emptied, and we shall lose so much tribute. Is it not better,

then, to humble them little by little? First to wrest the government of the city out of their hands, then to close their temples and forbid the offering of idol sacrifices? Seeing themselves brought low, they will come to know the truth and join the believers."

At such words of the emperor the empress was greatly grieved, and said with tears:

"Christ God Himself will help His Christian servants, if we are unwilling to help them."

Hearing the imperial conversation, the chamberlain Amantius related it to the holy bishops. On the next day the empress again summoned the holy bishops and said to them:

"I spoke to the emperor about you, about your need and your petition, but he will not listen to me, considering it unseemly to offend the idolaters of Gaza. But do not grieve; I will not cease to trouble the emperor with requests until he grants your petition."

Hearing this, the bishops bowed to her. Then St. Porphyry, remembering the prophetic words of St. Procopius, said to her:

"Labor for us, O Sovereign Lady, for Christ's sake. He, for your labor, will give you a son who shall reign in your lifetime and live many years in all imperial prosperity."

Hearing this, the empress was filled with gladness, and her face brightened with joy. Then she said:

"Pray for me, holy fathers, that I may bear a son; and if it shall be so, I promise to fulfil whatever you desire. Nay more, with Christ's help I will do not only what you ask but also what you do not ask, for I will build a holy church in the midst of the city of Gaza. Go, then, in peace and wait, praying for me to God, the Lover of mankind."

Then the time came for the empress to give birth, and she bore a child of the male sex, as the holy fathers had foretold. He was named after his grandfather, Theodosius, for the father of Emperor Arcadius was Theodosius[15], who reigned together with Gratian[16]. This second Theodosius was born in a caul, as it were in a purple garment, which

15. Theodosius the Great is meant, who reigned from 379 to 395.

16. Gratian was the Western emperor contemporary with Theodosius; he reigned from 375 to 383.

was a sign of his reign; and there was great joy for Emperor Arcadius and for the whole imperial city. The Empress Eudoxia sent her chamberlain Amantius to the holy fathers John and Porphyry with these words:

"I thank Christ God, who through your holy prayers has granted me a son. Ask of the Lord, holy fathers, life and many years for the one who is born, and health for me, a humble woman, that I may fulfil my vow to you."

After seven days the empress again summoned the hierarchs of God, John and Porphyry, and met them at the door of her bedchamber, carrying the newborn child in her arms. Bowing her head before them, she said:

"Bless me, fathers, and my son, whom God has granted me through your holy prayers."

The holy John and Porphyry signed her and her son with the sign of the Cross, and, having sat down, they conversed with her about many profitable things. Among other things the empress said:

"Do you know, fathers, what I have resolved to do concerning your request?"

Saint Porphyry replied:

"Whatever you have resolved, lady, you have resolved from God; for this night it was revealed to me in a vision. It seemed to me that I stood in Gaza, in the idol temple of Marnas; and you, standing there also, handed me the Holy Gospel, saying: 'Take and read.' Taking the Gospel from your hands, I unrolled it and found the place where the Lord says to the Apostle Peter: 'I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (Mt. 16:18)."

"And you, lady, in agreement with this, said to me: 'Peace be to you; be strong and of good courage.' I took heart, and from this I am assured that the Son of God has put a good counsel about us into your heart. Tell us, then, Sovereign Lady, what good thing you have resolved concerning us?"

The empress answered:

"If Christ wills, then after some time the infant shall be counted worthy of holy Baptism. Until that time, go and prepare a scroll on which you shall write whatever you wish; and when the child is brought forth from holy Baptism, hand the scroll to the one who will carry the newborn in his arms, and I will instruct him what he must do. I trust in the Son of God that He will arrange everything for good."

They went out and prepared the scroll, writing on it a petition not only for the destruction of the idols and the demolition of their temples, but also for the relief of the faithful from labor and taxes, and for the granting to them of the administration of the city. They also asked that something from the imperial estates be given to the holy Christian church, which was very poor and wretched, and that provision be made for its ministers. They wrote in their petition much else that was comforting to the oppressed and impoverished Christians, and then they waited for the day on which the imperial son would be baptized. Before his baptism it was announced that he would be emperor, since he had been born in the purple and at first had been clothed not in swaddling-cloths but in purple. Then the future emperor was solemnly carried to the church for baptism, while the whole city was magnificently adorned and the people were dressed in their most precious and splendid garments. The future emperor, covered with the imperial purple, was carried by a certain specially chosen man, radiant in costly garments; a multitude of princes and boyars walked before and behind him; and all around marched the army, bearing armor and weapons that gleamed with gold. One could see all the imperial glory, beauty and majesty, so that Saint Porphyry said:

"If such is the glory of an earthly, temporal king, what then is the glory of the Heavenly, Eternal King!"

When the prince was brought into the church, the two holy bishops stood at the church doors holding the prepared scroll; and when, after the holy baptism was completed, everyone came out of the church with the newly baptized prince, the holy bishops cried out:

"We beseech you, newborn king, accept our petition, and at the beginning of your reign show yourself merciful."

As they said this, the holy fathers laid the scroll upon the infant. The man carrying the prince stopped; he took the scroll and, unfolding it, began to read it aloud, for he had been so instructed by the empress. Having read part of the scroll, he folded it again and, placing his right hand under the infant's head, lifted it slightly, as if to express consent, and cried out:

"His imperial majesty commands that everything written here be fulfilled without fail; this is his imperial command, which can never be changed."

All who saw and heard this were astonished; they blessed the newborn emperor and wished him many years, praising him, who was beginning his reign with a deed of mercy, and also glorifying Emperor Arcadius, saying that he was blessed by God, for he had been counted worthy to have a son to reign with him, who was already giving his commands for such good deeds. All this was reported to the empress. She, filled with joy, bowed down to God, giving thanks. When the newly baptized child was carried into the imperial palace, the mother went out to meet him, took him in her arms and kissed him as a mother does. Then, bringing him to her husband, Emperor Arcadius, she congratulated him, saying:

"Blessed are you, my lord, that your eyes see, while you are still alive, an emperor who has come forth from your loins."

Emperor Arcadius, hearing this, rejoiced greatly. And the empress, seeing him bright and cheerful, said:

"If it pleases you, my lord, let us learn what is written in this scroll which was presented to our royal son, so that his first command concerning all that is written here may be quickly fulfilled."

The emperor commanded that the scroll be read, and when it had been read, he said:

"It is difficult to fulfil this petition, but it is also hard to refuse it, since in that case we would annul the first command of our son, and that is unseemly and improper."

The empress answered:

"It is not only improper to annul the first decree of a son, but it is also sinful to disregard the prayer of holy men who foretold to me the birth of a son."

