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

Март

MARCH

Book III

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

The Lives of the Saints, March. 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.

The English translation is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0), creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0.

Read online, with audio: saints.theuncreatedlight.com

Built November 2026.

CONTENTS

March 1. Life and Sufferings of the Holy Venerable Martyr Eudocia 7
March 2. Passion of St. Theodotus, Hieromartyr, Bishop of Kyrenia 45
March 3. Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus 67
March 4. Life of Our Venerable Father Gerasimus, Who Lived on the Jordan 80
March 5. Life and Passion of the Holy Martyr Conon of Isauria. 119
March 6. Suffering of the Holy Venerable Martyr Conon and of His Son Conon, Who Suffered at Iconium 136
March 7. Sufferings of the Holy Hieromartyrs Ephraim, Basil, Eugene, Elpidius, Agathodorus, Eferius and Capito, who at various times were bishops in Cherson 163
March 8. Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Theodoret, Presbyter of Antioch 173
March 9. Suffering of the Holy Forty Martyrs, in Sebaste of Armenia 182
March 10. Passion of the Holy Martyr Quadratus and Those with Him . . . 198
March 11. Commemoration of our Holy Father Sophronius the Wise, Patriarch of Jerusalem 228
March 12. Life of Our Holy Father Theophanes the Confessor 258
March 13. Translation of the Honorable Relics of Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople 286
March 14. Life of Our Venerable Father Benedict 291
March 15. Memory of the Holy Martyrs Agapius, Publius, Timolaus, Romulus, Alexander, Alexander, Dionysius, and Dionysius 315
March 16. Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Aristobulus 321
March 17. Life of Venerable Alexis, Man of God 329
March 18. Memory of Our Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem . . 361
March 19. Passion of the Holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria 378
March 20. Sufferings of Our Venerable Fathers John, Sergius and Patricius 399
March 21. Memory of Our Venerable Father James, Bishop and Confessor 415

March 22. Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Basil, Presbyter of Ancyra . 419
March 23. Life and Passion of Saint Nikon, Hieromartyr 433
March 24. Commemoration of our Father among the Saints Artemon, Bishop of Seleucia 452
March 25. Sermon on the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos. 458
March 26. Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel. 472
March 27. Life of our Venerable Father John the Seer, Hermit and Recluse of Egypt 547
March 28. Life and Sufferings of Our Venerable Father Eustratius of the Kiev Caves 567
March 29. Suffering of Our Venerable Father Mark, Bishop of Arethusa. . 578
March 30. Life of Our Venerable Father John Climacus 587
March 31. Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Hypatius the Wonderworker, Bishop of Gangra 603
Index of Saints and Feasts 653

THE FIRST DAY OF MARCH

March 1

1 марта

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

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Venerable Martyr Eudocia

Житие и страдание святой преподобной мученицы Евдокии

In the reign of Trajan[1], in the city of Heliopolis[2], in Coele-Syria[3], in the region of Lebanese Phoenicia[4], bordering on the land of the Jews, there lived a maiden named Eudocia. By birth and by faith she was a Samaritan[1683]. Beguiling many with her great beauty, she ruthlessly drew them to perdition, gathering by fleshly impurity, that easy means of gain, her shameful store from the riches of those lands. Her face was so beautiful that even an artist would have found it difficult to portray that beauty. Report of her spread on every side, and a multitude of noble youths, and even men of authority from other lands and cities, flocked to Heliopolis, ostensibly on other business, but in truth only to behold and to take their pleasure in the beauty of Eudocia, who by her sinful deeds had gathered wealth almost equal to the imperial treasury. And through this long gathering of treasures Eudocia had so deadened her soul in her impure life, and so hardened her heart in obduracy, that no power other than the Divine could heal the hopeless sickness of soul of this desperate sinner. Yet the time came when the hand of the Good Shepherd, seeking the straying sheep and delivering

1. The Roman emperor Trajan reigned from A.D. 98 to 117.
2. Heliopolis – Heliopolis, the city of the sun.
3. Coele-Syria – "hollow Syria" – a low-lying strip of land in the Lebanon mountains to the north of Palestine.
4. Lebanese Phoenicia – the eastern part of Phoenicia, adjoining the Lebanon mountains; Phoenicia proper occupies the northwestern part of Palestine, adjoining the Mediterranean Sea. Its principal cities – Tyre, Sidon, Sarepta – are mentioned in the Gospel.

it from perdition, reached out to her as well: the Creator looked upon His creation, corrupted by the malice of the devil, and desired to renew it. The true Householder took thought for the fruits of His vineyard, which were subject to the plundering of the enemy. The Lord of heavenly treasures hastened to receive into the eternal treasury the drachma lying in the mire of the earth and perishing. The Keeper of the good things awaited by the righteous called this desperate Samaritan woman to His perfect hope, and left the devil put to shame. He made her, who once lay in the swamp like cattle, undefiled like a lamb; the former vessel of impurity was filled with purity; the dunghill ditch became a clean, untroubled spring; the filthy stream was transformed into a fragrant lake; the stench of a rotten and fetid well proved to be an alabaster vessel of costly myrrh; she who for many had been a spiritual death became for many in her turn the cause of salvation. Thus began the turning of this great sinner to God.

A monk named German, returning through Heliopolis from a journey to his monastery, came into the city in the evening and stopped at the house of an acquaintance, a Christian who lived near the city gates, his room adjoining the wall of the house of the maiden of whom we speak. The monk, after sleeping a little, rose in the night as was his custom to sing the Psalms, and when he had finished the appointed rule, he sat down, took a little book which he carried in his bosom, and read in it for a long time. The book told of the Last Judgment of God, and that the righteous would shine like the sun in the Kingdom of Heaven, while sinners would go into unquenchable fire, where they would be delivered to cruel torments forever. On that very night Eudocia, by Divine providence, was alone. The bedchamber in which she had shut herself adjoined the wall behind which the monk was occupied in prayer and reading. When the monk began his psalmody, Eudocia at once awoke, and lying on her bed listened to all of the reading to its very end. She could hear everything the monk read, for only one wall, and that not a thick one, separated them, the more so since the monk read aloud. Listening to the reading, the sinner was greatly moved to compunction, and did not sleep until dawn, trembling in heart as she pondered the multitude of her sins, the Last Judgment, and the unbear-

able torment of sinners. As soon as day came, she (under the action of Divine grace, which stirred her to repentance) bade them summon to her the one who had read the book in the night, and when he came, she asked him:

"What manner of man are you, and whence? How do you live, and what is your faith? I beg you, tell me the whole truth. Having heard what you read in the night, I am troubled, and my soul is wearied, for I have heard something dreadful and wonderful, hitherto unknown to me. And if it is true that sinners are given to the fire, then who can be saved?"

The Blessed German said to her:

"Lady! What faith do you hold, if you have never heard of the Last Judgment of God and do not understand the meaning of the words I have read?"

"By my country and by my faith," said Eudocia, "I am a Samaritan; my wealth is immeasurable, and I am especially disturbed and terrified by the woe and the eternal and unquenchable fire with which the book you read threatens the rich. In the books of our faith I have never met such words, and therefore I was much alarmed, hearing something new and unexpected."

The Blessed German asked:

"Do you have a husband, lady? And whence comes your immeasurable wealth, as you say?"

"I have no lawful husband," she answered, "and my wealth was gathered from many men. And if the rich are condemned after death to such grievous and everlasting torment, then what profit is my wealth to me?"

German said to her:

"Tell me the true answer (for Christ, whom I serve, is without falsehood and true): would you be saved without riches and live happily, in gladness and joy, for endless ages? Or would you with your wealth be cruelly tormented in the eternal fire?"

"Far better for me to obtain eternal life without wealth," answered Eudocia, "than to perish forever with it. But I wonder, why will the

rich be so punished after death? Does your God really harbor such cruel and implacable hatred toward the rich?"

"No," said German, "God does not turn away from the rich, nor forbid them to be rich; but He hates the unrighteous acquisition of wealth and the use of wealth for a life of sinful pleasures and lusts; therefore, if anyone acquires wealth by lawful means and spends what he has acquired on good works, he is without sin and righteous before God; but he who gathers wealth by theft, robbery and injustice, or in general by any sinful deed, who keeps his wealth in his treasuries, not showing mercy to the poor, not giving to those who ask, not clothing the naked, not feeding the hungry, shall have torment without mercy."

Eudocia asked:

"Does my wealth not seem to you unrighteous?"

German answered:

"Truly it is unrighteous, and more hateful to God than any sin."

Then she said:

"Why so? For I have clothed many who were naked, fed many who were hungry to the full, and to some I have given help even with gold. How then do you call wealth an evil?"

"Lady," said German, "hear me attentively: no one who goes to the bath to wash will want to plunge his body into water that is foul, murky, loathsome and stinking, but washes where the water is clean. How can you be cleansed from the stinking and abominable defilement of sin by some deeds of mercy alone, when you wallow in it of your own will and at the same time despise the pure water of God's mercy? In any case, this swamp of sinful defilement, like a flood, will cast you with great force into a pit of sulphur and pitch, burning with the eternal flame of the wrath of God. For the wealth that is so great in you is hateful to the great Lord and the eternal Judge, and was already condemned before the Last Judgment, as gained in delusion and fornication. Nor will it help you in any way that from this great but foul and sinful wealth you sometimes gave a small part to a few poor; for the reward of this small virtue is destroyed by the immeasurable multitude of evil deeds, just as a fine fragrance is drowned out by a strong stench. No, you will never receive any grace as long as you voluntarily remain

in uncleanness, and you will not be vouchsafed the mercy of God otherwise than by rejecting your immeasurable sinful stench, washing yourself with tears of repentance, and adorning yourself with righteous deeds. As one who walks barefoot over thorns has many sharp splinters, so that even if some are drawn out, many remain in the body and cause torment; so the small alms you once gave to a beggar, even if it helps you to destroy some small sin, the greatest thorn of sin remains upon your conscience and will lead you to the heaviest torment. Terrible and righteous is the Recompenser, God, who is angered by you and threatens you with eternal and unbearable torments prepared for unrepentant sinners. But if you are willing to hear me, you can be saved from the torments awaiting you and receive eternal joy."

Eudocia said:

"Servant of the living God, I beg you, stay with me a little, and tell me in detail of those works by which one may be vouchsafed the mercy of God, so that I too, following that pattern, may obtain salvation. I am ready to use my wealth for good works. You said that God loves the righteous and virtuous distribution of wealth; and nothing hinders me, even with some diminution of my household possessions, from delivering myself from those torments which, by your words, those hated by God must endure on the day of judgment. Behold, honest father, I have many servants. Under your leadership I will lead them, laden with gold, silver and precious things, to your God, if only He, through your intercession, be pleased to accept my offering and grant me salvation."

"Do not judge God," said German to her, "by human customs. Do not think that He needs those trifling things which are precious to men. For He, being infinitely richer than all the kings of the earth, of His own will became poor for our sake, so that by this grievous poverty He might purchase for us eternal salvation. My daughter, distribute your wealth to the sick and the needy, for they are beloved of God. Whatever is given to them by anyone He counts as given to Himself, and for the temporal possessions bestowed upon the poor He repays with heavenly treasures that never fail. Do this, and then draw near to the holy and saving font of baptism. Once you are washed from the defilement of all your sins, you will be pure and undefiled. You will be born again by the

grace of the Holy Spirit and will receive a blessed portion, where you will delight in the imperishable and eternal light, where there is no sorrow, no sickness, and no wickedness. You will be a holy lamb, pastured on the heavenly meadows by Jesus Christ, our Savior. In a word: if you wish to be saved, my daughter, do as I counsel you, and you will be blessed for ever."

Eudocia answered:

"If the words you read, which I heard so clearly last night, had not been imprinted on my mind, I would not have summoned you here at all. Take from me, Father, as much gold as you wish, and remain here a few days, instructing me in your Christian faith and guiding me in virtue, so that once I have given away my riches and my estate and arranged everything properly, I may follow you wherever you go."

The Blessed German said to this:

"I have no need of gold. Hope for your salvation is enough for me, and this is sufficient reason for me to delay here a few days, if I find the lost sheep and bring her into the fold of Christ. Therefore, although I was hastening to my monastery, I will remain here a little while for the sake of your turning to God. As for you, do everything that I say: summon one of the Christian presbyters who live in this city, and let him instruct you and baptize you according to the rite of the Church, for in this lies the beginning and foundation of salvation. After that, all the other God-pleasing practices will follow in their proper order."

Hearing this from the blessed elder, Eudocia summoned one of the servants of her household and ordered him to go at once to the Christian church and ask the presbyter to come immediately to one who required him. She forbade him to say who was asking or why. The presbyter came quickly. On seeing him, Eudocia bowed down to the ground before him, kissed his feet, and said:

"I beg you, my lord, tell me about your faith. I too wish to become a Christian."

The presbyter, astonished at such words, asked Eudocia:

"What is your faith, that you desire to pass over to the right-believing Christian faith?"

She answered:

"I am a Samaritan, both by birth and by faith, and I have been the wife of the whole world. In one word I will confess to you the whole truth: I am a sea of many evils. When I heard that sinners who do not repent and become Christians will be tormented after death in eternal fire, I resolved in my mind to become a Christian."

The presbyter said to this:

"If you were a sea of sins, be now a haven of salvation. If you were tossed by many winds, enter now into the quiet harbor. If you were subjected to violent agitation, now seek the morning dew that descends from heaven. If you were submerged by a long flood, seek henceforth a good helmsman, who may guide you safely into his quiet harbor, where are the treasures of all righteousness. Take care to become an heir of the blessings found there. Distribute your earthly wealth to those in need, and free yourself from sinful sorrow, and at the same time from the darkness and the unquenchable fire that await you if you do not repent."

Eudocia, hearing this, wept, and striking her breast, said:

"Is it true that your God has no mercy for sinners?"

The presbyter answered:

"To sinners who repent, once they have received the sign of faith, that is, holy baptism, the Lord forgives all the sins of their former life, the life of unbelief. But for those who remain in their sins and do not think of repentance there is no forgiveness, and such will be tormented without mercy."

"Tell me, presbyter," asked Eudocia, "do you think there is in heaven anything greater and better than what is on earth? For we indeed have a great abundance of gold, silver and precious stones, of every kind of pleasure and delight. Besides, there is plenty of fish and birds, and an immeasurable quantity of every sort of food and drink. What could there be in heaven greater than all this?"

"If you do not turn your mind away from the seductions of this world," the presbyter said to her, "and do not feel contempt for temporal pleasures, you will not be able to fix your gaze on eternal life, nor to know those ineffable delights and inexpressible riches that are there.

But if you wish to receive them, forget the pride and joys of this life, and do not dwell on the sweetnesses of this world."

Eudocia answered:

"Far be it, my lord, that I should love anything temporal and soon perishing more than the immortal and blessed life. But this is what I wish to be assured of, Father: can I, once I have accepted the Christian faith, have a firm and certain hope that I shall come to that immortal life of which you speak? And what proof will you give me, so that I may be convinced of the truth of your words? And finally, how shall I learn of the forgiveness of my many sins by your God? For if I distribute to those in need the riches I possess, which are more than enough for every pleasure and delight for many years of my life, as you advise me, and then do not receive what you have promised, what could be more grievous and more painful than this last calamity, from which I shall have no way out? For the people whom I have wronged by my ill treatment would turn away from me with contempt if I tried to ask them for help in my misfortune. That is why I grieve and am troubled, because I am not sufficiently assured of the future. I should like to have greater knowledge and certainty of what you promise with such generosity, appealing to the mercy of your God, who readily forgives the sins of those who repent. If I become fully convinced of this, I shall calmly give away all my estate and go where you call me, and I shall serve the One God all the days of my life. And as before I was a model of lawlessness to many, so now I shall be the best model of repentance. Do not be surprised, Father, at my doubts. I hear all this for the first time; it is new and unexpected. In our books and in the Samaritan faith in which I was brought up, I have never heard such teaching, nor have I even found a trace of it."

The presbyter said to her:

"Do not be troubled, do not waver in your thoughts, Eudocia! Do not let your mind be scattered. What troubles you is a stratagem of the prince of malice and the envier of your salvation, the devil. This malicious spirit, as soon as he saw that you were awakening to serve Christ, at once, to destroy this good intention, raised such doubts in your heart. He hopes through fear to turn you from the right path and to

strengthen you again in your former sinful life, so that, shamefully binding you with attachment to worldly pleasures and lusts and utterly enslaving you to himself, he may draw you into death and perdition. For his crafty design, his sole and zealous effort, is to turn people away from the good way, to lead them into corruption, and so to make them partners in his eternal torment in unquenchable fire. But our Lord God, in whose goodness, ineffable mercy and love for mankind you wish to be assured, is ready, as you have already heard, to receive the repentant from afar, as a father does, with outstretched arms, and, having forgiven their sins, to grant them eternal life. You will be assured of this if you raise your mind from the earth on high, if, leaving aside temporal cares, you meditate on eternal life. But for this recollected and humble prayer is needed, for only in this way is God reconciled with the soul, and in the soul is perceived the divine light which reveals the whole truth. A person then sees clearly what is the nothingness of this brief world, and what the age to come is, how destructive the pleasures of this life are, and how good the Lord is, and how immeasurable His mercy. So then, if you only wish to be saved, listen to me: cast off your precious garments, clothe yourself in poor ones, and, shutting yourself in a secluded chamber of your house, remain there for seven days, recalling your sins and confessing them with tears before God, your Creator. Fast and pray to our Lord Jesus Christ to enlighten and instruct you as to what you must do to please Him. Believe me, you will not do in vain all that I advise you. Our Master is merciful and of boundless compassion, and He meets with His grace from afar those who are concerned to turn to Him, for He always rejoices at the repentance of a sinner."

Seeing that Eudocia agreed to his counsel, the presbyter rose and departed, saying to her at parting, as if prophetically, such consoling words:

"May Christ God, who justified the publican and showed mercy to the sinful woman who wept at His feet, justify and show mercy to you also, and make your name glorious throughout all the earth. Amen."

As soon as the presbyter had gone, the blessed Eudocia at once summoned her maidservant and said to her:

If anyone should wish to see me and comes here intending to enter, take care that he does not learn that I am at home; let no one, on any account, speak to him about me; say that I have gone to a distant village on some business and shall remain there a considerable time. Strictly order the doorkeeper, too, to admit no one here. Let all the ordinary work and occupations in my house cease, and let those who prepare my daily dinner no longer bring it here from now on. Shut also the large gates of the house until I give orders to open them again, and do everything as though I were not at home.

Having given these orders to her maidservant, she said to the Blessed German:

"I beg you, Father, explain to me what I am about to ask you: why do you monks live in desert places, shunning the pleasures of social life? Do you find greater delight in the deserts?"

"No, my child," answered the Blessed German, "we find in the deserts none of the things you consider pleasures. We leave the cities and worldly delights and retreat into the deserts solely in order to escape vain pride and to mortify carnal lusts by hunger, thirst, labor, coarse rags, and lack of everything needful; in a word, to be as far as possible from all places that offer opportunities for sin. One who lives in a city very easily falls into sin, either overcome by the weakness of nature, or enticed by the devil, or tempted by the sight of beautiful faces and by hearing lewd speech. From this arise impure thoughts, which defile the soul. And for a defiled soul the entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven is closed until it is cleansed by repentance, for heaven is the throne of eternal light, true joy, and unfailing delights, a throne having no darkness, sorrows, or griefs, nor any evil deeds. You see, then, why we go out into the desert: we wish to keep ourselves from sin in the days of our life that remain, and to cleanse our former transgressions by the austerity of life in the desert, thereby making our way to that blessedness easier. All our efforts and cares are directed to keeping our bodies undefiled and our minds unharmed by evil thoughts, and free from all malice, guile, hypocrisy, murmuring and slander, envy, fury, and anger. In this way we shall become like the Angels, as Christ declared to us through His holy lips in the Gospel. Wealth, however a

man may cling to it and however insatiably he may gather it, will in no way help him to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven: like a corpse lying in a coffin, it offers no assistance. Therefore, if we wish to receive forgiveness of our sins, let us strive in the remaining time of our life to walk in the way of the commandments of the Lord, along the paths of righteousness and truth; let us rend our hearts, as one rends a garment, by contrition for our sins, and let us unceasingly cry out to God. In this way we shall cleanse the sinful filth of which David speaks: 'My wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness' (Ps. 37:6). And that we may always sing the words of the Lord in prayer, the same David recalls: 'How sweet are thy words to my throat! Sweeter than honey to my mouth' (Ps. 118:103). So sweet are the words of the Lord that they surpass all the sweetness of the sweetest foods and the costliest drinks, and they strengthen the soul far more than food strengthens the body. Therefore the Divine Scripture also says of them: 'Wine gladdens the heart of man, and bread strengthens the heart of man' (Ps. 103:15), signifying by that wine and bread the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are truly as bread and wine to the human soul, for if a man diligently and unceasingly learns from them, they, giving strength and gladness to the heart, free the sinner from all foul deeds and justify him before the Lord. Therefore, put off your fine clothing and clothe yourself in the most modest attire; with all your mind turn to repentance through good works. Sow on earth abundant tears, that you may reap joy and eternal gladness in heaven. Quench with tears the flame of your sins, and you shall be granted comfort from the Lord and enter into the joy of the righteous. Weep over your iniquities, which the devil made sweet to your heart, and may the Angel, the intercessor for salvation, draw near to you because of your tears. Dry up the foul filth of corruption in which you have lain so long, the filth that clung to you and held you in the power of the author of all evil, so that from this time you may become a partaker of paradisal delight. Repay, and burden with grief, him who, enticing you with lusts, weighed you down with sins. Labor diligently for God, that you may appear as heir of the unfading light, and, like a bee, be a good worker,

gathering righteousness from many holy deeds and unceasingly caring to please God."

This speech of German sank deeply into the heart of Eudocia, already prepared by what he had said to her before. Grieving over her sins, in tenderness of heart she fell at his feet, saying:

"I beg you, man of God, complete the work you have begun for me with fitting honor, and present me pure to your God, lest I become a laughingstock to those who desire to beguile me; and, having finished the work begun, may I be granted blessedness through your saving teaching. Do not take your skilled hand from the prepared board until you have fully depicted Christ in me."

German answered her:

"Abide, my child, in the fear of the Lord, and, shut in your chamber, pray to Him unceasingly with tears until He destroys and cleanses all your sins and gives you assured confidence in His mercy. Good and merciful is our Lord Jesus Christ; soon He will show you His mercy and will not delay to comfort you with His grace."

Having said this, the Blessed German prayed to God, made the sign of the Cross over Eudocia, and shut her in her bedchamber, promising to remain in Heliopolis for her for seven days.

When Eudocia had spent seven days in fasting and prayer, the Blessed German came to her and, opening the doors, bade her come out of the bedchamber. Seeing that she had become pale of face and wasted of body, that her gaze was humble, and that her appearance differed greatly from what it had been, he took her by the hand and bade her sit down. Then, having prayed to God, he himself sat with her and began to ask her:

"Tell me, my child, what you have considered in these seven days, what you have learned, what you have seen, what has been revealed to you?"

She said:

"I will tell you everything, holy father. I prayed diligently all seven days, as you taught me. In the past night, when I was again lying prostrate on the ground in the form of a cross, praying and weeping over my sins, a great light shone upon me, surpassing the light of the rays of

the sun. I thought it was the sun rising, rose from the ground, and suddenly saw a bright and terrible youth, whose garments were whiter than snow. Taking me by the right hand, he lifted me into the air and, setting me upon a cloud, led me toward heaven. And there was a great and most wondrous light, and I saw an innumerable multitude of white-robed ones, rejoicing, smiling at one another, and rejoicing beyond words. When they saw me approaching them, they met me with exultation and greeted me joyfully as a sister. But when I, surrounded and accompanied by them, wished to enter that bright region, which far surpassed the light of the sun's rays, suddenly there appeared in the air someone terrible in appearance, black as soot, coal, and pitch. It was a monster surpassing all blackness and darkness.

Fixing upon me a most dreadful and furious gaze, gnashing his teeth and shamelessly attacking, he tried to tear me from the hands of my escort; and in doing so he cried out loudly, so that his voice resounded through the whole air:

"Can it be," he cried, "that you wish to bring her into the Kingdom of Heaven? For what purpose, then, have I laboured so diligently upon earth in the snaring of men, if my toil is to be spent in vain? This woman, for instance, has polluted the whole earth with fornication and corrupted all people by the abomination of her adultery. All the cunning and strength that I possessed I have expended upon her alone: I procured for her lovers from among the noblest and wealthiest men, and that in countless number; and from the riches squandered upon her love she amassed such a quantity of gold and silver as can scarcely be found even in the treasuries of kings. I proudly thought that I held her in my hands as my victorious banner and my invincible weapon, by whose means I could triumph over men who fall away from God and fall into my nets. And now, what is this? Have you come to such fury against me, O commander-in-chief of God's Powers, that you cast me down beneath the feet of this harlot? Has not your wrath against me been appeased by the fact that you avenge yourself upon me more and more pitilessly with each passing day? Do you indeed wish to take from me even this my true servant, whom I bought at so dear a price? Surely nothing now remains upon earth that is truly and inalienably mine! I

fear that you will snatch out of my hands all the sinners who still live, and present them to God as worthy to be heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven! My cares are in vain! My labour is fruitless! Why do you assail me so fiercely? Lay aside your fury, and loosen a little the bonds with which I am bound, and you shall see how in the twinkling of an eye I will destroy the human race from the earth and leave not even its heirs. I was cast down from heaven for a single act of disobedience, and yet you bring into the Kingdom of Heaven the most wicked of sinners, who have dared to mock God and have grievously provoked Him for many years! If this pleases you so much, then gather rather, in a single hour, from all the ends of the earth, all those who lead not a human but a bestial, brutish life, and bring them all to God; and I will withdraw into darkness and sink wholly into the abyss of the eternal torments prepared for me."

While he spoke such words and words like them, in fierce anger and with great rage, the one who led me regarded him sternly, and turning to me smiled encouragingly. And there was heard a voice from that light, saying:

"So it pleases God, who is merciful toward the sons of men, that sinners, if they bring repentance, shall be received into the bosom of Abraham."

And again there was a voice to him who led me:

"I speak to you, Michael, keeper of My Covenant: lead this woman back to the place whence you took her, that she may accomplish her struggle; for I Myself shall be with her all the days of her life."

And he at once set me in my bedchamber and said to me:

"Peace be to you, servant of God Eudocia! Take courage and be strong; the grace of God is now with you, and shall be always, in every place."

Encouraged by these words, I asked:

"My lord, who are you? Tell me, that I may know how to believe in the true God and how I may receive the true life."

"I," he answered, "am the chief of the Angels of God, and am charged with caring for repentant sinners, receiving them and bringing them into blessed and endless life. And great joy arises in heaven

among the Angelic host whenever some sinner turns to the pure light of repentance; for God, the Father of all, does not desire that the human soul should perish, which He from of old created with His most pure hands after the likeness of His image. Therefore the Angels all rejoice together when they see a human soul adorned with righteousness, worshipping the eternal Father; and they all greet her as their sister, for, having rejected the darkness of sin, she turns to the living God, the common Father of all the sons of light, and is joined to Him irrevocably."

Having said this, he made the sign of the Cross over me; I bowed down to him to the ground, and while I was bowing he withdrew into the heavens.

Blessed German said to her:

"Be assured henceforth, my daughter, and doubt no longer that there is in heaven the true God, ready to receive those who repent of their sins and to bring them into His eternal light, where He reigns, surrounded by the servants of His Kingdom, the holy Angels. You saw these Angels in that heavenly light, where you beheld the royal and immortal glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and became convinced how prompt He is in mercy and in the forgiveness of sins, how swiftly He bestows His grace upon those who desire to be reconciled with Him. You came to know His Divine glory and saw His heavenly court, full of unspeakable beauty, where He dwells; you understood how small and insignificant is the light of this world compared with the heavenly radiance. What more do you think, of what do you still reflect? Tell me!"

Blessed Eudocia, having an unwavering purpose to serve the One God, the King of glory, with all her heart, answered:

"I have believed and do believe that there is no other God who saves sinful men, save Him whose gates of heaven, shining with ineffable light, I have seen."

German said:

"Prepare yourself, my daughter, for diligent service to God; take careful thought that the fruits of your repentance, laid upon the scales, may outweigh the sins of your former life; and offer yourself to the immortal and eternal God as an acceptable gift. Weep and lament until

you have wholly washed away all your defilements with tears, and so become worthy to be a pure bride of Christ. Forget your former pride, and the harmful and savage passions of your youth, that Christ too may in turn forget your sins; free your neck from the heavy yoke of shameful labour which the devil laid upon you through sins; take upon yourself the good and light burden of life-giving repentance, and be henceforth free from sin and known to all the righteous and to the holy Angels. Therefore strengthen yourself in true faith and chastity, and having from now on a clean conscience, boldly say to the devil's face: 'Now there is nothing in common between me and you, nor between you and me, for I have found my true Lord, and to Him I have given myself in eternal possession; I have utterly left and cast off my former corrupter, carnal love, and have clothed myself in the new, incorruptible and bright garment of righteousness. In this garment I shall obtain the grace of God that saves me forever; I have no longer any earthly attachment, no inclination to worldly pleasures, whose emptiness and transience I have come to know; I desire now and diligently strive for the acquisition of heavenly goods. Therefore, devil, keep what you have; but from me, alien seducer, thief and slave of eternal darkness, depart further!'"

Eudocia, strengthened still more by these words, said to the monk:

"Honoured father, what now do you bid me do?"

"I wish," he answered, "that you first receive the sign of faith, holy Baptism, which will keep you unharmed all the days of your life; and I, with God's help, will go to my monastery and return to you again, if it pleases the Lord."

With tears she began to entreat him:

"Do not leave me, my lord, do not leave me until I am able fully to turn to God and receive the grace of Him that I await, lest the primordial seducer, seeing me abandoned and helpless, should somehow again lead me away wherever he pleases and return me to my former dissolute life."

And blessed German said to her:

"This earnest striving toward a better life, which God Himself has awakened in you, and your good hope shall preserve you from the en-

emy's nets, which you fear. Remain, then, for some time longer in humble prayer to God and in the confession of your sins, and take care to receive holy Baptism. I shall soon return to you, having sought, with the help of the Holy Spirit, what is profitable for your life."

Commending her to God, blessed German went on his way. After German's departure, blessed Eudocia remained for several days longer in fasting, having nothing at her table but bread, oil and water; day and night she prayed and wept. Then, going to the bishop of that city, she received from him Baptism in the name of the Holy Consubstantial Trinity. A few days after her enlightenment she wrote a prayerful letter to the same bishop; she informed him of her wealth, enumerating it in detail, and asked that the bishop take it for Christ. The bishop, having read the letter sent to him, summoned blessed Eudocia to himself and asked:

"Did you, my daughter, write this paper to me, a sinner?"

"I wrote it," answered Eudocia, "and now again I beseech your holiness: command the church steward to accept my gift, and distribute it to the poor and needy, the orphans and widows, as you yourselves know best, for I have become convinced that these riches of mine are unrighteous, as acquired through lawlessness."

Then the bishop, whose name was Theodotus, seeing her good intention, as well as her faith and love toward God, looked upon her and, discerning with his spirit her future manner of life, said:

Pray for me, my sister in the Lord, who have been deemed worthy to be called the Bride of Christ; you who hated impure carnal love, loved purity, and rejected a life of fornication; you who imitated virginal chastity and sold the worthless world in order to purchase for yourself the one heavenly pearl; you who spent a short time in the deceit of sin, and by repentance obtained for yourself the endless ages of heavenly life, who had death already before your eyes and acquired immortality; you who formerly drew many to destruction, and now, through Christ, shall likewise bring many to life! Clothed in the light of faith after emerging from murky darkness, you are worthy to be called a lamb of Christ. Truly, you are Eudocia, whose name means “good will”: the Lord showed His good will toward you, who despised sensual

people and loved the company of the Angels. Pray for me, I beseech you again, servant and friend of God, and remember me in the heavenly Kingdom.

After conversing with her at length amid tears, the bishop said to his deacon:

"Call to me quickly the one who is in charge of the church hospice."

When he came, the bishop addressed him thus:

"I know you to be a pious and God-fearing man, caring for many souls. Therefore I entrust to you this handmaid of God also, who strives for what is better, that you may care for her salvation, and all that she gives you shall be offered to God through the hands of the poor."

This man was a presbyter by rank; from his very youth he had preserved pure virginity, given all his possessions, inherited from his parents, to the holy Church of God, and devoted himself to the service of the Lord. Taking Eudocia with him, he went to her house, and when they had entered, Eudocia summoned the stewards of her household and said to them:

"Bring me each of you all that has been entrusted to you."

They immediately brought her two myriads of gold, that is, twenty thousand; an innumerable quantity of fine vessels of every kind; precious stones and royal pearls without number; two hundred and seventy-five chests of silk garments; four hundred and ten chests of white linen garments; sixty chests of garments woven with gold; one hundred and fifty-two chests of other garments adorned with precious stones and gold embroidery; twenty-five myriads of coined gold, that is, two hundred and fifty thousand; twenty boxes of fragrant aromatic substances; thirty-three caskets of genuine Indian unguents; eight thousand litrae of silver in various vessels[5]; one hundred and thirty-two litrae of silk fabrics embroidered with gold; seventy litrae of plain silk fabrics; and an innumerable quantity of other garments and belongings of lesser value. Besides these movable riches, Eudocia also possessed immovable property: lands, villages, and whole districts, which yielded

5. A litra was a unit of weight equal to 72 zolotniks. In silver it was worth up to 42 rubles, in gold up to 506 rubles.

up to eight hundred and two thousand each year.[1685] Having laid all these riches at the feet of the presbyter who was in charge of the church hospice, blessed Eudocia called all her male and female slaves and distributed among them the two thousand coins taken from the chest, as well as the vessels, curtains, costly beds, gilded furniture, and everything beautiful in the house that was outside the chests; she gave these things to them and divided them among them. At last she spoke her farewell:

"I release you," said Eudocia, "from this brief service; but if you wish, hasten also to free yourselves from the service of the demons. Be freed, then, if you will heed me and come to Christ, the true God; He will grant you the eternal freedom possessed by the sons of God, and enroll you in His armies."

Then Eudocia turned to the presbyter and said:

"Now, my lord, it is for you to care for all that has been offered to you and dispose of it as you will, for I seek the Sovereign Lord who seeks me."

The presbyter, marveling at the swift and unexpected change in her, at her repentance and such great love for God, said to her:

"Blessed are you, Eudocia, for you have become worthy to be numbered among the virgins of Christ's bridal chamber. The hour of the Bridegroom's coming is not unknown to you, nor are you ignorant of the way by which you must enter the wedding hall. Truly, you have taken great care not to remain outside the bridal chamber: you have filled your lamp with oil, and darkness shall not overcome you. Continue to grow in this virtuous strength, and God will help you; and pray for me, a sinner, for you are worthy to be among the choir of saints."

At that time the honorable German also came, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Seeing that Eudocia had given her possessions to her God, freed her male and female slaves, and become poor both spiritually and materially for Christ's sake, he took her and led her to a women's monastery which he had in his country, not far from his men's monastery, and there tonsured her as a nun. She remained in labors and ascetic struggles of the monastic life, serving God day and night.

Blessed German had seventy monks in his cenobium,[6] and thirty nuns in the women's monastery in the wilderness; among them was St. Eudocia. After thirteen months the abbess of that monastery, named Charitina, who had led a holy life, died. Under her guidance Eudocia had made great progress in ascetic struggles, learned the Psalter by heart, and, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, understood all of Holy Scripture well after reading it attentively once. Since she surpassed all her sisters in the ascetic labor of fasting, she was unanimously elected abbess by them all. And God did not delay in bearing witness to her worthiness and confirming her election by a miracle.

A certain young man, one of those who had formerly loved her, named Philostratus, a wealthy man, remembered his former love for Eudocia and, inflamed by lust at the prompting of the devil, began to consider how he might bring her back to her former fornication. After pondering this for a long time and growing more ardent in his love for her from day to day, he finally devised the following deceit. Dressing himself in monastic garb and taking as much gold as he could carry, he set out on foot for Eudocia's monastery, firmly hoping to accomplish his purpose.

When he knocked at the monastery gate, the gatekeeper looked out through the little window and asked:

"What are you seeking here, man?"

He answered:

"I, a sinner, have come so that you may pray for me and bless me."

The gatekeeper said:

"Men may not enter this place, brother, but not far from here you will find the monastery of Lord German. There you will receive prayer and a blessing; but do not trouble us here by knocking: you will not enter in any case."

Having said this, the maiden shut the window. Filled with shame and regret, yet burning with love for Eudocia, Philostratus went to German's monastery and arrived there at a convenient time. Meeting blessed German, who was sitting at the monastery gate and reading a

6. A coenobium is a monastery with a common rule, where all live together, having their common maintenance from the monastery.

book, he bowed down to him to the ground. The holy elder, according to the custom of the monastery, offered a prayer, and Philostratus received his blessing. Venerable German said:

"Sit down, brother, and tell me: from what country and from what monastery do you come?"

He answered:

"I am the only son of parents who have recently died. I did not wish to marry, but desired to serve God in the monastic order, and at once put on the sign of the monastic habit—these garments. I intend to find a place and a teacher who will instruct me in the monastic life. Having heard of your holiness, honorable father, I have journeyed a long way to come here, wishing to fall at your feet and beseech you to receive me into your monastery, for I desire to repent of my former sins."

During this speech blessed German gazed intently at him and, perceiving his sensual disposition, said:

"You would undertake a great labor, child; I do not know whether it would be within your strength. We elders can scarcely withstand the temptations of the devil that draw us toward impurity; what, then, will become of you, a young man in the flower of your years, at the age of burning, fiery passion?"

Philostratus replied:

"Father! Are there not examples of young men like me who have led virtuous lives and courageously overcome temptations? Is your Eudocia, of whom I have heard so much, since the fame of her virtuous life is spread everywhere, not young, and did she not live in luxury? Yet she heeded your instruction and now remains steadfast and unshaken in the monastic life, having conquered her flesh. I would not hide it from you, father: I am especially inspired by her example, and desire to imitate her. I remember how beautiful she was, how rich, and in what pleasures she spent her time; then in an instant she changed and began to serve Christ by the narrow and sorrowful way. If she could despise all these things and mortify her desires for love of Christ, why, father, do you not hope the same of me, a man stronger than a woman? If only I could see her once, I hope I would draw from her conversation and instruction such ardent zeal for God and strength for the struggle that it

would suffice me all my life to conquer and repel every temptation of the devil."

Hearing these words, German, the servant of God, took falsehood for truth and, thinking that he truly wished to serve God, said to him:

"We will not prevent you, child, from seeing Eudocia and hearing from her a helpful instruction, since you wish to follow the path of virtue after her example."

After this, Abbot German summoned a venerable monk, an elder who carried incense to the women's monastery and was often sent there to attend to necessary matters. German said to him:

"When you go to the women's monastery, take this brother with you: let him see Eudocia, for he wishes to receive spiritual benefit from her and imitate her God-pleasing life."

After some time the monk had to go to a women's monastery, and by the Abbot's command he took a young brother with him. Philostratus, dressed in monastic garb, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, entered the women's monastery and, seeing the Bride of Christ, St. Eudocia, was astonished at her humble appearance, her poverty and her wasted body. Her face was pale, her eyes were cast down, her lips were silent, her garments were poor, and her bed was a mat on the ground, with a prickly hair-shirt upon it. Finding a convenient time, he began to speak to her in a quiet voice (the other nuns stood at a distance):

"What does this mean, Eudocia? Who has deceived you, who lived in halls like palaces, who abounded in wealth and every luxury, who dwelt always in merriment and joy, and led you into these wretched places? Who has deprived you of the great city where you walked adorned in the most beautiful garments, where everyone honored you, marveled at your beauty and praised you with every kind of praise? What seducer has brought you from such happiness into extreme poverty and misery, into this poor and loathsome life? And now the whole of Heliopolis is searching for you, everyone wishes to see you, the very walls of your beautiful halls weep for you. I speak the desire of the people; I have been sent to you on behalf of all to beg you to return to the city and by your coming to end the people's sorrow. Listen to me, my lady, follow me, leave this wretched monastery, leave hunger, foul

garments, and the hard hair-shirt bed, and return again to your halls, to your former amusements and former pleasures, which you had in abundance. If you have squandered your wealth, giving it away in vain to strangers, everyone is ready to enrich you again. Why do you delay and hesitate? Why, when everyone loves you and wishes you well, do you make yourself your own enemy and tormentor? Is it not in vain, is it not shameful, to hide such beauty of face in this darkness of monasticism? Is it not in vain to spoil such eyes, like the rays of the sun, with needless weeping and tears? What profit is there in wearing out this beautiful young body with hunger, thirst and other sufferings? Where now are your perfumes, with which you filled the air in the city, and by which you seemed to all a goddess?[7] And for these perfumes you have voluntarily preferred the stench of a beggarly and contemptible life! Who has led you into this delusion? What false hope draws you away from such great riches, which could yet have increased? Which of the rich rejects his wealth or gives it away in vain, as you have done? But we know where the riches you have rejected are, and we can easily return them to you; only return to our city, my lady Eudocia! I have brought enough gold for the road, and the rest, which you have squandered, we will restore when we come to Heliopolis."

When he uttered these mad words, Eudocia looked upon him with anger, and, being unable to listen any longer to his deceitful and flattering words, she said to him in wrath:

"May the God of vengeance forbid you! Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Righteous Judge, whose servant I am, though an unworthy one, will not allow you, who have come here with an evil purpose, to return to your own place, for you are a son of the devil."

Having said this, she breathed in his face, and at once the pretended monk and wicked seducer fell dead to the ground. The sisters, who had seen them conversing without hearing their talk, were greatly terrified when they saw that Eudocia's interlocutor had fallen to the ground at

7. The pagans endowed their gods and goddesses with all human qualities, even with human defects, only in the superlative degree. Therefore they offered them as gifts what was considered most precious and best in human life: exquisite foods, costly drinks, fragrant substances, and so forth. Hence Eudocia, who lived in luxury, beautiful, always richly dressed and fragrant, could indeed seem to her contemporaries something like a goddess.

her breath and lay dead at her feet. At first they marveled at such a supernatural event and understood in it a divine action, but then they began to fear lest worldly people and judges learn of this incident and make an inquiry as into a murder, and burn the monastery, for the idolatrous Hellenes hated Christians and monasteries. Not daring to question Eudocia, they discussed the matter among themselves. And one of them said:

"Let us wait for now: night is already beginning. Let us pray through the night; perhaps the Lord will reveal to us the cause of this monk's death and instruct us what to do."

Midnight came. Before the beginning of the customary midnight office, the Lord appeared to Eudocia in a dream and said:

"Rise, Eudocia, glorify your God. Pray on your knees near the dead body of the tempter sent to you by the devil, and I will command him to rise; and he will rise and will know who I am, whom you believe in, and My grace will abound upon you."

Awakening, Eudocia offered prayer to her Lord and raised the dead man. Philostratus, rising from death as from sleep, came to know the true God who had had mercy on him, fell at the feet of the blessed one, and said:

"I beseech you, blessed Eudocia, true servant of the true God, receive me, a penitent; forgive me, who grieved you with wicked and impure words. Now I have understood how great and merciful a Lord you serve."

And the blessed Eudocia said to him:

"Go to your home in peace; do not forget the benefits of God shown to you; do not turn aside from the true path of the holy faith which you have come to know and which you promise to accept."

At that time the country was governed by Emperor Aurelian (not the Roman Caesar, but another of the same name, who was under the rule of the Roman Caesars), and Eudocia was slandered before him. Her former admirers gathered and, having consulted among themselves, wrote a letter to the emperor, reporting that Eudocia had carried off into the wilderness a great quantity of gold equal to the imperial treasury. They asked the emperor to give them a detachment of sol-

diers, so that, finding the fugitive, they might return her to the city and take the gold into the imperial treasury, because she had accepted the Galilean faith in a certain Christ and rejected the gods whom even the emperors worship. Hearing of the great quantity of gold, Aurelian readily agreed to their request and, summoning one comes,[8] ordered him to take soldiers, seize Eudocia together with her gold, and bring her to him. Taking three hundred soldiers, the comes set out for the wilderness, to the women's monastery where Eudocia lived. As they went, the Lord appeared to Eudocia by night and said:

"The emperor is angry with you, but do not fear: I am always with you."

When the comes with his detachment of soldiers saw the monastery walls, he halted to wait for darkness, for the day was declining toward evening, and he divided his force into parts, so that at night they might attack the monastery from all sides. And when they were about to make the assault, the all-powerful strength of the invisible hand of God hindered them, and all night long they could not come a single step near the monastery. Day came. They saw the monastery walls but could not approach them, and for three days and three nights their attempts remained fruitless, and they were perplexed as to what to undertake next.

And then a sudden, terrible, huge serpent attacked them, and they, throwing down their weapons, fled in terror. But although they escaped the serpent's teeth, they did not escape its poison. Struck by the deadly breath of the serpent, some of them suddenly fell dead, others lay on the road barely alive, and only with three soldiers did the comes return to the emperor. The enraged emperor said to his nobles:

"What shall we do with this sorceress, who by her spells has killed so great a multitude of soldiers? What do you advise? Such a crime cannot be left unpunished."

After deliberation the emperor's son said:

"I will go with a numerous army, raze this den of harlots to the ground, and bring Eudocia here."

8. A *comes* was a special official charged with collecting the imperial taxes. The same name was generally given to city governors.

The emperor and all agreed, and the next day the emperor's son set out with soldiers to destroy the desert monastery and seize Eudocia. On the road he approached a village belonging to his father, and, since night was coming, he wished to stop there for the night in this convenient place for rest. Out of youthful vivacity he leaped quickly from his horse, struck against a stone, and badly injured his leg, so that he was carried to bed in the arms of the soldiers. During the night his illness grew worse, and he died; and the soldiers returned to the emperor, bringing with them his dead son. At the sight of his suddenly dead son the emperor fell dead. The whole city gathered, and the people wept, grieving for the emperor's son and for the emperor himself, who was dying of sorrow. Among the people was Philostratus. Approaching the emperor's attendants, he told them that Eudocia was a servant of God, and no one could do her harm, for she was guarded by a heavenly power. But if the emperor wished to see his son alive, let him send to her a respectful request that she entreat God to restore the dead man to life.

"I myself," said Philostratus, "have experienced on myself the power of her prayer and God's mercy."

Hearing this, the emperor came somewhat to himself, and, learning more precisely from Philostratus what had happened to him, he believed his words and at once sent to Eudocia the tribune[9] Babylas with a respectful, humble and entreating letter. When he arrived at the monastery, St. Eudocia, bowing humbly, received the imperial letter and said:

"Why does the emperor send his letter to me, a poor and unworthy sinner?"

While awaiting the saint’s reading of the imperial letter, the tribune entered one of the monastery rooms and, seeing an open book there, bent over and read: "Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart" (Ps. 118:2); and having read to the end of the psalm, he dozed off and, laying his head upon the book,

9. A tribune was a representative of military authority, the commander of a small detachment, something like a modern colonel.

fell asleep. In a dream there appeared to him a certain radiant youth, who, striking him in the side with the staff he held in his hand, said:

"Babylas, arise! The dead man is waiting for you."

Awaking, Babylas was seized with terror at the appearance of the Angel, and he told this to the blessed Eudocia, asking her to release him quickly. She, calling all the sisters, said to them:

"How do you advise me to act in regard to what the emperor writes to my insignificance?"

The sisters answered with one voice:

– The grace of the Holy Spirit guides you: write to the emperor what is pleasing to God.

After praying for some time, the saint sat down and wrote to the emperor as follows: "I, a worthless woman, do not know for what reason your majesty has been pleased to send me a message. I, an unworthy woman full of sins, convicted by my conscience of many and terrible transgressions, have no boldness to beseech Christ my God to have mercy upon you and to return your son to you alive. But I trust in the known goodness and power of my Lord, that He will show upon you and upon your son His great mercy, if you believe with all your heart in the true God, who raises the dead, and hope in Him. It is impossible to call upon His holy and awesome name and to beseech Him for anything, unless one first believes in Him with the whole soul. Therefore, if you believe with your whole soul, you will see the great glory of the immortal God, you will be granted His mercy and you will enjoy His benefactions."

Having written the letter and sealed it three times with the sign of the Cross, she gave it to the messenger and dismissed him. Returning to the emperor, the tribune did not hand him the letter of St. Eudocia, but laid it upon the breast of the dead man, calling aloud upon the name of Christ. At once the dead man came to life, opened his eyes, spoke and rose, as if after sleep, alive and well. All were amazed and struck with awe at so extraordinary a sight. And the emperor cried out in a loud voice:

– Great is the God of the Christian woman Eudocia! The true and righteous God is the God of the Christians! Justly do many take refuge

in Thee, and piously do those who believe in Thee, Christ the Lord, act! Receive me also, who come to Thee, for I believe in Thy holy name and confess that there is one true God, holy and blessed forever!

Having come to believe in Christ God, the emperor was baptized by the city bishop, together with his wife, his son who had risen from the dead, and his daughter Gelasia. After this, having distributed generous alms to the poor and needy, he sent much gold to St. Eudocia for the construction of a holy church. Moreover, he commanded that a city be built on the site where Eudocia had lived, and he often wrote to her, asking for her holy prayers. Before long the emperor, having prospered in the holy faith and in good works, reposed in the Lord, and his wife died after him. The son was ordained a deacon, and later, when the bishop died, he was consecrated bishop. And his sister Gelasia, despising the vanity of the world and shunning married life, but desiring to serve the Lord, secretly withdrew into the monastery of St. Eudocia and lived in it until her death, zealously serving and pleasing the Lord.

At this time pagan impiety held sway, and many who secretly served the Lord were discovered by the God-hating and were compelled to the same perdition. Then in the city of Heliopolis there was a governor, Diogenes, a zealot of foul gods, their most zealous servant and a persecutor of those who refused to worship idols. He wished to take as his wife the aforementioned imperial daughter Gelasia, and to this her father Aurelian had also agreed while he was still in unbelief. But when he was enlightened by holy baptism, he did not wish to give her to an unbelieving husband, unless he accepted the Christian faith. Soon Aurelian died, and Gelasia, fearing that she would be forcibly taken by Diogenes, fled, as has been said, to the monastery of St. Eudocia, but no one knew exactly where she had hidden. There was only a rumor that she was concealed somewhere with Eudocia. The governor Diogenes sent fifty soldiers to seize Eudocia as a Christian, for investigation. As the soldiers went after her, the Lord appeared to Eudocia by night and said:

– Daughter Eudocia! Keep watch and stand courageously in the faith. The time has come for you to confess My name and to glorify My glory. The contest you are to undergo draws near. Behold, men as ter-

rible as beasts will now fall upon you, but do not be troubled or afraid, for I will be with you as a close companion and a strong helper in all your struggles and labors.

When the vision ended, the soldiers climbed over the monastery wall during the night. The venerable woman, perceiving this in the spirit, went out to them and asked:

– What do you need here? Whom are you seeking?

The soldiers seized her and asked about Eudocia. She promised to hand Eudocia over to them, if only they would release her for a short time. And, entering the church, she went into the holy sanctuary, opened the small casket containing the Most Pure and Life-giving Mysteries of Christ, and, taking a portion of that great holy thing, hid it upon her breast. After this she came out and said to the soldiers:

– I am Eudocia. Take me and lead me to the one who sent you.

They took her and led her with them. It was a moonless and dark night, and behold, a bright and beautiful youth appeared, carrying a light before her and illuminating the way. This was an Angel of the Lord, seen only by Eudocia; the soldiers saw neither him nor the light. The soldiers wanted to seat Eudocia on a donkey, but she would not consent and said:

– "Some in chariots, and some in horses" (Ps. 19:8), but I, trusting in Christ, will go on foot.

Upon arrival in the city, the governor ordered Eudocia imprisoned for two days, and on the third day he summoned the jailer and asked him:

– Did anyone give that sorceress any food or drink?

The guard answered:

– I swear by your mercy, my lord, that no one gave her food or drink, and however many times I looked at her, I always saw her lying prostrate on the ground and praying (as I suppose) to her God.

The governor said:

– Tomorrow I will conduct an inquiry and trial concerning her, but today I am occupied with other matters.

On the fourth day the governor Diogenes sat down in the court and ordered Eudocia brought. Seeing her, humble in appearance, in poor

clothing, with her head bowed, he commanded the servants to uncover her face, and at once it shone like lightning. Diogenes was amazed and was silent for a long time, marveling at the unspeakable nobility and beauty of her face, radiant with divine grace. Gazing long upon her beauty, he was troubled in spirit, and turning to the judges, he said:

– By my god, the sun! One cannot put to death such beauty, like the sun. I do not know how to proceed!

One of the judges said:

– Does your majesty not think that such beauty is natural? No, this is a magical phantom. Do you not know what power sorcerers possess? And when the magical enchantment is destroyed, her natural ugliness will at once appear.

The governor addressed the blessed woman:

– First of all, tell us your name, your origin and your way of life.

Having signed herself with the sign of the Cross, the saint said:

– My name is Eudocia, and there is no need to ask me about my origin or my way of life. Therefore I beg you, governor, do not waste time on idle talk, but do with me what you usually do with Christians. Judge me, torment me as you wish, put me to death, and I hope in Christ, my true God, that He will not despise me or forsake me.

The governor said:

– To a brief question you answer so much; how much will you say when we begin to torment you? Tell us then: why, having left the city and rejected the gods, did you go off into the desert, carrying away the public property, having treacherously emptied the city treasury?

The saint answered:

– Why I left the city I will say in one word: I was free, and what I wished, that I did. What law forbids a free person to go where he wishes? And as for the accusation of stealing gold, I desire that the slanderer stand before me, and then the slander will be exposed and the lie will vanish before the truth. Did I depart having stolen what belonged to another?

After long disputation the saint remained unconquered in word and unbending in faith. Then the governor ordered her hanged on a tree and four soldiers to scourge her cruelly. The soldiers took her, stripped

her to the waist, and hanged her. When they undressed her, a portion of the Most Pure and Life-giving Body of the Lord fell from her breast; she had taken it when leaving the monastery. The servants, not knowing what it was, picked it up and brought it to the governor. Stretching out his hand, he wished to take it, and at once the portion of the Most Pure Body of the Lord turned into fire, and a great flame scorched the servants of the tormentor and injured the left shoulder of the governor himself. He fell to the ground from the pain and cried out to the sun, which he revered as a god:

– Lord Sun! Heal me, and I will at once consign this sorceress to the fire. I know that you are punishing me because until now I have not destroyed her!

At these words fire fell upon him like lightning and put him to death, burning his body like a brand. Fear and terror seized everyone. And one soldier saw that a bright Angel of God stood near the saint, speaking into her ear and comforting her, covering her body with a linen cloth whiter than snow. Seeing this, the soldier drew near to the saint and said:

– I too believe in your God; receive me, a repentant servant of the Living God.

The saint answered him:

– May the grace of sincere conversion come upon you, child. I see that you are beginning a new life, as one newly born; if you wish to be saved, shun your former unbelief.

The soldier said:

– I beseech you, servant of the Lord, have mercy on the governor, beg your God to return him to life, so that many may know the true God and believe in Him.

After these words he went to the tree and freed the holy martyr, and she, kneeling, prayed for a long time. Then she rose and cried aloud:

– Lord Jesus Christ, who knowest the secrets of man, who didst establish the heavens by Thy word and didst create all things in wisdom! Command that, by Thy almighty and omnipotent will, all who were scorched by the fire sent from Thee may come to life, so that many

faithful may be established in the holy faith, and unbelievers may turn to Thee, the Eternal God, and thereby Thy most holy name may be glorified unto ages of ages!

After this she went to the dead, and taking each by the hand, she spoke:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, arise and be well again as before.

And so she revived them one by one, raising them up and waking them as from sleep. While all looked on in astonishment and terror at the wonderful miracles taking place, suddenly there was a cry and weeping: word had come to Count Diodore, who was there with the soldiers, that his wife Firmina had died suddenly, suffocated in the bathhouse. Struck by the unexpected news, Diodore tore his garments and, seized with grief, hastened with tears to the place where his wife had died. Many of the people ran after him, and the governor Diogenes, raised from the dead, also went there. Seeing that the count's wife had truly died, he returned to St. Eudocia and said to her:

"I truly believe that your God is infinitely higher and more powerful than our gods. But if you wish to strengthen and confirm my faith, which is only beginning and is still weak, then I beg you, come with me to the dead Firmina. If you raise her, then without delay or doubt I shall believe fully in your God."

St. Eudocia said to him:

"God will reveal His will in boundless mercy not only for your sake, but for all who desire to enter into His Kingdom. Come, then, with God's help, to the place to which you call me."

As they walked together with the people, they met those carrying a dead body. The saint commanded that the bier be stopped, wept, prayed for some time, and, taking the dead woman by the hand, said in a loud voice:

"Great and eternal God, Lord Jesus Christ, the Essential Word of the Father, who raisest the dead! We pray Thee: for the assurance of those present, be pleased to work a great miracle, command Firmina to live again, and grant her the spirit of repentance, that she may turn to Thee, the ever-living and eternal God."

After this prayer Firmina immediately rose from the bier, and all the people, with one voice and in a loud cry, exclaimed:

"Great is the God of Eudocia, true and righteous is the Christian God! We beg you, servant of the living God, save us, for we too believe in your God."

And Diodore, seeing his wife alive, was exceedingly glad, and falling at the feet of the Venerable one, said:

"I beg you, servant of Christ, make me also a Christian, for now I have truly come to know who is the Almighty God whom you serve."

Diodore was baptized with his wife and all his household in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and a multitude of the people, and also the governor Diogenes with his household, were baptized and remained in the holy faith until death.

After this, at Diodore's request, St. Eudocia lived in his house, instructing the newly enlightened Christians in the Divine word. A lad, Zenon, working in a nearby garden, was slain by the deadly breath of a serpent, and his mother, a widow, wept for him inconsolably. Learning of this, the Lamb of Christ Eudocia said to Diodore:

"Let us go and comfort the weeping widow, and you will see the wondrous mercy of our God."

Arriving, they saw that the lad had swollen, bloated and blackened from the serpent's venom. The saint said to Diodore:

"The time has come to show how great a faith you have in God. Pray, then, lifting the eyes of your soul to heaven, and raise the dead man."

Diodore said:

"My lady, servant of Christ! I have believed only recently, and I cannot, by contemplation of God, fix the eyes of my heart upon Him."

The saint said to him:

"I firmly believe that God hears repentant sinners and soon fulfills their petitions. Call upon the Almighty Lord with all your heart, and He will show us His mercy."

Then Diodore, bowing his neck and striking his breast, began with tears to pray aloud:

"Lord God, who wast pleased to call me, an unworthy sinner and unbeliever, to the holy faith, who didst send this honorable handmaid for the salvation of our souls! Knowing my unchanging and unshaken faith, hear my sinful and unworthy prayer, and command the lad slain by the serpent to live again for Thy glory, that he and every soul may glorify Thy Most Holy Name forever."

After the prayer Diodore said to the dead youth:

"Zenon! In the name of Jesus Christ, crucified under Pontius Pilate, arise!"

And at once the dead man stood up, the blackness was wiped away, and his body became healthy as before; and all believed and glorified God, the Creator of heaven and earth. When the people began to disperse, the blessed Lamb of Christ Eudocia said:

"Brethren! Wait a little. Once more Christ our Savior shall be glorified."

The people stopped. The saint prayed, and behold, the serpent that had slain the lad crawled up with a terrible hissing, driven by a miraculous fire, and before the eyes of all it writhed and twisted about, burst asunder, and died. Then all who saw this, together with their wives and children, went to the bishop of Heliopolis and received holy Baptism. And the Venerable Eudocia returned to her monastery and spent her life in the customary labors of the monastic life. Sometimes she came into the city, strengthening the faithful and bringing unbelievers to faith in Christ God. After her Baptism she lived fifty-six years and reposed by a martyr's death in the following manner. After the death of the governor Diogenes, who had died in the Christian faith, his office was taken by Vincentius, a cruel man and an enemy of the Christians. Hearing of the Venerable Eudocia, he sent soldiers to cut off her honorable head.

Thus the holy Venerable Martyr Eudocia, on the first day of the month of March, was slain by the sword for Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Having bound thy soul to the love of Christ by spiritual righteousness, thou didst pass by, in forgetfulness, the corruptible, fair, and temporal things, as a disciple of the Word; by fasting thou didst first put passion to death, and then in suffering thou didst put the enemy to shame. Wherefore Christ granted thee the double crown, O glorious Eudocia, Venerable Passion-bearer; intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having contended well in thy suffering, even after death thou sanctifiest us, O all-praised one, with the outpouring of miracles, us who by faith take refuge in thy Divine Church. And rejoicing, we beseech thee, Venerable Martyr Eudocia, that we be delivered from the infirmities of the soul and draw the grace of miracles.

* * *

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Nestor and Tribimius

Страдание святых мучеников Нестора и Тривимия

The holy Martyrs Nestor and Tribimius lived in the reign of the impious Decius[10], and were natives of the city of Pergia[11]. Being Christians, they fearlessly preached about Christ, and for this the pagans laid an accusation against them before the governor of the province. The latter at once sent a large detachment of soldiers with orders to bind them and bring them to him for judgment. When the holy martyrs were brought to trial, the governor, to frighten them, commanded that all the instruments of torture be laid out before them; but they, seeing this threat, began to preach about Christ in a loud voice. Then the governor commanded that they be stripped and beaten without mercy with dried ox sinews, after which they were hanged upon a tree and their bodies were scraped until their entrails were laid bare. Finally convinced that the saints were unshaken in their faith in

10. The Roman emperor Decius reigned from 249 to 251 and was a cruel persecutor of Christians.

11. The city of Perge was located in the Asia Minor region of Pamphylia, situated in the southern part of Asia Minor on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

Christ our God, the governor commanded the executioners to take them down from the tree and cut off their heads with knives. Giving thanks to the Lord, the holy martyrs thus departed, and Christ God received them into His Kingdom.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Antonina

Страдание святой мученицы Антонины

The holy Martyr of Christ Antonina suffered in the city of Nicaea[12] in the reign of Diocletian and Maximian[13]. Since she believed in Christ, an accusation was brought against her to Maximian that she was a Christian. Brought to Nicaea and standing before the emperor, she fearlessly confessed her faith. In order to compel her to renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to the idols, she was subjected to cruel tortures, but she did not yield to the desire of her tormentors, and she was cast into prison. Soon after this Maximian commanded that she be brought out of prison and again sought to compel her to renounce Christ; but on this occasion too she did not obey the emperor. Then Maximian commanded that she be hanged and her ribs scraped. Amid her torments the holy Antonina continually denounced the emperor's error and preached about Christ. Seeing this, Maximian commanded the executioners to strip her of her clothing and beat her naked body. But when the executioners were about to carry out the emperor's command, Angels appeared and, guarding the holy martyr, subjected the tormentors themselves to torment. After this the saint was laid upon a red-hot iron bed, but she remained unharmed. Then she was thrown, in a sack, into the Lake of Nicaea.

12. The city of Nicaea was located in the Asia Minor region of Bithynia, lying in the northern part of Asia Minor along the shores of the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea. It is known in history as the place where the First and Seventh Ecumenical Councils were held.

13. In 284 the Roman Empire was divided into the eastern part, ruled by Diocletian, and the western part, which from 285 was under the authority of the Augustus Maximian Herculius. Here, however, one must understand not Maximian Herculius but Maximian Galerius, co-ruler of Diocletian in the east, his son-in-law and later successor (306–311). Although the open persecution of Christians began in 303, Galerius had already persecuted Christians privately some years before this.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Domnina

Память преподобной Домнины

The Venerable Virgin Domnina labored in Syria. Living in a tent which she had made for herself in the garden of her mother's house, she unceasingly shed tears, nourished herself only with lentils soaked in water, and every morning and evening went to the house of God for prayer, covered from head to knees with a veil, so that no one might see her face. She reposed in peace between the years 450 and 460.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the commemoration of the holy Martyrs Marcellus and Antonius, burned with fire for Christ.

NOTES

1683. Samaria was the central part of Palestine, bordering on Galilee and Phoenicia to the north, on Judea to the south, and adjoining the Mediterranean Sea. Its population consisted of the ten tribes of Israel, apart from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The Samaritan faith is the Samaritan schism. At first the inhabitants of Samaria differed in nothing from the Jews, following the same law of Moses. Afterwards, owing to their intercourse with pagan foreigners, they lost the purity of the Jewish religion, and little by little separated from the Jews, so that about 335 years before the Nativity of Christ they even built a temple on Mount Gerizim, separate from the Jewish one, and established in it a special worship, having something in common with the worship of the Jerusalem temple. From this time the chief point of doctrine dividing Jews and Samaritans was the teaching concerning the place of true worship (Jn. 4:19–20). Moreover, of all the books of the Old Testament they acknowledged as sacred only the Pentateuch of Moses, and this too had in places been altered from the original. All the other books of the Old Testament they rejected, although they had a chronicle of their own, under the title "Book of Jesus," a reworking of the Book of Joshua.

1685. Let not the reader or listener, the Minei-Chetii says, find it surprising or incredible that the sinful woman acquired by fornication so great a fortune, as is here related, for among the Greeks, who had not yet known the true God and bowed down to idols, harlots were not only not despised but even greatly honored, as for instance Aphrodite, whom they even counted among their vain gods. Concerning the riches of Hellenic har-

lots, we find the following in the ancient historians. Phryne, an Athenian harlot, after Alexander the Great had destroyed the stone walls of the famous Hellenic city of Phoebe or Thebes, offered at her own expense to restore those walls and build the city better than before, on condition that there be written on the walls: "Alexander destroyed, but Phryne the harlot rebuilt." Lais, a Corinthian harlot, was so rich and famous that, according to some, for a time all of Greece lay at her door. Thais, another Athenian harlot, was so beautiful, famous, and wealthy that Ptolemy, the first Egyptian king after Alexander the Great, did not disdain to make her his lawful wife. Radone of Thrace, an Egyptian harlot, had such wealth that, emulating the glory of the Egyptian kings, she herself erected for her own glorification a pyramid in no way inferior to the royal pyramids. Eudocia too was like them in her life and in her riches, but when she abandoned this, she was impoverished in spirit and body, and pleased God by repentance, and became like the holy virgins, entered into communion with the Angels, and became an heir of eternal riches, which eye has not seen.



THE SECOND DAY OF MARCH

March 2

2 марта

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

Passion of St. Theodotus, Hieromartyr, Bishop of Kyrenia

Страдание святого священномученика Феодота, епископа Киринийского

The holy Hieromartyr Theodotus, a Galatian by birth,[1] was bishop of the city of Kyrenia on the island of Cyprus.[2] Born to Christian parents, he was taught to read and from his youth grew in wisdom and virtue. He came to the island of Cyprus to preach the Word of God, and he instructed the pagans to abandon their error and idolatry and to believe in Christ. Through his preaching he turned many from pagan impiety and set them on the path of salvation, and for this reason he was ordained bishop of the Cypriot city of Kyrenia. At that time the impious Licinius[3] reigned, and Savinus was governor of the island of Cyprus, and a severe persecution of the Christians was then taking place. St. Theodotus, desiring to suffer for Christ, boldly disputed with the pagans, exposing their errors, and openly preached about Christ. When the governor Savinus heard of this, he ordered the saint to be seized for torture; but the servant of God, learning of this, did not wait for the men sent after him but went himself at once to the governor and said:

"I am the one you are looking for. I have not hidden from you, nor have I been brought to you by force, but I have come of my own will, to

1. Galatia, otherwise Gallo-Graecia, a region of Asia Minor which received its name from the Gauls, the inhabitants of present-day France, who were settled in Asia in the third century B.C. Christianity was planted in Galatia by the Apostle Paul during his first and second journeys.
2. The island of Cyprus lies in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, in the angle between the coasts of Cilicia and Syria. Here the holy Apostle Paul preached the Gospel.
3. Licinius reigned from 311 to 324.

preach Christ my God, the truth which must not be concealed, and to expose the worthlessness and impotence of your impiety. There is no need to say much of your impotence: the deed itself plainly shows that you are more cowardly than frogs. Because of one Christian the whole city and army have been thrown into confusion, for the demons tremble at a single servant of Christ and try to destroy him, fearing that he, escaping torments, will shame their impotence by defeating their servants, who do not trust in them."

The governor could not endure such rebuke and ordered that the saint be beaten with ox-sinew whips without mercy; and during the long torture he cried out with the words of David:

"The sinners have wrought upon my back; they have lengthened their iniquity" (Ps. 128:3).[4]

When the servants stopped beating the martyr, the governor said:

"Do you see what benefit your bold speech has brought you?"

The saint answered:

"If your eyes of the soul were enlightened, I would show you what benefit my courage has brought me, which you call boldness. But you are blind and cannot see the blessedness that awaits me. Consider at least this: that I, looking with my soul upon the heavenly rewards prepared for martyrs for Christ, am unshaken in sufferings and do not feel the torment, because the joy of my soul overcomes all the sufferings of the body."

Savinus said:

"In vain do you boast, Theodotus, and you deceive your hearers; you will not beguile me with your words. I shall torture you until you acknowledge the dominion of our gods."

The saint answered:

"Torture me as you wish, use all your skill, and you will learn the strength of Christ's warrior. You will see who wins: the martyr, or those who torment him!"

The governor said:

4. Russian translation: "The plowmen plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows." Blessed Theodoret explains: "The prophetic word refers to the scourges and wounds which the wicked inflicted upon the victorious martyrs."

"Do you not know that by the imperial command I can break your body and utterly destroy you?"

The saint answered:

"The God whom I serve has made me mightier than kings and stronger than princes; therefore I speak to you as to a slave, and I count you lower than a prisoner. With the help of my God, who has taught me to despise all the goods of life as hay, chaff, and dung, I disdain all torments. Do not think to frighten me with your proud threats. You boast that you have power over my body, but robbers in the deserts have the same power when they attack travelers and torment them. You consider yourself mighty, relying on your sword, a lawless sword, for you have replaced lawful authority with tyranny: you free adulterers and murderers from punishment, while subjecting innocent and pious people to it."

The governor, greatly enraged, ordered the naked martyr to be hung on a tree and his sides scraped with sharp instruments. Enduring these savage tortures, the sufferer of Christ prayed thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of all things visible and invisible, who didst take captive death, destroy hell, slay on the Cross the principalities and powers of the underworld, condemn the prince of this age, who didst give power from on high to Thy holy Apostles and keep them from temptation, who didst once grant victory to the youth David over the giant Goliath, who didst tame the flame of the Babylonian furnace, cooling the fire with dew so that it did not harm the bodies of the holy youths: strengthen me also in these torments. Thou knowest human weakness, Thou knowest that our strength is less than dust and that our power fades sooner than a flower. Grant glory to Thy name, O Lord, and give strength to my weakness. Break the might of those who rise against Thy holy flock, that the whole universe may understand that Thou alone art the Most High God, who gives strength and power to those who trust in Thee!"

During the prayer the executioners so mangled the saint's body that his bones were laid bare, and the governor ordered him taken to prison.

On the way to the prison the saint cried out in a loud voice:

"Let those who see my sufferings understand that I suffer not without hope. There is a reward for martyrs' exploits with Christ, in whom I place my hope. If an earthly, temporal king honors and rewards his brave soldiers who shed their blood, glorifies the slain in books, makes their images, and takes care to preserve their memory, how much more will our Champion, the Eternal Heavenly King, grant glory in the present life to His warriors and ascetics, and after the resurrection, a share in His Kingdom. The witnesses to this are the honored relics of the saints martyred before us. These relics are reverently venerated by all Christians and are held more precious than all earthly jewels and riches. By this veneration the heavenly glory of the souls of the martyrs, bestowed on them by God and His Angels, is clearly portrayed."

The martyr spoke much more, accompanied by all the people to the prison, where he remained for five days; and afterward he was again brought to trial before the governor.

And the governor said to the martyr:

"I think you need no further punishment. Having experienced the weight of the first torments, you will come to your senses, honor our gods, and not wish to repeat the sufferings. But if you do not submit, you will force me to torture you even more severely. So obey me and spare yourself the torments that await you."