And at once Emperor Arcadius commanded that everything written in the scroll by the Palestinian bishops be confirmed by imperial letters. When the letters, written in the name of both emperors, Arcadius and Theodosius, had been prepared, the empress summoned the hierarchs of God, John and Porphyry, and showed them those letters, asking whether they were pleasing to them. They bowed and thanked her for her merciful and wise zeal, and they asked that, for the fulfilment of the imperial command, a pious, honest and faithful man be sent to Gaza, not such a one as the man sent earlier. A pious and God-fearing man was found in the person of a certain Cynegius, who was charged by the emperors to go to Gaza and arrange everything in the best manner according to the command. The empress gave Saint Porphyry much gold for the building of a stone church in the midst of the city of Gaza, and also for the establishment of a hospice; and she further promised to give as much as would be needed for the building of the church. Besides this, she gave the two bishops gifts and church vessels, gold and silver, for the churches of Caesarea and Gaza, and gold for the journey. The emperor, too, honoring the holy bishops and abundantly supplying them with gifts and money, dismissed them in peace. They, having taken leave of the most holy Patriarch John Chrysostom, sailed to their dioceses; and after them set out on the road the imperial dignitary Cynegius, to whom the imperial commands had been given.

When the travelers approached the island of Rhodes, the holy fathers John and Porphyry begged the helmsman to put in to shore so that they might visit the Venerable Procopius the hermit; but he would not, saying that the wind was unfavorable, and he paid no attention at all to the request of the hierarchs of Christ; for he was secretly an Arian and hated the Orthodox bishops. But when they had passed that island, at once a storm and a tempest arose at sea, and all were in great fear, dreading shipwreck. The tempest continued the whole day and the whole night. When the dawn appeared, Saint Porphyry fell into a light sleep, and in his dream he saw the Venerable Procopius, who said to

him: "Persuade the helmsman to renounce the Arian heresy[17] and anathematize it, and prepare him for holy Baptism, and at once the terrible tempest will cease." Awakening from sleep, Saint Porphyry told this to the blessed Metropolitan John and to the others who were with him; then, summoning the helmsman, the saints said to him:

"If you wish your ship and all of us to be saved from shipwreck, and above all, that your soul be delivered from eternal perdition, renounce your false faith, the Arian heresy, and join the Catholic Church."

The helmsman was amazed that the holy bishops knew a secret which no one knew, and he said to them:

"Since God has revealed to you the secrets of my heart, I renounce the teaching of Arius and believe as you believe; confirm me, then, in the holy faith."

When he had said this, the storm ceased at once, and there was calm upon the sea. The saints instructed him from the Divine Scriptures and confirmed him in Orthodoxy, then catechized and baptized him. They completed the rest of their journey safely, the holy bishops putting in at Maiuma[18], which lies twenty stadia[19] from Gaza, and from there proceeding by land to the city of Gaza. When the faithful learned of their coming, they went out to meet them with psalms and hymns, bearing the holy Cross before them; and with great joy and triumph they brought the bishops of God into the city. The idolaters, seeing this, were greatly enraged and gnashed their teeth, but dared not do them any harm, for they had already heard that the Christian bishops had been received with honor by the emperor, and that an imperial command was being sent after them to humble the fury of the pagans and destroy their temples. Meanwhile, as the Christians proceeded with the precious Cross and their bishops, they drew near to the idol of

17. The Arian heresy takes its origin from the impious Arius (at the beginning of the 4th century), who taught that the Son of God is not God, consubstantial with God the Father, but a supreme creature through whom God the Father created the world. This heresy was condemned at the First Ecumenical Council (in 326), at which the true teaching about the Son of God was set forth in the first seven articles of the Creed.

18. Maiouma was a port city of Palestine, serving as the harbor for Gaza, which was situated not directly on the sea-shore but at some distance from it.

19. A stadion is a measure of length, about 88 sazhens; 20 stadia is a little more than 3 versts.

Venus. The inhabitants of Gaza, especially the women, honored this idol greatly, lighting candles and burning fragrant incense, for the demon dwelling within it had deceived many in visions of sleep, enticing maidens and wives into every kind of carnal sin. When the Christians approached that idol, which stood in the street upon an elevated place, the demon immediately fled, casting the idol down to the ground. The idol, being of marble, broke into many pieces as it fell, and killed two of the unbelievers who were standing there, laughing and reviling Christian worship. At the sight of this wonder, many pagans believed in Christ, joined the Christians, and went to the holy church, asking to receive holy Baptism. Those who believed numbered thirty-two men and seven women. Thus the faithful rejoiced doubly, both at the safe arrival of their shepherds and at the salvation of human souls. Afterward, the blessed Metropolitan John remained in Gaza for two days, then departed for Caesarea, and the Christians escorted him. A few days later the imperial dignitary mentioned above, Cynegius, arrived in Gaza, bringing with him many officials and a voivode with a military force. The pagans were greatly frightened, and some of them fled the city. In the morning Cynegius assembled all the city elders and the whole people, and showed them the emperor's command, by which the idol temples in Gaza were to be destroyed and the idols shattered. When this command was read aloud, the crowds of the impious raised a cry and began to weep and lament. Unable to bear their outcry, Cynegius gave a signal to the soldiers, who rushed upon the pagans and began beating them; the assembly of the impious was dispersed, while the Christians, rejoicing with great gladness, gave thanks to the emperors and praised them greatly. Then, together with the soldiers, they rushed upon the idol temples and began to destroy them with great tumult. There were eight principal idol shrines in the city: those of the Sun,[20] Venus, Apollo,[21] Proserpina,[22] Hecate,[23] Fortune,[24] and Marnas; the last shrine was the largest and was visited most often by the impious pagans.

20. The Greek sun-god *Helios* was venerated in many places. Art depicted him resembling Apollo, only with a fuller face.
21. *Apollo* was venerated as the god of light, also of intellectual enlightenment, poetry and music.
22. *Proserpina* was venerated as the mistress of the underworld, and also of the cereal crops that come forth from the depths of the earth.

Countless other idols also stood in the marketplaces and streets, in various buildings and upon the city walls, and around the city, along the roads, in the gardens and in the fields. In ten days the Christians shattered all these idols and destroyed the filthy idol temples, except for the great and most beautiful temple of Marnas. Many said that it ought not to be destroyed, but rather cleansed of the defilement of idols and consecrated as a church of God. In view of the desire of many to preserve the temple of Marnas, St. Porphyry prayed to God, asking Him for guidance. And behold, as he was celebrating the Divine service in the holy church, a child's voice rang out from among the people:

"Let the temple of Marnas be burned and destroyed, for it is defiled by the blood of people sacrificed to demons; let its foundations be dug out of the earth and scattered, and let a new church be built upon that place to the glory of God."