St. Theodotus answered:

"Do you not understand, you thrice-accursed man, that although my body is broken by torments and my sides are lacerated, I have nevertheless come to you today with courage, ready to endure all sufferings until I finish the course of my race and receive from my Lord Jesus Christ the crown prepared for me."

"Do not pronounce here the name of the Crucified, for you defile the place of judgment with it," the governor interrupted.

"Madman, full of all uncleanness!" said Theodotus. "In your opinion you do not defile this place when you pronounce the names of your foul and impious gods; but when I pronounce the name of my All-Pure Master Christ, King and Lord of all, you grow indignant, blaspheme, and grieve as though the court were being defiled by the name of Christ?

Thus does your mind suffer when I utter His most pure name. And so the demons you worship suffered, unable to bear the torment of beholding Christ, and cried out:

"What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God? Hast Thou come here to torment us before the time?" (Mt. 8:29). It is no wonder that you cannot bear to hear the name of Christ, for you are like the demons, imitating and serving them, as did your forefathers."

Savinus said:

"I thought that after the earlier torments you would be more compliant and would listen to me, who offer you salvation; but you have become even worse and continue to argue with us, deluded by the hope that you suffer for Christ. For this I shall deliver you to new torments and show that your hope in Christ is vain. This deceiver, in whom you place your trust as you go to suffering, will not help you."

The holy martyr answered:

"If I suffered for the sake of man, I would be more wretched than you godless men and would have no hope of a future life. If I did not look to the Heavenly Kingdom, where Christ rewards beyond our merits, I could not endure to the end, nor bear such tortures. Therefore, with Christ's help, shall I not bear great pains for the sake of the eternal blessedness that has been promised? See, then, the help of Christ in me and be convinced that I hope in Him. Under the protection of His hand I do not fear your torments and I do not even suffer. Let the perishable body suffer, but my resolve, grounded in God, remains unshaken."

Then the governor Savinus ordered the martyr laid on an iron bed and kindling and straw set alight beneath him. When the sufferer endured this torment too, the governor marveled and said:

"Where do you Christians get such unmercifulness? Whom can you show mercy to, being so merciless to yourselves? To whom will you be kind, when you are not kind to yourselves?"

St. Theodotus answered:

"You do not know true humanity, yet you speak of mercy. I would be grateful to you if you condemned me to death, freed me from temporal life, and sent me into the Heavenly Kingdom. For you wish to exalt me,

since the more you torment me, the greater the reward you prepare for me. If you truly desire to show me mercy, deliver me by sufferings from temporal life. Multiply here my torments: they will be added to my crown of righteousness there. Torture me to death, so that as a perfected ascetic I may pass to my Champion, Christ, and that all the Angelic hosts may receive me with joy and gladness."

The governor said:

"I shall devise more terrible torments and make you a perfected ascetic."

And the martyr of Christ answered:

"Oh, if only you knew the mercy of my God, in whom I hope that for these brief sufferings I shall be granted eternal life with Him! You yourself would wish to suffer as I suffer, but the demons you honor have hardened your hearts, and you have no hope after death. Therefore you are sunk in worldly vanity, preferring the temporal and passing to the eternal."

Hearing these words, the governor said in astonishment:

"I have been told about you that you are a simple man, but I see that you are a great sage!"

St. Theodotus replied:

"If Christ speaks within me, what orators could stand against me? Know that they told you the truth, that I am a simple man, but the grace of my Christ, who helps me, both teaches me to speak and strengthens me in torments, easing my sufferings."

"I will not spare you, Theodotus," said the governor.

"Do what you will, I am ready," the saint answered.

Then Savinus ordered the soldiers to drive nails into his feet and make him walk. And as they drove in the nails, he raised his hands to heaven and said:

"I thank Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast vouchsafed me, unworthy as I am, to share in Thy sufferings. Whence to me, the cast-off, such great grace, that I am already as it were in heaven?! I thank Thee, my Savior, for Thou hast delivered my soul from the persecutors. Let Thy name, O Lord Christ, be glorified in my body! Son of God! Thou art my life, and death for Thee is gain to me! I entrust to

Thee those who suffer for Thy name; be their helper. Command this storm to cease, scatter those who rise up against Thy holy Church, that people may glorify Thee in peace forever!"

He also said to the Christians around him:

"Brethren! My contest is ending, the crown is near, the pledge of my righteousness, which Jesus Christ will give me. He was crucified for me, and for Him I have given my body to torments. He died for me to deliver me from corruption; I die for Him to be made worthy of His Kingdom. O great grace of Christ! For brief suffering for His sake, He rewards me beyond my merits with eternal and ineffable blessedness: 'the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:18)."

Saying this, he walked, driven on by the soldiers, treading on his nail-pierced feet. Seeing his patience and hearing his honey-sweet words, many pagans believed in Christ, reviled the vile idols, rebuked the tormentor, and glorified the name of Christ. Learning of this, Savinus ordered the saint thrown back into prison, so that the people would not be seduced by his magical (as he called it) teaching; and then he began to consider with his counselors by what death to destroy the holy martyr. After some time the martyr's wounds began to fester, and the pious Christians who came would wipe his sores with clean cloths.

When Constantine the Great granted freedom of faith to all Christians, an edict came from him ordering the persecution to cease and all who were held in bonds for Christ to be released. St. Theodotus, hearing that he was to be freed, was greatly saddened, for he desired to die in torments for Christ. After his release he went to his city of Kyrenia, and having spent two years on the episcopal throne he reposed in the Lord, and received from Christ the Lord the double crown of hierarchy and martyrdom, Who crowns His ascetics with eternal glory. May we too be made worthy of it, through the prayers of the holy hieromartyr Theodotus 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 expose the sea of heresy, and with the faith of orthodoxy didst wound the deceit of idolatrous godlessness; having become a burnt offering of God, thou dost water the ends of the earth with miracles, O Hierarch Father Theodotus. Entreat Christ God to grant us great mercy.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Euphalia

Память святой мученицы Евфалии

St. Euphalia lived in the third century and was a native of Sicily. Her mother was a pagan and suffered from a hemorrhage. The holy martyrs Alphius, Philadelphus and Cyprinus (whose memory is celebrated on May 10) appeared to her in a dream and told her that she would be healed if she believed in Christ. She was baptized and was healed; afterwards she also baptized her daughter. Her son Sermilianus, learning of this, wished to kill his mother, and cruelly beat his sister Euphalia and gave her to a servant for defilement. By her prayer St. Euphalia blinded the servant, and she herself was beheaded with the sword by her brother.

Life of Our Holy Father Arsenius, Bishop of Tver[5]

Житие святого отца нашего Арсения, епископа Тверского

St. Arsenius was born in the city of Tver to pious, noble and well-to-do parents. Neither the year of his birth nor the names of his parents are known. Having asked God for a son, the parents above all took care to implant the fear of God in his heart. After some time they gave the youth to be taught letters. With God's help he soon showed such progress that he surpassed all his peers. Arsenius was young in years, but he understood well that all the goods of this life are inconstant and quickly passing. He thought and cared only about pleasing God and saving his soul. After some time the blessed one's parents

5. The ancient Life of St. Arsenius was written at the end of the fifteenth century by the monk Theodosius. The wonders of the Hierarch were described in the second half of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth centuries.

died, having charged their son before their death to live holily and God-pleasingly, to keep firmly the commandments of the Lord and to observe the Christian faith, and they left him all their property. Having buried his parents, the saint began still more often to think about the salvation of his soul. He thought:

"I know that I am a sojourner and a stranger on earth. Short and brief is life here, but future life is endless. Great wealth my parents have left me, but my soul does not rejoice in it. For it is said in Scripture: 'What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in return for his soul?' (Mt. 16:26.)"

Reflecting thus, he began to distribute his property to the poor: he clothed the naked, visited the sick, helped widows and orphans, and interceded for the wronged. But the envier of the human race, seeing the pious life of St. Arsenius, stirred up strife against him. He put into the minds of some of the blessed one's kinsmen the thought that the youth was acting badly in generously distributing his parents' property. The saint's kinsmen now urged him to marry, now reviled and reproached him, saying:

"Look, this sanctimonious fellow has ruined the whole parental house and wastes his life without purpose."

But such words did not disturb the pious youth. The Lord put into his mind the thought to go to the Pechersk monastery, where once the venerable Antony and Theodosius had labored and shone forth with their virtues. Having freed all his slaves and given his property to the beggars, the young ascetic secretly left his native city and made his way to the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery, to which he was called by a voice he had heard in a dream. Arriving at the monastery, the saint fell on his knees before the abbot and begged him:

"Have mercy on me, Father, have mercy on a sinner. Do not drive me from the holy monastery; remember that Christ does not reject repentant sinners."

So earnestly did the saint beg the Abbot of Pechersk. The abbot was astonished and asked him:

"Why, child, do you so greatly grieve over your sins, for you are still young in years?"

"I am a great sinner," St. Arsenius answered, "for there is no man who has not sinned, even if he has lived only a single day. Have mercy on me, Father, and do not drive me away from the holy monastery. I know that I too must one day appear before the dread judgment seat of Christ — what answer shall I give then to the impartial Judge?"

The abbot was amazed at the youth's answer. With his spiritual eyes he perceived that a special grace of God rested upon the youth. But seeing that Arsenius was still young, the Abbot of Pechersk said to him:

"The monastic life is hard, there is much deprivation and sorrow in it. It will be difficult for you at such a young age to bear all the monastic labors. But the Lord has pointed out many paths for the salvation of men. Choose for yourself another way, an easier one."

"I am not afraid of the labors of monastic life," the saint answered, "they are sweet and pleasant to me. I ask only one thing of you: make me the lowliest servant in the holy monastery, and with gratitude I will fulfill everything. May God be my protector, and may your holy prayers help me. I firmly remember the words of Scripture: 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God' (Lk. 9:62). Only receive me, Father."

Astonished at the youth's piety, the abbot received Arsenius into the monastery and clothed him in the monastic habit. The newly entered monk was entrusted to the guidance of a virtuous elder, experienced in spiritual struggles.

Many ascetics, like bright stars, shone in the Kiev-Pechersk monastery alone. They set a good example for the pious youth: one was distinguished by firm faith, another placed all his hope in the One Lord, one flourished in silence and obedience, another waged a victorious battle against his flesh and subdued it to the spirit. St. Arsenius saw these ascetic feats and began to imitate each of them, striving not to leave out a single good example. With the greatest humility he fulfilled all the commands of the abbot and the other monks, worked unceasingly, missed no Divine service, was content with the most meager food, and gave himself to sleep only for the shortest time.

In the Caves Monastery it was the custom that every monk should pass through all the degrees of obedience, beginning with the lowest and rising to the higher. Like the others, St. Arsenius performed every obedience, and he performed them with great zeal. Day and night he labored, never letting his hands lie idle for a single hour: he prepared food for the brethren, chopped wood, and carried water; no one ever heard from him a word of murmuring or of idle talk. He so adorned himself with virtues that he stood above all the monks in the monastery. The brethren marveled at his diligent labors and his guilelessness.

At that time St. Cyprian, the future Hierarch of Moscow, was living in Kiev[6]. Seeing that Arsenius was distinguished by a keen mind and was advancing in virtue, he drew the young monk close to himself and loved him, often conversing with him and instructing him in the commandments of God. And when the saint took the throne of the Metropolis of Moscow, he did not wish to be parted from St. Arsenius. The Hierarch took him with him to Moscow, ordained him Archdeacon, and entrusted him with the management of correspondence[7]. At first St. Arsenius asked not to be laid with such a burden; he said that he wished to pray in quiet and to labor in the virtues. But afterward, persuaded by the Hierarch, he consented, asking only that he not be raised to the higher degrees of the priesthood.

Meanwhile, in the homeland of the Blessed Arsenius, in Tver, disorders arose. Euthymius, Bishop of Tver[8], caused no small confusion among his flock; distinguished by an unyielding temper, he meddled in worldly affairs; lacking Christian humility, he showed great pride and vain haughtiness. By his conduct the bishop turned against himself not only the prince and the boyars, but also the clergy, the monks, and the simple laity. Prince Michael Alexandrovich of Tver[9], seeing that the discord was growing, sent an embassy to Moscow and summoned Met-

6. St. Cyprian was appointed Metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus on December 2, 1375. He arrived in Kiev in the following year, 1376, and resided here until his confirmation on the Moscow see in May 1381.

7. In other words: Metropolitan Cyprian.

8. Euthymius (surnamed Vislen) was appointed Bishop of Tver on March 9, 1374.

9. Michael Alexandrovich was Grand Prince of Tver from 1339 to 1399. Before his death he became a monk, taking the name Matthew.

ropolitan Cyprian to settle the matter. The holy Metropolitan Cyprian set out for Tver, taking with him two Greek metropolitans, Michael and Nicander, St. Stephen, Bishop of Perm, Michael, Bishop of Smolensk, and St. Arsenius, together with many archimandrites and hegumens. When the Holy Council drew near to Tver, Prince Michael himself went out to meet it with a multitude of people and received the arrivals with honor. As soon as Cyprian and the other Fathers reached the city, they went at once to the church in the name of the Honorable and Glorious Transfiguration, where they first served a moleben, then the Divine Liturgy, and gave their blessing to all.

Four days later the Metropolitan, with the whole Holy Council, examined the case of the Bishop of Tver. Euthymius at first defended himself. But the Fathers of the Council exposed his unjust deeds; he was deprived of his rank and sent into confinement in the Chudov Monastery in Moscow.

For a long time in Tver they had known of the virtuous life of St. Arsenius. Now Prince Michael asked the Metropolitan to ordain him Bishop of his city.

"I think that Arsenius can establish peace and quiet in our city," said the prince to the Metropolitan. "I know of no other man more virtuous and more worthy. Moreover, he was born here. Not only I, but many citizens know him and his pious parents."

The Most Reverend Cyprian approved the prince's intention and summoned Arsenius. When the saint heard of the prince's desire, he firmly refused:

"Forgive me, my lords; I am a sinful man and unworthy of such a rank. I call the Lord to witness that I have never had, and do not now have, any other desire than to mourn my sins in solitude. For this reason I earlier refused the rank of presbyter; and to think of the episcopate would be a sin for me."

The saint went on refusing for a long time, but at last the prince and the Metropolitan said to him:

"If you do not wish to obey our will, then we and the Holy Council have the authority to impose a ban upon you."

St. Arsenius would resist no longer and gave his consent. Thus he was chosen Bishop (July 24, 1390), but he feared the burden of governance and dreaded the quarrels and disturbances that had not yet subsided in Tver after the removal of Bishop Euthymius, and with all his soul he desired to labor in solitude. Therefore, some time later, St. Arsenius again petitioned Metropolitan Cyprian to relieve him of so heavy a burden. But the Metropolitan encouraged him and again persuaded him. Seeing in this the providence of God, Arsenius submitted to the Metropolitan's will and on August 15, 1390, was ordained Bishop of Tver.

Having entered upon the archpastoral throne, St. Arsenius above all strove to establish peace and concord in his spiritual flock and to root out rebellion. He preached the word of God with zeal: he instructed all who came to him as a loving father; in the house of God he edified his flock as a careful shepherd. He always remembered the words of the prophet Ezekiel: "And thee, son of man, I have set a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me" (Ezek. 33:7). Thus the Hierarch taught all, and by his word he drew all to himself. The citizens of Tver with great eagerness strove to hear their teaching shepherd. In his own life St. Arsenius gave everyone a good example: upon entering the throne he began to live an even more austere and strict life, completely subjecting his flesh to the spirit. All marveled at the purity of his life and his unceasing vigilance. Strict toward himself, he treated others gently and was merciful to the poor: he defended the oppressed, distributed clothing and food to the needy, and ransomed slaves and captives. The fame of his virtuous life spread far and wide; many came from afar, asking for his prayers and blessing.

For his good life the saint was granted by the Lord the gift of working miracles. Many people flocked to him; all who were afflicted with any sickness came to the saint, and by the mercy of God he granted various healings. On some of the sick he laid his hands, over others he read prayers, some he blessed and sprinkled with holy water or anointed with oil—all he healed by fervent prayer to the Lord.

While in Tver, St. Arsenius did not forget the Monastery of the Caves, where he had begun his monastic labors, and he constantly remembered the life of its venerable founders, Antony and Theodosius. The Hierarch resolved to found a monastery resembling the Caves Monastery, and he wished that his body be laid in it. St. Arsenius told the Prince of Tver of his intention. The Prince commended the Hierarch's good desire and himself promised to help him during the building of the monastery and to provide it with the landed estates necessary for its maintenance. Then the Hierarch chose a place on the river Tmaka, 4 versts from the city of Tver, which pleased him greatly. It was called Zheltikovo. Invoking God's blessing, he ordered a wooden church to be built here in the name of the Venerable Antony and Theodosius of the Caves, his great teachers. When the cells were built, the saint gathered the brethren and set a hegumen over them. This took place in 1394. Ten years later the Hierarch laid the foundation of a stone church in the Zheltikovo Monastery and consecrated it in the name of the Most Pure Mother of God, of the Honorable and Glorious Dormition of Her, surely remembering the Dormition Church of the Caves Monastery. The church was consecrated on August 30, 1405; it was splendidly adorned and painted with frescoes. The Great Prince of Tver fulfilled his promise and gave the monastery several patrimonial estates. The Hierarch often came to his monastery and took part in the labors of the brethren, showing everyone an example of monastic life. He did not seek honor and glory among the brethren, but in the monastery he had himself founded he wished to be a simple monk. Great in his virtues, he instructed and enlightened all the brethren: as the moon shines among the stars, so St. Arsenius shone with his piety among the monks of the monastery. The Hierarch wished to make the Zheltikovo Monastery the place of his repose. With his own hands he hewed for himself here a tomb of white stone and a lid for it from another stone. Wishing that the monks of the new monastery might always be edified by the exploits of the Fathers of the Caves, St. Arsenius ordered a copy made of the ancient Paterikon of the Caves, the book in which were set forth the exploits and great labors of the holy ascetics of the Kiev Caves[10]. From

this it is evident that the Hierarch strove by deed, by word, and by edifying writings to enlighten and instruct his flock; he unceasingly bore in his heart the words of Scripture: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. 2:24). Such a pastor was St. Arsenius. He built not a few churches of God in the city itself and in its environs; he also restored the principal Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Savior in Tver.

Prince Michael of Tver sincerely esteemed his worthy pastor. He often conversed with St. Arsenius and received no small spiritual benefit from these conversations. The gentle words of the hierarch sank deeply into the prince's heart. Instructed by the hierarch, the Grand Prince built churches of God, performed works of mercy, helped the needy in his principality, and sent alms to Constantinople. Feeling the approach of his death, the prince expressed his desire to receive the monastic habit. St. Arsenius approved his good intention, tonsured the prince, naming him Matthew in monastic life, and soon after, accompanied by the hierarch, the monk-prince departed from this temporal life. Loving peace, St. Arsenius always strove to reconcile those who were at enmity. At that time there were frequent quarrels between princes, and the hierarch always endeavored to put an end to these princely strifes. By the help of God he succeeded in 1403 in reconciling the Tver prince John Mikhailovich with his brother, the Kashin prince Basil Mikhailovich, whom the Tver prince had wronged. But after some time the enmity between the brother princes flared up anew. Then the hierarch, threatening the terrible wrath of God and eternal condemnation, put an end to this enmity on the feast of the Life-Giving Trinity in 1406.

In reconciling those at enmity, the hierarch endeavored to deal with all quietly and gently: he did not allow anyone to be wronged, and everyone who came to him found protection and refuge. The saint was a defender of orphans and widows, dealt lovingly with the beggars and

10. The word "Paterikon" means "Book of the Fathers," that is, a book about the fathers. A Paterikon is a collection of brief accounts of ascetics or their sayings. The Kiev Caves Paterikon, copied by order of St. Arsenius, includes: the Life of the Venerable Theodosius of the Kiev Caves, written by the Venerable Nestor; the account from the Chronicle on the founding of the Kiev Caves Monastery; and the collection of narratives by Simon, Bishop of Vladimir, and Polycarp, a monk of the Kiev Caves, about the ascetics of the Kiev Caves.

the poor, encouraged the weak, and helped everyone with good counsel, money, or fatherly instruction.

Imitating the Heavenly Shepherd Christ, he always cared for the straying sheep of his flock and led them into the fold of repentance.

Hierarch Cyprian more than once summoned St. Arsenius to Moscow for conciliar deliberations.

The blessed repose of St. Arsenius followed in Great Lent of 1409. By the Sunday appointed for the gathering, the clergy of the Tver diocese had assembled in Tver for the customary annual council[11]. On Sunday they greeted their vladyka; on Tuesday St. Arsenius delivered an admonition to the pastors, instructed them in matters of pastoral service, and settled affairs; the same day he blessed the assembled pastors, bade them farewell, and dismissed the council. On Thursday of the Second Week the hierarch fell gravely ill and lost his speech. On Friday morning (March 1) Grand Prince John Mikhailovich[12] came to him with the brethren and boyars; he summoned archimandrites, hegumens and priests to perform the unction over the sick hierarch. Around the bed of the patient sat ten monks, who desired to hear a parting word from their bishop. But he was silent. The following night St. Arsenius died. For 19 years and 7 months he had shepherded with great zeal the rational flock entrusted to him by God. Hearing of the death of the righteous hierarch, Prince John Mikhailovich came with a multitude of people to his relics. All grieved and wept: "Our sun has set; we have lost a good pastor and father."

On the following day the relics of St. Arsenius were carried from the episcopal house to the cathedral church, where the townspeople of Tver took leave of their pastor, and they were buried in the Zheltikov monastery, in the vestibule of the right chapel of the Dormition church (in honor of the Image Not Made by Hands), in the very stone tomb which the hierarch had made with his own hands.

11. In antiquity the "Sobornoe Voskresen'e" (or, more briefly, "sbor," "the honorable assembly") was the name for the Sunday after the first week of Great Lent, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, because on that day the priests gathered annually before the bishop and formed the diocesan council.

12. John Mikhailovich was Grand Prince of Tver from 1499 to 1525. Before his death he received the monastic tonsure with the name Job.

At his burial there were many sick. They asked the saint for healing and received relief from their infirmities. Such was the life of St. Arsenius, such was his blessed repose; now he stands before the throne of the Lord together with the Angels, glorifying the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

After the death of St. Arsenius, the townspeople did not cease to honor his memory. Seeing the miracles that flowed from his tomb, the pious inhabitants of Tver invoked St. Arsenius in prayer and received help and intercession in their troubles. After 74 years had passed since his repose (in 1483), Bishop Vassian of Tver[13], by the command of Tsar John Vasilyevich, desired to uncover his relics. Gathering a council with a multitude of people, he went to the Zheltikov monastery. The tomb in which the relics of God's servant rested was taken out of the earth and carried into the cathedral church. When the lid was opened, the whole church was filled with fragrance. Corruption had not touched the relics of St. Arsenius; even the vestments remained wholly intact. Then the bishop commanded that the tomb be covered again with its lid, ordered an icon of the saint to be painted (it survives to this day), and set it by the Tomb for the veneration of those who came. A pall bearing the image of the wonderworker was placed on the tomb. By the blessing of Bishop Vassian a service to St. Arsenius was also composed. From then on a local feast in his honor was established at the Zheltikov monastery. From that time even more miracles took place at his tomb. The local celebration of St. Arsenius in Tver was established by the Moscow Council of 1547.

The most remarkable and striking of the miracles of St. Arsenius occurred in 1566. At that time a fisherman named Terentius lived in Tver. At first he had great faith in St. Arsenius, but afterward he fell into unbelief and suffered a derangement of mind. His parents brought him to the Zheltikov monastery, hoping that their son would receive healing here. But he died. Two days later his body was carried into the church of the Most Pure Mother of God, where the holy relics rested. The parents grieved deeply and even murmured against the hierarch:

13. Bishop Vassian (in the world Prince Strigin-Obolensky) governed the Tver diocese from 1477 to 1508.

"We hoped to receive mercy from you, and our son has died. Our zeal for you is waning, and our faith is failing."

The Lord did not suffer such reproachful words against His servant. During the reading of the Gospel the dead man suddenly rose up and began to weep bitterly over his transgression. The parents of Terentius also repented of their murmuring against the saint.

Acacius, then Bishop of Tver[14], a righteous and pious man, himself saw the one who had risen and was assured of the reality of the event.

In 1606, when the Russian land was suffering from the invasion of the Poles and Lithuanians, the enemies by force laid waste many regions of the Russian state, including the Tver monastery. The enemies did not spare the Zheltikov monastery either. They broke into it, thinking to find many treasures. But the monks had in advance succeeded in hiding the monastery treasures, and they themselves withdrew to Tver. Only on the relics of the saint remained a pall embroidered with gold bearing his image. Finding nothing in the monastery, the enemies were greatly disappointed in their expectations. One of the foes, vexed at the failure, seized the pall from the relics of the saint and laid it on his horse. But no sooner had he mounted the horse than, by an unseen power, the horse and rider were lifted into the air and then hurled to the ground. From the violent blow they died, and the pall in a marvelous manner rose up onto the roof of the Dormition church. This pall is preserved in the monastery to this day.

In 1637 a new stone cathedral church was being built in the monastery. Therefore the relics of the hierarch were for a time transferred to the wooden church of Sts. Anthony and Theodosius of the Kiev Caves. One of the brethren, named Hermogenes, having been in an intoxicated state, entered the church after Vespers and fell asleep not far from the relics of the hierarch. Waking at night, he was struck by a marvelous vision. The church was brightly illumined; St. Arsenius rose up and sat on his stone tomb. Hermogenes, seized with terror, wished to flee. But St. Arsenius, looking at him, said sternly:

14. Bishop Akakii governed the Tver diocese from 1522 to 1567.

"Why, presumptuous one, have you entered the house of God in a drunken state?"

Hermogenes fell down as one dead. He lay a long time, but then, coming to himself, with great difficulty went out of the church by the north doors, which were locked from within. After that he was ill for a long time. But the hierarch wished only to admonish the unwise and deliver him from vice. When Hermogenes, having sincerely confessed his sin before all, asked the hierarch's forgiveness, he received healing from his infirmity before the relics of St. Arsenius.

Often the holy servant of God showed his marvelous help to sufferers, and through his prayers the sick received healing. Of the many wonders let us mention the following.

In Tver there lived a youth Gerasimus, son of the priest Basil. At a wedding feast Gerasimus was given wine mixed with a poisonous draught. He fell gravely ill and was already thinking of death. Suffering, Gerasimus turned to the healer who asks no reward, St. Arsenius; he came to his relics on the day of his memory (March 2), prayed earnestly, and the servant of God marvelously healed the sick youth.

Many years later Gerasimus, having become a cleric, moved to live in Moscow. In his house there lived his niece Daria, who had long suffered from an eye disease. As time passed the illness grew worse, so that Daria could not even sleep at night and constantly moaned. She was unable to bear the light. At last, on the day of the memory of St. Arsenius, a priest from the church dedicated to his name came to Gerasimus's house with holy water and washed Daria's eyes with it. She was at once healed.

Great was Gerasim's astonishment when he saw his niece restored to health. He had already felt gratitude toward his heavenly intercessor, and now, seeing this new mercy, Gerasim desired to have a service and the Life of the saint in his own home. But no Life of St. Arsenius could be found in Moscow. At Gerasim's request, the archimandrite of the Zheltikov monastery sent him the Life and canon of the Hierarch, asking that after reading them they be returned to the monastery. Gerasim hastily began to copy the Life. But a misfortune befell him. When, before beginning his work, he prayed and bowed down to

the ground, his right eye struck a nail protruding from the floor. He could barely rise to his feet, and he cried out loudly:

"O Master, Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!"

In Gerasim's house at that time lived the monks Iona and Theophilus of the Zheltikov monastery, who had brought the Life of St. Arsenius. Seeing Gerasim's suffering, they began to wipe away the blood flowing from the wound and advised Gerasim to pray to Arsenius. As soon as Gerasim began to ask the Hierarch for his healing, the blood immediately stopped flowing. Then everyone saw that Gerasim had crushed his eyelid and eyebrow, but the eye itself, by the mercy of God, remained whole. Soon the wound healed completely, and Gerasim, with gratitude and a tender heart, finished copying the Life of the Hierarch, by whose prayers he had so quickly received healing.

During the time of Archimandrite Sabbatius[15] the following wondrous miracle occurred. A peasant living near the monastery of St. Arsenius buried his treasure in the forest, wishing to keep it safe. Some time later the man came back to the place where his money had been hidden and began to search for it, but could not find it. The peasant fell into great sorrow, began to lament and weep. He even wanted to hang himself and had already thrown a noose over a tree. Suddenly a venerable man appeared before him and said:

"Why, child, have you conceived evil in your heart? Why do you wish to destroy your soul and condemn yourself to eternal torment?"

Trembling seized the peasant, and he began to weep. When the wondrous man asked why he wept so bitterly, the peasant said that he had hidden his money and could not find it.

The venerable man struck the ground with his staff and said:

"In this place you will find what you are seeking."

The peasant, digging up the ground, found his treasure. Amazed by this, he began to thank the one who had appeared and asked him:

"Whence are you, honorable father, and what is your name, that I may give thanks to you for my deliverance and for the finding of my treasure?"

15. Two archimandrites named Sabbatius are known: the first took office in 1566, the second is mentioned in 1650. The second is meant here.

"I am Arsenius, and I live in the monastery built by my labors. Go there and offer worthy thanksgiving to God."

The peasant wished to fall on his knees before the elder, but he became invisible. Then the peasant understood that the venerable man had been St. Arsenius himself; coming to the Zheltikov monastery, he gave thanks to God and His saint and told all that had happened to him.

In 1657, a new miracle occurred at the shrine of St. Arsenius. At that time a deacon named John lived in the Zheltikov monastery. Prompted by the devil, he conceived the plan of stealing the silver and gold vessels from the church where the relics of the Hierarch rested. One day at noon he asked the sexton for the keys to the church, entered, and took all the silver and gold vessels that stood not far from the shrine of the saint. Driven by greed, he wished also to take from the relics the silver panagia which the saint had worn during his life. Suddenly, by an unseen force, the thief was thrown so far from the holy relics that he struck the church floor and lost consciousness. After some time, monks entering the church saw John lying in the middle of the church as though dead. Understanding what had happened, they carried him out of the church, sent him to Tver to Archbishop Joasaph[16], and related all that they had seen. John himself could not speak: he had lost the use of his tongue and was wholly paralyzed. By the bishop's command the paralyzed deacon was brought back to the monastery and afterward taken to the church. Little by little he began to come to himself, and at last, repenting, he was fully restored to health.

Many other wonders have flowed from the holy relics of the glorious hierarch and shepherd of Christ's flock, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ[17]. Glory to God forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Having lived piously in hierarchy, thou didst enlighten the people by thy teaching, and having greatly labored for the church of the

16. Archbishop Joasaph governed the Tver diocese from 1657 to 1676.

Most Pure One, and being a lover of monks, thou didst therefore receive from Christ the crown of thy flock. Wherefore, as we honor thee as the vicar of the Apostolic throne and a great hierarch, we beseech thee, O blessed one: deliver us from all afflictions by thy prayers to Christ, O Hierarch of Christ, Father Arsenius, our father.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Joyfully receiving thy honored relics, the most pure church, into which they were honorably borne by a multitude of hieromonks and right-believing princes, took them as a treasure of great price. Therefore we also now, the rational sheep of thy fold, standing around thy shrine, lovingly cry to thee: forget not thy children, O Father, whom thou hast wisely gathered and loved, that we may call to thee: Rejoice, O Hierarch Arsenius, our shepherd and teacher.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Agathon, the Egyptian hermit, who reposed in the fifth century.

On the same day, the memory of the Martyr Troadius, a youth who suffered under Emperor Decius in the city of Neocaesarea.

17. After the uncovering of the relics of St. Arsenius, they lay in a white-stone tomb which he had hewn with his own hands; afterward, under Patriarch Nikon in 1655, they were transferred to the shrine of St. Philip, and a service was composed for this feast. In 1734 the citizens of Tver, Ivan and Maxim Yankovsky and Vasily Volchaninov, provided a silver shrine for the relics of the Wonderworker, in which they rest to this day.

THE THIRD DAY OF MARCH

March 3

3 марта

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

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus

Страдание святых мучеников Евтропия, Клеоника и Василиска

After the sufferings and martyr's death of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Tiro, his companions and close friends Eutropius, Cleonicus, and his nephew Basiliscus remained in prison for Christ. The governor of the city, Publius, who had tormented St. Theodore, had already perished, struck down by the wrath of God. In his place another was appointed, named Asclepiodotus, a native of Phrygia, a cruel and godless man. He inflicted much evil upon the Christians, for he had received from the emperor Maximian[1] authority to compel Christians to offer sacrifice to idols, and to destroy in cruel torments those who would not obey.

Once, while sitting in judgment with his counselors, he summoned the keeper of records, Evlasius, and commanded him to read the former court proceedings. When Evlasius read of the sufferings of Theodore Tiro, all marveled at the patience of the holy martyr, and the governor asked:

"Where are the friends of Theodore mentioned in the book?"

Evlasius answered:

"They are held in prison with the other captives."

Seeing the temple of their goddess Juno, called the mother of the gods, which Tiro had burned, the governor roared like a lion, and at once ordered soldiers to be sent to the prison to bring before him the holy martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus.

1. Roman emperor in 285–310, co-ruler with the emperor Diocletian.

Eutropius and Cleonicus were brothers by birth, from Cappadocia, while Basiliscus, nephew of St. Theodore, was born in Amasia; but all three, through their mutual love, called one another brothers.

Coming to the prison, the soldiers said to the jailer:

"Deliver to us the friends of Theodore."

Then the jailer went in to the saints and said:

"Rise! The time you have awaited day and night has come; the governor calls you. But I beseech you, remember me also in your prayers."

The jailer spoke thus because he had seen them day and night at prayer and the wonders that occurred with them: a marvelous light shone among them, and the prison many times opened of its own accord. Therefore he had come to believe that the Lord dwelt with them. At the governor's summons the saints went gladly, but the remaining prisoners grieved that they were losing the friendly fellowship of the holy martyrs. Then St. Eutropius said to them:

"Do not weep, friends, for we shall see one another again. But pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that He grant us suffering and death for His sake, and that the devilish paganism may cease, and the universe be filled with the grace of God."

Having comforted the captives with such words, the saints went out with the soldiers. St. Eutropius sang: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 132:1)

And then a voice came from heaven:

"I will not part thee from thy brethren, until you all come to Theodore and rest in the bosom of the patriarchs who dwell in the divine light."

Eutropius was very handsome and wise. When the saints were brought and stood before the governor, he asked them:

"Why are your faces not gloomy from your long stay in prison, but joyful, as if from constant merriment?"

The blessed Eutropius answered:

"Truly, governor, our Christ always gives us joy, visiting us with His grace, and the words of Scripture are fulfilled in us: 'A joyful heart makes the face cheerful' (Prov. 15:13)."

The governor asked:

"What is your name?"

"My first name," the saint answered, "is Christian; and my parents named me Eutropius."

Then the governor said kindly:

"I see that you are as well-mannered as you are handsome; I think you have long been such a sage."

The saint answered:

"I have learned spiritual wisdom from my Lord Jesus Christ; in Him I place my hope that He will help me answer your questions wisely."

The governor said:

"Listen to me, Eutropius, and persuade your brethren to obey the imperial command and offer sacrifice to the gods. For this I will write about you to the emperors, and they will appoint you voivode in this land, honor you as a prince, and shower you with great riches. Then you will see in fact how good it is to obey the emperors and submit to their commands. But if you are not persuaded by my words, I will cut your body into pieces and cast it to dogs and beasts to devour. Whatever remains of your bones I will burn in the fire and cast the ashes into the river. Do not hope that Christians will gather your remains and anoint them with myrrh as relics. So submit, offer sacrifice to the gods, or only say before the people that you submit and wish to offer sacrifice: everyone is looking at you, awaiting your decision. Do not turn away from the gods those who wish to offer them sacrifice, lest you stain your name by undergoing shameful and cruel tortures."