The child was seven years old, and so the clergy thought that he had spoken thus at his mother's prompting. They took him and began to frighten him, as if intending to beat him, so that he would say who had taught him to speak in this way. But the child began to speak in Greek, saying the same thing—that the temple of Marnas should be burned and destroyed. Then all understood that he was speaking by the Holy Spirit, for though he was seven years old and had not been taught Greek, the child now spoke it well. Therefore, believing the child's words, they burned and destroyed the beautiful shrine of Marnas down to its very foundations; these they dug out of the earth and scattered along the streets and roads, so that all might trample upon them. Then the soldiers went through all the buildings and dwellings of the pagans, gathering up the idols hidden everywhere. When they had collected a great multitude, they piled the idols together and set them on fire. Thus idolatry was rooted out in Gaza. Cynegius, having sufficiently humbled the impious leaders and punished them for oppressing the Christians, returned to the emperors; at the bishop's request, however, he left part of the army in the city, lest the idolaters should again lift up their horn

23. *Hecate* was a fearsome underworld deity who rules over evil and harmful demons, can summon the souls of the dead from the netherworld, and terrify people with apparitions.
24. *Fortuna* was venerated as the goddess of chance, especially of happiness and prosperity.

against the Christians. After this, the bishop of Christ founded a cruciform church on the site of the temple of Marnas, and the Empress Eudoxia sent a drawing of it on a sheet of paper. For this church she also sent thirty marble columns, two of them gleaming like emeralds. Thus, with the empress's help, a church was built in five years, incomparably more beautiful than the former temple of Marnas. Having consecrated this church, the bishop of God began to celebrate the Divine service, giving great thanks to Christ the Lord that, in the place where unclean blood sacrifices had formerly been offered to false gods, the Unbloody and Most Pure Sacrifice was now being offered to the true God. Then St. Porphyry built a guesthouse with gold given by the pious empress, and there he gave rest to strangers and fed the poor. With God's help he wisely tended Christ's flock with the word of God, so that the number of the faithful increased more and more; for many pagans, forsaking their impious idolatry, turned to Christ God. The rest of the pagans, however, were consumed with anger and envy as they saw the Christian Church flourishing beautifully and growing, while paganism withered and diminished. And so they again attempted to rise up against the holy shepherd and his flock. Once a dispute arose between the church steward and an idolater, a prominent citizen named Sampsichius, concerning a certain matter belonging to the Church's property. At the noise, the faithful and the unbelievers ran together, each supporting his own—the faithful the steward, and the unbelievers Sampsichius. But since the unbelievers were more numerous, they overcame the faithful and stirred up a riot, seizing clubs and weapons. Having killed seven of the faithful and grievously wounded many others, the pagans ran with disorderly shouting and tumult to the bishop's courtyard, intending to kill St. Porphyry. When he learned of this, he said to the deacon Mark:

"Let us flee, brother, and hide for a while, until the Lord's anger has passed by."

And climbing over the wall, they fled in the opposite direction from the rioters and hid with a certain maiden named Salafa, who was a pagan by faith. Having been left an orphan after her parents' death, she lived with her grandmother, who was ill; she served her and fed her by

the labor of her hands. This maiden concealed the holy bishop and his deacon, giving them food and drink. St. Porphyry remained with her that day and night, and all the following day. On the next night, when the uproar and riot had subsided, the saint returned home with Mark and found everything there plundered, while the blessed Baruch lay beaten and covered with wounds, scarcely breathing. The Christians reported all this to the anthypatos[25], who resided in Caesarea. He sent soldiers, who seized all those who had stirred up the riot and committed murder; some he put to death, while others he severely beat and released alive. From that time the impious grew quiet. For the remainder of his life, the bishop of Christ, Porphyry, lived in peace and quiet. The bishop thanked the maiden Salafa, with whom he had hidden from murderous hands, and enlightened her through holy Baptism; he also healed her ailing grandmother, baptized her, and provided them with food from the Church's property. He wished to unite the maiden in marriage to a lawful husband, but she desired to be betrothed to Christ, at which the saint greatly rejoiced in spirit. He dedicated her to the service of Christ and enrolled her among the undefiled virgins. She served God until the end of her life, preserving her virginity undefiled in fasting and prayer, aided by the God-pleasing prayers of God's servant Porphyry, who offered unceasing prayers to God for his flock by night and by day.

The Hierarch of Christ was renowned as a great wonderworker. By his prayer he made whole and unharmed three youths who had fallen into a deep well; but a certain woman belonging to the Manichaean heresy, full of demonic cunning and heretical fables, who greatly blasphemed Orthodoxy and led many astray into her own wickedness, he put to death by his prayer, for she suddenly fell and gave up her spirit. St. Porphyry also wrought many other miracles to the glory of God. Having tended the Church of Christ for twenty-four years, eleven months, and eight days, the saint departed to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Chief Shepherd and Great High Priest, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.[26] Amen.

25. Anthypatos was the highest official of a province.
26. The repose of St. Porphyry is dated to the year 420.

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyr Sebastian, beheaded by the sword under the emperor Nero.[27]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Adorned with thy most sacred virtues, thou wast clothed in the vestment of the priesthood and didst shine forth, all-blessed and God-taught Porphyry, and thou adornest us with the exaltations of healings, ever interceding for us all.

* * *

27. This holy martyr belonged to the company of St. Photina, whose memory is on March 20. The Roman emperor Nero reigned from 54 to 68.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 27

27 февраля

New Calendar February 27 · Old Calendar March 11 (civil dates)

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Procopius of Decapolis, Confessor

Память преподобного отца нашего Прокопия Декаполита, Исповедника

The land of Decapolis, which received its name from the ten cities situated within it, lies by the Sea of Galilee. The holy Evangelist Mark mentions this land, saying: "Jesus went again to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis"[1] (Mk. 7:31). The Venerable Procopius the Confessor was from this land. Experienced in monastic struggles, proven in strict fasting, and adorned with purity of soul, he was renowned and celebrated among the ascetics. At that time came the grievous days of the iconoclastic heresy. Its first instigator was the lawless Greek emperor Leo the Isaurian[2], who unjustly called the holy icons idols and those who venerated them idolaters. Without mercy he slew many innocent Orthodox Christians and cursed all the pious emperors, hierarchs, and Christians who had lived before him, because they venerated the holy icons, thereby bringing upon himself the curse of all. Then the great and immovable pillar of Orthodoxy and strong defender of the true faith, the Venerable Procopius, courageously stood against the multitude of heretics who in their impiety blasphemed the Incarnation of God the Word and dishonored the holy icons. He put the heretics to shame, exposing their foolish thinking and overcoming it with invincible, God-inspired words;

1. Decapolis – the "Ten Cities," a region on the far side of the Jordan, extending in the north as far as Damascus, in the south as far as Philadelphia, in the west as far as Scythopolis, and in the east as far as Canatha. Here lay ten cities, populated chiefly by pagans, among whom, however, there were also many Jews.
2. He reigned from 717 to 741.

the Venerable Procopius tore their cunning verbal entanglements apart as though they were a spider's web.

By this he incurred the wrath of the godless emperor, who roared like a wild lion coming out of the wilderness, seeking prey. At his command the Venerable Procopius was seized and cruelly beaten; his torturers lacerated his body with iron instruments, and then cast him into a dark and foul-smelling dungeon. But the saint steadfastly endured all his sufferings. The Venerable Basil, who had earlier struggled together with Procopius in fasting and virtue, suffered alongside him. Together they now endured many torments for the holy icons. Both were imprisoned together and remained there until the death of the godless persecutor. When Leo died, deprived not only of temporal life but also of the future life eternal, St. Procopius, together with his friend Basil and other saints, was released from prison. He spent the rest of his life in ascetic labors, instructing many in virtue and leading them to salvation. In venerable old age he departed to Christ God, to behold Him face to face rather than in an icon, and, as a faster and sufferer for Christ who had struggled even unto blood for His holy icon, to receive a worthy reward for his labors.

Troparion, Tone 8:

By the streams of thy tears thou didst make the wilderness fertile; by thy sighs from the depths thou didst bring forth fruit a hundredfold through thy labors; and thou wast a lamp unto the universe, shining with miracles, O our Father Procopius. Pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The Church, having thee today as her morning star, dispelleth every mist of false doctrine, honoring thee, O heavenly initiate, most glorious Procopius.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Thalaleus

Память преподобного Фалалея

St. Thalaleus was from the region of Cilicia[3]. Despising worldly vanity, he first came to the monastery of the Venerable Sabbas the Sanctified. Having embraced the ascetic struggles of monastic life, he received the angelic habit and, for his virtuous life, was deemed worthy of the rank of presbyter. Several years later he came to Gabala, one of the Syrian cities belonging to the metropolitan see of Laodicea. Twenty stadia from the city stood a large tomb. Upon it was an ancient pagan shrine, fallen into decay and surrounded by old graves; here dwelt a multitude of unclean spirits. All who passed by feared this place, for the unclean spirits not only terrified travelers with apparitions but often attacked them and caused great harm to both people and animals. Hearing of this, the Venerable Thalaleus went there and settled in that place. He built himself a small tent and lived in it, struggling in fasting, mortifying the flesh through privation, and praying without ceasing by day and night. The unclean spirits could not endure such a neighbor. Gathering in a whole host, they rushed upon the holy man with great fury, trying to frighten him with wild cries, threatening him and employing every kind of scheme to make the saint leave the place they had long considered their own. But the Venerable Thalaleus, strong in his faith in God, shielding himself with prayer and the sign of the Cross, stood steadfastly like a brave and invincible warrior and trampled down the feeble might of the evil spirits.

For a long time, every day and especially at night, the saint courageously battled the unclean spirits, and at last, with God's help, overcame them. They fled in shame, unable to defeat the invincible warrior of Christ.

Having driven out the demons, the servant of God built himself a cell quite unsuited to his stature, small and cramped, only two cubits high and one cubit wide. In it he could not stand, nor even sit in the usual manner: the Venerable Thalaleus was tall, and so, when seated in his cell, he was always forced to bend his head down to his knees. He

3. Cilicia – a south-eastern province of Asia Minor, which once formed one of the flourishing regions of the Roman Empire; it borders on Syria to the east, on Cappadocia and Lycaonia to the north, on Pisidia and Pamphylia to the west, and on the Mediterranean Sea and its gulf to the south. Today this region belongs to Turkey.

lived in such confinement for about ten years. At that time Bishop Theodoret of Cyrene visited him and found the Venerable Thalaleus reading the Gospel. When the bishop asked him why he had chosen such a way of life, the saint answered:

"I am a great sinner. Believing that great torments await me in the life to come, I have devised for myself this little prison of my own will, hoping that by these small hardships I may escape eternal torments."

In speaking with him, the bishop received great benefit.

God also granted the Venerable Thalaleus the gift of working miracles: through his prayers the venerable one could heal those suffering from every kind of illness, and he healed not only people but livestock as well. Therefore many came to him as to a healing spring and found health in him, not only of body but also of soul, so that many of the surrounding Hellenes were converted to Christ God. Among the Christians living within the borders of the city of Gabala there were many pagans. All were enlightened by the holy faith, being brought to the knowledge of the truth through the miracles of St. Thalaleus. With the aid of these newly converted Christians, the Venerable Thalaleus destroyed the pagan shrine and demolished the tombs. Cleansing the place of demonic defilement, he built there a church of God in the name of all the holy martyrs and established daily divine services in it to the glory of God. He spent the rest of his life in the same struggles as before and, having pleased God, reposed in advanced old age. St. Sophronius of Jerusalem writes thus of this venerable father in the *Spiritual Meadow*[4]:

"Abba Peter, presbyter of the Lavra of St. Sabbas, told us about Abba Thalaleus of Cilicia, that this blessed father was a monk for sixty years and never ceased weeping, saying: 'God has given us, brethren,

4. "The Spiritual Meadow" (Gr. *Leimonarion*, meadow, pasture) – a very widely known work of the Greek monk John Moschus (622 A.D.). In the monasteries of Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Cyprus, Constantinople, and Rome, Moschus gathered a mass of narratives about the lives of Christian ascetics, as well as their sayings and admonitions, and set all of this forth in his *Leimonarion*, which served as one of the primary sources for later hagiographical writings. The *Leimonarion* was completed by Moschus in Rome, whither he was accompanied by his disciple, the monk Sophronius, later Patriarch of Jerusalem. Having finished the *Leimonarion*, Moschus handed it over to the disposal of Sophronius.

this time for repentance, and if we waste it, we shall be strictly judged for it.'"

The Venerable Thalaleus died about the year 460, having lived as a monk for 60 years.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Titus, Presbyter of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного Тита, пресвитера Печерского

How "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness" (Rom. 1:18), and how "the peace of God," which surpasses understanding (Phil. 4:7), descends and guards the body and soul of the person who seeks it—all this we see in the life of the blessed Titus. He was a monk of the Kiev Caves Monastery[5], honored with the rank of presbyter. The Venerable Titus was led to struggles worthy of eternal blessedness by the following circumstance: he had a brother, not according to the flesh but according to the spirit, a black-robed monk of the same monastery named Evagrius, who held the rank of deacon. Great and sincere love united the two monks, so that all marveled at their unanimity and mutual affection. But the devil, who hates every good thing and is accustomed to sow tares among the wheat (Mt. 5:22), sowed enmity between them as well. With anger and hatred he so darkened their hearts that they could not even look one another in the face, and therefore did everything they could to avoid each other. When one went through the church with a censer, the other would flee from the censing; if one did not withdraw, the other would pass by without censing him. They remained for a long time in such sinful darkness, so that, at the devil's prompting, they even dared to offer the Divine Gifts and partake of them without having been reconciled with one another or asked each other's forgiveness. The brethren repeatedly urged them to be reconciled, but they would not even listen. One day, by God's providence, the Venerable Titus fell so seriously ill

5. Evidently, the Kiev Caves Monastery, founded by the Venerable Anthony in 1073 and Theodosius.

that he no longer expected to live. Then he began bitterly to weep over his sin and humbly sent word to the deacon Evagrius:

"Forgive me, brother, for the Lord's sake, for I have offended you with my anger."

But he not only refused to forgive Titus; he reviled him all the more and even cursed him. When the brethren saw that Titus was already dying, they brought Evagrius to him by force, so that he might be reconciled with his brother. Seeing him, the sick man raised himself up, fell at Evagrius's feet, and said with tears:

"Forgive me, father, and bless me!"

But the merciless and inhuman Evagrius turned away from his brother and said before them all with words full of hatred:

"I never wish to be reconciled with him, neither in this age nor in the age to come!"

Having said this, he broke free from the brethren's hands and fell. The monks wanted to raise him up, and found him dead. They could neither fold his hands, nor close his mouth, nor shut his eyes, as though he had died long before. At that moment the blessed Titus rose up, completely healthy, as if he had never been ill. All were struck with terror at the sudden death of the one and the swift healing of the other. They began to ask the blessed Presbyter Titus what this meant. The blessed Titus related to them what had been revealed to him from on high concerning it:

"During my illness," so the blessed Titus began his account, "while I was still possessed by anger, I saw the Angels withdraw from me. They wept over the perdition of my soul, while the demons rejoiced that I harbored anger against my brother. That is why I began to ask you to go and beg forgiveness for me from my brother. When you brought him to me, and I bowed down before him, but he turned away from me, I saw a merciless Angel with a fiery spear, with which he struck the one who had not forgiven me, and he fell dead. The same Angel extended his hand to me, raised me up, and behold, I was healed."