To this Eutropius replied to the governor:

"Cease your idle talk, son of the devil, heir of Gehenna! Cease seducing the servants of God, enemy of God, cast out from the incorruptible goods and the bliss of Paradise, eternal prisoner of the nether hell! Cease speaking unseemly words, you who block the path to good deeds, teacher and leader of impiety! I do not know what more to say to you, deceitful seducer! You promise me temporal honor and riches, which are left here on earth. What use is it to me, that which kindles soul-destroying passions, leads to boasting, adultery, robbery, murder and other crimes? What profit did the former prince Publius, who tormented St. Theodore, gain from temporary glory and riches? Now he is

buried in the earth, devoured by worms, and suffers in hell, in unquenchable fire. The wrath of God will not delay to overtake you as well, and you will perish, impious lawbreaker. You threaten me with cruel tortures, the sword, fire and beasts, but do not hope to frighten me with such threats or to compel me by such torments into godlessness. To suffer for Christ my God is my first desire, for He is our wealth, honor, strength and glory. No, neither I nor my brethren will depart from Him, but we will suffer for our Savior: our life is in His hands; He is the invincible Voivode, who delivers from calamity those who call upon Him; He can deliver us also from your hands."

Hearing this, the governor was filled with wrath and ordered the saint struck on the face, saying:

"Wretch! You were summoned here to offer sacrifice to the gods, not to reproach us!"

But when they began to strike the saint severely, the hands of those who struck him dried up.

By the governor's order, everything that was done and said at the trial was recorded in detail. And when the scribes saw that the hands of the tormentors had dried up, they dropped their pens in terror. However, one Christian standing among the people recorded what was happening. The governor addressed the martyr with these words:

"Will you at last bow down to the gods to preserve your life, or do you wish me to put you to death?"

"No," answered St. Eutropius, "I will not bow down to senseless gods. You yourself are senseless if you act thus. But I will bow down to my God and offer Him my song of praise as a sacrifice. So says the blessed David, and through his lips Christ Himself: 'Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; they have eyes, but they see not' (Ps. 113:12–13). And he adds to this: 'Let those who make them be like them, and all who trust in them' (Ps. 113:16). You are deaf and blind, and would you make me also such? But I will not depart from my Lord Jesus Christ."

Then the governor addressed the saints Cleonicus and Basiliscus:

"And what do you say: will you offer sacrifice to the gods to preserve your life, or, like Eutropius, will you persist and so undergo the same torments?"

The saints Cleonicus and Basiliscus answered:

"As our brother and lord Eutropius believes in Jesus Christ, so we also believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As Eutropius suffers for Christ, so we also wish to suffer, and the devil cannot separate us, who are joined by the holy faith in Christ and by mutual love. As a threefold rope is not broken, so we three shall be firm; and as the Holy Trinity is indivisible, so we are united in faith and love. Torment us then even more cruelly; we shall go to these torments to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you oppose."

When they had said this, the governor ordered four soldiers to stretch out each of them and beat them with strong sinews without any mercy. The saints were beaten so severely that pieces of flesh fell to the ground, stained with blood. But they endured bravely and prayed to God. The torment was cruel, yet by God's help the passion-bearers seemed to feel no pain at all. St. Eutropius prayed with these words:

"Lord God Almighty, good and merciful! Do not despise us, O Master, You who save the righteous, instruct the wicked, correct the stubborn, guard the wise and teach the foolish. You bound the devil and set man free. You are the helper of those bound in chains, the defender of those who are tormented, the fount of goodness, the Savior of our souls. You send sufferings and give courage to endure torments. Grant us also to endure sufferings for the sake of the martyr's crown. Come to our aid as You helped Your servant Theodore. Show people the malice of the devil, Your mercy, and by Your almighty help show all that we honor You alone as our King, Jesus Christ, glorifying You with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever."

The saints Cleonicus and Basiliscus said:

"Amen."

Suddenly a terrible earthquake occurred, so that the whole court shook; the exhausted and frightened executioners withdrew, and the saints, delivered by an invisible power, remained unharmed. And the

Lord appeared to them with Angels and with St. Theodore. St. Eutropius addressed the Lord:

"Glory to Thee, my Master Christ, that Thou hast heard me so quickly; and who am I, that my Lord Himself should come to me?"

And to the saints Cleonicus and Basiliscus St. Eutropius said:

– Do you see, then, that our King, Jesus Christ, stands with Theodore in all His glory?

"We see," they answered.

St. Theodore, appearing with the Lord, said:

"Brother Eutropius! Your prayer has been heard, and the Savior has come to your aid, proclaiming eternal blessedness."

The Lord Himself said to them:

"When you were being tormented, I stood before you, beholding your endurance. Because you bore the first sufferings courageously, I shall be your helper until you finish your contest, and your names shall be inscribed in the Book of Life."

After these words, the Lord disappeared from sight, together with St. Theodore.

The soldiers who had been tormenting the saints began to beg the governor:

"We beseech you, sir, release us from this task; we cannot torment these men."

Pointing to the saints, the governor said:

"These magicians are using incantations and thus frightening the soldiers."

Many of the people, who had been vouchsafed to see the divine manifestation, cried out:

"No! It is not incantations or sorcery, but the God of the Christians who helps His servants: just now we saw their King, Christ, and heard an angelic voice."

"I saw nothing," said the governor, "nor did I hear any voice."

St. Eutropius addressed him with these words:

"You speak rightly when you say that you did not see the divine manifestation and did not hear the heavenly voice: you do not see with the eyes of your soul, because the devil has blinded you, and Isaiah's

prophecy is fulfilled in you: 'They hear with difficulty, and have closed their eyes' (Is. 6:10)."

Hearing this, and seeing that the people were in an uproar, the governor ordered the saints to be bound and taken to prison. When the saints entered, the prisoners rejoiced greatly, and Christ's passion-bearers sang: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 123:8).

As he dined late that day with his counselors, the governor said to them:

"I do not know what to do with these men: the whole city is in an uproar because of them. What do you think?"

One of the counselors said:

"I beseech you, put them to death as soon as possible. If you delay their execution, the whole city will turn away from the gods and follow these men. Above all, do not allow the loquacious Eutropius to speak so much."

"I urged him to worship the gods," said the governor, "both with entreaties and with threats, but he reviled both the gods and the king, and vexed me, too, with his reproaches. But let us summon him alone and try to persuade him with entreaties. If he listens to us, the merciful gods will be glorified; if not, I shall put them to death."

Having said this, he sent soldiers to bring Eutropius from prison. Eutropius entered, and the governor, seated at table, addressed him:

"Would you like me myself to usher you honorably into the temple of our gods, so that you may offer sacrifices to them?"

St. Eutropius replied:

"As the Lord my God lives! It is not even in my thoughts to depart from the Christian faith, founded upon an immovable rock."

The governor invited the Martyr to sit and dine with them, but he refused. The others seated there also urged him:

"Sit with us, Eutropius; eat and drink, and submit to the governor!"

The saint replied:

"No, I, a servant of Christ, will not sit with the defiled, as the blessed Prophet David says: 'Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sits in the company of the corrupt' (Ps.

1:1). And elsewhere: 'I have not sat with deceitful men, nor will I go in with the crafty' (Ps. 25:4). Another Prophet proclaims: 'Come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not their uncleanness, and I will receive you' (Is. 52:11)."

The governor said:

"You used to be well-mannered, Eutropius, but now you seem ill-mannered."

"I am not ill-mannered," the saint replied, "but I keep the commandments of God. If you strive to fulfill the commands of earthly kings, I strive all the more to fulfill the commands of the King of Heaven, the Immortal One, Whom I serve."

The governor continued to persuade the saint:

"Tomorrow, go alone, without your brethren, and offer sacrifices to the gods, so that the people, seeing this, may be persuaded not to turn away from the gods, but to honor them with sacrifices."

St. Eutropius refused:

"Wicked man! Do you wish to make me a corrupter of Christ's flock? No, this shall not be, for my Lord says: 'Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea' (Mt. 18:6). And elsewhere He says: 'You cannot serve God and mammon' (Mt. 6:24), and, 'What fellowship has light with darkness? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?' (2 Cor. 6:14, 16)."

Hearing this, the governor ordered gold, various costly garments, and 150 litras[2] of silver to be brought, and said:

"I will give you all this, and even more, if only tomorrow you tell the people that you have submitted to the governor; then you may pray to your God as much as you please."

"Wicked tempter!" cried St. Eutropius. "No, you shall not tempt the servant of God! I remember firmly the words of Scripture: 'What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, but harms his soul? Or what

2. *Litra* (Gr. λιτρα, Lat. *libra*) equals 2/3 of a Russian pound. Consequently, 150 litra of silver make 100 pounds of silver, or at the present price of silver about 2200 rubles. (150 litra – 49 kg 117.5 g. – Editors of "Azbuka Very")

ransom can a man give for his soul?' (Mt. 16:26). Just as your brother Judas, loving silver, destroyed his soul, so shall you perish with him. But why do you delay putting us to death? Know that nothing will turn us away from the love of Christ." The governor argued with him at length, but the Martyr not only refused to obey him, he reproached him ever more and reviled the gods. It was already midnight, and time to retire to sleep, so the governor said to his servants:

"Take Eutropius to prison and bind him there, along with his friends. It seems that evil will never change, and no good can be expected of it."

As he was leaving, the saint said to the governor:

"You, garden of wickedness, bearing no fruit of righteousness, shall soon perish and be cast into the fire. You are worthless soil, producing not wheat but weeds! Satan has taken possession of your soul and sown it with seeds of evil."

Having said this, he went out. When he came to the prison, he found the saints Cleonicus and Basiliscus fervently praying: they had prayed for him all night.

The next morning, the governor wished to offer sacrifices to the gods publicly, and ordered heralds to cry out in the streets that all should gather with sacrifices at the temple of Artemis. When the people had gathered there and the governor arrived, the holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus, and Basiliscus were also brought there at his command. All worshipped the idols and offered sacrifices, some incense, others animals.

"Eutropius," said the governor, "go with your brethren and offer sacrifices to the gods, or you will die a cruel death."

St. Eutropius and his friends began to speak thus:

"O Lord God Almighty, eternal, undefiled, most pure, immutable, dwelling in heaven, glorified on earth! Thou hast established the heavens, set the earth upon its foundations, fashioned the mountains, numbered the countless stars and given names to them all, and wondrously pourest forth Thy light upon us. Thou didst once deliver the three holy youths from the furnace in Babylon, save holy Daniel from the lion's mouth, deliver Thy servant Susanna from death, preserve

holy Thecla from fire and beasts, and abide with St. Theodore in his sufferings. Be with us also, and come to this place; show Thy power and destroy all the madness of the pagans. Grant that Christians may offer to Thee, the True God, bloodless sacrifices in this place, for Thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Glory to Thee, and to Thine only-begotten Son, and to Thy Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen."

When the saints had spoken these words, thunder roared and the earth shook, so that the temple trembled, and the governor and all who were present ran out of it, fearing they would perish. The idol of Artemis fell and shattered into tiny pieces. Amid the din of the earthquake, a voice sounded from above:

"Your prayer has been heard, and on this place there shall be a house of prayer for Christians."

The saints rejoiced in the Lord.

When the earthquake ceased and everyone gradually recovered from their fear, the governor took his seat on the tribunal and, gnashing his teeth in fury at the saints, ordered sulfur and pitch to be brought, melted in three cauldrons, and poured over the saints' bodies. The governor also ordered strong stakes to be driven into the ground, the saints to be stripped and set between them, and their hands to be fastened to separate stakes, so that they were crucified. When this had been done and the pitch in the cauldrons was boiling fiercely, St. Cleonicus addressed St. Eutropius:

"Brother, let us pray to the Lord; great suffering awaits us."

The saints began to pray:

"Lord Jesus Christ, come to our aid and show Thy power: we are weak; strengthen us to endure the torments."

The servants brought the cauldrons of boiling sulfur and pitch, holding them with iron tongs. Blessed Eutropius said to the servants:

"May the Lord turn your deed back upon yourselves."

Suddenly, by the power of God, the Martyrs freed their hands from the stakes, took the boiling cauldrons in their own hands, and poured the pitch upon one another's backs. As it ran down their bodies, the pitch flowed like water across the marble floor, reached the servants,

and burned them to the bones. At this sight the governor was horrified, but attributed it to Christian sorcery. He ordered other servants to tear the saints' bodies with iron claws and pour mustard and salt dissolved in vinegar into their wounds. The saints endured all this courageously. Amid the torments, St. Eutropius said to the governor:

"Wicked man, enemy of the glory of God! Devise still greater torments, so that, for greater suffering, we may receive the Martyrs' crown in greater glory."

Enraged by these words, the torturer ordered his servants to torment the saints more severely, while they said:

"Make haste, most defiled man, and be done with us: we long to be rid of you and behold the face of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The saints were tormented for a long time, and only at sunset did the governor order them to be cast into prison again and bound in chains. The saints prayed thus in prison:

– O Lord God! Forsake us not until we have endured all sufferings and, freed from our tormentor, attained the quiet haven where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor grief, nor sighing.

While they were thus praying, at midnight the Lord appeared to them, saying:

– Verily I say unto you: since you go to death for My sake, you shall receive from Me eternal life with the saints.

Comforted by the visitation of the Lord, the martyrs were strengthened still more in the faith.

In the morning the governor again seated himself upon the judgment seat and, summoning the saints, said:

– Well then? Have you decided to bow down to the gods and offer them sacrifices, or do you wish to die an evil death?

St. Eutropius answered:

– Have you not heard from us, O benighted, blinded, and insensible destroyer, that we will not bow down to your gods, deaf and dumb demons, nor offer them sacrifice?!

Hearing this, the governor condemned the saints Eutropius and Cleonicus to crucifixion, issuing the following decree:

– Eutropius, teacher of sorcerers, and another sorcerer, Cleonicus, who have not obeyed the commands of the eternal emperors but confess the Christian faith, shall be crucified by the sentence of the most venerable court. Basiliscus, however, shall be confined in prison with the other prisoners.

Hearing this, St. Basiliscus cried out to the governor:

– Condemn me to death as well; I do not wish to be left behind my friends, but I strive to stand with them before Christ, our God.

– No, – said the governor, – the gods have so suggested to me: you made a vow not to forsake one another; but I will not destroy you all together, lest the vow be broken and your desire not be fulfilled.

– Truly, – exclaimed Eutropius, – you are fiercer than all beasts, the most savage of all animals! You divide a band that is inseparable in faith and love. But soon God will take vengeance on you; the flowers of God's grace will bloom and bear fruit for the churches of God.

After these words, St. Eutropius, together with St. Cleonicus, was led outside the city, where the crosses stood. The whole city followed them: not only Christians, but also pagans. Seeing their crosses, the holy martyrs said:

– O Lord our God, Jesus Christ! We praise and thank Thee that Thou hast made us worthy of death on the cross, after the likeness of Thy voluntary suffering. Vouchsafe us the crown of righteousness, that, suffering with Thee, we may be glorified in Thy Kingdom. We beseech Thee for the holy Church; humble those who rise against Thy servants, and grant peace to the Christian race.

During this prayer the soldiers nailed the martyrs to the crosses. And behold, a voice was heard from heaven, calling the saints to eternal rest. The saints Eutropius and Cleonicus commended their souls to the Lord with the prayer: "Into Thy hands, O Master, we commend our souls."

Thus they died on the 3rd day of March. Two pious men, citizens of the city of Amasea, Quintus and Velonicus, asked the governor to permit them to take the bodies of the martyrs. The governor did not refuse the request. Then Velonicus took the body of St. Eutropius and, anointing it with myrrh, buried it with honor in his village, which lay 18 sta-

dia[3] from the city. Quintus took the body of Cleonicus and laid it with the same honor in the village of Kimê. In these places, at the tombs of the martyrs, many healings were performed to the glory of God.

St. Basiliscus, who remained in prison, was held in chains for a long time yet. The governor Asclepiodotus perished; under his successor Agrippa St. Basiliscus was beheaded on the 22nd day of May. On this day his memory is celebrated to the glory of Christ, our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

On the same day, the memory of Sts. Zeno and Zoilus, who died in peace.

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Piama, a maiden who lived in the land of Egypt and had the gift of clairvoyance; she reposed in the year 337.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of Sts. Zeno and Zoilus, who died in peace.

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Piama, a maiden who lived in the land of Egypt and had the gift of clairvoyance; she reposed in the year 337.

3. *Stadion* (στάδιον), a Greek measure of length, equals approximately 74 sazhens. Consequently, 18 stadia – somewhat more than 2.5 versts. (Attic stadion – 177.6 m, Olympic stadion – 192.27 m. – Editors of "Azbuka Very")

THE FOURTH DAY OF MARCH

March 4

4 марта

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

Life of Our Venerable Father Gerasimus, Who Lived on the Jordan

Житие преподобного отца нашего Герасима, жившего на Иордане

The Venerable Gerasimus, the great ascetic, was a native of Lycia[1]. From his youth he trained himself in the fear of God, and having embraced the monastic life, he withdrew into the desert, into the depths of the Egyptian land of the Thebaid. After spending some time there in the labors of piety, he returned again to his homeland of Lycia. Then he came to Palestine at the end of the reign of Theodosius the Younger[2], and settled in the Jordanian desert, where, like a bright star, he shone by his virtuous life. There, by the river Jordan, he founded a monastery. During his sojourn in Palestine, in the reign of Marcian and Pulcheria, the Fourth Ecumenical Council of the holy Fathers was held at Chalcedon against the impious Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, and the archimandrite Eutyches, who taught that in Christ there is only one nature, the divine; the holy Fathers condemned them. Afterward there appeared certain heretics who reviled the Council and asserted that it had rejected the dogmas of the true faith and restored the teaching of Nestorius[3]. Such was one monk, Theodosius, infected with the impiety of Eutyches. Coming to Jerusalem, he disturbed all of Palestine, seducing not only simple people but even many saints and the Empress Eudocia, widow of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, who

1. Lycia – a region in the southern part of Asia Minor.
2. Theodosius II, called "the Younger" in the Life, was the grandson of Theodosius the Great. Born in 400, in 408 he succeeded his father Arcadius in the Eastern Roman Empire. Reared in strict piety, Theodosius strove to root out the last traces of paganism in the Empire. He died in 450.

was then living in Jerusalem. With the help of the latter and of many Palestinian monks whom he had led astray, he drove the blessed Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, from the throne and seated himself upon it. Those who remained faithful to orthodoxy suffered much from the false patriarch Theodosius and withdrew into the depths of the desert. The first to withdraw was the Venerable Euthymius the Great; other holy Fathers followed him. At this time, by the permission of God, the Venerable Gerasimus too was led astray, but soon repented, as Cyril of Jerusalem[4] writes in his Life. There was then, he says, in the Jordanian desert a hermit, recently come from Lycia, named Gerasimus. He had passed through all the rules of the monastic life and valiantly struggled with the unclean spirit; but while he conquered and drove away the invisible demons, he was deceived by visible demons—heretics—and fell into the heresy of Eutyches. At this time the fame of Euthymius's virtuous life spread everywhere. To him went the Venerable Gerasimus, into the desert called Rouba, and there he settled for a long time. Having been sated with the sweetness of the saint's teachings and admonitions, he rejected the false doctrine of the heretics, returned to the right faith, and bitterly repented of his error. So Cyril relates. At last the most holy Juvenal again occupied the patriarchal throne: the pious Emperor Marcian sent to seize the false patriarch Theodosius, to bring him to judgment for his deeds. But Theodosius, learning of this, fled to Mount Sinai and disappeared no one knows where. Thus in Jerusalem and throughout all Palestine the right faith shone forth again, and many who had been led into heresy turned again to piety. The Empress Eudocia too, recognizing her error, was reunited to the Orthodox Church.

The monastery of the Venerable Gerasimus lay at a distance of 35 stadia from the holy city of Jerusalem, and one stadion from the river

3. *Nestorius*, bishop of Constantinople, taught that Jesus Christ is not the true God but only a simple man, the son of Joseph and Mary, who on account of the sanctity of his life was granted a special grace of God. According to the teaching of Nestorius, Jesus Christ saves us not by His redemptive merits but by the example of a good life. The teaching of Nestorius was condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council, held in 431.

Jordan. Here he received newcomers, and to those who had passed the trial period he gave hermit cells in the desert. In all he had no fewer than seventy desert-dwellers, for whom the Venerable Gerasimus established the following rule. Five days of the week each one spent in his solitary cell in silence, occupied with some work, eating a little dry bread brought from the monastery, water, and roots. On these five days it was not permitted to eat anything cooked, nor even to kindle a fire, so that there should not be even a thought of cooking food. On Saturday and Sunday all came to the monastery, gathered in the church for the Divine Liturgy, and partook of the Most Pure and Life-giving Mysteries of Christ; then at the common meal they ate cooked food and a little wine, to the glory of God, and presented to the abbot the work accomplished during the five days. On Sunday after noon each again withdrew to his solitary cell in the desert, taking with him a little bread, roots, a vessel of water, and palm branches for weaving baskets. Their non-possession and poverty were such that none of them had anything except one worn garment, a mat for sleeping, and a small vessel of water. The abbot even forbade them, when leaving the cell, to close the door, so that anyone might enter and freely take whatever he wished from these poor things. And so they lived according to the apostolic rule, "one heart and one soul," and no one called anything his own, but all things were held in common. It is related that some of the desert-dwellers asked the Venerable Gerasimus for permission to light sometimes at night a candle for reading, or to kindle a fire to warm water in case of need. But St. Gerasimus said to them:

"If you want to have fire in the desert, then come and live in the monastery with the newcomers: as long as I live, I will never permit the desert-dwellers to have fire!"

The inhabitants of the city of Jericho, hearing of such strict asceticism under the guidance of St. Gerasimus, made it their rule every Saturday and Sunday to come to the monastery of the Venerable and to

4. Bishop of Jerusalem from 315 to 386, that is, earlier than the activity of the Venerable Gerasimus. In the Life the author is apparently named incorrectly; perhaps one should read Cyril of Alexandria (archbishop 412–444), who wrote much against heretics.

bring in abundance food, wine, and everything needful for the monastery.

The Venerable Gerasimus observed the fasts so strictly that during the Holy and Great Forty Days he ate absolutely nothing until the Bright Day itself, and sustained his bodily and spiritual strength only by partaking of the Divine Mysteries. Under this pious teacher the blessed Cyriacus also labored, as is written in his Life: "Having received Cyriacus, who came to him, with friendliness, and perceiving in him the divine glory, the Venerable Euthymius himself clothed him in the schema and sent him to the Jordan to St. Gerasimus. St. Gerasimus, seeing Cyriacus's youth, ordered him to live in the monastery and to bear obediences. Ready to perform every work, Cyriacus spent the whole day amid the monastery's labors, and the whole night he stood in prayer, sometimes yielding to sleep only for a short time. He imposed fasting upon himself, and only every second day did he take bread and water. Seeing such abstinence in Cyriacus, despite his young years, the Venerable Gerasimus marveled and loved him. St. Gerasimus had the custom during Lent of going to the most remote part of the desert, called Rouba, where the Venerable Euthymius had once lived; loving the blessed Cyriacus for his great abstinence, he took him with him, and there Cyriacus received the Holy Mysteries every week from the hands of St. Gerasimus, remained in silence until Palm Sunday, and returned to the monastery, having received great spiritual benefit."

After some time our Venerable Father Euthymius reposed, and the Venerable Gerasimus learned of his death while he was in his own cell: he saw the Angels of God joyfully bearing the soul of the Venerable Euthymius up to heaven. Taking Cyriacus with him, he went to Euthymius's monastery and found him already dead. Having committed his honored body to burial, he returned with his beloved disciple Cyriacus to his own cell.

To the great servant of God Gerasimus even the irrational beast served as a rational man does, as the blessed Fathers Eviratus and Sophronius the Sophist write in the *Leimonarion*[5]: "We came to the monastery of Father Gerasimus, which lies at a distance of one stadion

from the Jordan, and the monks living there told us about Father Gerasimus. Once he was walking through the Jordanian desert and met a lion, which showed him its paw, swollen and filled with pus from a thorn that had pierced it. The lion gazed meekly at the old man and, not being able to express its request in words, begged for healing by its humble appearance. The old man, seeing the lion in such distress, sat down, took the beast's paw, and drew the thorn out of it. When the pus had run out, he cleansed the wound well and bound it with a cloth. The healed lion from then on did not leave the old man, but followed him like a disciple, so that St. Gerasimus marveled at the mind and gentleness of the beast. The old man fed it, giving it bread or other food. The monks had a donkey, on which they brought water for the brethren from the holy Jordan. The old man entrusted the lion with accompanying the donkey and guarding it when it grazed on the banks of the Jordan. It happened once that the lion wandered a considerable distance from the grazing donkey and fell asleep in the sun. At this time a man from Arabia was passing by with camels, and seeing the donkey grazing alone, he took it and led it away with him. Waking, the lion began to look for the donkey, and not finding it, went with a dejected and sorrowful look to the monastery of Father Gerasimus. The old man thought the lion had devoured the donkey, and asked:

"Where is the donkey?"

The lion stood silent, lowering its eyes to the ground, like a man. Then the old man said:

"You have devoured it! But blessed be the Lord, you shall not leave here, but shall do for the monastery all that the donkey did."

By the old man's command, from then on they began to load the lion, as before the donkey, with a cask holding four measures[6], and to send it to the Jordan for water for the monastery.

Once a soldier came to the old man to pray, and seeing the lion carrying water, took pity on it. In order to buy a new donkey and free the

5. "The Limonarion" ("Spiritual Meadow") – a work of the Greek monk John Moschus; written at the beginning of the seventh century, it contains brief accounts of the lives and ascetic labors of the saints.

6. *Mekh* – a leather bag that served as a measure of liquids.

lion from labor, he gave the monks three gold coins. A donkey for the monastery's service was bought, and the lion was released from labor.

Some time later a merchant from Arabia, who had led away the donkey, set out for Jerusalem with camels to sell wheat; the donkey was with him as well. Near the Jordan a lion chanced to meet the caravan; recognizing the donkey, it roared and rushed toward it. The merchant and his companions fled in terror, but the lion, seizing the bridle in its teeth as it had done before, led the donkey, with three camels laden with wheat tied one behind another. Expressing with its roaring its joy at having found the lost donkey, the lion brought it to the elder. The Venerable Elder smiled quietly and said to the brethren:

"We were wrong to revile the lion, thinking that it had devoured our donkey."

The lion was given the name Jordan. After this it often came to the elder, received food from him, and did not leave the monastery for more than five years. When the Venerable Father Gerasimus departed to the Lord[7] and was buried by the brotherhood, by God's providence the lion was not in the monastery at that time; but after some time it came and began to seek its elder. Father Sabbatius and one of the disciples of Father Gerasimus, seeing the lion, said to it:

"Jordan! Our elder has left us orphans: he has departed to the Lord!"

They began to offer it food, but the lion would not accept food; it looked about in all directions, seeking the Venerable Father Gerasimus, and roared mournfully. Father Sabbatius and the other elders stroked its back and repeated:

"Our elder has departed to the Lord and left us!"

But by these words they could not restrain the lion from its wailing and mournful roaring, and the more they sought to comfort it with words, the more sorrowfully it roared, expressing by voice, face and eyes its grief at not seeing the elder. Then Father Sabbatius said:

"If you do not believe us, come with us; we will show you the place where the elder lies."

7. In 475.

And they went with it to the tomb in which the Venerable Gerasimus had been buried. The tomb was situated close by the church. Standing over the tomb, Father Sabbatius said to the lion:

"Here lies our elder buried."

And kneeling down, he began to weep. Hearing this, and seeing that Sabbatius was weeping, the lion beat its head against the ground and roared terribly. Roaring loudly, it died over the elder's tomb. The lion could express nothing in words, yet by God's will it glorified the elder both during his life and after his death, showing us how obedient the beasts were to Adam before his fall and expulsion from Paradise."

Thus relate John and Sophronius. From this account it is evident how the Venerable Gerasimus was pleasing to God, working for His glory from youth to old age. He departed to the Lord into eternal life, where with the saints he glorifies the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Burning with heavenly zeal, thou didst prefer the harshness of the Jordan wilderness above all the sweetness of the world; wherefore the beast obeyed thee even unto death, O Father, and, meekly and piteously, died upon thy grave, glorifying thee thus to God. Pray to Him, and remember us, O Father Gerasimus.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Paul and His Sister Juliana, and Others with Them

Страдание святых мучеников Павла и сестры его Иулиании и прочих с ними

The Roman Emperor Aurelian[8] issued a decree throughout the whole empire that all Christians should offer sacrifices to the gods. Those who resisted this decree were ordered to be put to death in cruel torments. The emperor himself, passing through Isauria, arrived at the Phoenician city of Ptolemais[9], in order to compel all the Christians there to offer idol-sacrifice. As the emperor entered the city,

8. Reigned from 270 to 275.

the Blessed Paul was standing there with his sister Juliana. Paul, seeing the emperor entering, made the sign of the cross over his face and said to Juliana:

"Be bold, my sister, and do not be afraid, for a great calamity is coming upon the Christians."

Aurelian, seeing that Paul had crossed himself, ordered him to be seized and held in chains until morning. In the morning, having a throne set up in a conspicuous place, the emperor sat in the presence of the whole people and ordered the Blessed Paul to be brought to torment. When he was brought, the emperor said:

"Audacious man, how did you dare, at my entry into the city, to make the Christian sign upon your face? Have you not heard of our imperial edict issued against the Christians?"

The Blessed Paul answered the emperor:

"I have heard your edict, but no one can ever so terrify us Christians that out of fear we would decide to renounce the true God and cease to confess faith in Christ the Son of God. The torments inflicted upon us by you are short-lived, whereas the sufferings appointed by God's unfeigned judgment will be eternal, just as the glory which God gives to Christians is also eternal. Who among us would be so mad as to forsake the living God and bow down to deaf and dumb idols? Our Savior Jesus Christ Himself says in the Gospel: 'Whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in heaven' (Mt. 10:33)."

Aurelian said to Paul:

"I see that I have long borne with your insolent words; come forward and offer sacrifice to the gods, lest I deliver you to a cruel death."

The Blessed Paul again said:

"I know no other God except our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have served from childhood with purity of heart."

Then the Emperor Aurelian said to the soldiers:

"Hang him up and torment him cruelly, until his Christ comes and delivers him from your hands."

---

9. *Ptolemais* – a city in Phoenicia, south of Tyre, north of Mount Karyusla. Here St. Paul stopped during his last journey to Jerusalem and spent a day with the Christians (Acts 21:7).

The soldiers immediately carried out the imperial command: hanging the Blessed Paul naked upon a tree, they tormented him. And the saint prayed to God with a loud voice:

"Lord Jesus Christ, True Son of the True God the Father, whose birth no one can comprehend, neither Angels, nor Archangels, nor thrones, nor dominions, nor principalities, nor powers, nor Cherubim, nor Seraphim[10], but only the one God the Father: help me, Thy humble and despised servant, and deliver me from the hands of Aurelian."

By his prayer the Lord Jesus Christ lessened his cruel torments, so that the saint did not feel pain from the wounds inflicted upon him. At this time the holy bride of Christ, Juliana, seeing that her brother was delivered to torment, came to the tribunal and cried out loudly to the tormentor:

"Tormentor Aurelian, why do you so cruelly torment my innocent brother?"

Angered by her words, Aurelian said to the servants:

"Uncover this woman's head and strike her on the face, so that she may not speak to us so boldly; and torment the impious man even more severely, and we shall see whether Christ will protect and help him."

The Blessed Juliana, mocking the emperor's words, said:

"I marvel how you, O emperor, rave and do not understand the power of Christ, who lessens the torments of those who call upon Him in faith."

Aurelian, turning to those standing around him, said:

"My gentleness, with which I speak to this woman, drives her to frenzy."

And looking fiercely at the saint, he said to her:

"Approach the gods and bow down to them, for you will not escape my hands."

But the holy Juliana answered with firmness:

"I do not fear your tortures, nor do I heed your threats, for there is a God in heaven who can deliver us from your impious hands. Hand me

over to all the tortures, and you shall see the help given me in the midst of them by my Lord Jesus Christ."

Then Aurelian, with cunning, began to speak to the saint:

"I see your beauty, and for its sake I wish to spare you; I beg you to heed my admonitions and offer sacrifice to the gods. I will make you my lawful wife, and all the days of our life you shall reign together with me. To your brother I will give a great reward for his sufferings, and I will honor him with the highest rank."

In answer to the crafty words, the holy Juliana, raising her eyes to heaven and making the sign of the cross over her face, laughed.

"By your laughter," said Aurelian, "you insult my great indulgence toward you."

But the saint answered:

"No, I do not insult you; I laughed joyfully because I now behold with spiritual eyes the Divine beauty of my Heavenly Bridegroom, seated upon His holy throne and desiring the salvation of all men. He told me to undertake voluntarily the ascetic feat of suffering, and to despise you, a crafty and loquacious man, since you, though you are called a king, worship wood and stone."

Such an answer from the martyr threw Aurelian into a violent rage, and he said to the soldiers:

"Hang this woman up and torment her cruelly, so that she may understand that she is at the imperial tribunal."

When the soldiers began to torment the saint, her brother, the holy Paul, looked at her and said to her:

"Do not fear the tortures imposed by the tormentor, my sister, and do not be afraid of his threats, for having suffered a little here, we shall receive an eternal reward from Christ our God."

Meanwhile Aurelian was saying to the soldiers who were tormenting the saint:

10. Holy Scripture distinguishes among the Angels different orders or ranks, of which it indicates nine (Gen. 3:24; Is. 6:2; Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:20–21; Rom. 8:38; 1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 1:6). In the *Celestial Hierarchy* of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the first place among the orders of the Angels is occupied by the Seraphim.

"Torment her more severely, persuading her to abandon her pride and madness."

The holy Juliana, tormented without mercy, hearing the emperor's words, laughed again and said:

"Aurelian, tormentor! You think you are tormenting me, but with the help of my Christ I do not feel the torments."

To this Aurelian said to her:

"Although you lie, claiming that you do not feel the torments, I will overcome your obstinacy and will continue to torment you."

The saint said:

"My Lord Jesus Christ will not forsake me, nor will He allow me to be overcome by you, for He is my helper now and always, and will help me to the end, so that you may know His power and my Christian endurance. As for you, my God will command that you be tormented with eternal unquenchable fire, and will require from you those human souls which you have destroyed by your treacherous seductions."

The saint's words threw Aurelian into a violent rage. He ordered a cauldron of pitch to be brought and a strong fire kindled beneath it. When the pitch in the cauldron boiled, so that one could not approach it, the tormentor ordered the holy martyrs Paul and Juliana to be cast into the cauldron. Thrown into it, they raised their eyes to heaven, and as though with one voice, prayed:

O Lord God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who didst descend into the fiery furnace of Babylon to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and didst not permit them to be harmed by the fire (Dan. 3), Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, Master, incomprehensible Light, Mystery and glorification of the Father, Morning Star of God Most High, who didst become incarnate for our sins and didst live among men, desiring to save the souls which our enemy the devil boldly beguiled, scattered and cast down into hell, a thing which his disciple Aurelian is doing even now: Thou, O Lord, deliver us also from this grievous torment.

During this prayer of the sufferers, the seething pitch turned into cold water, and all who stood by marveled at the power of God and glorified Him. Aurelian, however, mad with rage, did not glorify God; thinking it to be sorcery, he commanded that the saints be taken out of

the cauldron, in which there remained not even a smell of pitch but only cold water. When the martyrs had been taken out, Aurelian said to them:

"Do you think that the people present here, who saw everything that happened and who have been beguiled by you, will believe that God has remembered you, and that it was not rather you who by the power of sorcery cooled the cauldron? I swear by my gods that I will make your witchcraft of no avail, and that you, scorched by fire, wounded and exhausted by many and prolonged torments, will against your will offer sacrifice to the gods."

St. Paul answered these insolent words:

St. Paul answered these insolent words:

"We will never forsake the living God, who created heaven and earth, who freed us from darkness and delivered us out of your hands. Never, tormentor Aurelian, will you be able to persuade us to bow down to your voiceless, lifeless and insensible idols. Subject us to whatever torments you know, and in them you shall learn the power of our God."

Then Aurelian commanded that two iron beds be brought, that many coals be taken from the public baths, and that the beds be heated with them; then the holy martyrs were to be laid naked upon the heated beds, and at the same time melted pig fat was to be poured over them. During this torment Aurelian said to the martyrs:

"Now I have overcome your magic power, and you shall learn who Aurelian is. Let your Christ come and help you."