Terrified by the account, the monks wept much over the deceased Evagrius. They buried him, but could not fold his hands or close his

eyes and mouth. They themselves now took special care to guard against anger, forgiving one another every offensive word, mindful of the words of the Lord: "Whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be liable to judgment" (Mt. 5:22). Likewise St. Ephraim the Syrian said: "If anyone happens to die in enmity, such a one awaits an implacable judgment." And of the brethren who were then brought to their senses one could say: "Great peace have they who love Thy law" (Ps. 118:165).

But especially the Presbyter Titus himself, seeing how, by reconciling with his brother, he had obtained reconciliation with God and had been delivered from death, not only bodily but spiritual, from that time on did not even think of being angry with anyone; rather, casting off anger, he acquired a steadfast love for the brethren, which, as the root of peace, is the bond of perfection. It proceeds from "a pure heart and a good conscience and unfeigned faith" (1 Tim. 1:5); it "suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not" (1 Cor. 13:4), and it contains within itself all the virtues, and especially fasting, chastity, and constant prayer. From that time on the blessed one always kept in his heart the words of Scripture: "Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:7–8).

In offering the unbloody sacrifice, Presbyter Titus also fulfilled the Gospel word: "To love one's neighbor as oneself is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mk. 12:33). He acquired for himself so undisturbed a peace that, burning with the feeling of perfect love, he could not, grieving, say: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger; there is no peace in my bones because of my sins" (Ps. 37:4). The perfect peace of soul of this ascetic was such that in him was truly fulfilled the saying of the Apostle: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

Therefore, also in Heaven the blessed Titus was granted to receive repose, striving toward which, after many labors and struggles, he departed to the Lord. His holy body rests in one of the caves of the Kiev Caves Monastery, full of saints like the lower heaven; in spirit he is

present in Heaven, whither he was raised by the hands of the Angels who appeared to him. They could say of the former sinner, and afterward of the worthily repentant righteous man, only what St. Paul said of the Apostle Titus: "God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus" (2 Cor. 7:6). We, likewise rejoicing, may respond to these heavenly inhabitants with the same Scripture: we were comforted, seeing your comfort, and especially rejoiced in the joy of Titus, who has rested among you. By the holy prayers of the Venerable Titus, may we also be granted, casting off all anger, to receive forgiveness of sins and to receive temporal and eternal repose from Christ Jesus our Lord, who is "the God of love and peace" (2 Cor. 13:11). To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages.[6] Amen.

* * *



6. The Venerable Titus lived in the 12th century.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 28

28 февраля

New Calendar February 28 · Old Calendar March 12 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Proterius, Patriarch of Alexandria

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Протерия, патриарха Александрийского

After the death of St. Cyril, the heretic Dioscorus[1] ascended the patriarchal throne of Alexandria.[2] This lawless man spread his heresy throughout all of Egypt. At that time there lived there a pious presbyter, steadfast in the true faith, named Proterius. He was known for the holiness of his life and was filled with God-inspired understanding and wisdom. Proterius saw that many had been led into the heresy of the patriarch, who falsely asserted that in Christ there is one nature, and he zealously contended against the heretics. Patriarch Dioscorus was greatly angered against him; desiring to win this defender of Orthodoxy over to his own opinion as well, he cunningly flattered Proterius and even honored him with the rank of archpresbyter, but his efforts were in vain. St. Proterius, confirmed in the faith by the most holy Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril, was unshaken. At the Fourth Ecumenical Council, held at Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian,[3] Dioscorus was denounced for his heresy, was deprived of the pat-

1. Dioscorus was the chief supporter of the heresy of Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople; the latter maintained that Christ, although born *of two natures*, abides *not in two*, since at the Incarnation of God the Word the human nature assumed by Him lost all its own reality and was swallowed up by the Divinity. In the history of the Church the heresy of Eutyches is known under the name of *Monophysitism* (Monophysites – those of one nature).

2. Alexandria – the famous city founded by Alexander the Great about 333 B.C. on a cape projecting into the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea (somewhat south of the present city of the same name); it was once the center of learning and the first trading city on earth; at the beginning of the fourth century it became the center of Christianity and the seat of the patriarch.

riarchal dignity, was excommunicated from the Church, and was exiled to the city of Gangra in the province of Paphlagonia,[4] where after some time he died. In place of the deposed Dioscorus, the Orthodox bishops, clergy and pious Christians chose in Alexandria as patriarch the holy Proterius, truly worthy of such a rank.

But the majority of the Alexandrian people, poisoned by the venom of Dioscorus's heresy and additionally stirred up by some heretical clergy, were opposed to Proterius's appointment as patriarch. And when St. Proterius, installed as Orthodox patriarch, took up the administration and began to confess the right faith confirmed by the holy fathers at the Council of Chalcedon, a revolt arose among the people and a strife broke out. Some of the clergy, headed by the presbyter Timothy, surnamed Aelurus, and the deacon Peter Mongus, who were nominees of Dioscorus and supporters of his heresy, together with others renounced the Orthodox, refused to have communion with St. Proterius, and stirred up schism among the people. Therefore a great dissension arose in the Church of Alexandria: some acknowledged the newly-appointed patriarch and held to Orthodoxy, while others demanded the return of Dioscorus and anathematized the dogmas established at the Council of Chalcedon. The two sides waged a fierce struggle against each other. The adherents of Dioscorus rose against St. Proterius, calling him an adulterer, for even during Dioscorus's lifetime he had taken his bride, the Church of Alexandria, and they called Proterius a heretic unworthy of the patriarchal rank. St. Proterius endured many afflictions from the heretics; fearing that the heretics would kill him, he demanded a military guard; he was always in fear, expecting popular disturbances, for the adherents of Dioscorus had already risen against the city authorities and the troops stationed in the city. At this time a consul came from the Thebaid to Alexandria to quell the dis-

3. The Council of Chalcedon (451), as the expression of Orthodox truth on the question of the union of the two natures in Christ, drew up a definition by which Christ is confessed as perfect God and perfect Man, consubstantial with the Father according to His Godhead and consubstantial with us according to His manhood, abiding after the Incarnation *in two natures, unconfusedly and indivisibly,* so that the distinctive character of each nature is preserved in their union in the one Person of Christ.

4. Paphlagonia – a harsh, mountainous region in the northern part of Asia Minor.

turbance. The rebels began to hurl stones at the soldiers who had arrived with the consul. The latter, seeing the popular uprising, made their way into the temple of Serapis and barricaded themselves inside. The rebels surrounded the temple, and, seizing it, burned all the soldiers within. When news of this reached the pious emperor Marcian, he was greatly angered and sent a great military force, which subdued the disturbance, and he ordered that the bread and grain which were brought to Alexandria by ship from the cities of Egypt should from now on be sent not to Alexandria but to Pelusium, and from there to Constantinople. Moreover, Marcian took from the Alexandrians their public baths and other properties, restricted the freedom of the inhabitants, and closed their public theatrical performances. The citizens, grieving over this and chiefly feeling the shortage of bread, humbled themselves and asked the most holy Patriarch Proterius to go to the emperor and intercede for them. St. Proterius, going forth, petitioned the emperor on behalf of his city, and the emperor, showing mercy, granted all the requests of the holy man. The citizens had their former freedom restored, and bread began to be shipped directly to Alexandria. After this the patriarch for some time peacefully governed his flock, and he deposed Timothy Aelurus, who would not repent.

After the death of the pious Marcian the heretics again raised their heads and began to stir up the common people, and they ceased only when they had attained their goal. The cunning and crafty Timothy Aelurus, who also practiced sorcery, cleverly seduced the Egyptian monks living in monasteries or dwelling in the desert in the following manner.

On a dark, moonless night Timothy, dressed in dark clothing, went about the cells of the monks and called each by name. When the monks asked him who he was and what he wanted, he answered:

"I am one of the Angels, sent by God, so that you should not have communion with Proterius and should not accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon. You must appoint Timothy Aelurus as bishop in Alexandria."

Thus the cunning flatterer, with the help of a demon, deceived them. The monks, not understanding the snares of the enemy, accepted the lie

as truth, and, recounting to one another the vision of the Angel, agreed and gathered all together. Having taken counsel, they all set out for Alexandria as if for battle; all of them were blinded with rage against the holy hierarch Proterius and wished to drive him from the church. At that time Timothy gathered around himself in Alexandria many rebels; some he enticed, and to others he secretly gave money. Waiting for a convenient time, when the consul Dionysius was not in the city, for he had been delayed in Upper Egypt, Timothy, with his numerous like-minded followers, with the armed troops he had hired, and with the monks who had come, went to the church. Among the rebels were two deposed bishops and several clergy who were likewise excommunicated. They consecrated Timothy as bishop and proclaimed him Patriarch of Alexandria. He did this in defiance of all the canons of the Church, disregarding all the imperial laws, relying only on the rebellious people and the deluded monks.

The most holy Patriarch Proterius, seeing such a rebellion and having no help from anyone, because of the absence of the consul, resolved to flee. Secretly at night he left the city. When he fell asleep in a certain hidden place, in a dream-vision the prophet Isaiah appeared to him and said:

"Return to the city; there I shall await you!"

Pondering the vision, Proterius understood that a martyr's death awaited him. He returned and entered the baptistery of the church. Meanwhile the rebels, desiring to kill St. Proterius, searched for him everywhere. Learning that he was in the baptistery, they shut him in there. Then some of them entered to him and killed him and six men who were with him, tearing the whole body of the saint with the sharp points of iron staves which the tormentors carried with them. They shed innocent blood at the very time when our Pascha, Christ, was sacrificed for us; the murder was committed on Great Saturday. But the murderers were not sated with blood and extended their savagery still further. Tying ropes to the feet of Christ's martyr, they dragged his holy body to the middle of the city, striking him with various instruments and tearing him to pieces. Some, in the greatest fury, like dogs or wild beasts, sank their teeth into his body. Piling up a large fire,

they burned the body of Christ's sufferer, and scattered his ashes into the air.[5] In doing so, at the command of their false patriarch Timothy, they also burned the episcopal throne on which St. Proterius had sat, as if it had been defiled by the holy man; thus the filthy and impious declared God's servant godless.

After the inhuman murder of St. Proterius, Timothy sent his soldiers through all the cities of Egypt to expel the Orthodox bishops and to set in their places others whom he himself would appoint. Then the oppressed Orthodox bishops and clergy and all the faithful sent a petition to the pious emperor Leo, who had succeeded Marcian on the throne; the Orthodox also sent a similar petition to the most holy Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople. In their petitions they related all that had happened and tearfully begged that the Church of Alexandria be delivered from such a calamity. The emperor and the patriarch deeply grieved over the inhuman murder of the holy, innocent hierarch of God, Proterius. The emperor at once sent his dignitaries with troops to Alexandria, and many of the rebels were punished: some had their hands cut off, others had their tongues cut out, some were cast into prison, others were beaten and exiled. As for Timothy Aelurus himself, the false patriarch, he was brought to judgment. Condemned by the Orthodox bishops, he received the reward of his deeds: they not only deprived him of the episcopal dignity, but even cast him out of Christ's Church, and sent him into exile in the city of Gangra, where his teacher Dioscorus had once been in exile. In his place another Timothy, surnamed Salophaciolus, was raised to the patriarchate in Alexandria. He was distinguished by his firm faith, wisdom and virtuous life, for which he enjoyed the respect of all. And peace came to the Church of Alexandria, which from that time onward, together with all the Orthodox, glorified the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity. Amen.

* * *

5. Saint Proterius suffered martyrdom and died in 467, in the reign of Leo the Great.

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Basil the Confessor

Память преподобного отца нашего Василия Исповедника

Saint Basil lived in the reign of Leo the Isaurian, the iconoclast. Having left the world with its allurements, he entered a monastery and passed the monastic life in virtue. When there was persecution against the veneration of the holy icons, Saint Basil boldly resisted the iconoclasts. For this he was seized and subjected to many tortures; but, notwithstanding this, Basil rejected the heretical teaching of the iconoclasts and stood with Saint Procopius for the truth even to the shedding of his blood. Like the Venerable Procopius, he was lacerated over his whole body; then he was cast into prison, where he languished for a long time, until the death of the impious emperor. After the death of the tyrant, the Venerable Basil was released together with Saint Procopius and the other confessors, and he lived as before in ascetic labors, turning many to the Orthodox faith and instructing them in a virtuous life. After some years of God-pleasing life he was granted a blessed repose, and with prayer, thanksgiving, and ineffable joy he departed to the Lord[6], whom he had loved from earliest childhood.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Dweller in the wilderness, angel in the flesh and wonderworker wast thou made manifest, God-bearing Father our Basil; by fasting, vigil, and prayer thou didst receive heavenly gifts, healing the infirm and the souls of those who come to thee in faith. Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him who crowned thee; glory to Him who through thee worketh healing for all.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having received divine revelation from on high, thou didst go forth, O wise one, from the midst of worldly tumult; and having lived as a monk in a godly manner, thou didst receive the grace of working miracles and of healing infirmities, O most blessed and most holy Basil.

6. Saint Basil died about 750.

* * *

Commemoration of the holy Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydus

Память святого священномученика Нестора, епископа Магидийского

Saint Nestor was seized in his own house during prayer, in which he had been forewarned of his martyrdom by a vision of a ram; by Irinarchus, the governor of the city of Magydus (in the Asia Minor region of Pamphylia), he was personally presented in Pergia[7]. On the way, Saint Nestor was strengthened by an earthquake and by a voice from heaven. In Pergia, after terrible tortures, he ended his life on the cross during the persecution of Decius, in the year 250.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Women Marina and Kyra

Память преподобных жен Марины и Киры

The Venerable Marina and Kyra were from the city of Beroea[8], from parents of noble and well-known standing in the city. But they disregarded the nobility of their birth and, having reached mature age, withdrew outside the city, enclosed for themselves a small corner of land, and, walling up the entrance to their refuge with stones and clay and leaving only a small opening for the passing of their necessary food and for conversation with those who came, they began to labor in the enclosed place, in the open air. Glorifying God in their souls, the Venerable ones remained in silence at all times, interrupting it only one day in every fifty days. Beneath their wide monastic garments the saints wore very heavy iron chains upon their bodies, and they endured hunger and the sufferings arising from it with extraordinary patience. For three years in succession they took food only once in forty days. Once, setting out to venerate the Life-bearing Tomb of the

7. A city in Asia Minor.
8. The city of Beroea was located in Syria, east of the ancient capital of the Syrian kingdom, Antioch.