"Our Christ," the holy Juliana answered the tormentor, "is already with us here, helps us, and does not allow the fire to harm us; but you do not see Him, for you are not worthy. I advise you to abandon your madness and turn to Christ. If you wish to believe in Him, He will receive you when you repent, for He mercifully and compassionately forgives the sins of men; but if you do not turn to Him, you shall be delivered to the eternal fire."

At this time two soldiers, seeing that the saints, scorched upon the beds, remained unharmed by the fire, cried out with a loud voice:

"There is no other God but the heavenly God, who helps Paul and Juliana."

The emperor, enraged at the soldiers for this, commanded that both of them be immediately beheaded with the sword. He thought that they had been bribed and had taken much gold from the Christians so that they would not torment the saints cruelly. When these soldiers were led to execution, St. Paul gave them this exhortation:

"Fear not," he said, "you shall never die, but shall be with the saints as heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom."

Hearing his words, the soldiers stopped and began to pray:

"Lord Jesus Christ, our Master! True God, whom Paul and Juliana preach, be with us also, for we are dying without having committed any wickedness."

After these words they were beheaded with the sword. Their names were Quadratus and Acacius. After the death of these soldiers, others were appointed to scorch the saints lying upon the heated beds. They scattered salt upon the fire so that it would blaze more strongly; but the saints felt no torment and continued to reproach the tormentor. Put to shame by his powerlessness against the martyrs, Aurelian commanded that they be cast into prison, that heavy wooden collars be placed on their necks, shackles on their feet, and iron rings on their hands. In the prison the tormentor commanded that sharp nails be strewn on the floor like thorns and thistles in a field, and that the martyrs be laid upon them, so that they would not only have no relief in their sufferings but would be tormented even more by the nails tearing their bodies. At the same time the tormentor ordered strictly that none of the Christians should come to them or bring them food or drink. At midnight, when the saints lay upon the sharp nails and prayed, suddenly a light shone in the prison, an Angel of the Lord appeared, and said to the martyrs:

"Paul and Juliana, servants of the Most High Lord, arise and glorify God!"

Having said this, the Angel approached and touched the chains and fetters of the martyrs, and immediately the bonds broke and fell from their bodies, their wounds were healed, and they became whole again.

And behold, they saw two tables covered with pure linen and a meal prepared before them, full of all kinds of food. The Angel said to the saints:

"Partake of the food which Jesus Christ has sent you."

The holy martyrs Paul and Juliana sat down at the table and, taking bread in their hands, lifted their eyes to heaven and gave thanks to God; then they ate and drank what the Lord had sent and were strengthened.

The prisoners who were in the prison saw the light shine forth, and saw the saints, freed from their fetters, sit down at the places prepared for them at the table, and eat and rejoice. In amazement they came up to them and were made partakers of this meal prepared by an unseen hand. Glorifying God, who shows such mercy to His servants, and believing in Him, they all became Christians.

On the third day the emperor Aurelian again sat down on the judgment seat, and, commanding that the holy martyrs Paul and Juliana be brought before him, said to them:

"I hope that the torments have had their effect upon you, and that, having renounced your madness, you now approach the gods and offer sacrifice to them."

St. Paul answered him:

"This madness, not to renounce Christ, let it remain forever with me and with all who love God: 'for the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men' (1 Cor. 1:25). 'For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, for it is written: He taketh the wise in their craftiness' (1 Cor. 3:19). And indeed I would be mad if, turning away from the True God, I bowed down to your demons."

Aurelian again flew into a rage and commanded that both martyrs be hanged naked on a tree and that their ribs be scraped with iron claws. They, given over to torment, prayed to God:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, Light of Christianity, unshakable faith, appear to us and help us and forsake us not, for the sake of Thy Holy Name."

By their prayer the Savior, invisibly standing near them, lessened their sufferings, and the saints did not feel the torments. One of the soldiers, named Stratonicus, who had been placed on the left side of the holy Juliana to scrape her ribs, pitied her beauty and refrained from scraping. The saint, perceiving his thought, pushed him with her left foot and said to him:

"Stratonicus, carry out the tormentor's command and spare me not, for my King, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal God Himself, helps me; He guards my soul and lightens my bodily torments."

Stratonicus, throwing down the instrument that was in his hands, ran to the place of the imperial court and cried out:

"Aurelian, impious tormentor! Why do you so unjustly deliver Christians to torment? What evil have these people done, who worship the True God? Why do they suffer so greatly? Is it really only because they worship Christ, the Lord of all?"

Hearing his words, the emperor fell into terrible rage and for a full hour could not speak. At last he said:

"And you, Stratonicus, have become a participant in the same madness! What has beguiled you? The beauty of Juliana, or were you overcome by her womanly speech?"

Stratonicus, lifting his eyes to heaven, saw that the faces of the holy martyrs hanging in torment were bright, like the faces of the Angels of God. Immediately, crossing himself, he ran to the impious idol altar set up there, overturned it, and, trampling it under his feet, cried out:

"I too am a Christian! Do with me, tormentor, whatever thou wishest." Aurelian was greatly enraged and commanded that his head be cut off.

When Stratonicus was brought to the place of execution, he prayed to God thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, through preaching Thee Paul and Juliana remain unconquered, preserved by Thy Divinity, and put the tormentor Aurelian to shame. I beseech Thee: receive my soul also into Thy Heavenly Kingdom, and reject me not, who for a brief time have confessed Thy holy Name before the tormentor Aurelian."

After this prayer he was beheaded with the sword, and the Christians, taking his body, hid it. The holy Paul and Juliana were tormented all that day and were in no way weakened by their sufferings. Aurelian, turning to Juliana, said to her:

"Vile and impious woman! How were you able, during the torments, to beguile this soldier? You are guilty of his death."

The saint answered:

"I did not beguile him, and I am not guilty of his death. Christ, who chose me as His bride, has called this soldier to Himself as one worthy, for if he had not been worthy, he could never have received the martyr's crown. You yourself will be tormented in the flames of Gehenna, and will see him in the Kingdom of Heaven. Then you will beat your impious breast, seeing that he who was once your subordinate, an insignificant man rejected by you, has been placed above you and crowned by Christ with the glory of the Heavenly Kingdom. You will then be filled with great sorrow and will cry out, asking for mercy for yourself, but you will never receive it."

After this, Aurelian commanded that the torments of the saints be stopped, and that they be shut up again in prison. That same evening Aurelian commanded that they be moved from the prison to the public bath. Then, summoning sorcerers, enchanters and charmers of serpents, he commanded them to bring all the most venomous reptiles they had: vipers, asps and snakes, and to release them into the bath where the martyrs were confined. The sorcerers, carrying out the imperial command, gathered a multitude of reptiles and let them into the bath with the saints. But the reptiles crept about at the feet of the holy martyrs and did no harm to them, while the saints fearlessly sang and glorified God. In this confinement in the bath, together with the reptiles, the saints remained three days and three nights. On the fourth night Aurelian sent to learn whether Paul and Juliana had been devoured by the reptiles. When the messengers approached the doors of the bath, they heard the saints singing psalms and glorifying God. Wishing to learn better what was going on inside, the messengers climbed onto the roof of the bath and looked down through a small window. They saw a bright light, and Saint Paul sitting together with his sister, Saint Juli-

ana. Beside them stood an Angel of God, who did not allow the reptiles to touch the saints. Seeing this, the messengers went to Emperor Aurelian and told him what they had seen. The next morning he again sat down at the tribunal and commanded the sorcerers and charmers to take the reptiles out of the bath, and to bring the martyrs before him for judgment. The sorcerers, approaching the doors of the bath, began by incantations to summon the reptiles to themselves, but the reptiles did not obey them. When the doors of the bath were opened, at once all the reptiles rushed upon their charmers and the other people who had come with them; having mortally stung them, the reptiles disappeared. After the reptiles had scattered, the messengers of the tyrant came and, taking the holy martyrs, brought them before him for judgment. The tyrant, looking at them and smiling, said:

"I am glad to speak with you again, for I hope to learn something great from you. I swear by the gods, if you tell me the truth, you will receive from me many great gifts and will be men of distinction in my kingdom. Tell me: is it true what I have heard from those who looked in through the window at you in the bath, that our lord Apollo came to you and helped you, protecting you from the reptiles, and that you saw his face with your own eyes?"

Saint Paul answered the emperor:

"We do not know Apollo and have never seen him, for we serve the True God, who has prepared salvation for His servants. But your soul is mortally lost, for you do not desire to know the truth and to repent. The great frenzy of the torments you devise has brought you to such a state that you dare to revile the incorporeal servant of God, the holy Angel, whom our Lord Jesus Christ sent to us in order to stop the mouths of the reptiles, and you boldly call him Apollo."

The martyr's words kindled a great anger in Aurelian, and he commanded that Saint Paul be struck on the face with tin rods, and that they say to him as they did so:

"How dare you answer so proudly and insolently? Know that you stand before the emperor."

After this torment, Aurelian commanded that Saint Paul be taken away and that Saint Juliana be brought near to him. The tyrant said to her:

"Lady of my heart, Juliana! I beg you, do not follow the madness of your brother. I see that you are a prudent maiden of great understanding; therefore listen to my counsel, and you will be empress with me, for I will take you as my wife and set up your golden statues in all the cities of the empire."

But the saint answered the emperor:

"You will not beguile me by anything, impious tyrant; you will not ensnare the servant of the Most High God with your cunning, nor make her liable to eternal death. Although you desire it, you cannot deprive me of the glory of Christ and of the Heavenly Kingdom."

Then Aurelian commanded that the saint be taken away from the judgment seat, and again brought Saint Paul before him, to whom he began to speak thus:

"Behold, Paul, your sister Juliana gave us her promise to offer sacrifice to the gods. For this reason I wish to take her as my wife, and she will be the sovereign lady of my whole kingdom. Be persuaded yourself, and fulfil my command to offer sacrifice to the gods: you will be my friend and receive a high office as your reward."

But Saint Paul answered these crafty words:

"Truly you have lied, saying that my sister has fallen away from her most pure and immortal Bridegroom, Christ, and has become the companion of you, defiled and corruptible, and of your demons. But it is no wonder that you lie, for you have the devil as your father, who is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Having learned lying from him, you do the same as he, and you cannot beguile anyone except by falsehood. But you labour in vain, for you will not beguile us by your lying cunning, even if you promised us the kingdom of the whole world."

Angered by the martyr's answer, Aurelian said to him:

"How long will you speak so insolently to us, senseless man? I swear by the gods that I will torment you with every kind of torment, and no one will be able to deliver you from my hands."

Having said this, the emperor commanded that a large fire be kindled, that fourteen iron rods be brought and heated in the fire. Then he commanded that Saint Paul's hands and feet be bound, that a heated rod be thrust between his hands and feet, that he be fixed into the ground, and that two soldiers beat him in turn with the heated rods. The command was carried out. The tyrant commanded that Juliana be taken to a house of prostitution and there given over to defilement. Hearing this command, many of the people hastened there, outdoing one another, so that they might enter to her first, stirred up, like horses, by her beauty. When the saint had been brought into the house of prostitution, an Angel of the Lord appeared to her and said:

"Fear not, Juliana, for the Lord Jesus Christ, whom you serve, has sent me to guard you, so that His holy name may be glorified among those who fear Him."

And the Angel struck with blindness the debauchers who wished to touch the saint, shaking them off like dust from the feet of Christ's bride, so that they could not approach her, but went groping and ran into the walls. Seeing this miracle, the people as if with one voice cried out loudly:

"Great is the God of Paul and Juliana, who everywhere saves and protects those who fear Him!"

The blinded debauchers, bending their knees, cried out to the saint:

"Juliana, servant of the Most High God, we have sinned against you, desiring to defile you. But you, as a servant of the good God, forgive us, and pray to your Christ that He may grant us sight."

The saint had compassion on them, took a little water, and, lifting her eyes to heaven, began to pray to God thus:

"Jesus Christ, True God, Savior of all men, hear me, Your servant, and now show signs and wonders such as You work for men; grant these people sight, that they may glorify Your holy Name."

Having prayed, the saint sprinkled all the blinded with water, and they at once received their sight. The healed fell to the ground, gave thanks to God, and, coming into the Christian church, confessed their sins and were granted holy Baptism. Meanwhile the soldiers, by the emperor's command, continued to torment Saint Paul, striking him

without mercy with the iron rods heated in the fire, and the attendants and the rods were often changed. In the midst of these sufferings the saint cried out to the emperor:

"Aurelian, impious tyrant, what evil have I done, that you torment me so cruelly and godlessly? But truly my Lord Jesus Christ lightens my sufferings, while you await the eternal fire prepared for you and for the devil, who teaches you against us."

Aurelian, wishing to grieve the saint, said:

"Paul, where is your sister Juliana? You think she is a maiden; but today she has been given up to dishonour in a house of prostitution."

Saint Paul answered this reproach:

"I believe that my God, who lightens my sufferings and delivers me from your wicked schemes, will also protect my sister and keep her unblemished from all defilement, and will send her an Angel from His heaven to guard her."

After a while Paul again said:

"Behold, my sister is returning unstained, having kept her virginity, and she comes to see my sufferings and my wounds."

The saint spoke thus because with his far-seeing eyes he saw everything that had happened to Saint Juliana. The tyrant commanded that the saint be returned. When Saint Juliana was again brought to the judgment seat and Saint Paul saw her, he was filled with great joy and met his sister with a bright smile. Aurelian asked the saint:

"Juliana, did the fornicators take their pleasure in your beauty?"

The saint answered:

"My joy, my beauty, and all my adornment is Christ, who sent His Angel and preserved me, His humble servant. I have placed my hope in Him and glorify His Most Holy Name, for He is the True God who works wonders, and there is no other God besides Him alone."

Having commanded that the torture of Saint Paul be stopped, the emperor gave orders that a pit three sazhens deep be dug, filled with firewood and set alight. When the wood had burned completely and a multitude of red-hot embers remained in the pit, the tyrant commanded that the holy martyrs, Paul and Juliana, be cast into it. But they themselves went to the fiery pit, blessing God and calling upon Christ the

Savior, their Helper. Coming to the pit, the martyrs crossed themselves and threw themselves into the fire. Being in the fire, they sang and glorified the Lord, for an Angel of the Lord came down from heaven, weakened the power of the fire and scattered the embers, and preserved the martyrs whole and in no way harmed. The saints stood in the pit and sang:

"Blessed is God, King of ages, who has remembered our humility and Himself quenched the fiery flame, forgiving our sins by His great goodness; You have preserved us, unworthy as we are, whole and unhurt from the fury of Aurelian the tyrant."

All the people heard the singing of the saints, and many of the pagans, seeing the glory of God, were moved in their hearts, and, rejecting the idols, believed in Christ. The tsar commanded that the saints in the pit be stoned. But suddenly there came lightning and a loud thunder was heard, a fiery cloud appeared, from which fire came down upon the earth, and a voice was heard from heaven:

"Aurelian, you shall go into the fiery Gehenna prepared for you and for your father, the devil."

Aurelian and all the people were struck with fear, and the tormentor commanded that the saints be drawn out of the pit and put in prison. They, however, glorified God for all the wonders which God had wrought for their sake. After seven days Aurelian again sat down in judgment and commanded the priests to bring all the idols they possessed, of gold and silver, adorned with precious stones, and to spread his imperial purple beneath their feet. Then, summoning the holy martyrs Paul and Juliana, he said to them with great fury:

"Come now and bow down to the gods, for you shall not escape my hands."

St. Paul, laughing at his words, said to him:

"Never, tormentor, shall we forsake God who created heaven and earth. Do not hope ever to bring us to idolatry."

Then Aurelian said to the martyr:

"Worthy of a cruel death, do you think these are idols? Do you not perceive the power that is in them?"

St. Paul answered:

"Zeus, whom you call a god, was a sorcerer full of passion and the most unrestrained fornicator. Seeing beautiful women and maidens, he seduced them by sorcery in various ways, sometimes turning into a bull, sometimes into a bird, an eagle or a swan, sometimes into gold; and having thus seduced and defiled a multitude of persons, he is called a god by them and is worshipped. But I will not enumerate in order all his lustful, shameless and lawless deeds, for I see that you are angered by my words; nevertheless I do not fear your wrath, but, lest I cause offense to those who hear this, I will pass over the rest in silence. Another of your gods is Apollo. Was he not born of adultery to a woman named Latona, who bore him between two trees? This Apollo also committed much wickedness, imitating his father Zeus. Likewise, is not your famous god Dionysus also born of the adultery of Semele, the daughter of Cadmus?[1724]"

"You lie, insolent man!" cried Aurelian. "Dionysus was born of Juno, the mother of the gods."

St. Paul laughed and said:

"Can a god be born of a woman? Can anyone become a god without first being one? Does God have a wife, and can he beget children by a wife?"

Aurelian, enraged at such an answer, said to the saint:

"Impious and insolent man! How long will you with deceitful words reproach and revile our gods? Is not your Christ, whom you call the Heavenly God, also born of a woman?"

St. Paul answered his reviler:

"Although you are unworthy to know the mystery of Divine Revelation, yet, lest those who stand around you be beguiled by your words, it is necessary to tell briefly of what you ask. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, the seas and all that is in them; he also created man, in his own image and likeness, pure, having no sin, righteous and pious, and placed him in Paradise, full of every good, having fashioned from his rib a helpmate for him. But your father, the devil, envying such happiness of men, seduced Eve, and through her led Adam also into transgression of the commandment of God. Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise, begat sons

and daughters, from whom the whole world was filled with people; and the whole human race was subject to death through sin which entered the world, so that all our forefathers and the righteous were brought down to hell alongside sinners: 'death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a type of the one who was to come' (Rom. 5:14), as the Apostle of Christ, Paul, says. For this reason the Heavenly Father, Almighty God, having taken pity on the human race and willing to help it, sent his Son to take on human flesh, to save Adam and those bound with him in the chains of hell. This Son of God is the Word of the Father, begotten of the Father before all ages, his Wisdom and Power and Right Hand, of whose incarnation the Archangel Gabriel brought tidings to the Most Holy Virgin, who was descended from a prophetic and royal line; into her most pure and sanctified womb God himself, that is, the Word of the Father, invisibly entered, taking upon himself flesh, when the Angel said to her: 'Hail, thou who art highly favoured! The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; therefore also that which is born shall be called the Son of God' (Lk. 1:28, 35). And from the immaculate Virgin was born the Son of God, the Word of the Father, clothed in flesh as in a garment, for the salvation of men. No one can see the true God, for God is like a consuming fire; a man living on earth cannot see the face of God and remain alive. Therefore our God, having become incarnate, was born, and as an infant fed on milk, being perfect in his Godhead. He was a boy, a youth, growing in the flesh into a perfect man, living with men thirty-three years, going about cities, countries and villages, bestowing benefits on all and delivering us who had been conquered and taken captive by the devil. Then he was voluntarily crucified on the Cross, to grant salvation to a world perishing through the devil's deceit, and he died in the flesh, descended into hell together with his holy soul, broke the brazen gates, shattered the iron bars, and led the souls of the saints out of darkness and the snares of the devil, and raised them up into the heavenly regions. On the third day he rose from the dead together with his flesh, appeared to his disciples, his Apostles, and to many others

who truly believed in him, ate and drank with the Apostles for forty days, then ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of God his Father with his flesh. Now the devil is tormented and grieves, for Christ God has cast him under the feet of Christians, that those who enter the Kingdom of Heaven may trample him, a kingdom of which you are a stranger, and you will be in the eternal fire of Gehenna, the inheritance of your father, the devil."

Having heard all this, Aurelian changed countenance from rage, gnashed his teeth and cried out:

"Insolent and vile man! I have patiently listened to your deceitful words, which insult us and revile the gods. For the last time I say to you: if you do not offer sacrifice to the gods, I will hand you over to a cruel death."

The holy Paul and Juliana cried out loudly:

"We are Christians and have our hope in Christ; we will not bow down to your gods nor serve your demons, and we do not fear your torments, however much you devise them for us. For we believe in God and hope that you will be vanquished by us, as the devil was vanquished by Christ, who strengthens us and destroys your malicious inventions."

Then Aurelian commanded that St. Paul be bound to a tree and his face scorched with fire, and that a herald proclaim:

"Speak no insolent words to the tsar, and do not revile the gods."

Seeing her brother's torment, St. Juliana cried out:

"Impious tormentor! What evil has my brother done that you have delivered him to such cruel torment?"

Aurelian commanded that St. Juliana also be bound and tormented, her face scorched with fire; and he said to Juliana:

"Shameless woman, humble yourself, as is fitting for a woman."

The saint answered him:

"Aurelian, I will obey you, commanding me as a woman to humble myself, but I fear Christ, the Living God, who is before my eyes; I cannot forsake him, and I will not bow down to demons."

Aurelian, seeing that he was put to shame by the holy martyrs, was greatly enraged and again commanded that the bodies of the martyrs

be scorched and burned. All the people, seeing such suffering of the saints, cried out:

"Emperor Aurelian, you judge and torment them unjustly for refusing to offer sacrifice to the gods; you will answer for them after death."

Aurelian, fearing that some disturbance might arise among the people, gave orders to behead the holy martyrs and cast their bodies to be eaten by dogs, beasts and birds. And the saints were led to death. They rejoiced and exulted and sang: "But thou wilt save us from our enemies, and wilt put to shame those who hate us" (Ps. 43:8).

When they were brought outside the city to the place of beheading, St. Paul asked the soldier to cut off the head of St. Juliana first, for he feared she might be frightened at seeing his head cut off. St. Juliana, making the sign of the Cross over herself and rejoicing, stretched out her neck and was beheaded with the sword. St. Paul, seeing that his sister had died a martyr's death, raised his eyes to heaven and gave thanks to God; then he himself, making the sign of the Cross over himself, stretched out his neck and was beheaded with the sword. The holy bodies of the martyrs remained unburied outside the city, for by the tsar's command soldiers had been posted nearby to guard them, lest Christians take them away. Dogs ran to the place of execution, but did not touch the bodies of the martyrs; wolves also came and likewise did not touch the bodies, but even guarded them, staying constantly beside them; birds of prey flew in, but did not alight upon the honourable bodies; they flew above them, guarding them and not allowing flies to settle on them. This continued for seven days and nights, after which the soldiers reported this to Aurelian. Hearing them, he said:

"How powerful is the sorcery of the Christians! We could not conquer them even after their death."

And Aurelian commanded the soldiers to be withdrawn from the guard, but not by day, only by night, so that they should not be mocked by the Christians.

At the coming of day, the Christians, seeing that there was no longer a guard, took the much-suffering bodies of the holy martyrs Paul and Juliana and buried them with honor. To our Lord Jesus

Christ, who reigns together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and honor, always, now and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father James the Ascetic

Житие преподобного отца нашего Иакова Постника

In the land of Phoenicia,[11] near the city of Porphyrion,[12] there lived a hermit named James, who, having forsaken the vanity of this temporal life and taken the monastic habit, dwelt in a cave for fifteen years. James advanced greatly in ascetic labors of fasting and became so great in virtue and so pleasing to God that he was granted by Him authority over demons, and by the name of our Savior Jesus Christ he performed many healings. All men marveled at so virtuous a life, and there came to him not only believers but also unbelievers. Discerning by his foresight who was conversing with him, the God-inspired man taught them from the Divine Scriptures and turned them to the true Christian faith. But the ancient enemy of the human race, the devil, who is especially hostile to the zealous servants of Christ, seeing that he was put to shame by the many virtues and the perfect life of this holy man, rose up against him with his snares, desiring to drive the holy man from those places. To this end he entered into one of the unbelieving Samaritans living in the city of Porphyrion, as once he entered into Judas, and taught him to labor for the expulsion of James. This Samaritan gathered many like-minded men, relatives, friends, acquaintances, neighbors and slaves, and came with them into the house of their impious priest. There they held a council on how to drive James from the bounds of their country, since he was turning many from their faith to Christ. After a long deliberation they devised a treacherous means. Summoning a certain harlot, they gave her twenty gold coins and promised to give as many more if she would go and lead James the hermit into sin. Then they would accuse him and drive him out of their

11. *Phoenicia* was a country lying along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Its chief cities were Tyre and Sidon.

12. *Porphyrion* was a town in Phoenicia near Carmel. Properly it was a suburb or a large village.

country in disgrace as a fornicator. The woman they had hired went to James and, knocking at his door, asked him to open it and let her in. When the blessed man did not open to her, she knocked all the more earnestly, importuning him with many entreaties. At last the saint opened the door, and seeing a woman standing there, he thought it was an apparition; therefore, signing himself with the sign of the Cross, he at once carefully locked the door again, and returning to his cell, he stood facing the east and fervently prayed to God that He would turn aside from him the demonic temptation. Meanwhile midnight came, and the woman did not cease knocking; at last she cried out loudly to the saint:

– Have mercy on me, true servant of the living God! Open the door to me, lest I be devoured by beasts before your cell.

The Venerable James, thinking that it was already midnight and that there were many beasts all around, though unwillingly, opened the door to her and said:

– Whence have you come, and what do you seek here?

The woman answered:

– I am from a monastery, and I was sent by the abbess on business to the city; but as I was returning, dark night overtook me, and I lost my way and came here. I beg you, man of God, take pity on me, and do not allow me to be torn to pieces by beasts at your door, but permit me to remain with you this night until day comes, and then I shall go my way.

The Venerable James had compassion on her, brought her in, and, offering her bread and water, he himself shut himself into the inner cell and left her in the outer one. She, having eaten bread, slept a little. Then, pretending to be ill, she began to weep bitterly and groan, and, pressing against the door of the inner cell, she begged the Venerable to help her. The saint, looking through the little window and seeing that she was taken ill, was at a loss what to say to her or what to do. The woman implored him:

– I beseech you, Father, she said, condescend to my infirmity and protect me with the sign of the Cross, for my heart aches terribly.

The saint, listening to her entreaties, came out to her, and at once, lighting a fire and bringing the holy oil which he had, he sat down beside her. Holding his left hand in the fire, the saint dipped his right hand in the holy oil and touched the woman's body, now making the sign of the Cross, now anointing and warming her heart with his hand, for she complained of sharp pain in her heart. Moved by impure desires, the woman wished to stir up lust also in the saint and draw him into sin, and therefore she said to him:

– I beg you, Father, anoint me with oil once more and warm my heart with your hand, so that my sufferings may cease altogether.

The blessed James, being simple in heart and without malice, believed the woman's words and did what she asked. But, knowing the demonic seduction that wages war against the flesh, and fearing lest through excessive compassion and sympathy for the woman he might bring his soul to eternal perdition, for two or three hours he held his left hand in the fire, bearing the pain with steadfastness, until the joints of his fingers fell away. Thus the blessed man struggled against the diabolical temptation, so that from the unbearable pain no impure thought might come into his mind. Seeing what the saint had done, the woman was struck with terror. She was moved in heart, and at once rising, she fell with tears at the saint's feet, beating her breast and crying out:

– Woe is me, wretched and blinded! Woe is me, for I have become a dwelling of the devil.

The saint, seeing that she was weeping and hearing her words, was greatly astonished and said to her:

– Rise, woman!

Quickly raising her from the ground, and offering fervent prayer to God, he asked:

– Tell me, what does this mean? Why have you come to me?

The woman, scarcely recovering herself, told the saint everything in detail: how the impious Samaritans had taught her to seduce the saint; she said that the devil himself had devised this temptation, so as to ensnare in fleshly sin a righteous man who by his life imitated the incorporeal beings. Hearing the woman, the Venerable sighed, and shedding

many tears, gave thanks to God; then, having instructed and blessed the woman, he sent her to Bishop Alexander. The woman, coming to the church, confessed all her sins before the bishop. The hierarch, having instructed her sufficiently and seeing that she had truly repented, enlightened her with holy baptism and sent her to a women's monastery. Thus the harlot became a bride of Christ.

Afterward, gathering all the Christians and his clergy, the bishop expelled all the Samaritans from the city. After this, coming to the blessed James, the bishop by paternal exhortations strengthened him still more in his blessed life. And the woman, who had been a sinner before, by her life pleased God and was granted to receive power over demons.

A little while later, the daughter of a certain noble and wealthy man, tormented by an unclean spirit, began to call upon the name of the holy James. Her parents brought her to the saint and begged him that, having compassion on the young girl, he would drive the unclean spirit out of her. The saint, having prayed to God for her and laid his hand upon her, at once by the power of God cast the demon out of her, and the girl became well. Seeing this miracle, the parents of the girl gave thanks to God, and wishing to bring gratitude to the man of God, they brought him three hundred gold coins. But the righteous man not only did not wish to take the gold, but did not even look at it, saying:

– It is not fitting either to buy or to sell the Divine gifts, as Holy Scripture also says: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons; freely you have received, freely give" (Mt. 10:8). Gold should be given to the poor, for living in the desert I have no need of it.

Having said this, the saint sent back the men who had brought the gold. In that same land there was a young man, paralyzed in both legs through the action of the devil; his parents brought the young man to the holy James and begged him to pray to God for him. The Venerable fasted and prayed for three days and healed the paralytic; then, blessing him, he commanded him to return home on his own feet. Many others also, afflicted with various infirmities, came to this wonderworker, and all, through his prayers, were healed and returned from him well. The servant of God, seeing that all honored him, feared lest he fall into

vainglory, and therefore he left the cave and fled, withdrawing from human glory. Going forty stadia from the city, he found beside a river a large cave in the rock and settled there. Here he lived thirty years, spending all his days and nights in prayer and tears. For a long time he fed on the seaweeds growing by the river, and afterward he made himself a small garden, where he worked part of the day and ate of the fruits he had sown and raised. The ascetic life of the holy James so glorified him that, for the benefit of their souls, monks and clergy came to him from twenty or thirty monasteries. And not only spiritual persons but also a multitude of worldly people began to come to him; they received instruction in a virtuous life, and, being granted his blessing and prayers, they returned with much benefit to their souls.

Such a great man, who had been granted the grace of God, fell, however, into a grievous transgression. This happened, it seems, because he began to think much of his own holiness and God-pleasing life and to regard himself as a great ascetic. The beginning of his fall was as follows. The ancient enemy of the human race, the devil, who envies those who live God-pleasingly and ceaselessly digs a ditch of perdition for them, entered into a maiden, the daughter of a rich man, and began to torment her, calling by her lips the name of James and saying:

– I will not come out of her unless you bring me to James the hermit.

The parents of the maiden took her and went with her for a long time to monasteries and deserts, seeking the holy Father James. At last they found him, and fell at his feet and began to beseech him:

“Have mercy on our daughter, for she suffers grievously from an unclean spirit. For twenty days now she has taken neither food nor drink, but, crying out, she tears at herself and calls upon your name.”

The saint, standing in prayer, prayed to God for her so earnestly that the very place where he stood shook. When the prayer was ended, James breathed upon the maiden and said to the unclean spirit:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I command you: come out of this maiden."

Immediately the devil came out of the girl as though scorched by fire. She fell to the ground and remained for a long time without

speech. But the holy James prayed to God again, took her by the hand, raised her from the ground and gave her back to her parents. They, seeing such a miracle, glorified God. But fearing lest the unclean spirit should return to her, they begged the saint to allow their daughter to stay with him for three days, until she was fully recovered. So the maiden remained with the elder, and her parents went home.

When the maiden remained with the holy James, the devil, seeing that the saint was alone with the maiden in a deserted, secluded place, and judging that the moment was most favorable for his snares, stirred up against the ascetic a storm of unclean thoughts and filthy carnal desire, and so inflamed his lust that the holy man, the very one who before could not be enticed by the seduction of the harlot sent to him by the Samaritans, the very one who for the preservation of chastity and purity had burned his own hand in the fire, the one who had worked many miracles and cast out demons, was so greatly inflamed by lustful passion that, forgetting the fear of God, his many years of ascetic labors, and the grace and power of healing sent to him from God, being already in venerable old age, he was overcome by the devil and fell. He ravished the maiden, defiled her, and his own virginity, and, having defiled body and soul, destroyed all his former ascetic labors. It was not enough for him to commit one sin; he added to it one still graver. As a man who slips down a mountain falls, striking rock after rock and being shattered, so it happened with the holy James: having committed one great sin, he fell into another, greater and more grievous, multiplying lawlessness with lawlessness. The enemy stirred up fear in him, and he began to reason: "The maiden will now tell her parents that I ravished her, and I shall have shame and reproach, and I shall be in great trouble because of her." Yielding to the demonic suggestion, he killed the innocent maiden, thinking to hide his sin from men and escape disgrace. But he did not stop there; he gave himself still more to sin: for the body of the maiden, which he had defiled and mercilessly slain with his own hand, he did not give to the customary burial in the earth, but cast it into the river. Such is the fruit of proud self-conceit, for if this monk had not considered himself holy and great in virtue, he would not have fallen into such grievous sins, and the enemy would not have

mocked the old age of him who in his youth had once overcome his stratagems.

After this the devil began to lead James, as a bound captive, into the last pit of perdition, into the gravest of all sins, the despair of Cain and Judas. The elder, sitting in his cell, did not know what he should do. Sorely accused by his conscience, sighing and given over to despair, he no longer dared to open his lips in prayer or turn his mind to God. He resolved to flee to some other distant land and, leaving the monastic life, to settle in the world, and in his old age serve the world and the devil. Going out of his cave, he set off quickly, driven and tossed by despair as by a violent sea storm.

But the exceeding, boundless, and human-loving goodness of Christ, which the sins of the whole world cannot overcome and which wills that all men be saved and that none should perish, did not forsake this fallen elder or allow the demons to rejoice fully in his ruin, but, by His unspeakable dispensations, arranged for him to rise from his fall and be renewed. For when he set out on his way, he saw a monastery on the road, and, entering it, greeted the abbot and the brethren. They offered him bread to eat, but he would not hear of it, only sighing often and heavily. When the brethren begged him to refresh himself with food, he said to them:

"Woe is me, wretch! How shall I dare to lift my eyes to heaven? How shall I venture to call upon the name of Christ, whom I have offended? And how shall I touch His gifts, being a fornicator and a murderer?"

Then he confessed before them all, in order, everything that had happened to him. The abbot and the brethren, hearing his confession, were troubled, and out of sympathy began to comfort him, that he should not give himself up to despair, but, repenting, accept a penance for his sins. For a long time they asked James to remain with them, but he did not heed them and went off into the world. For a long time he wandered in the desert. At last, by the will of God, he met a certain God-inspired man, who asked the elder to turn from his path and enter his cell. Persuading James, he brought him in, washed his feet, and offered him such food as he had, asking him to partake of it. But

James, accused and tormented by his conscience, often sighed from the depths of his heart and beat his breast, not wishing even to touch the food. Then that man fell at James's feet, comforted him, and swore with an oath that he would not rise from the earth until the elder consented to eat the food offered. When James agreed, the monk rose from the ground, and they both partook of a meal such as is possible in the desert. After eating, both rose, gave thanks to God, and sat down again. Then the desert-dweller said to James:

"Father, give me instruction for the good of my soul, teach me as your son in Christ, and strengthen my heart, for various thoughts often and sorely trouble me."

James wept bitterly, and weeping inconsolable tears and beating his breast, said:

"Leave me, brother, to weep over my grievous sins, by which I have provoked God; for I, like a feeble youth, enticed by the devil, have fallen into perdition in this my vain and dishonorable old age, and now I am utterly lost. In old age I have been overcome by the passions which I conquered in the days of my youth: I fell into unclean fornication and dared to commit graver sins."

Hearing James, the hermit was filled with great sorrow and grief, and begged the elder to relate to him in detail the whole diabolical temptation. He asked this for two reasons: first, that the elder, confessing his sins, might be moved to repentance; second, that he himself, hearing the account of the elder's fall, might be taught caution and not fall into the same temptation. Then James began his narrative.