Lord, they took no food until they had completed the veneration, and on the return they traversed the whole distance of their way, which comprised 20 stadia, tasting nothing. They performed the same ascetic feat when they undertook a journey to the church of the holy Martyr Thecla. Having glorified themselves by such an ascetic life, these holy women at last passed over to the eternal life which they had so desired[9].

* * *



9. They died about 450.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF FEBRUARY

February 29

29 февраля

New Calendar February 29 · Old Calendar March 13 (civil dates)

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Cassian the Roman

Память преподобного отца нашего Кассиана Римлянина

Venerable Cassian was from Rome and was the son of noble and renowned parents. From his early youth he showed a love for learning and for the books of Holy Scripture. Distinguished by diligence and clarity of mind, he first studied philosophy and astronomy, and then turned to the reverent study of Holy Scripture, which he mastered so thoroughly that by his learning he was one of the outstanding men of his time. Moreover, he kept virginity and was distinguished by purity of soul, good conduct and other virtues. Leaving his homeland, he came to Constantinople to St. John Chrysostom. Having acquired from him still further knowledge and having learned the virtuous life, he withdrew to a skete. In one of the monasteries there, St. Cassian took upon himself the monastic life, surrendering himself wholly to obedience and to all the labors of the monastery, accustoming himself to the harsh monastic life that requires fasting and other ascetic feats. These feats awakened in him the desire for new and higher ones, and he went off to a desert place to live a life of silence there. St. Cassian struggled in this way for no little time, learning to understand temptation and wearing himself down with great labors. Desiring to receive greater benefit for himself from the other holy fathers, he left the place where he had kept complete silence and visited all the monasteries in Egypt, in the Thebaid, on the Mount of Nitria, in Asia, in Pontus and in Cappadocia. Having become acquainted, through his journeys, with the lives of many great fathers and having studied the various

forms of monastic ascetic struggle, St. Cassian founded two monasteries in Massilia, one for men and one for women. In addition to this, he wrote several books of instructive words, filled with edifying admonitions of wisdom and profit, so that everyone who reads them attentively and diligently may draw no small benefit for his soul and learn what the life and judgment of the holy author of these soul-profiting books were.[1] Venerable Cassian also wrote against Nestorius concerning the incarnation of the Word of God from the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos;[1672] by orthodoxly glorifying the Mother of God, the saint was well-pleasing to God, who was born of her. Having lived many years amid such labors and feats, and having given great benefit to monks through his writings, St. Cassian departed to the eternal abodes.[2]

* * *

Commemoration of Venerable John, named Barsanuphius

Память преподобного Иоанна, нареченного Варсанофия

Venerable John was a native of Palestine; at eighteen he was baptized and took upon himself the monastic habit, and he especially began to labor in fasting. For his virtuous life he was appointed archbishop of Damascus.[3] But, having not long remained on the archiepiscopal see, he noticed that the duties of his high position were hard to reconcile with monastic labors; therefore John left the episcopate and secretly withdrew from Damascus. Coming to Alexandria,[4]

1. Venerable Cassian is a teacher of the ascetic life. In the first of the 12 books "On the Institutes of the Coenobia" he speaks of the outward appearance of the monk, that is, of his garment; in the second, of the order of the night psalms and prayers; in the third, of the order of the daily prayers and psalms; in the fourth, of the order of renunciation of the world. In the 24 Conferences with the Fathers are contained the conversations of the desert fathers on various spiritual subjects. In the 13th Conference he discourses on grace.

2. St. Cassian died in 435, on July 23. The day of commemoration of Venerable Cassian, February 29, occurs only in a leap year. When February has 28 days, the service of St. Cassian is sung at Compline.

3. Damascus is the chief, richest trading city of Syria, one of the most ancient in the whole world; it lies to the northeast of Palestine, on the river Barada that flows through it, in a beautiful and fertile plain at the eastern foot of Anti-Lebanon. Even at the present time Damascus, which is part of the Turkish Empire, is one of the richest cities of Asia and has up to 150,000 inhabitants.

he renamed himself Barsanuphius, so that no one would recognize him and his true position would not be revealed. From Alexandria he set out, as a poor pilgrim, to the Mount of Nitria;[5] bowing down before the abbot of the monastery there, St. John asked him to accept him for the service of the brethren. The abbot accepted him and gave him the monastic garment. The saint began to serve the monks zealously; by day he was occupied with this work, and by night he remained sleepless in prayer. Early in the morning he gathered gourds and vessels from all the cells and went to the river; having drawn water, he brought it and set a vessel of water before each cell.

One of the monks, a man of feeble mind, greatly troubled the saint, at times giving him reproachful nicknames, at other times pouring slops over him. Incited by the devil, the unworthy monk bored through the wall of the cell where Venerable John lived, and through the opening he "performed a water-outflow" onto the saint's bed, so that it began to give off a stench.

Learning of this, the abbot summoned the brother in order to punish him. But Barsanuphius fell at the abbot's feet and, weeping, said that he himself was guilty in this:

"I myself," said the saint, "provoke the brother and stir up his anger; forgive him for the Lord's sake."

Thus he saved the brother from punishment. But after some time John was recognized by Venerable Theodore of Nitria, left the mountain and fled to Egypt. Here he displayed such a gift of foresight that he knew even the thoughts of men. He delivered the Church from heretics, wrote many soul-profiting books, and departed in peace in Christ Je-

4. Alexandria is a famous city founded by Alexander the Macedonian in 331 B.C. on the shore of the Mediterranean, in Lower (Northern) Egypt, at the mouth of the Nile. Alexandria was once the first city in the world and served as the center of trade, industry and especially of pagan learning, and in the first centuries of Christianity was the nursery of Christian enlightenment. Christianity was brought here, according to tradition, by the Evangelist Mark. (In Turkish and Arabic: Iskandery.) It belongs to the number of the most fortified port cities and the most important trading points on the Mediterranean, with a population of over 230,000 inhabitants.

5. The Mount of Nitria lies at a distance of a day's journey (25–30 versts) from the Nitrian Desert, which lies in the northwestern part of Egypt. This waterless, stony desert was a favorite place of the Egyptian hermits, who became famous for their ascetic feats. Here monks settled for the strictest solitude and unbroken silence, for the sake of abiding in the One God.

sus,[6] to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Theocteristus the Martyr, Abbot of Pelekete

Память святого мученика Феоктириста, игумена Пеликитского

In the 8th century, under Constantine Copronymus,[7] he suffered for the veneration of icons: his nose and hands were burned with pitch. St. Theocteristus was a participant in the sufferings of St. Stephen the New.