"I," he said, "have served the Lord in fasting and in the desert life for more than fifty years, steadfastly resisting the passions, of which I have signs even on my body, for I burned my hand in the fire for the sake of chastity. And I, unworthy, was granted to receive great grace from the good God, for through me, a sinner, God wrought many miracles. At last Satan entered a certain maiden, whose parents, having heard of the grace of Christ that was in me, brought her to me that I might pray for her. By God's help I cast the demon out of her. They asked that their daughter remain with me for three days, until she was fully recovered, and, leaving her with me, they went away. And I, in-

flamed with carnal desire, which darkened my mind, forgetting God at that time, not fearing Gehenna, not sparing my many years of labor, ravished the maiden and defiled her virginity. And it was not enough for me to commit one sin, but at the instigation of the demon I dared to commit another, graver than the first, for I killed that maiden and cast her body into the river. Despairing of my salvation, I fled from that place, and now I am going into the world, for how can I lift my eyes to the heights of heaven? If I should venture to call upon the name of Christ, the heavenly fire would consume me."

When James, shedding abundant tears and weeping bitterly, had finished his confession, the hermit was moved in heart, and, falling on the elder's neck, kissed him and said:

"I beg you, father, do not faint in soul, do not despair of your salvation, but with faith that God hearkens to repentance, confess your sins to Him, for the Lord is abundantly merciful, and His compassion toward us is unspeakable. If God did not accept repentance, how could David, already granted the gift of prophecy, who fell into the sin of adultery and murder, obtain forgiveness for such sins? How could St. Peter, the first of the Apostles, to whom the Lord entrusted the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, who thrice denied the Lord during His voluntary passion, by the bitter weeping of repentance not only obtain forgiveness of sins but be granted the great honor of being shepherd of Christ's rational sheep? Let us repent, while we still have time for it."

Strengthening James's soul with these words, the hermit begged him to stay and live with him. But James would not consent. Then the hermit, falling at the elder's feet and kissing them, pleaded even more earnestly that he should not leave him, for he feared that the elder would utterly destroy his soul by falling into despair. Unable to persuade James, the hermit grieved greatly and wept. At last, having offered fervent prayer to God on his behalf, he let him go, supplying him with food needful for the journey, and accompanied him fifteen stadia, all the while urging him to repent. Then, embracing James and kissing him with tears, the hermit returned to his cell. James, having gone a considerable distance along the road back into the world, turned a little aside and saw an ancient burial cave in which there were many

bones, already turned to dust by time. Entering that cave, James gathered all the bones, laid them in one of the corners, and settled in the cave[13]. Bending his knees, James, with great weeping and sobbing, beating his breast, began to pray fervently to God, crying out:

"How shall I dare to turn to Thee, my God? What beginning shall I make of my salvation? How shall I dare to offer prayer with my impure tongue and defiled lips? With which sin shall I begin first to ask forgiveness: fornication or murder? O most good Master, forgive my grievous sins; be merciful to me, unworthy, most merciful Lord, and do not destroy me together with my ungodly deeds, for great are my iniquities: I have fallen into fornication, I have become a murderer, shedding innocent blood, giving the body to the water, to beasts and birds to devour; now, Lord, I confess all my sins to Thee, the All-knowing, asking forgiveness. Do not despise me, O Master, but in Thy ineffable lovingkindness have mercy on me, ungodly and unclean, show me Thy exceeding goodness and cleanse all my iniquities, lest the enemy drown me, already plunged into the abyss of sin, and the serpent of the underworld devour me."

In such confession of his sins and repentance the blessed James remained for ten years, all the while living in that burial cave. He became as a living dead man, living among the dead and never appearing among the living. If anyone happened to come to that place, James would enter into conversation with no one; if anyone asked him anything, he did not answer a single word, opening his lips only for prayer to God and for confession of his sins. His food was the herbs that grew in those desert places, and even these he ate very rarely and little, only so as not to die of hunger. Thus James spent a full ten years in unceasing tears, sighs and prayers, day and night calling out with weeping to God, confessing his sins and beating his breast without mercy.

The all-bountiful and most merciful Lord, who desires not the death of a sinner but awaits his conversion, did not disdain the so long repentance of the blessed James; hearing his cries and confession of sins,

13. This cave was situated in Palestine, near Mount Carmel.

He forgave him his transgressions and again bestowed upon him the grace of working miracles.

It happened in that land that there was drought and severe dearth of rain. All imposed a fast upon themselves and prayed, asking God to send rain upon the earth. And there was a revelation to the bishop of that city, a virtuous and holy man. In this revelation it was said to him:

"If the holy elder who lives in the burial cave prays to God for you, then all your calamities will cease and fruitful rain will pour down."

On the next day the bishop gathered the clergy and all the people and related the revelation he had received. With the cross procession and singing of moleben, all set out toward that cave. Coming to it, the bishop and all the people began to knock at the closed door and to beseech God's servant that, having mercy on their land, he would pray to God that He turn away from them His righteous wrath and chastisement and end the drought, sending rain upon the earth. But the blessed one made them no answer from the cave; not daring to raise his eyes to heaven, he only beat his breast and said inwardly:

"Be merciful, O Christ, to my many and grievous sins!"

The bishop, however, knocked and entreated James earnestly for a long time; but receiving no answer from him, he returned with all who had come with him, grieving and weeping. Entering the church, all again performed the moleben singing, shedding tears. Meanwhile the storm raged even more fiercely, and with it the severe drought and famine; therefore the people prayed to God even more zealously, redoubling their fasting and prayers. Then the bishop again received a revelation, during which he clearly heard a voice saying thus:

"Go to My servant James, of whom I told you before, and if he prays to Me for you, you will at once be delivered from the calamities that have fallen upon your land."

After this revelation the bishop again went to the cave with all the clergy and people and earnestly implored God's servant, even troubling him, that he would offer prayer on their behalf; then he forcibly opened the door and brought the saint out. The blessed James, though he did not wish it, raising his eyes to heaven and lifting up his hands, prayed for those people for a long time. And while the prayer was still on his

lips, suddenly abundant rain fell upon the earth, and the storm ceased. For the Lord fulfilled the prayer of one who feared Him and heard his petition, truly showing what is written in the prophecy: "Then thou shalt call, and the Lord shall hear; thou shalt cry, and He shall say: Here I am!" (Is. 58:9).

The bishop and all the people, astonished and at the same time gladdened by this most glorious miracle, sang to God a song of thanksgiving with rejoicing and triumph, and greatly honored His holy servant James. And the day on which, through the prayers of St. James, they were delivered from calamities and received the mercy of the Lord, they established to be kept as a feast in all the years to come.

After this the Venerable James received a revelation that God had accepted his repentance and forgiven his sins. Therefore he again began, by the grace of Christ, to accomplish many miracles, for all the sick brought and carried to him from the whole land, afflicted with some infirmity, at once received healing, and devils were driven out by the word of the saint. After a little time James worked even greater miracles than those he had worked before his sin.

In that same year in which he had asked God for rain, the end of James's life was also revealed to him. Summoning the bishop, the saint enjoined upon him that after his death his body should be buried in the cave where he had lived. After this, a few days later, the blessed James fell asleep in the Lord, and his holy soul was received into the good things of his Lord together with the saints who had pleased God by repentance. James had lived seventy-five years from his birth. The news of the saint's death at once became known throughout the whole land, and a great multitude of people gathered from everywhere for his burial, with candles, censers, incense and fragrances; the bishop also came with all the clergy, and singing the fitting hymns, having anointed the holy body of James with precious fragrances, they honorably buried him in that cave, as St. James himself had enjoined upon the bishop before his death. After a little time the bishop built a church in the name of this St. James not far from the cave where he had lived, and taking the honorable relics from the cave, he translated them into the church and established that the holy memory of the honorable servant of God,

our Venerable Father James, be celebrated in all the years to come, to the glory of Christ God, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

On the same day, the memory of St. Gregory, bishop of the city of Constantia on the island of Cyprus, who died in peace.

On the same day, the repose of the holy right-believing Prince Daniel Alexandrovich of Moscow, in 1303.

On the same day, the slaying by the Tatars of the blessed Prince Basil (Vasilko) Konstantinovich of Rostov, in 1238.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of St. Gregory, bishop of the city of Constantia on the island of Cyprus, who died in peace.

On the same day, the repose of the holy right-believing Prince Daniel Alexandrovich of Moscow, in 1303.

On the same day, the slaying by the Tatars of the blessed Prince Basil (Vasilko) Konstantinovich of Rostov, in 1238.

NOTES

1724. *Zeus*, or *Jupiter*, is the Greco-Roman god whom the pagans revered as the ruler of heaven and earth, father of all gods and men. According to the tales of pagan writers, Zeus, in order to seduce some woman, resorted to such transformations: thus he came to Danaë in the form of a golden rain, enticed Leda by taking the form of a swan, and abducted Europa by turning himself into a white bull.

Apollo was the god of the ancient Greeks and Romans; he was revered as the god of light, especially of the sun's light, and also of intellectual enlightenment, poetry and music, as a god of prophecy, a healer of diseases, and the guardian of all civil order.

Leto (Latona), according to the mythology, was before Hera the wife of Zeus, by whom she bore Apollo and *Artemis* (or, among the Romans, *Diana*, goddess of childbirth, of the hunt and of the moon). She was beloved by Zeus even at the time when he was married to Hera, and, pursued by the jealous Hera across the whole earth, she gave birth to Apollo on Delos at the mountain Cynthus.

Dionysus, or *Bacchus*, is the god of the vine and of wine-making. His mother was Semele, daughter of Cadmus; his father was Zeus. The saint calls the birth of Dionysus adultery, since, according to the mythology, Zeus begot him by Semele at a time when he had a wife, Hera.

Juno is the Roman name for the Greek *Hera*, wife of Zeus. These pagan tales about Zeus show how far pagan religious thought had strayed from the true path of knowledge of God, arriving at the deification, in the persons of its gods, of deeds which even the sound, natural moral sense condemns in a man.



THE FIFTH DAY OF MARCH

March 5

5 марта

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

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyr Conon of Isauria

Житие и страдание святого мученика Конона Исаврийского

The holy Apostle to the Nations[1] Paul, during one of his missionary journeys,[1729] enlightened the inhabitants of the city of Isauria[2] with the light of the true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. At that time, in the village of Bethany, which lay eighteen stadia[3] from the city of Isauria, there lived a man named Nestor, with his wife Nada. They had a son, Conon. When the youth grew up, his parents resolved to marry him and betrothed him to a beautiful maiden named Anna. But even before this, there had appeared to Conon, in the form of a radiant man, the holy Archistratigos Michael. Having taught Conon the true faith, the Archistratigos led Conon to a river, baptized him in the name of the All-Holy Trinity, gave him Communion of the Divine Mysteries, and then, making the sign of the Cross over him, became invisible. From that time the youth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Archistratigos Michael remained invisibly with him always. On the day of the marriage, the bridegroom and the bride were led into the bridal chamber amid general rejoicing. Here Conon covered a lit candle with a vessel and asked the maiden:

– Which is better, darkness or light?

The maiden answered:

1. The holy Apostle Paul is given the title "Apostle of the Gentiles" on account of his great labors in preaching, during which he carried the Gospel from the depths of Asia to Rome, and even, according to tradition, to Spain and Britain.
2. *Isauria* – a small, mountain-hidden region of ancient Asia Minor, bordering on Lycaonia to the east, on part of Phrygia to the north, on Pisidia to the west and on rugged Cilicia to the south.
3. *Stadion* – an ancient measure of distance of about 80 or a little more sazhens.

– Light, of course, is better than darkness.

Then the holy Conon opened his lips, filled with Divine grace, and began to persuade the bride to preserve her virginity and purity of life, and to believe in Christ, the True God.

– This, he said, is the unwaning light, while fleshly life and the impious pagan faith are darkness.

The maiden had a good heart, so that the seed of the word of God fell on good ground, and the bride soon agreed in everything with her bridegroom. She believed in Christ and vowed to preserve her virginity forever. So this holy couple lived in virginal purity, as brother and sister, or rather, as two Angels of God, burning with love for God like the Seraphim and pleasing Him alone. A little more time passed, and the blessed Conon succeeded in persuading his parents also to abandon idolatry and turn to Christ. Conon baptized his father, his mother and his bride, and all of them, guided and instructed by the holy Conon, pleased God. Conon's father, the blessed Nestor, was also granted the crown of martyrdom, being slain by idolaters for exposing their errors. After a short time the holy one's mother, the blessed Nada, also departed in peace to the Lord, and after her the holy virgin Anna, Conon's betrothed, passed into the incorrupt chamber of the heavenly Bridegroom, Christ. The holy Conon laid them all in honorable burial in one place.

Left alone, Conon continued to live for God, exercising himself in contemplation of God and mortifying his body with fasting, labors and all-night prayers. For his ascetic struggles he was granted the grace of the Holy Spirit, which, like some treasure, lay hidden in him for a long time and was revealed only in the old age of the holy Conon. This is how it happened.

In that country, in a desert place, in impassable mountains, there was a cave, fearful and dark. In the cave there was an idol-temple, where stood a huge stone idol of the impious god Apollo,[4] who was especially venerated in the land of Isauria. The Isaurians had the custom of gathering there every year on the day of the feast of Apollo, to offer

4. *Apollo* – a god of the ancient Greeks and Romans, venerated as the god of light, especially of the sun, also of intellectual enlightenment, poetry and music; a god of prophecy, a healer of diseases and a guardian of civil order.

sacrifices and to perform the abominable festival. When the day of this feast came and all the inhabitants of the city gathered to go to the temple in the cave, the holy Conon, moved by the Spirit of God, came into the city. Seeing a multitude of armed people, on horseback and on foot, as though prepared for battle, he cried out to them in a loud voice:

– Men of Isauria, wait a little, I wish to say a word to you. Why are you armed? Has an enemy army suddenly attacked your country and summoned you to battle?

The people answered Conon:

– No, but we are going to offer sacrifice to the god Apollo and to celebrate him.

St. Conon asked them again:

– I want to learn from you who this Apollo is and what is his power?

The people answered:

– He is our provider, who bestows on us all blessings; he also strengthened our fathers, from whom we received the custom of celebrating him.

Then the saint, laughing at them, put to them this question:

– Have you ever heard the voice or any word of your god?

They answered:

– No! But our fathers commanded us to believe in him.

To this St. Conon said to them:

– Your fathers, like dumb beasts, were themselves in delusion, not knowing the True God; for if they had known Him, they would not render such veneration to a deaf, mute and vile idol. Give me power over your god, and I will show you whom you venerate, what this your god is. If I smear him with paint, will he be able to wash himself? If I smash him with an iron hammer, will he be able to become whole again? If I give him food, will he stretch out his hand to take the food and begin to eat?! How long will you go on raving? Heed me, for I am from your own city, though a stranger to your affairs; abandon idolatry, and I will teach you how one must honor the True God and worship Him who sits in the heights. He is the invisible but all-seeing God, Creator of heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, the mighty

and all-powerful King, who saves His servants and destroys His enemies, those who worship idols and offer sacrifices to demons. This God does not require bloody sacrifices, but wishes that those who come to Him should know Him without malice and guile, and believe that He is the True God, the Father of His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is not separated from the Father, through whom He created the ages; with Them reigns also the eternal Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father. These three Persons, in essence, are one God, who burns with fire those who hate Him, the idol-worshippers, but loves those who love Him; His mercy has no bounds, for He is merciful to all who place their hope in Him and call upon Him in faith.

The people were thrown into agitation by these words of the saint, and among them arose a great uproar: some rushed at the saint to kill him, others restrained them, not allowing them to lay hands on him, for they wished to hear something more from him. When the popular agitation had somewhat subsided, some of the people asked the saint:

– With what can you convince us that there is a God above our god Apollo, whom we honor above all other gods? Show us some sign from your God, so that we may believe in Him.

St. Conon, hearing that a sign was requested, placed his hope in God and said to the people:

– Behold, many of you are on horses, and not a few are on foot, young and strong men. Come, let us all go to the cave of Apollo, to the place of your gathering; you go ahead, and I, as an old man, will follow after you, and let us give one another our word that whichever of us arrives first, that god is great and true, and He is the one we ought to believe in. If you, some on horses and others, strong and young, on foot, outstrip me, old and weak in body, and reach the temple of Apollo before me, then your god is truly God. But if I, an old man, on foot, arrive there sooner than you, then my God is greater than your god, and you must believe in Him.

All approved his speech and agreed to the condition he proposed, saying among themselves:

– This old man will not be able to reach there in four days: the way is far and difficult, since it stretches among high mountains and deep valleys covered with thick brush.

After that, all hastened to the cave: some relying on their horses, others on their feet, while St. Conon went after them, moving with difficulty. On the way he fervently prayed to God, and immediately the holy Archistratigos Michael appeared before him, took him up, and in a single moment transported him to the place to which all were hastening. The people, however, hurrying on horseback and on foot, the Archangel by an invisible power threw into confusion, and they wandered about among the mountains and thickets; both men and horses fell from the mountain heights and were dashed to pieces, and the whole day and the whole night they could not reach Apollo's cave, and were not even certain whether they were going by the right road. In the morning, unexpectedly for them, St. Conon came out to meet them. Seeing him, the people were greatly astonished. The saint, however, laughing at them, asked:

– Why could you not come sooner? I have waited for you a long time, and so I decided to come out to meet you.

The people, greatly exhausted, told the saint everything that had happened to them, and implored him to show them the road to Apollo's temple. Then St. Conon went before them and, bringing them to the cave, said to them:

– Behold, I have fulfilled my condition and have come here before you. Now you must acknowledge that my God is great and believe in Him, and deliver your god into my hands, and I will requite him for having deceived you until now.

But they cried out to the saint:

– No, do not lay the blame on our god and do not take vengeance on him: we ourselves are to blame for being late in coming; we lost our way, and therefore we could not fulfill the agreement.

Such an answer greatly angered the saint, and he said to them:

– If even now you have not believed in my God, but continue to believe in your idol, will you then carry out whatever he himself announces to you?

They all answered:

– If we truly hear the voice of our god, we will immediately carry out his word, for we undoubtedly believe in him.

And again they concluded an agreement with the saint and gave their word, more firmly than before, that they would believe whatever their god said. Then the saint, standing before the cave where the temple of Apollo was, called out to the idol in a loud voice:

– Idol! I speak to you: thus commands my Lord Jesus Christ: come out of the temple and come here to me.

And at once the lifeless idol, as if alive, rocked, fell from its place, and rolling across the ground came to the saint, and rising up from the earth stood before him. The whole multitude of people was struck with great terror and with loud cries rushed off in flight. St. Conon waved his hand to them, urged them not to be afraid, and with difficulty stopped them. Having calmed them, he again turned to the idol, and all began to watch closely to see what would happen next. And the saint began to question the idol:

"Tell us, lifeless idol, who is the True God: you, or the Lord my Jesus Christ whom I preach?"

At once the stone idol, trembling, stretched out its hands to heaven and loudly, in a human voice, pronounced:

"One is the True God, Christ whom you preach."

Having said this, the idol fell down and crumbled to pieces. Seeing this miracle, the whole people cried out:

"One is the True God, the God of Conon: He has conquered."

And a multitude of people believed in Christ and, smashing their idols, received holy Baptism. Some, however, hardened, remained in their former unbelief and grieved deeply over the destruction of the idol of Apollo. But afterwards, seeing the many various miracles performed by St. Conon, the remaining pagans of that land also came to believe in Christ.

In the same Isaurian land, in another cave, also situated in a desert place, there dwelt a terrible demon. Like a warrior or a brigand, he attacked people and animals passing by and put them to death. The Isaurians offered him many sacrifices, begging him not to do them

harm nor to kill them, but their entreaties brought them no benefit and served only to bring still greater destruction. Then a multitude of people, both believers and pagans, gathered, and they all went to St. Conon and earnestly besought him to drive the demon out of their country. The believers entreated without any doubt in the power of Christ, which worked through St. Conon; the pagans, however, cunningly tempted St. Conon, for they themselves thought that he would not be able to drive out the fierce demon, but rather that the demon would put him to death. Yielding to the entreaties of the Isaurians, St. Conon set out, accompanied by a multitude of people. He approached the very cave where the demon dwelt, while the people stood at a distance in trembling. Turning his face toward the cave, the saint commanded the unclean spirit in the name of Christ to come out of the cave, in the sight of all the people. From within, the demon called out to the saint, asking him to allow it to come out unseen, so that people would not see its loathsome form. But the saint sternly commanded it to appear before all. Then the demon, in full view of all the people, came out of the cave in the form of a terrible, trembling woman. The saint, forbidding the demon to cause harm to anyone, sent it away into Gehenna[5]. At once the demon became invisible, and the whole people cried out:

"Great is the God of Conon!"

A multitude of pagans believed in Christ. And St. Conon, having sufficiently instructed the people in faith in the True God, returned to the city. The people accompanied him with joyful singing; the saint himself began the singing, and the people joined in, glorifying Christ, the True God. Upon his return, St. Conon settled in his village, in his father's house, performing miracles, healing every sort of sickness in

5. *Gehenna* – the Greek rendering of a Hebrew term meaning *the valley of Hinnom* or "of the sons of Hinnom"; by this valley is meant a deep, narrow ravine where the Jews once offered their children in sacrifice to Moloch (4 Kgdms. 24:10; Jer. 7:11). In later times it served as a dumping place for all kinds of refuse, and fire was constantly kept burning there to consume it; therefore the valley of Hinnom became a symbol of the place of eternal torment. It is in this very sense, the sense of *hell*, that the word gehenna is used in the New Testament (Mt. 5:24–40, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15; Lk. 9:43, 45; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6).

those who came to him with faith, and casting out demons, over whom power had been given him by God.

One of the most distinguished inhabitants of Isauria was robbed by thieves, who carried off a great quantity of gold. Many were falsely accused of this theft and given over to torments: the innocent were held in fetters and in dungeons, but the gold was not found. Then there came to St. Conon the man who had been robbed, and the relatives of those who had been falsely accused and were languishing in prison, and, falling at the saint's feet, they begged him to ask God to help find the stolen gold. The saint, grieving for the wrongly accused and the innocently suffering, agreed to fulfill the citizens' request. He went to the city. There, standing in the square, he raised his hands to heaven and prayed fervently to God until God revealed to him where the stolen gold was hidden. Taking many of the people with him, St. Conon went with them outside the city and, having walked a considerable distance into the wilderness, came to a certain stone. Under the stone the gold concealed by the thieves was found; St. Conon bade those who had come with him take the gold and carry it into the city. All the Isaurian people were greatly astonished and glorified God. When the man whose gold had been stolen wished to learn who the thieves were and asked Conon about it, the saint answered him:

"Take your gold, and be content that it has been returned to you without loss; and release those who are languishing in prison."

He did so. The report of this miracle spread throughout the whole country, many turned to God, and day by day the Church of Christ grew and multiplied.

Some time later, St. Conon, while dwelling in quietude in his house, saw a multitude of demons arrayed against him. All the demons that lived on the island and had been driven out of people and out of idol temples armed themselves against the saint. Seeing the demons, the saint bound them in the name of Jesus, so that they could not move. Then the demons began to beseech Conon not to send them into the abyss, but to command them to do whatever pleased him. The saint, forbidding them to do harm to people, set them to various works: some he ordered to dig the earth in the gardens and to pull up noxious weeds,

thorns, and nettles; others to plough the fields and sow them; others to guard the fruit; some to pasture the herds and protect them from wild beasts; others to chop wood and carry water, and to perform every sort of household labor. The demons, like slaves and captives, served the blessed Conon for as long as it pleased him, diligently carrying out every task assigned to them, for, bound by the invincible power of God, they were enslaved to the servant of God.

It happened that one night robbers attacked the saint's house, hoping to find rich booty there, for he was famed throughout that whole country.

Having bound the saint, the robbers wished by torture to compel him to show the place where he had hidden his gold. They had already begun to torment him when suddenly, by God's command, the demons who served the saint appeared, seized the robbers, and beat them without mercy; then they kindled a fire in the oven and began to scorch the robbers' bodies, while they released the saint from his bonds. The saint, having mercy on the robbers, forbade the demons, and they ceased the torment of the robbers, who were scarcely alive. By the saint's prayer the robbers came to themselves, and the blessed one sent them away in peace, giving them the commandment to abandon their brigandage. The demons not only freed St. Conon from the robbers, but by God's will even guarded the honor of his name. For if any of the unbelieving Isaurians dared to revile Conon, at once the demons would attack such a one unseen and beat him, so that the name of Conon became an object of reverence and fear for all. Once two idolaters remembered Conon and began to revile him with evil words. At once the demons fell upon them, beat them, dragged them along the road by their hair, and cast the revilers at the feet of the saint. After that, all the unbelievers held such fear of Conon that they did not dare even to think anything evil about St. Conon. Once a certain man broke into Conon's garden with the intention of stealing apples. But unseen guards seized him, beat him, and brought him to the saint together with his donkey and a sack filled with fruit. The saint gave him instruction and, charging him to steal no more, sent him away in peace.

A poor widow, during the harvest, came to the field and walked behind the reapers, gathering the ears of grain that were left. In her arms she held her only young son. Suddenly a wolf dashed out of the forest, snatched the child from his mother's arms, and carried him off into the wilderness. The people gave chase, but they could not overtake the wolf or rescue the child from its jaws. The grieving woman came to St. Conon the Wonderworker, wept, and, falling at his feet, told him of her sorrow. He at once gave command to his invisible servants, and they in one moment seized the wolf, which held the child in its teeth, and set it before the saint. The saint returned the son alive and unharmed to his mother, and bade the wolf go away to its place.

Not all the demons, however, were bound by the saint's word; and so some of them began to bring various diseases upon the inhabitants of that land, and above all smallpox. The saint, perceiving the snares of the demons, prayed to God and at once received power over these demons as well. Gathering them all together, he forbade them; some he drove into the desert, others he sent into the abyss, and others he bound and shut up in thirty clay pots sealed with tin, and, marking them with the sign of the Cross, buried them in the earth beneath his house.

At that time persecution of Christians arose, and a voivode named Magdon arrived in Isauria with an imperial decree. The voivode first tortured St. Onesius in the village of Usorov to death. Then St. Conon was seized. He was subjected to many and cruel torments, being compelled to offer sacrifice to idols. The Isaurians, hearing that the voivode had delivered St. Conon to torment, gathered in great numbers with weapons and set out for the village of Usorov, intending to put the voivode to death. Learning of their intention, the voivode, with his servants, mounted his horses and fled from that country. The Isaurians pursued him, but could not overtake him. Finding the holy martyr Conon bound, covered with wounds over his whole body and bloodied, they untied him and wept over him. Wiping his blood, they smeared their own bodies with it, desiring to receive sanctification from the blood of the saint, and with tenderness they kissed the wounds he had received for Christ. The holy martyr grieved greatly and was pained in soul that

he had not been allowed to suffer to the end, for he desired to die in torments for his Christ. After this, the faithful took the saint to his paternal house in the village of Bethany, and gave every care to heal his wounds. Two years after his sufferings, St. Conon fell asleep in the Lord. The inhabitants of the whole Isaurian land gathered and wept for the saint. He was buried together with his blessed parents and with his holy betrothed, who had preserved her virginity undefiled to the end of her life. After the burial of St. Conon, the Isaurians resolved to convert the martyr's house into a church. When they began to dig the earth for the foundation, they found in the ground thirty clay vessels, in which St. Conon had enclosed demons. Not knowing what was in those vessels, but supposing gold or silver hidden in them, the finders rejoiced and broke one vessel. At once there came out of it demons in the form of thick and foul smoke, which, darkening the air, produced a terrible whirlwind. All the people were struck with terror; some fell down from fear, and some fled from there. The demons flew through the air and, making a great noise, called to one another by name. Everyone in that village was seized with great terror, so that no one dared, after sunset, to go out of his house, for at night many demonic apparitions appeared and frightened people and animals. This was permitted by God for a time as a punishment to the money-loving people who hoped to find treasure in the vessels. By the prayers of St. Conon the demonic apparitions were driven away. The remaining twenty-nine vessels, which contained demons, were buried beneath the church of St. Conon. By his holy prayers may we also always be unharmed by demons, glorifying the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Having lived upon earth as an Angel in purity, thou wast counted worthy to be a companion of the Angels, and thou didst lead thy parents to the knowledge of Christ; and having confessed the one God in Trinity, thou didst suffer even unto blood. O Martyr Conon, intercede unceasingly with Him for us all.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Conon, Surnamed the Gardener

Память святого мученика Конона, по прозванию Огородника

St. Conon lived in the reign of Decius and was a native of Nazareth of Galilee. From there he moved to Pamphylia, to the city of Mandon (or Magido), and here, in a place called Karmena, he made for himself a garden, on whose fruits he fed. He was a good man, guileless and simple-hearted. Although he had not been taught letters, he led a God-pleasing life. When the Hegemon Publius, who had come to the city to persecute Christians, heard of him, he at once sent soldiers to take him. The men sent came to Conon and, in mockery, greeted him with kind words. Conon joyfully returned their greeting and received them courteously. Then the soldiers said to him:

"Hegemon Publius calls you."

The saint answered:

"What business can he have with me? For I am a Christian. Let him rather call to himself those of his own mind."

The soldiers bound St. Conon and brought him before the hegemon. When he was compelled to offer sacrifice to the idols, he, grieving in the depths of his heart over the blindness and error of unbelievers and reproaching the hegemon for impiety, remained unshaken in the confession of faith in Christ. Then iron nails were driven into his feet, and he was driven before the hegemon's chariot until the holy sufferer, exhausted, fell to his knees, and with prayer on his lips, gave up his soul to the Lord.

Memory of the Venerable Hesychius the Faster

Память преподобного Исихия Постника

The great servant of God Hesychius, from his earliest years, was instructed and reared in virtue. Renouncing attachment to all earthly goods, he unceasingly pondered the eternal goods of the heavenly Sion. For this reason he left his native city of Adrapa and withdrew into the wilderness near Adrania[6].

In order to labor in solitude, the saint wished to settle on a mountain called Maionis; but the demons dwelling there, foreseeing their expulsion from the mountain by the saint, and not wishing to admit the saint to this mountain, entered into two men, John and Hilarion, and, meeting the servant of God, asked him:

"Where are you going?"

Learning of his intention, they said to him:

"Do you not know that this place is very dangerous? You are going to certain death, for here dwells a multitude of flesh-eating beasts; besides, robbers also live here, so that you will not survive here even a single day."

The saint, perceiving in spirit that these were words not of men but of demons, said:

"For my many sins I have long been worthy of death; therefore I will go, to die either by beasts or by robbers."

Having said this, the saint offered prayer and, driving away the unclean demons by the power of the Cross, continued his way. Ascending the mountain, the saint chose for himself a place, built a cell, and began to labor in ascetic toils; the saint also made a garden here, and, tilling it and sowing seeds, he fed from the labor of his hands.

It happened once that a multitude of birds swooped down on the saint's garden, devouring the grain and seeds and destroying the saint's labors. Then the saint turned in prayer to God, and at once the birds that had partaken of his labors fell to the ground and, being unable to fly, lay on the earth with their wings spread out; all those birds that had touched the seeds could no longer rise into the air, but, as if struck by some poison, lay writhing on the ground; and that place was filled with a multitude of birds lying on the earth.

After some time the saint, taking pity on the birds, came out of his cell and said to them:

"Depart from here and do not eat any more the labors of monks."

---

6. *Adrapa* (or Antrapa) – a town at an equal distance from Ancyra of Galatia and Amathia, otherwise Claudiopolis. *Adrania* – a seaport (in Turkish, Edrenos) in Bithynia.

As soon as the saint uttered these words, all the birds on the ground at once flew upward, and from then on they never again approached the saint's garden.

Finding a spring of water in a certain valley, the Venerable built here a small church in the name of the holy Apostle Andrew, where he dwelt in contemplation with his disciples.

Once they brought to the saint a demon-possessed girl, whose parents, falling at the saint's feet, implored him to cast the unclean spirit out of their daughter. The Venerable, having prayed to God, at once expelled the demon from the girl, and said to her parents:

"Thus says the Holy Spirit: in this place, after my death, there will be a monastery of holy women ascetics, whose prayers will drive away from here all the hosts of demons."

This prophecy of the saint was fulfilled in its time.

Once, going out of his cell, the Venerable saw a certain man with a heavily laden cart. The cart was drawn by oxen, and one of them stumbled, fell to the ground, and could not rise to its feet. The man tried to lift it, but could not; the fallen ox remained motionless, like a great stone; exhausted from his labor, the man began to weep.

Seeing this, the Venerable took pity on him, and, approaching the ox, stroked its neck and said to the dumb beast, as if it understood his words:

"Rise, lazy one, and continue your way, lest you become an instrument of the enemy's malice."

Having said this, the saint made the sign of the Cross over the ox. And at once the ox rose and calmly drew the heavy cart. The man was greatly astonished at what had happened, and, bowing to the saint, thanked him and joyfully continued on his way.

The saint from day to day strove toward greater ascetic labors and rose to more perfect virtues, so that he was counted worthy to be a companion of the Angels. From an Angel of God he learned also of his own repose, thirty days before his death. Preparing for his departure, the saint was filled with great joy.

Before his end the saint summoned the disciples who lived with him and taught them much. At midnight a light suddenly shone from heav-

en, illumining not only the saint's cell but the whole place; and the Venerable, joyfully saying, "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit," departed to the heavenly dwellings[7].

His holy and honorable body was buried in the aforementioned church in honor of the holy Apostle Andrew, in a stone coffin, before the holy gates.

Afterward the honorable relics of the saint were translated by Theophylact, Bishop of Amaseia, to the city of Amaseia[8] and laid on the right side of the sanctuary, in the year 792, in the reign of Constantine and Irene[9]. And on that desert place where the Venerable labored, a women's monastery was built, as the saint had foretold.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Mark the Faster

Память преподобного Марка Постника

This holy ascetic surpassed all the monks in the strictness of his fasting life. At the same time he devoted himself to the study of the Divine Scriptures, and attained perfection in virtue, as his written instructions bear witness[10], and he performed many miracles. The purity of the Venerable Father's soul was so great that the presbyter of the monastery, as he himself testified with an oath, never once gave him the Divine Mysteries with his own hand; but each time he approached the holy Communion, he received the Holy Gifts from an Angel, who held the spoon and himself communed him. The Venerable Father's servant said that he had never once seen him spit upon the ground, so great was his meekness. The Venerable Father remained in the monastic estate for forty years and bore the ascetic labor of fasting for sixty years[11]. He departed to the Lord at the age of one hundred[12].

* * *

7. The saint's death followed around 790.
8. *Amasia* is located in the northern part of Asia Minor, on the shore of the Black Sea.
9. Constantine VI Porphyrogenitus, Byzantine emperor, reigned from 780 to 797, and Irene from 797 to 803.
10. The Venerable Mark studied the word of God so perfectly that he knew all of Holy Scripture by heart; he was a listener of St. John Chrysostom and wrote many instructive discourses. These discourses were published in Russian translation in 1858.

Memory of St. Eulogius the Martyr

Память святого мученика Евлогия

The holy martyr Eulogius was a native of Palestine. His parents were unbelievers. After their death the saint distributed to the poor the riches that had come to him as an inheritance, and, impoverished for Christ's sake, he went about the land of Palestine as a wanderer, instructing unbelievers and turning them to Christ. Having been slandered before the governor of that land, the saint endured many tortures, because he would not consent to offer sacrifice to idols. At last his head was cut off.

Commemoration of the holy martyr Onesius, who lived and suffered at the same time as the martyr Conon of Isauria.

Commemoration of the holy martyr Eulampius, beheaded by the sword.

Commemoration of the holy martyr Iraida; the time and place of her death are unknown.

Translation of the relics of the holy right-believing Prince Theodore of Smolensk and Yaroslavl, and of his children, David and Constantine, into the cathedral church of the Monastery of the Savior in Yaroslavl. The commemoration of the saints is on September 19. The relics were discovered in 1463.

11. It is thought that the Venerable Mark took the monastic habit at the age of 40 and labored in the monastic life for 60 years. The place of his ascetic labors was Mount Nitria, situated in Lower Egypt, 70 versts south of Alexandria and west of the river Nile, near the Libyan desert.
12. The Venerable Father died around the middle of the 5th century.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

Commemoration of the holy martyr Onesius, who lived and suffered at the same time as the martyr Conon of Isauria.

Commemoration of the holy martyr Eulampius, beheaded by the sword.

Commemoration of the holy martyr Iraida; the time and place of her death are unknown.

Translation of the relics of the holy right-believing Prince Theodore of Smolensk and Yaroslavl, and of his children David and Constantine, into the cathedral church of the Monastery of the Savior in Yaroslavl. The commemoration of the saints is on September 19. The relics were discovered in 1463.

NOTES

1729. After his conversion from a persecutor of Christians into a self-sacrificing follower of Christ, the holy Apostle Paul spent his whole life in missionary labors. The Apostle began his first journey to preach the Gospel from Antioch, where he and Barnabas were called by the Holy Spirit to the great work of evangelism (Acts 13:1–3). Taking with him John Mark, the Apostles, after visiting Cyprus, came to Asia Minor, and here, in Antioch of Pisidia, in Iconium and in the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe, they enlightened many with the teaching of Christ, suffering continual persecution from the Jews (Acts 13:4–14:28). The holy Apostle Paul undertook his *second* journey together with Silas after the Apostolic Council (in the year 51) in Jerusalem (Acts 15). Visiting the churches founded earlier, the Apostle Paul preached successfully in Macedonia and Greece, founding the famous churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth; in the last he remained a year and a half (Acts 15:36–18:28). On the *third* journey the Apostle again began from Antioch. Once more visiting the churches he had established, the Apostle came to Ephesus, where he preached for more than two years; then he again passed through Macedonia and Greece and returned to Jerusalem. Here he was seized and, after two years of confinement under guard at Caesarea, was sent to Rome, where he lived two years, preaching the Kingdom of God without hindrance (Acts 18:1–22:30). Tradition says that the Apostle, after being acquitted before the judgment of Caesar, again set out on a *fourth* journey to preach the Gospel, reaching the limits of the West (Eusebius and Clement of Rome), and, after a second imprisonment in Rome, died a martyr's death in the reign of Nero.

THE SIXTH DAY OF MARCH

March 6

6 марта

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

Suffering of the Holy Venerable Martyr Conon and of His Son Conon, Who Suffered at Iconium

Страдание святого преподобномученика Конона и сына его Конона, в Иконии пострадавших

In the reign of the impious Aurelian[1] there lived in the city of Iconium[2] a man named Conon. He was fair of face and God-fearing. The wife of Conon likewise held a firm faith in the Lord. Both spouses burned with love for the heavenly fatherland, and they sought the honours and glory of heaven more than those of earth. For a long time they prayed to God that He would grant them a son. The Lord heard their prayers and sent them a son, whom they also named Conon. On the very day of the infant's birth the mother departed to the Lord, having a firm hope of salvation, according to the word of the Apostle: "Yet she shall be saved in childbearing" (1 Tim. 2:15).

The blessed Conon himself spent all his days and nights in prayer. When his son had reached the age of seven, Conon distributed all that he possessed to the poor and, taking the boy, went off to a monastery, where he lived the monastic life. The Lord granted him grace, so that he gave sight to the blind, cleansed lepers, cast out demons, healed various diseases, and wrought many glorious miracles.

The river that flowed through Iconium was very full in the spring; it overflowed its banks and caused many calamities to the inhabitants of that country, flooding their fields, gardens and houses. In one of these floods the river inundated far more villages than usual. The people of

1. *Aurelian*, Roman emperor, reigned from 270 to 275 A.D.
2. *Iconium* – a city in Asia Minor, now Konya.

Iconium came to the man of God Conon, and, falling at his feet, they entreated him:

"Help us, servant of God, for the flood is greater than usual and has overwhelmed us and all our goods and property; many people have remained on the other side of the river and cannot come here."

"I, brethren," the blessed Conon answered them, "am a sinful and unworthy man. What can I do?"

But the whole people began to cry out to him with one voice:

"Holy Conon, servant of God, help us!"

Then the holy Conon went to the bank of the river, and, raising his eyes to heaven, began to pray:

"Lord Jesus Christ, as once Thou didst hear Moses, Thy servant, on the shore of the Red Sea, and didst lead the sons of Israel across on dry land, hear likewise now, O Master, me also, hear for the sake of this people, that they may see Thy wonders and glorify Thy blessed Name for ever and ever."

The whole people answered:

"Amen."

At once the river divided into two parts: one part suddenly flowed back, and the other went its own way. All who were present, men and women, with one voice cried out, glorifying God, who saves all who hope in Him. People and animals returned to their villages, from which they had been driven by the water. But the waters that had turned back flooded the villages situated upstream of the river, and filled not only the valleys and forests but covered even the elevated places. Then the whole people came again to the man of God and told him what had happened. Saint Conon went to the river, and, making the sign of the Cross over it, said:

"Hearken to the command of Almighty God: gather all your waters into your bed, do not overflow your banks, and do not flood the villages of men."

At once the river, like a servant obedient to his master, flowed within its bed and did not spill over its banks, although just before this the water in it had stood like a mountain.

Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord: "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, and say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' it will move" (Mt. 17:20).

Saint Conon, caring for the salvation of human souls, destroyed many idol-temples and converted unbelievers to Christ. This happened not only in Iconium but also in the surrounding lands. It came about that the report of Saint Conon reached the governor Domitian. This impious lawbreaker came to Iconium and produced in that city such fear and confusion that no one dared openly to acknowledge himself a Christian. Many withdrew into the mountains and deserts, where they lived together with the wild beasts, not wishing, out of fear, to renounce the confession of the Christian faith. The governor Domitian, at the instigation of the devil, commanded that the man of God Conon be seized and brought before him.

When the saint had been brought to torment, Domitian looked at him with a friendly smile and said to him:

"Greetings, noble elder."

"Greetings to you also," the saint answered.

"I see," Domitian continued, "that what I have heard of you is true, for your appearance is bright and inspires respect, your eyes shine like stars, and your venerable age cannot be reproached. We have received word that you have been stricken by the deadly poison of Christianity, and that you not only go astray yourself but also lead many others into the same error. Nevertheless we did not believe this report, for we knew you to be a noble man and devoted to our faith."

To the words of Domitian the holy Conon answered:

"It is written that one should follow useful counsel and not harmful. Why, then, have you rejected our Lord, who was seized and condemned to death, who died on the Cross and was laid in the tomb? Why have you not marvelled at His birth from the Most Pure Virgin, who, though she bore a child, remained a Virgin? Why have you not been amazed at the Nativity, of which the Angels brought the good tidings, rejoicing and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men' (Lk. 2:14)? Why do you not marvel at the power of Him who fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes? Who could

have wrought such a miracle, if not He who opened the eyes of one born blind, gave life to the dead Lazarus, who had been four days in the tomb, and at last, of His own will, suffered for the salvation of the whole world, at whose death the rocks were split, the tombs were opened, and many holy dead rose again?"

"But if your account were true," Domitian objected to the saint, "the whole world would believe in your Christ, and the power of Zeus would be destroyed."

Saint Conon said:

"So it shall be: this Zeus and all your gods will be destroyed by the invincible power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who commanded me to preach the truth, to which I shall remain faithful to the end, for it is written in the law of Christ: 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life' (Jn. 14:2). It behoves us who believe to enter the Kingdom of God through many afflictions, while the children of this age, living sumptuously in worldly goods, will be cast out and go into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

These words of the martyr brought Domitian into great wrath, and he commanded that Saint Conon be beaten and subjected to various tortures. The saint said fearlessly:

"I do not fear your tortures; carry out quickly what you have planned. I beg you to subject me to the most grievous torments, that I may be found worthy of a greater reward from my Christ."

Domitian said:

"I will give you useful counsel: listen to us, and you will become worthy to enjoy things together with us."

But Saint Conon answered:

"I desire to save my soul, not my body, and I desire to enjoy spiritual joys, not bodily ones. But you, impious one, will be delivered to torments together with your father the devil in hell, where there will be no end to your sufferings."

After this Domitian asked the saint:

"What rank do you hold in your faith, impious elder? Are you a priest?"

"No," the martyr answered, "I am a simple man and not worthy of that holy rank, those who have been found worthy of which rejoice with Christ and with His holy Angels in spiritual joy. Nevertheless, I too live for my Lord Jesus Christ, I bow down to Him and rejoice in His Name."

"Did you have a wife?" Domitian continued to ask.

"I did," the saint answered, "but I lived with her only a short time, for she departed to Christ our God."

"Do you have children?" Domitian asked again.

"I have one son," the saint replied, "he remained in my house, but I wish that he too might stand before you."

"Surely he does not worship our gods either?" asked Domitian.

"As is the tree," the saint answered, "so are its branches. But I beg you, command that my son be brought here, that we may receive the martyr's crown together."

At once, at Domitian's order, soldiers were sent for the young Conon. When he was brought and set before the tormentor, he asked the elder Conon:

"How old is your son?"

Conon answered:

"At the age of seven I gave him to a monastery for instruction, and there he learned to read. When he had reached twelve years of age, he was made a church reader. And now he is seventeen years old, and by the grace of Christ he holds the rank of deacon and is among the sacred servants of God. From childhood I taught him to live chastely, and he is worthy of the martyr's crown. I beg you: do not delay long, but command that we be delivered to torments, that we may be crowned together by Christ our God, for we are Christians and desire to die for Christ."

"What is your son's name?" asked Domitian. The martyr answered:

"He has the same name as his father."

Domitian turned to the young Conon and began to speak to him:

"You have heard, youth, that your father has lived many years, was married, begot a son, and enjoyed life for a rather long time, and now is already an old man; it is no wonder, then, that he desires death. But

you are still young and have only just begun to know the whole charm of life. Do you really wish to obey your father?"

To the crafty words of the tormentor the youth answered:

"My father taught me to honor the One True God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, to live holily and piously, and he showed me the way of salvation. He told me that this life is not life but death, that all lovers of temporal life die for eternity, while our Lord Jesus Christ has an endless life, which He bestows upon those who love Him. Moreover, I have been taught by my father that an everlasting torment in the Gehennal fire, never quenched, is prepared for the impious idol-worshippers, while crowns incorrupt in heavenly glory are prepared for the righteous servants of Christ, in the unending Kingdom of Christ our God, for whose sake we have left the world, and the world has left us. Thus taught by my father, I am of one mind with him. I desire to go to God by the same road that he goes, and I give myself up to the same torments to which he has given himself. For so my Lord Christ said: 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' and 'The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise' (Jn. 5:17, 19)."

"And if I destroy your father with cruel tortures, would you wish to perish in the same way?" asked Domitian.

"Yes, I wish it," answered the blessed youth Conon. "I wish to die together with my father, so that we may also live together in the Kingdom of our Lord, for to die for Christ is not death but the receiving of eternal life."

Then Domitian, turning to the elder Conon, said to him:

"Truly this youth is wiser than you, and only one thing is lacking in him: that, having come to know the truth, he should bow down to our gods."

The elder Conon answered the tormentor:

"The youth knows the truth well, for he worships together with me Him who said: 'I am the Truth' (Jn. 14:6). But to demonic idols, your false gods, neither he nor I will bow down forever."

"For the last time I say to you: listen to me and bow down to the gods," said Domitian, "so that you may be spared cruel torments and death, and receive from us rich gifts."

The elder Conon answered him:

"O lawless one cast out from God, tormentor insatiable for human blood, and most impious of all men! Did I not tell you from the very beginning that I am a Christian and that I wish, together with my son, to die for Christ? But you, as one intoxicated with malice and mad, do not remember my words!"

Then Domitian commanded that an iron bed be brought and heated strongly, and that the holy martyrs be laid naked upon it and scorched. Carrying out the tormentor's order, some of the servants kindled burning coals, others poured boiling oil upon the holy martyrs, but the saints remained unharmed. The elder Conon said to the tormentor at this:

"Do you not remember, Domitian, that I asked you to subject me to cruel torments? And you did not even try to do this, for this torment is insignificant to us, and we do not feel the scorching."

Seeing that this had in no way harmed the martyrs, the tormentor commanded that a copper cauldron be prepared, and, filling it with tin, sulphur and pitch, that it be kindled and the holy martyrs cast into it. At this he said:

"If on the red-hot bed they find it cool, I will warm them in the boiling cauldron, and we shall see whether their God is able to deliver them from the fiery flame."

The saints, cast into the cauldron, lifted their eyes to heaven and prayed:

"Creator of all, O Lord! Hear us who pray to Thee. Send to us Thy holy Angel, that he may cool this greatly kindled cauldron, as once he cooled the fiery Babylonian furnace for the three youths. Hear us, O Master, and hasten to our aid, that all may understand that Thou art the Son of the living God who came into the world."

Immediately, at their prayer, the Lord sent His Angel, who with heavenly dew cooled the cauldron and said to them:

"Peace be with you, good warriors, faithful ascetics! Fear not and be not afraid, for Christ is with you. He will make you victors and partakers of eternal joy."

After this Domitian commanded that the holy martyrs be hung head downward and fumigated with foul smoke. Saint Conon the elder, smiling at such an order, said:

"Madman! The fire did us no harm; shall we then be frightened by smoke?"

When the saints were still tormented with the foul smoke, they laughed at the tormentor and said:

"Are you not ashamed, wretch, that two warriors of Christ have conquered all your proud might, put to shame your father the devil, and crushed and overcome all his malicious cunning?"

Domitian was filled with great rage and, shamed, not knowing what else to do, commanded that, ending this torment, the martyrs be sawn in two with a wooden saw. When the servants set them up and were about to saw, the saints asked the servants to give them time for prayer, and they prayed to God thus:

"O Master, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, King of kings and Lord of lords, we thank Thee that Thou hast vouchsafed us to suffer for Thy holy Name, hast strengthened us in torments, and didst not allow Thy enemies to mock us, but didst make us victors over the devil. We glorify Thee, Christ God, Almighty and All-good Lover of mankind, and we beseech Thee: grant peace to Thy holy Church, which is in the universe; put to shame and defeat those who persecute her; quickly overthrow and destroy the abominable idol temples; raise up Thy power and spread the praise of Thy holy Name; preserve and multiply the Christian race, which rightly glorifies Thee until the end of life. We further beseech Thee, O Master, receive our souls in peace. Let not the tormentor's command be fulfilled, and let us not be sawn in two, lest this give joy to our enemy, who wishes to boast that he destroyed us. May Thy mercy always be with us and take us to Thyself, and let Domitian know that we are Thy servants, and that Thou hast done with us what Thou didst will. And when anyone hears of what has happened, may he glorify Thy Most Holy Name forever."

When the saints had said "Amen," a voice was heard from heaven calling them to the heavenly dwellings. The holy martyrs, signing themselves with the sign of the Cross, committed their holy souls into the hands of God. Immediately a strong earthquake occurred, the idol temples fell, and all the idols in the city were shattered, while Domitian fled and hid himself in his house.

The brethren who were in the monastery, hearing what had happened to the holy martyrs, came and took their honorable bodies, brought them to the monastery, and with honor committed them to burial, glorifying the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, glorified by all creation forever. Amen.

* * *

Suffering of the Forty-Two Holy Martyrs

Страдание святых 42 мучеников

The Greek emperor Theophilus,[3] son of the emperor Michael, surnamed Balbus, or Travlos, who was a native of Amorion,[4] waged frequent wars with the Arabs, sometimes defeating them and sometimes being defeated by them.

Once, setting out on campaign with a large army against the Agarenes, Theophilus besieged a city called Sozopetra, which was the homeland of the Saracen prince Amirmumnas, and wished to take this city.

The Agarene prince Amirmumnas (also called Avisak) was at this time in another place. He sent envoys to Emperor Theophilus, earnestly asking him to withdraw from the city of Sozopetra and not to lay waste his beloved native city. But Theophilus did not heed his request; he took the city, utterly destroyed it, and returned home with great booty.

Amirmumnas, deeply grieved at the ruin of his native city, was greatly enraged and began to hire soldiers everywhere for large sums

3. Theophilus, Byzantine emperor, reigned from 829 to 842 A.D.
4. *Amorium* – a city in Phrygia, in Asia Minor.

of money: in Babylon, in Phoenicia, in Palestine, in Coele-Syria, and in distant Africa.

After some time, having gathered all his army at Tarsus,[5] he resolved to march against the beautiful city of Amorion in Phrygia, which city was the homeland of Emperor Michael Travlos, father of Emperor Theophilus, in order to avenge his native city of Sozopetra, destroyed by Theophilus.

Hearing of this, the Greek emperor Theophilus also gathered a large army from the east, from the west, and from Persia, and setting out to war against the enemy, he arrived at the Phrygian city of Dorylaeum, which lies three days' journey from the city of Amorion. Many of the emperor's courtiers, having learned for certain that the Saracen army was far more numerous than the Greek, advised the emperor not to engage in battle with the army of the Agarene prince, but to remove the inhabitants of Amorion and settle them in other fortified cities. But Theophilus said that it was shameful to avoid battle and to leave the beautiful city of Amorion empty.

He began to prepare the army for battle and sent part of it to defend Amorion. Among the commanders who were with the army were the following: Constantine, surnamed Drungarius,[6] who held the rank of patrician;[7] Aetius, likewise a patrician; Theophilus, also a patrician; Theodore, surnamed Kratir,[8] who held the office of protospatharius;[9] Milissenus and Callistus, surnamed Turmarch,[10] Vasoy, and many other commanders and noblemen.

After a little time the armies of Theophilus and Amirmumnas met, a great battle took place, and many men were slain on both sides. At first the Greeks prevailed over the Agarenes, but then, by God's permission, the battle turned, for the Lord Christ, angered at Theophilus for his

5. *Tarsus* – the principal city of Cilicia, a region in Asia Minor.
6. *Drungarii* properly designated the commanders of warships.
7. That is, of a senator.
8. *Kratir* (*khratis*) – mighty, strong.
9. *Protospatharius* – the first of the swordbearers, an honorary title at the court of the Byzantine emperors.
10. *Tourmarchai*, the same as *drungarii*.

iconoclasm, deprived the Greeks of courage; the Agarenes recovered and began to prevail over the Greeks.

Suddenly the whole Greek army turned to flight, abandoning its emperor, who was protected only by the Persian army which he had hired for money.

Without doubt Emperor Theophilus would have been killed here had the night not come. But the Heavenly King, "Who will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever" (Ps. 102:9), took pity on the Christians and suddenly sent a heavy rain upon the Agarene ranks, so that their bowstrings slackened, and they ceased pursuing the fleeing Emperor Theophilus and the defeated Greek warriors.

After this cruel battle, the Agarene prince Amirmumnas immediately came to the city of Amorium and laid siege to it, digging a deep ditch around it. For a long time he besieged it on every side, intending to take it.

The Greek emperor Theophilus fled in shame to Dorylaeum; from there he sent envoys to the prince Amirmumnas with many costly gifts, asking the prince to withdraw from the city of Amorium. But the latter, greatly enraged over his ravaged city of Sozopetra, was unyielding. Mocking the emperor's request and his gifts, calling him a coward and a fugitive, the prince ordered the imperial envoys held in chains until the matter was ended, and for many days afterward he commanded that strong assaults be made upon the city.

Those within the city resisted vigorously, and from the city walls a multitude of the Agarene host and their most distinguished commanders were slain. Doubting the possibility of taking the city, Prince Amirmumnas was already minded to abandon it and withdraw to his homeland. And this would certainly have come to pass, had there not occurred a treacherous betrayal by one of the Amorian commanders, named Vaditzis. This man, having quarreled with the voivode, planned to deliver the city into the hands of the enemy.

He shot an arrow with a paper tied to it toward the Agarenes, who were already preparing to withdraw from the city walls; on the paper he wrote the following:

"Why, having spent so much time here and expended such efforts, do you withdraw from here without victory? Dare, be brave, make an assault upon that side of the city wall where there is a pillar with a marble image of a lion, and at the top of the pillar an image of a date palm made of stone; here I am, and I guard this side; I will help you, and you will easily take the city, for here there is no wall. You yourselves shall decide what honor you will give me for my service to you."

When this note tied to the arrow was found and brought to the Agarene prince Amirmumnas, he read it and was exceedingly glad. He at once commanded his whole army to approach the indicated wall, and with the aid of the treacherous Vaditzis the entire Agarene host entered the city, in which there occurred a great slaughter, so that Christian blood flowed like a river through the city streets. The city was destroyed not only by the sword but also by fire, for it was at once set alight on every side; and this was the chastisement of the Lord upon the people for the heresies that had multiplied at that time among the Greeks. Of the inhabitants of this city almost none then escaped the Agarene sword or fire, and those who then remained unharmed did not afterward escape slaughter, and some were taken captive.

When the slaughter of the inhabitants ceased, the above-named voivodes sent by the emperor to defend the city were taken captive: Constantine, Aetius, Theophilus, Theodore, Milissen, Callistus, Vasoi, and the other high commanders, who numbered forty-two men. The men and women, young men and maidens who remained alive were taken captive, and the Agarene prince commanded that the men be separated from the women, young men and maidens, and it was found that there were about seventy thousand men, while the women, maidens and young men were without number. The prince commanded that all the men be put to the sword, leaving alive only the above-named voivodes and commanders, and he distributed the women and children among his warriors. Thus this beautiful city of Amorium perished in a single day by sword and fire, on account of the sins of the impious emperor Theophilus, who had taken the icons from the churches and cruelly tortured many holy confessors for venerating the icons.

After this, the tormentor Amirmumnas commanded that the men sent by Theophilus, who had witnessed all the ruin of the city, be released from their chains, and he sent them back to the emperor to report to him all that they had seen.

Receiving such tidings, the emperor fell into deep sorrow. Then he sent envoys to Amirmumnas, desiring to ransom his voivodes and commanders for two hundred centenaria[11]. But the latter did not wish to return the prisoners for such a price, saying that he had expended a thousand centenaria on gathering the army; mocking the imperial message and the envoys, the prince dismissed them with dishonor.

Then Theophilus, from deep sorrow, fell ill, and after a short time died of that sickness. The captives were led away into Syria. The commander Vaditzis, who had betrayed the city to the enemy, renounced Christ, and becoming an apostate, accepted the Agarene faith, for which he received great honors and gifts from the prince.

Prince Amirmumnas, having brought the captive Greek voivodes with their retinue, forty-two in number, into his land, commanded that they be confined in chains in a gloomy dungeon, where they were fitted with stocks on their feet and starved and tormented with thirst. Thus the saints dwelt in great distress, suffering not so much at the hands of the Agarenes as from the above-named apostate Vaditzis, who raged greatly against them.

After some time, the impious Agarenes, at the instigation of their prince, began to seduce the holy prisoners into their Agarene faith, for this impious prince considered it a merit for himself to take captive also the souls of those whose bodies he had taken captive.

Once, some men entered the dungeon to the saints and, as though showing mercy toward them, gave them a small alms, and advised the saints to spare themselves and be freed from their harsh imprisonment —and this release would come when they passed over to the Mohammedan faith. But the saints did not wish to hear these deceitful words, preferring rather to endure all the days of their lives in grievous want and dungeon confinement, and even to accept the most cruel

11. *Kentenarion* – a kind of gold coin of great value.

death, than to renounce Christ and pass over to the impious faith of Mohammed. With such enticements these crafty seducers came to the saints not once but many times. Yet they achieved nothing, although they promised the saints in the name of their prince not only freedom but also honors and great gifts.

Once some of the most distinguished men, coming and giving alms to the prisoners, sat down beside them and, feigning tears, began to weep as though grieving over them, held so long in confinement, and said among themselves:

"To how many sufferings unbelief in the great prophet Mohammed leads! Behold those whom we now see in heavy chains—are they not noble men, honored by their sovereign, brave in war and renowned among their people? Did they not have under their command more than seventy thousand warriors and the strongly fortified city of Amorium? But now they are delivered into the hands of our protosymbolos[12] (so they called their prince). Who has taken from them their strength and firmness? Is it not only that they have been made powerless because they reject the great prophet Mohammed, whose servants, believing in him, won such a glorious victory? But it is not strange that they still do not believe in him, for they have not yet known him, since they were taught by no one; those who sin in ignorance alone can easily obtain forgiveness."

Then, turning to the saints, the courtiers said to them:

"You men, of whom we are now speaking and whom we pity, listen to us as we counsel you what is good: depart from that narrow way upon which the Son of Mary commands you to walk, and walk instead by that way which is broad both in the present and in the future age, and which our prophet points out to us. Does our prophet speak of the impossible when he teaches that God has the power to reward those who obey Him with every good thing even here, and to make them heirs of paradise in the other world? Does God lack gold, or is there any lack of anything? Turn away from the unbelief of ignorant people, for it is contrary to sound sense to disdain the gifts of God, given both

12. *Protosymbolos* – the first counselor.

here and in the next world. Or do you wish yourselves to be the distributors of the divine gifts, receiving them not when God sends them but when you yourselves desire? You do this from great pride, despising God's goodness and turning His mercy into wrath. For if you yourselves give something to your slaves, and they refuse your gifts and turn away from you, will you not be angry with them, and, being greatly offended by them, will you not inflict punishment upon them instead of gifts? If mortal men act thus, will not the immortal God do so all the more to you? Accept the teaching of our prophet; then you will be freed from present calamities and will be gladdened by the divine gifts bestowed upon you while you are still alive, and promised after death as well. For being most merciful, God, seeing that man, desiring to fulfill in life the arduous law of Jesus, grows weary, sent His prophet Mohammed to free people from this labor and from all hardships, promising blessedness in the next world after all the joys of this present life, and teaching that those who listen to him can be saved by faith alone, without doing good works."

Having heard these impious words of the Agarenes, the wise men looked at one another and smiled gently. Then they said together with the psalmist:

"The proud have dug a pit for me, contrary to Thy law. All Thy commandments are truth" (Ps. 118:85–86).

Looking upon the Agarenes, they answered them:

"Is this, then, the teaching of your prophet? And do you truly believe that it is righteous and pleasing to God when the flesh is conquered by every kind of desire, by impure and passionate lusts, and our reason is so subjected to the passions that it never even occurs to us to rise up from foul fleshly deeds by means of abstinence? What difference will there be between a man living thus and a senseless beast? No, men, no! We do not wish to be such, and we will not turn aside from the virtuous and pure Christian law, for we are disciples of those who cried to God: we will not turn from Thee, for 'for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter' (Rom. 8:36). 'Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,

nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 8:38–39)." Having heard such an answer from the saints, the Agarenes departed from them, having not won them over to their faith.

After some time had passed, the seducers sent by the prince, called gymnosophists[13], came again to the saints in the prison, as the first had done. They also, having given alms to the prisoners and kissed each of them, sat down and asked the saints:

"What is impossible for God?"

"Nothing," answered the saints, "all things are possible for Him, for this is proper to the nature of God."

"If all things are possible for God," the gymnosophists continued, "then let us see to whom in the present time He shows mercy by His almighty power: to the Greeks or to the Ishmaelites? To whom has God given the most fruitful and most beautiful lands of the earth, to you or to us? Whose army does God increase? And whose regiments does He destroy like hay? Is God then unjust? If He did not see that we keep His commandments, He would not bestow upon us such great benefactions; and on the contrary, if He did not know that you do not believe in the prophet Muhammad sent by Him, He would not have subjected you to us and delivered you into captivity."

Having heard the speech of the gymnosophists, the saints answered them:

"If you believed the testimonies of the prophets, you would know that your reasonings are false, for can what you say be confirmed by the Divine Scripture? Never. And everything that has no witness is false. Answer us this question: if it happened that two men were disputing the possession of one field, and one of them, having no witnesses, cried out and said that the field was his, while the other, without dispute or quarrel, presented many witnesses, honest and worthy of trust, who said that the field was his and not the first man's, what do you Saracens think: to whom would you adjudge this field?" They answered:

13. *Gymnosophists* – philosophers who renounced the use of all the goods of life and went about naked.

"Truly, the field belongs to him who has witnesses."

"You have judged justly," said the saints. "In the same way we also reason concerning Muhammad, your teacher, and concerning the Only-begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having come into the world and become a man, born of the Most Pure Virgin, concerning which, as we have heard, you too have often spoken, had witnesses concerning Himself from all the most ancient holy prophets who foretold His coming into the world. Your great prophet and lawgiver Muhammad also came, whom you call sent from God; and what then? Ought he not to have had witnesses from two prophets, or at least from one, so that it would be clear that he was truly sent from God?"

These words of the saints put the gymnosophists to shame, for after these words they saw themselves defeated.

Then Saint Vasoi spoke, smiling:

"The Saracen lawgiver too," he said, "has a glorious and true prophet who prophesied concerning him, the holy Isaiah; and if I had not grieved these wise men (that is, the gymnosophists), I would have told them this prophecy."

"We shall not be grieved in the least," they said, "for we know how to forgive those who sin through ignorance, even if they should say something unfitting about our prophet."

"Do you not say," the saint continued, "that the prophet Muhammad is the very last of the prophets?"

"Yes, that is so," they answered.

Then Saint Vasoi said:

"Isaiah, whom you too confess as a prophet of God, says in one of his prophecies: 'The Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail' (Is. 9:14). Isaiah himself, moreover, explains his words further, understanding by the head those who look upon faces, that is, those who render unrighteous judgment, and by the tail understanding the prophet: 'the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail' (Is. 9:15). Do not be angry, men: is not your prophet the 'tail,' being, by your own word, the very last of the prophets? And does he not teach you lawless deeds? For is it not lawless that your prophet laid down for you as law that if

some man, having come to hate his wife, should put her away, he may take her back to himself again only after she has been taken by another man? Let us pass over the other lawless enactments of Muhammad's law; what has been said is enough for understanding the prophecy of Isaiah, that it was not about someone else, but only about your prophet Muhammad that he spoke the prophecy, saying: 'And the leaders of this people shall lead them into error, and those led by them shall perish' (Is. 9:16)."

"We too know how to philosophize," said the gymnosophists, "but since it is so pleasing to God, who are we to resist His will? And Muhammad has no need of human testimony, for he was appointed by God, from whom he also received such laws."

"Did he truly bring you from God such a law, that you should have many wives and with them, during your fasts, spend whole nights until sunrise in gluttony and bodily pleasures?" asked Saint Vasoi.

They answered:

"Yes, this is true."

Then the other saints said:

"We must also answer your first question, by which it is supposed that the better faith belongs to those who have greater courage in war and victory. If you derive your faith from military strength, then remember the ancient might of the Persians, who conquered many lands and subdued almost the whole universe; after them came the dominion of the Greeks, when Alexander the Great defeated the Persians; then Rome conquered the whole universe. What then? Did all of them have the true faith because they were strong in war? Not in the least. All of them were deeply devoted to idolatry, not knowing the True God, the Creator of all. How then do you say that your faith is true, because you (by God's permission for our sins) in recent times have defeated us by the strength of your army? For it often happens to us Christians, who truly confess God, that with His help we have the upper hand over our enemies and conquer. But when we, having angered Christ our Lord, do not bring repentance, then He brings ungodly men upon us, avenging our sins. Nevertheless we, even when punished, do not renounce our Master, but ask His mercy, believe, and have hope that He will have

mercy on us. As for your teacher, who has no witnesses from the prophets and is even contrary to the holy prophets, we do not honor him in the least, but utterly reject him."

After this conversation the gymnosophists, shamed and angered, returned to their prince.

Meanwhile seven years had already passed since the saints had suffered, confined in fetters in that narrow and gloomy prison. Day and night they remained in prayer, incessantly chanting the psalms of David and thanking God for all His providence concerning them: for by this prison confinement and sorrow He cleansed the past years of their life, spent in pleasures and comforts, and strengthened them for so long an endurance as they could not even previously have imagined.

While they were suffering thus, the aforementioned apostate Vaditzis, who had betrayed the city of Amorion to the barbarians and had fallen away from Christ, came to the prison on the fifth day of the month of March, when the sun was already setting, and, calling to one of the prisoners through an opening, a man who had formerly been a notary[14] to his master Constantine the patrician and was also called Constantine, said to him secretly:

"Learn, wise man, what love I have had for your master Constantine the patrician for many years, and even now. Today I have reliably learned that the prince has resolved to kill you all tomorrow if you do not accept his faith, and I have come to inform you of this. Advise your master to save himself from death by a feigned consent to accept the Saracen faith, and do so yourselves too; but in your thoughts do not in the least turn away from the Christian faith, and for the sake of the disaster that has befallen you, feign to please the prince, and your Christ will not be angry with you for this."

But this God-loving man, making the sign of the cross on himself with his right hand, answered the apostate:

"Depart from us, doer of lawlessness," and Vaditzis went away from him.

14. That is, secretary.

Then the master, Constantine the patrician, asked Constantine the notary:

"Who called you to the opening of the prison, and for what purpose?"

He, not wishing to tell him of this before all his company, lest someone, fearing death, should begin to grieve and waver in his thoughts, moved aside with his master Constantine and told him what Vaditzis had announced. Constantine the patrician, giving thanks to God, said:

"Let the will of the Lord be done."

Then, turning to his company, he said:

"Let us remain, brethren, in prayer throughout this whole night."

All, rising, prayed, chanting the psalms of David until dawn.

On the next day, early in the morning, the cruel voivode sent by the prince came to the prison with armed soldiers, and, bringing forth the forty-two holy martyrs from the inner prison and ordering the doors of the outer enclosure to be shut, began to question them:

"How many years have you been in this confinement?" he asked.

"Why do you ask about what you already know?" the saints replied. "Already the seventh year is ending since we have been confined here."

"Can it be," said the voivode, "that in so long a time you have not come to know the loving-kindness which our most just prince shows to you? For he has spared you for so many years, though he could long since have delivered you to death. For such mercy shown to you, you ought to be grateful to him, to pray for him, and to love him with all your heart."

The saints answered:

"Our law commands us to pray for our enemies and for those who oppress and wrong us; therefore we pray to God for your prince as well. But we cannot love him with all our heart, for the holy prophet David forbids this, crying out to God thus: 'Do I not hate them that hate thee, O Lord? and do I not abhor them that rise up against thee?' (Ps. 138:21).

To this the voivode said:

"How can it be that one prays for the one whom he hates? In truth you lie, saying that you pray for a prince whom you hate."

The saints replied:

"We speak the truth in saying that we pray to God for him, that God may enlighten the eyes of his soul, darkened by unbelief, so that he may come to know the way of truth and worship God in piety, embracing the true faith (the Christian faith) in place of the false one which he now holds and thinks to be true. If your prince were to come to know and accept the true faith, then we would not only love him with all our heart, but would also render him due honor, in the words of the prophet David: 'How dear also are thy friends unto me, O God!'"

Then the voivode said:

"Are not the Greek and Roman princes mad, if they think that our people, so free, so brave and so strong, could have been gathered together without divine providence? If we were hated by God and He had no providence over us, we would not have multiplied as we have, nor would we be what we are now, as you yourselves can see."

The saints answered:

"We do not say that you live without divine providence, for no one is deprived of His providence. If someone does not know God, if someone offends Him by impious deeds, nevertheless he lives on the earth and moves not without divine providence. We say only that you believe wrongly in the true God, for, confessing Him as the Creator of all things visible and invisible, you mock Him, asserting that He is the Author and Cause both of all that is good and of all that is evil, of truth and of falsehood, of righteousness and of unrighteousness, of humility and of pride, of meekness and of wrath, of chastity and of unrestrained fornication, and of the other virtues and the vices opposed to them, which there is no need to enumerate here in detail. If what you say about God were true, we would say that you have a correct understanding of God. But since, as darkness differs from light, so your confession differs from the truth, we cannot fail to reproach you for supposing that you have true knowledge of God, when in fact you do not have it. It would be no wonder at all if God were angry with you, although you are kept under His providence."

The voivode said to them:

"What then? Or do you maintain that there is another God, the Creator of all evils and of every sin? How can two Gods exist, one good and the other evil? How can the world stand if two Gods are at enmity with each other?"

The saints answered the voivode:

"We do not say that there is another God, a creator of evil, distinct from God the Creator of all good. No, that is not so; but we tell you that there was found one of the Angels who, by his own free decision, chose for himself what is harmful and opposed to good, and, having loved this, first hated his Creator God, and then man. Afterwards he was permitted to tempt our free will, whether it strives toward God or obeys his tempting suggestion. You have been led astray by him, and therefore you falsely attribute his malice to the utterly sinless and unchanging God."

"Nevertheless," the voivode objected, "our prophet Muhammad teaches that the almighty God is the author of every evil deed of man, as well as of every good one."

To this the saints replied:

"Evidently he has falsely invented another god, just as the Hellenes of old devised the Agathodaimon[15], and he compels you to worship such a god as never was and never will be. But we know the true God and confess Him of whom the holy prophets preached in the Old Testament and the holy Apostles of Christ in the New, the Creator of all that is good. We know no other God whatsoever."