* * *

NOTES

1672. Nestorius was a heresiarch, a native of the Syrian city of Germanicia Caesarea on the Euphrates; neither his origin nor his year of birth is known; according to the testimony of his chief opponent, St. Cyril of Alexandria, "he came out of the mire and his origin was shameful." Having become Patriarch of Constantinople, he at first showed himself a zealous persecutor of heresies, but then unexpectedly himself proved to be a heretic. He began to declare in the church that the Most Holy Virgin Mary should not be called Theotokos, since she bore not God but only the man Jesus, who was only the dwelling-place of the Divinity and the instrument of our salvation; this man, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, became Christ, that is, the Anointed One, and the Word of God dwelt with him only in a special moral union. At the Third Ecumenical Council (431) the heresy of Nestorius was condemned, and he himself was exiled first to the monastery of Euprepius (near Antioch), and then to the remote Egyptian oasis of Ibis, where he died a few years later.

✠

6. Venerable John died in the second half of the 5th century. Emperor Leo, in 457, informed him, among other bishops, of the martyric death of Proterius (see February 28), Patriarch of Alexandria.

7. The reign of Constantine Copronymus (741–775) was the time of the highest development of the iconoclastic heresy in the Greek Church. At this time the most courageous defenders of the veneration of icons were monks, for which the emperor subjected them to cruel executions. According to the historian Nicephorus, monks had their heads broken on the very icons in whose defense they had come forward. In general, the persecution of the Orthodox under Copronymus recalled the times of Diocletian, the cruel pagan emperor and persecutor of Christians.

INDEX OF SAINTS AND FEASTS

A

Commemoration of a Certain God-fearing Hermit, 63

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Abraham, Bishop of Arvil, 62

Memory of St. Abraham, Bishop of Carrhae, 285

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Adrian and Eubulus, 34

Commemoration of St. Agapitus the Confessor, Bishop of Synada, 327

Memory of St. Agathon, Pope of Rome, 356

Commemoration of the Holy and Righteous Simeon the God-Receiver, 31

Memory of St. Anthony, Patriarch of Constantinople, 250

Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Archippus, Philemon and Apphia, 343

Memory of the Venerable Athanasius the Confessor, 396

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Azariah, 38

B

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Basil the Confessor, 480

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Blaise, 33

Commemoration of St. Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna, 117

C

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Cassian the Roman, 483

Commemoration of the Venerable Confessors Eugenius and Macarius, 347

Commemoration of the Venerable Cyril, Wonderworker of Novoozersk, 59

D

Memory of the Venerable Demetrius of Priluki, Wonderworker of Vologda, 220

E

Memory of the Holy Empress Theodora, 219

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Ennatha, Valentina and Paula, 207

Memory of the Venerable Erasmus of the Kiev Caves, 423

Memory of St. Eulogius, Archbishop of Alexandria, 272

Memory of Venerable Eusebius the Hermit, 293

F

First and Second Finding of the Precious Head of the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John, 413

Memory of our holy father Flavian the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople, 319

G

Memory of St. George, Bishop of Amastris, 359

I

Memory of Our Venerable Father Isidore of Pelusium, 42

J

Memory of the Venerable John, Antiochus, Antoninus and Moses, 409

Commemoration of Venerable John, named Barsanuphius, 484

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Julian, 117

L

Memory of Our Holy Father Leo, Pope of Rome, 313

Life and Passion of St. Onesimus, One of the Seventy Apostles, 288

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste, and of Others Who Suffered with Him, 209

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Proterius, Patriarch of Alexandria, 475

Life and Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, 397

Life of our holy father Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia, Wonderworker, 237

Life of Our Holy Father Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, 360

Life of Our Holy Father Leo, Bishop of Catania, 350

Life of Our Holy Father Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch, 227

Life of Our Holy Father Parthenius, Bishop of Lampsacus, 120

Life of Our Holy Father Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza, 443

Life of Our Holy Father Tarasius, Archbishop of Constantinople, 426

Life of our Holy Father Theodosius, Archbishop of Chernigov, 81

Life of Our Venerable Father Auxentius, 274

Life of Our Venerable Father Dositheus, Disciple of Venerable Dorotheus, 331

Life of our Venerable Father Isaac, Recluse of the Kiev Caves, 279

Life of Our Venerable Father Luke of Hellas, 132

Life of Our Venerable Father Martinian, and the Memory of the Holy Women Zoe and Photinia, 253

Life of Our Venerable Father Nicholas the Confessor, Abbot of Studion, 48

Life of Our Venerable Father Prochorus, Wonderworker of the Kiev Caves, 200

Life of the Holy Right-believing Prince Roman, Wonderworker of Uglich[^, 35

Life of the Venerable Mary, who ascetically labored in male guise under the name Marina, and of her father the Venerable Eugenius, 243

Life of the Venerable Titus, Presbyter of the Kiev Caves, 471

M

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyrs Marcellus, Bishop of Sicily, and Philagrius, Bishop of Cyprus, 184

Memory of the Holy Mariamne, 311

Memory of the Venerable Maron, 285

Commemoration of the holy martyrs Martha and Mary, and their brother the holy martyr, the youth Licarion, 118

Martyrdom of the Hieromartyr Haralampius, Bishop of Magnesia, and with him the Martyrs Porphyrius and Baptus, and Three Women Martyrs, 185

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs, the Thousand and Three, who suffered at Nicomedia, 154

Commemoration of St. Maruthas, Bishop, and of the holy martyrs who suffered in Martyropolis, 301

Passion of the Holy Martyr Maurice and of His Son Photinus, and with Them Seventy Soldiers, 385

N

Commemoration of the holy Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydus, 481

Passion of the Holy Martyr Nicephorus, 179

P

Commemoration of the holy Martyr Perpetua, and with her the holy youths Satyrus, Revocatus, Saturninus, Secundus, and the holy woman Felicitas, 18

Passion of the Holy Martyr Phausta, Maiden, and with Her Eulasius and Maximus, 98

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Procopius of Decapolis, Confessor, 467

R

Commemoration of Venerable Rabbula, 345

Uncovering of the Relics of the Holy Martyr Mina Kallikeladas, 312

Memory of the Holy Right-believing Prince Vsevolod, named Gabriel in Holy Baptism, 222

S

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Sadoc, Bishop of Persia, and with him 128 Martyrs, 353

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Agatha, 68

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Dorothea, and with her Christina, Callista and Theophilus, 105

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Papias, Diodore and Claudian, 38

Sufferings of the Holy Twelve Martyrs, Pamphilus the Presbyter and Those with Him, 295

Memory of the Venerable Symeon the Myrrh-gusher, King of Serbia, 271

T

Tale of the Meeting of the Lord, 22

Commemoration of the Venerable Thalaleus, 468

Memory of the Venerable Thalassius, Hermit of Syria, 394

Commemoration of St. Theocteristus the Martyr, Abbot of Pelekete, 486

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates, 158

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Tyro, 303

Passion of the Holy Martyr Theodulia, 77

Memory of Our Venerable Father Timothy, Hermit in Symbola, 358

Passion of the Holy Martyr Tryphon, 7

V

Memory of the Venerable Varadatus, Hermit of Syria, 395

Memory of the Venerable Vendimian, Hermit of Bithynia, 17

W

Commemoration of the Venerable Women Marina and Kyra, 481

Z

Memory of the Holy Prophet Zechariah the Sickle-bearer, 171

Memory of the Venerable Zevinus, Polychronius, Moses and Damian, 410