Then the voivode said to them:

"Would you not like today, together with our most just prince, the protosymbol, to offer prayer to God according to the custom of our faith? For it is for this that I have been sent to you. I know that some among you agree to it. Those who do not agree, when they see these men rewarded with gifts, will regret their senseless obstinacy."

To this all the saints unanimously replied:

"We pray to the One True God that not only the protosymbol, your prince, but the whole Saracen people may turn away from the impious

error of Muhammad and render due honor and worship to the One God, preached by the prophets and the Apostles of Christ. We cannot abandon the light and voluntarily pass into darkness."

"See that you say what you mean, lest you repent afterwards," said the voivode, "for because of your resistance you will not escape a severe execution."

But the saints answered:

"We commit our souls to the Immortal and Righteous God and hope in Him until our last breath; and from the faith in Him which we hold we shall not depart."

Then the voivode again began to persuade the saints, saying:

"At the Day of the Last Judgment the orphanhood of your children and the widowhood of your wives will bear witness against you, for you are now deprived of them, since you do not fulfill the prince's desire and reject his faith. Otherwise our Grand Prince could command your present emperor, a young boy, to send your wives and children here to you. But even now, if you agree to listen to us and confess the prophet Muhammad, then, as I have told you, you will soon see all your household, and seeing them you will rejoice greatly. In your Greek land there now reigns the consort Theodora with her young son Michael, and she will not be able to oppose the command of our great protosymbol. Do not be concerned about wealth and property, for the tribute from the Egyptians, the use of which for one year our most merciful prince will grant to you as to his friends, will so enrich you that great property will remain even to your descendants to the tenth generation."

At this speech of the voivode the saints, as with one voice, cried out:

"Let Muhammad be accursed, and all who confess him as prophet."

When the saints uttered these words with great boldness and confidence toward God, the enraged voivode at once commanded armed soldiers, each to seize one of the saints, bind his hands behind his back, and lead them like sheep to the place of execution. At this spectacle there began to gather an innumerable multitude of the Saracen people,

15. That is, God, the author of both good and evil.

and the Christians living among the Saracens, wishing to see the slaying of the holy martyrs.

When the martyrs had already drawn near to the river Euphrates, the voivode called to himself one of the martyrs as they went, the holy Theodore, surnamed "Kratir," that is, strong or brave, and said to him:

"You were formerly a cleric (as we have heard of you), and, having left the sacred rank, you took up a spear, clothed yourself in military armor and shed human blood in battles. Now you hypocritically profess yourself a Christian, condemned by your own conscience for having long since rejected the Christian faith. Would it not be better for you to turn to the teaching of the prophet and messenger of God, Muhammad, and receive from him help and deliverance from death, all the more so since you can have no hope or confidence toward Christ, from whom you voluntarily withdrew long before?"

But the brave martyr of Christ, Theodore, answered the voivode with firmness:

"You speak falsely, voivode, in saying that I have departed from Christ God; I only left the sacred clergy because of my unworthiness. Therefore I must now all the more shed my blood for the faith of Christ and die for love of Christ, so that my merciful Lord may now forgive me for what I sinned against Him before. For if your slave, having run away from you and then returned, had not spared even his own life for your sake, would he not then receive from you forgiveness for his former flight, on account of the devotion he showed afterwards?"

"Let your will be done," said the voivode, "I have offered you only that by means of which you might escape death."

When the Saracen executioners bared their swords and, taking the holy martyrs, led each of them apart for beheading, it happened that the holy Theodore Kratir stood beside Constantine the patrician. Theodore feared that Constantine, seeing his execution, might waver and become afraid of death, and therefore he began to exhort him, saying:

"Listen, my lord, since you surpass us all both in the height of your rank and in your virtues, it befits that you be the first of us to become a martyr, bowing your head beneath the sword for your Lord before all of

us, and be the first to receive the crown from Jesus Christ, the Heavenly King, just as from the earthly king you were honored above others with dignities."

But the holy Constantine answered him:

"It befits you far more, so valiant a man, to do this, and to be the first to lay down your life for Christ; you will have me and our other friends as your followers."

Then holy Theodore offered a prayer, and, commending his soul to God, went up to the executioner and with joy received the glorious martyr's death by the sword.

After him the other saints, in order and according to the rank of their former dignities, as though summoned to a royal feast, went one after another to the sword, showing no fear before death, no timidity or faintness of heart, so that the voivode was greatly astonished to see the martyrs going to their death with such joy.

Thus the forty-two holy martyrs ended their lives by a valiant death for their Lord, on the sixth day of the month of March.

After the slaying of the holy martyrs, the Saracen prince commanded that the aforementioned apostate Vaditzis also be put to death by the sword, saying:

"If he had been a true Christian, it would not have befitted him to renounce his faith; and if he did not keep faith in his Christ, how can he keep faith in our Muhammad? If he has become an enemy of his fellow Christians, having delivered them into our hands, then, should a time of calamity come upon us, he may become a traitor to us as well. He who was faithless to his own, will he be faithful to strangers? Not in the least."

And they struck off the head of that wretched traitor with the sword, and thus he received the fitting recompense from the Saracens for his friendship toward them, when he delivered into their hands the most renowned and beautiful Christian city of Amorium.

On the following day, by the prince's command, the bodies of the forty-two holy martyrs were cast into the river Euphrates. The corpse of the slain apostate was cast in there as well. After a little while the bodies of the holy martyrs were found on the bank on the other side of

the river, intact, with the head of each joined to its own body, and all the bodies lay side by side in comeliness. The corpse of the apostate, however, was found far from the saints, and his head lay at a great distance from his body. The honorable bodies of the saints were taken up by the faithful and buried with honor, while the body and head of the impious traitor were torn apart and devoured by crocodiles. For all this let there be glory to Christ our God, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, worship is offered unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Upon the earth ye suffered for Christ's sake, and, appearing as crowned champions of piety, ye took up your dwelling in heaven in gladness; for having cast down every wile of the enemy by the afflictions and the blood of your wounds, ye grant from on high the remission of sins to those who ever praise you.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Newly risen stars of the faith, who zealously suffered for Christ, we all worthily crown you with glorious wreaths, praying to Christ for us, for ye are pillars and bulwarks of the Christian commonwealth.

* * *

Memory of Venerable Arcadius

Память преподобного Аркадия

Holy Arcadius lived on the island of Cyprus in the reign of Constantine the Great. From his youth he devoted himself to monastic labors and pursued them until the time of Julian the Apostate[16], in whose reign he died. He was the teacher of Sts. Julian the physician and Eubulus, who suffered at the hands of Julian shortly before the death of their teacher[17]. Having mourned the martyr's death of his disciples, holy Arcadius committed their honorable bodies to buri-

16. Constantine the Great, 306 to 337 A.D.; Julian the Apostate, 361 to 363 A.D.
17. Sts. Julian and Eubulus suffered about 361; their memory is kept together with that of Venerable Arcadius.

al, and after them he himself, giving thanks to God, departed from this world.

* * *



THE SEVENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 7

7 марта

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

Sufferings of the Holy Hieromartyrs Ephraim, Basil, Eugene, Elpidius, Agathodorus, Eferius and Capito, who at various times were bishops in Cherson

Страдание святых священномучеников Ефрема, Василия, Евгения, Елпидия, Агафодора, Еферия и Капитона, бывших в различные времена епископами в Херсоне

In the sixteenth year of the reign of Diocletian,[1] the Most Holy Patriarch Ermon of Jerusalem sent many bishops into various lands and to diverse peoples, to proclaim the Word of God and to preach Christ, after the apostolic example.

Two of these bishops, Ephraim and Basil, came into the land of Tauroscythia, and here, in the city of Cherson, both labored for some time, preaching the true God to a people who did not know Him and enlightening those darkened by the gloom of Hellenic idol-worship. Then St. Ephraim, leaving the inhabitants of Cherson to St. Basil, went to the Scythians who dwelt along the Danube, and by his preaching he turned many of them to Christ there; and having endured considerable sorrows and labors in the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, he was beheaded on the seventh day of March.

Meanwhile St. Basil, rebuking in Cherson the error of the unbelieving and showing them the right path of salvation, roused the anger of the people. The wicked seized him, beat him without mercy, and drove him out of the city. Withdrawing to a certain mountain, he dwelt in a cave; that mountain lay one hundred stadia[2] from Cherson and was

1. The Roman emperor Diocletian reigned from 285 to 305. During 18 years of his reign he permitted Christians to confess their faith openly, but from 303 he began to persecute them, and with particular cruelty.

called *Parthenon*, which means "of the maiden," for on it there was a shrine and an idol of some Hellenic goddess-maiden. Dwelling on that mountain, St. Basil rejoiced in spirit that he had been counted worthy to suffer wounds and exile for Christ's sake; he lamented the perdition of human souls beguiled by the devil, and with tears he prayed God for their conversion.

So some time passed. A certain official of Cherson had his only son die, and the youth was buried outside the city. In great sorrow the parents sat by the grave, grieving and weeping; night came, and they did not leave their son's tomb. And behold, in a dream the deceased son appeared to them, saying:

"Why do you mourn my death? You cannot take me from here alive, for our gods, the lifeless idols invented by the demon for the seduction and ruin of men, cannot raise me up. If you wish to have me restored to life, entreat that stranger whom you beat and drove out to pray to his God for me, and believe yourselves in that God whom he preaches: for He is the true God, having power over the living and the dead, and He is able to raise me from the dead alive through the prayers of the man you have wronged."

Awakening at once, the parents told one another their vision and were greatly amazed that it agreed in both of them. Joyfully they hastened to the city and related the vision to their friends. As soon as day came, they began searching everywhere for the man of God, and they found him in the cave mentioned above. The city official came with his household to him, fell at his holy feet, and begged him to raise his son.

"How can I do this, being a sinful man?" the saint replied. "But you will receive what you ask, if you believe in the God whom I preach, who alone is able to raise the dead from their graves."

"If we receive our son alive," said the parents of the dead youth, "we will do with all our heart whatever you wish and command."

The hierarch of God, Basil, rose and went with them to the grave; when the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, he entered within,

2. A *stadium* was a Greek measure of distance, whose value varied at different times. In the III century A.D., the stadium measured 184.97 meters, or 87 sazhen.

made the sign of the Cross over the dead youth, and prayed to God for a long time. Then he took water, blessed it, and poured it upon the dead man, invoking the Most Holy Trinity, after the likeness of holy Baptism. At once the dead man came to life and began to speak, glorifying God. Fear and dread seized all who were present, and the parents were filled with inexpressible joy. All fell at the feet of the hierarch, calling him great and acknowledging the God he preached as the true and almighty God. Taking the archpastor of God, St. Basil, they led him into the city with great honor. The official, with all his household, believed in Christ and was baptized; also many from among the people who had seen this miracle joined the faithful. And the Church of Christ began to grow in Cherson, while the impure Hellenic shrines gradually fell into disuse.

Seeing the desolation of his shrines, the devil cried out in the hearts of the Jews who then dwelt in Cherson, and they persuaded the Hellenes to rise up against the Christians, and above all against their leader, St. Basil, and to kill him.

"If the teacher of the Christians is killed," they said, "then Christianity will easily be ruined."

An innumerable multitude of armed wicked men gathered; with shouting and clamor they suddenly fell upon the archpastor of God, dragged him out of his dwelling, bound his feet, and, surrounding him, dragged him through the city streets, beat him with clubs and stones, and trampled him underfoot. They brought him to the place where the Christians had set up a pillar crowned with a cross; here the hierarch of Christ yielded up his holy soul to God, dying in suffering on that same seventh day of March on which St. Ephraim had been beheaded in Scythia.

The body of St. Basil was taken outside the city gates and cast out to be eaten by dogs and birds. For many days it lay unburied, yet, preserved by God, it remained undamaged; at night a bright star appeared above this suffering body, and a wolf, sitting nearby, guarded it from the dogs, while by day an eagle hovered over the body, not allowing the carrion birds to approach, until the Christians secretly took it at night and buried it with honor.

After the martyrdom of the holy bishop Basil, one of his disciples set out by sea for the lands of the Hellespont and found there three bishops, Eugene, Elpidius and Agathodorus, who were laboring in the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ; they had been sent to preach, together with the saints Ephraim and Basil, by the Most Holy Ermon, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Having found them there, the disciple told them of the death of St. Basil, and they glorified God, who had crowned His servant with the crown of martyrdom. Consulting together, the bishops boarded a ship and sailed to the city of Cherson, desiring to imitate St. Basil. They preached Christ God in Cherson, and the number of the faithful increased from day to day. But, as with St. Basil, the devil stirred up the Jews and Hellenes against them as well; gathering in great numbers, they seized the holy bishops, bound them, dragged them through the streets, beat them with wood and stones, until the holy martyrs yielded their honorable souls into the hands of their Lord. Their bodies were taken out of the city through the gate by which the dead were ordinarily carried out to be buried, and were cast outside unburied for the dogs and birds to scatter; but the Christians secretly took them and gave them honorable burial. The three holy bishops, Eugene, Elpidius and Agathodorus, suffered on March 7, a year after the martyrdom of St. Basil.

Some years later, in the days of Constantine the Great, when he was already inclining toward Christianity, Bishop Eferius came to Cherson, also sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Seeing that the unbelieving people, by their cruelty and fury, would not allow Christianity to spread in Cherson, Eferius went to Byzantium to the Emperor Constantine and brought a complaint against the wicked people of Cherson, who oppressed the Christians. The emperor gave his permission for the Christians to dwell in Cherson freely and without hindrance, to hold their assemblies openly and unhindered for the glory of God, and he commanded that all who hindered the Christians be expelled from the city. With such imperial will, St. Eferius returned to Cherson and greatly gladdened the flock of Christ, while the unbelievers were grieved and disturbed. Having built a Christian church in the city and set everything in good order, the bishop went again to the emperor to offer

him thanks for the good deed. On the way back he fell ill, and, sailing as far as the island of Aas, he ended his temporal life and began life eternal. The faithful buried him and set a pillar upon his grave; tall trees that grew there pointed out the saint's tomb from afar. The repose of St. Eferius took place on the seventh day of March, the day on which the earlier bishops had also died as martyrs.

The Christians mourned the departed one for a long time; then they informed Emperor Constantine of the death of their bishop and asked for another in his place. In place of Eferius there was sent the blessed Capito, bishop of the Church of Cherson, and the faithful received him joyfully. A great multitude of the unbelieving people also gathered; approaching the newly arrived bishop, they asked him for a miraculous sign as proof of the truth of his faith, so that they too might be convinced.

"Let the miracle be such," they said, "that a great fiery furnace be lit, and that the Christian bishop enter into it; and if he is not burned and remains alive, then we will all be baptized."

St. Capiton, trusting in God, agreed to their wish and ordered a great furnace to be built. When it had been heated strongly, the holy bishop, with the general attention of the people, put on his omophorion[3] and prayed to God with tenderness, that He would display His divine power, as once in the Babylonian furnace,[4] for the assurance of the unbelieving people. After a long prayer, and after the deacon's cry aloud, "Let us attend," the hierarch entered the furnace and stood in the flames for about an hour, praying and holding his hands stretched out toward heaven, and he received no harm from the great fiery blaze; then, gathering hot coals into his phelonion,[5] he came out unharmed before the people. Beholding this most glorious miracle, all were filled with great wonder and fear; for they saw that the fire had not even

3. *Omophorion*: an elongated cloth bearing the image of four crosses, laid upon the shoulders and hanging down in front and behind; without the omophorion a bishop cannot perform sacred rites. Symbolically, it signifies the lost sheep (mankind), saved from destruction by the Master of the sheep (the Lord). Lk. 15:5.

4. Concerning the miraculous deliverance of Ananias, Azariah, and Misael from the fire—Dan. 3.

5. *Phelonion*: a vestment of a bishop and priest, circular and without sleeves.

touched the vestments of the hierarch, and that his phelonion, full of burning coals, was not scorched.

"One is God," cried out the people with a loud voice, as if with one mouth, "the Christian God, great and mighty, who has kept His servant unburned in the furnace!"

Then all Cherson and that country embraced the Christian faith, having been assured of its truth by a most glorious miracle. This miracle was proclaimed to the great Constantine and related to the holy fathers at the First Ecumenical Council, in Nicaea[6], and all, glorifying God, marvelled at the great faith of St. Capiton and his zeal for God.

Several years later, St. Capiton set sail from Cherson for Constantinople; a storm arose, and the waves drove the ship to the mouth of the Dnieper River. There, unbelieving and godless men plundered the ship and seized all who were aboard, and drowned in the water the hierarch of God himself, Capiton.

He suffered a martyr's death on the twenty-first day of December, but his commemoration was joined to that of the earlier Chersonese hierarchs who suffered on the seventh day of March. His holy soul was united with theirs in heaven, and all seven hierarchs of God, the bishops of Cherson, like the seven chief Angels[7], stand together before the Most Holy Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God, glorifying Him with all the saints unto the ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

The light-bearing day of the shepherds hath come, of those who shone brightly as bishops in Cherson; we celebrate their feast, for they suffered for Christ's sheep. Hieromartyrs, pray to Christ, the Chief Shepherd, that He may number us also among the sheep standing at His right hand, that we may cry unto you: Rejoice, holy fathers, who poured forth your blood for Christ.

* * *

6. The First Ecumenical Council was held in 325 and consisted of 318 bishops. It condemned the heresy of Arius, who taught that the Son of God is not equal to God the Father; at this same Council the time for the celebration of Holy Pascha was precisely determined.
7. Their names are Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salaphiel, Jegudiel, and Jeremiel.

Commemoration of Venerable Emilian

Память преподобного Емилиана

In Rome there lived a certain man named Victorinus. From his youth he had sinned greatly, but in his old age he came to his senses and, remembering his sins, trembled at the Judgment of God. He came to one of the holy monasteries and, having entreated the abbot to receive him, renounced all the attachments of this world and became a monk. He gave himself wholly to submission and obedience, keeping what was commanded him and mortifying his body by day and by night. In the monastic habit he was given the name Emilian. Keeping continually in his soul the remembrance of death and ever making ready for the Dread Judgment of God and to answer for his sins on the day of trial, Emilian always lived in fear of the eternal torments of Gehenna. By this fear he so wasted and dried up his body that all the brotherhood, who lived in the monastery for the love of God, marvelled at such great mortification of the flesh, humility, and toil. And all strove to imitate his life and equal his ascetic struggles in obedience, that by such laborious repentance they might cleanse their sins. They saw how every day he endured hunger and thirst, stretched himself upon the ground, slept little, and tormented and subdued his body—and they gained great benefit thereby.

The monastery in which Emilian pursued the ascetic life was built upon a high mountain, which had a cave on one of its slopes. The blessed Emilian had a custom of secretly leaving the monastery late in the evening and going to this cave, where he prayed with tears throughout the night until Matins.

Much time passed. One night the abbot happened upon Emilian as he was leaving the monastery at a late hour. Not knowing why this brother was going out, the abbot left his cell, secretly followed him, and, seeing him enter the cave, stood beside it and resolved to wait until he came out, so that he might learn from him why he went into the cave. A little while later, a heavenly light, brighter than the rays of the sun, suddenly illumined the mountain, and the abbot saw Venerable Emilian standing in the cave, his hands raised aloft as he prayed to

God; and the heavenly light descended upon the blessed man's head. At this sight horror and fear seized the abbot. On his way back to the monastery he ran in trembling, and could scarcely move his feet for great terror. When he reached the monastery gates, he heard a voice from heaven saying:

"Emilian, your sins are forgiven you."

The abbot was even more amazed, and went into his cell, where he waited in silence for dawn. Wishing the brotherhood to benefit from this, after Matins the abbot turned to Emilian in the presence of all and asked:

"Where were you this night, brother?"

The Venerable bowed to the abbot and answered:

"I was in the monastery, resting all night with the brotherhood."

But the abbot rebuked him and urged him not to conceal the mercy of God shown to sinners who truly repent. Emilian was compelled to reveal the secret to the whole brotherhood: how light and a voice had descended upon him from heaven, from the throne of mercy. Then the abbot began to speak to the brotherhood:

"Hearken, my dear brothers. Almighty God could have forgiven this brother's sins even in silence, but for our sake, to stir our hearts to repentance, He sent him His mercy in the form of light, together with His voice, that we too might know and glorify the mercy and love for mankind of our Creator, who is near to those who truly repent."

Thus assured that his sin had been forgiven, Venerable Emilian spent the remainder of his life in spiritual joy and departed to the Unapproachable Light, to hear the voice of joy and gladness of the righteous, who rejoice in the heavenly dwellings unto the ages.

Commemoration of Venerable Paul the Confessor

Память преподобного Павла исповедника

St. Paul was bishop of the city of Plusiada[8] at the time when the heresy of the iconoclasts arose in the Church. Seeing how the op-

8. The city of Plusiada, called Prusias until the VII century, was founded by Hannibal and lay in Bithynia, a Roman province in the northwestern part of Asia Minor.

ponents of the holy icons raged against the Christian faith, how they perverted the ordinances of the holy Apostles, showed contempt for the precious icons, and uttered blasphemies against them, the Venerable rose against them like a victorious warrior of God, and smote them with the words of the Divine Scriptures as with arrows. For this he endured persecution, exile, and every kind of adversity in life. Amid such valiant struggles he gave his spirit in peace to the Lord and departed to the heavenly Kingdom, which he had so dearly loved[9].

* * *

Account of a Recluse to Whom God Revealed the Lot of Those Who Receive Alms

Повесть о затворнике, которому Бог открыл об участи принимающих милостыню

A certain recluse was greatly renowned in his monastery, for from his youth he had led a holy life. Renouncing all the pleasures of the world, he shut himself up in a narrow cell and served God, mortifying his body with fasting and an all-night vigil, praying to the Sovereign of all for himself and for the whole world, and exercising his mind in contemplation of God. At the appointed time he received a small quantity of food from the hands of the monastery's attendant; but of all that God sent through Christians to the monastery's brotherhood —gold, silver, food, and wine—he never took anything for himself.

He once had the following vision concerning those who receive alms. One day the governor of the city came to that monastery to give alms, and gave everyone a silver coin[10]. He came also to the recluse, carrying a gold coin[11], and entreated him to accept it. Ashamed before this honorable man, the elder took the gold coin and put it in his pocket.

In the evening, having completed his usual rule, the elder lay down on a mat[12], intending to sleep a little. And behold, it seemed to him that he was in a spacious field with the rest of the brotherhood of that mon-

9. Venerable Paul reposed around the year 860.
10. *Srebrenik* — a silver coin that at various times had different values. In the time of the Savior, a srebrenik was worth approximately 80 kopecks.
11. *Zlatnitsa* — a gold coin in general, of indeterminate value.
12. The bed of the ancient hermits and ascetics was usually a mat, most often made of reeds.

astery. The whole field was full of thorns, and a certain young man (who was an Angel of the Lord) said to the monks of that monastery:

"Reap the thorns."

The young man came also to him, the recluse, and said:

"Gird yourself and reap the thorns."

When the recluse began to make excuses, the Angel said:

"You must have no excuses, for yesterday you hired yourself out with the other monks who took a silver coin each from that lover of Christ. You took a gold coin, and therefore you must labor more than the others, reaping thorns, since you received the greater payment. The thorns you see are the deeds of the man from whom you received alms yesterday; so come and reap them with the others."

When he awoke and pondered what he had seen, the recluse was greatly troubled, and at once sent for the man who had given him alms, entreating him to take back his gold coin. But that lover of Christ would not take it back, and said to the recluse:

"Keep it, father, or give it to whomever you wish."

Then the elder said to him:

"I do not wish to reap the thorns of another's sins, when I cannot rid myself even of the thorns of my own sins."

Then he threw the gold coin out of his cell and shut the window.

Learning why the elder had refused his alms, the man began to take care to amend his life and began to give much alms to the poor and needy, remembering that, according to Scripture, sins are cleansed by almsgiving and faith[13].

* * *

13. Lk. 11:41; Tob. 12:9; Sir. 3:30.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF MARCH

March 8

8 марта

New Calendar March 8 · Old Calendar March 21 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Theodoret, Presbyter of Antioch

Страдание святого священномученика Феодорита, пресвитера Антиохийского

By the great emperor Constantine and his son Constantius, a cathedral church was erected in Antioch of Syria and richly adorned. Among the people it came to be called the *Golden Church*, because it was artistically painted with gold and adorned with a mosaic that gleamed with gold; its roof, too, was entirely gilded, and its countless church vessels were all of gold and pure silver. The emperors gave much property for the support of the numerous church clergy. In the clergy of this great cathedral church, St. Theodoret served as a presbyter; the vessels, furnishings, and all the wealth of the church were entrusted to his safekeeping. From his youth he led a virtuous life and kept the true faith in his heart, fulfilling the word of Scripture: "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

By fasting, prayers, almsgiving, care for the salvation of human souls, and blameless priestly service, he pleased God.

When Constantine's son Constantius died, Julian the Apostate succeeded him. On receiving the empire, he at first showed himself to be a pious Christian and recalled from exile the bishops whom Emperor Constantius had banished for their piety. But once he had secured his throne, he openly renounced Christ before all, though in secret he had long since renounced Him, giving himself over to demons and sorcery. And he began to persecute the Church of Christ; even if he did not utterly destroy the entire Christian people, at least he seized, tortured,

and killed their leaders, Christians of the spiritual rank, and lay dignitaries. He took the churches of God from Christians and turned them into shrines for his idols, plundered all the property of the Church, and said, wretch that he was:

"Christians ought to possess no wealth, for Christ commanded them to be poor, saying: 'Acquire neither gold nor silver.'"

In that cruel time the cathedral church of Antioch, named *Golden* for its beauty, was also despoiled; all its costly adornments were taken into the imperial treasury, the church's property was plundered, the clergy were scattered, and St. Theodoret was tortured to death.

It happened thus. Emperor Julian had an uncle who bore the same name, Julian, his mother's own brother; he appointed him governor and persecutor over the eastern lands. This Julian, the emperor's uncle, had formerly been a Christian, but, wishing to please his nephew, Emperor Julian the Apostate, he renounced Christ and worshipped idols. He came to Antioch before the emperor arrived there, together with another imperial official named Felix, who administered the imperial treasury. Knowing that the cathedral church held great wealth, Julian seized the church's keeper of the sacred vessels, the blessed presbyter Theodoret (for all the other clergy had fled in fear and hidden wherever they could). He sought to seize him because Theodoret had the church's sacristy in his keeping. Taking his keys from him, binding him tightly, and shutting him up in prison, Julian entered the church of God with the imperial treasurer Felix and a great armed force, to take its adornments, its gold and silver, and all its precious things, and add them to the imperial treasures. Entering God's holy place like a thief and robber, with what great audacity and shamelessness he plundered the Church's adornment, dishonoured the holy place of the Lord, and defiled it! The wretch dared to urinate right beside the Holy Table; and when the church vessels had been brought out of the sanctuary and all laid together on the ground, he sat upon them in mockery, uttering blasphemy and reviling our Lord Jesus Christ with his unclean mouth. One of those present, named Vzoi, urged him not to heap such shameless dishonour upon the holy place of the Lord and not to blaspheme Christ. But striking him hard on the head, Julian said:

"Christians have no divine Providence at all, and are utterly deprived of such care."

Having plundered and defiled the church of God, the impious governor turned to torturing God's servant, St. Theodoret. When he was brought in chains before the ungodly tribunal, Julian said to him:

"Theodoret! Why, under Emperor Constantine, did you destroy the temples of the ancient gods, while adorning the tombs of the departed and ordering churches to be built over them?"

The saint replied:

"The divine churches and the tombs of the saints were built and adorned by our forefathers, for God glorified His saints, finding them worthy of this. But I marvel at you, governor, that from being a Christian you have become a worshipper of idols."

The governor ordered the saint to be struck in the face.

"You sin, Julian," the saint said to him, "by calling stone and wooden idols gods."

Then the torturer ordered the saint to be stripped, hung upon a tree, and scraped all over his body with iron claws. For three hours they scraped him, and blood flowed in streams, but the saint's face shone with joy, as though he felt no pain at all. And the torturer said to him:

"Wretch, sacrifice to the gods, and I will release you from the debt that rests upon you on account of the church property which you wickedly squandered. But if you do not sacrifice, you will cast out your soul by a violent death."

The saint replied:

"You are the wretch, you lawless man, and so is your emperor, for you have forsaken Christ and clung to Antichrist, and must be burned in everlasting fire. I, for my part, owe nothing to anyone but my Lord Jesus Christ, before Whom my duty is to keep the true faith until my last breath."

The torturer addressed him again:

"Theodoret! You will receive many honours and gold from me, if only you renounce that crucified sorcerer whom you call the Son of God."

The holy martyr replied:

"May your gold be with you to your destruction[1]; but I hope in my Lord, Who gives His servants incorruptible things in place of things that perish, and heavenly things in place of earthly ones."

Then the torturer ordered the martyr's sides to be burned with two candles. As they began to burn him, he lifted his eyes to heaven and began to pray—and at once both servants who were burning him fell to the ground as though dead. Julian and those around him ordered the servants to be carefully lifted from the ground, and said to them:

"Why have you stopped burning the impious Christian and given yourselves over to drowsiness and negligence?"

Coming to themselves, the servants answered the torturer:

"If you do not see how the Angels of God defend God's servant, then you are impious and blinded in soul. Behold, four Angels are speaking with him, and sternly forbidding us to touch his precious body. Blasphemer! Do not speak empty words, but know that the God of the Christians is great, and we now believe in Him."

Covered with shame, the torturer ordered these servants to be thrown into the depths of the sea. As they were being led away to be drowned, the holy martyr of Christ called out to them, saying:

"Go before me in peace upon the blessed path, my children, and afterward I too shall follow you and rejoice with you in eternal joy in the Kingdom of Heaven."

And the servants died by drowning, having been deemed worthy to receive the crown of martyrdom from Christ God, in Whom they had believed. As the impious governor continued to confront the holy martyr Theodoret, he cried out:

"Sacrifice to the gods!"

Filled with the spirit of prophecy, the saint said to him:

"You, most impious and most wretched of all men, will gnaw your own entrails, and little time will pass before you violently cast out your defiled soul and deliver it to the eternal fire. Likewise, your most lawless emperor, not long after you, will perish in the land of Persia; struck by an unseen hand, he will be cast into the fiery Gehenna. Know for

1. Acts 8:2. The words of the Apostle Peter to Simon the sorcerer, who wished to acquire the gift of the Holy Spirit for money.

certain that your undertakings will not prosper, for your end is near, and your destruction does not sleep."

Unable to endure such words from the saint, the foul torturer ordered him to be beheaded at once. The saint went joyfully to his death, praying to God for himself and for all the world; and, struck on the head with an axe, he reposed.

Having buried his honorable body, the faithful kept in their hearts the prophetic words that he had spoken to the tyrant in his torments, and they waited for their fulfillment. And it came to pass that both Julians, uncle and nephew, soon perished with a great outcry. Julian, the emperor's uncle, governor of the eastern lands, who had murdered St. Theodoret, from the time when he defiled the Holy Table of God with his urine and trampled upon the sacred vessels, mocking the holy things and blaspheming Christ, fell into sickness. Immediately worms began to breed in his secret parts; they gnawed at him from below, and the disease grew day by day. The most skilled physicians applied great effort to heal him, but had no success at all, and his condition grew worse hour by hour, for the worms multiplied greatly and consumed the body which the righteous hand of God had touched. And the words of the saint, spoken to the tyrant, were fulfilled: "you will chew your own entrails"; for when his passages were stopped up, his blasphemous mouth became a foul passage. Thus, devoured by worms, he vilely cast forth his wretched soul. Likewise his friend Felix, who was in charge of the imperial treasures, did not escape the swift judgment of God: by the retribution of God his inward parts were injured, and blood flowed day and night in a stream from his blaspheming mouth, as from a spring, and soon he died, consigning his wretched soul to Gehenna for eternity. When the impious Emperor Julian came to Antioch and learned of this, he did not dare to dishonor the relics of the holy Hieromartyr Babylas, which rested in the Daphne of Apollo, but commanded the Christians to take them from there, as is written in the life of this saint, on the 4th of September. Afterwards the apostate Julian, setting out on campaign against the Persians, perished there, as the holy Hieromartyr and Christ's servant Theodoret had foretold[2]. Seeing the fulfillment of his

prophecy, the faithful glorified Christ, the true God, glorified with the Father and the Son for ever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Theophylact the Confessor, Bishop of Nicomedia

Память преподобного Феофилакта исповедника, епископа Никомидийского

In those days, when the Church was troubled by the heresy of iconoclasm[3], there came from the eastern lands to Constantinople a pious man, Theophylact, and became close to the luminary of the Church, St. Tarasius, who was then still a layman and a senator, the chief keeper of the secret affairs in the imperial palace. After the death of the iconoclast emperor Constantine Copronymus[4], his son Leo[5] reigned with his mother Irene; Patriarch Paul, surnamed the Merciful, of his own free will left his throne, and in his place St. Tarasius was raised to the patriarchate, who convened the Seventh Ecumenical Council and anathematized the heresy of iconoclasm[6]. At that time the blessed Theophylact, together with Michael of Synnada, left the world, took monastic vows, and were sent by the most holy Tarasius to a monas-

2. Julian was struck by an arrow shot by a Persian. Feeling death approach, he laid his hand to the wound, took some blood, threw it into the air and said, as if seeing before him Christ whom he had persecuted: "Thou hast conquered, Galilean!" (363)

3. Iconoclasm in the Greek empire began under Leo III the Isaurian (717–741) and ended under the Empress Theodora (842). During this time reigned: Constantine V (to 775), Leo IV (to 780), Constantine VI and Irene (to 802), Nicephorus I (to 811), Stauracius and Michael I (to 813), Leo V the Armenian (to 820), Michael II (to 821), Theophilus (to 840), Theodora and Michael III (to 867). The Patriarchal throne of Constantinople under these emperors was occupied by: Anastasius the iconoclast (753), Constantine II the iconoclast (766), Nicetas the iconoclast (780), St. Paul, commemorated August 1 (784), St. Tarasius, commemorated February 25, under whom was the VII Ecumenical Council in 787 (806), St. Nicephorus (815), Theodore the iconoclast (821), Anthony the iconoclast (832), John VII the iconoclast (842) and St. Methodius (846).

4. The surname Copronymus is derived from the Greek *kopros*, dung.

5. Reigned 775–780. Leo IV the Khazar, although an adherent of iconoclasm, was more yielding toward its opponents: he permitted the monks who had fled in his father's time, defenders of the veneration of icons, to return, and even allowed them to occupy episcopal sees; thus the secret adherent of the veneration of icons, Paul of Cyprus, was raised to the patriarchal throne. Icons were even found in the palace, in the rooms of the Empress Irene, who had secretly, unknown to her husband, supported the venerators of icons. When this came to light, Leo removed Irene from the palace, but he soon died.

tery built on the shore of the Black Sea. There, labouring in monastic toils, they advanced in virtues and received boldness toward God in their prayers.

It was the time of harvest, and there was a strong heat; people were fainting from great thirst. The saints prayed to God, and a dry bronze vessel began to pour forth water in an amount sufficient for their needs. So the Lord fulfills the will of those who fear Him and hearkens to their prayers! This miracle was like the ancient miracle in the wilderness, when God brought water out of the rock for thirsty Israel (Ex. 17:6), and another, when for Samson, dying of thirst, the dry bones of an ass's jaw became a source of living water (Judg. 15:19). When the Venerable Fathers Theophylact and Michael shone like stars with the light of their virtuous lives, the most holy Patriarch Tarasius found them worthy of the high episcopal rank, and, ordaining both, sent Michael to Synnada and appointed the blessed Theophylact bishop in Nicomedia. What care for the rational flock of Christ St. Theophylact showed in Nicomedia, what solicitude for the poor, orphans and widows, was witnessed by the Divine temples he built, the hospitals, the houses of hospitality, and the countless alms that he dispensed daily. He himself served the sick, the blind, the lame and the infirm; going round the almshouses and the city squares with a vessel of warm water, he washed with his own hands and cleansed the lepers he met, disdaining nothing in serving them.

After the departure from the world of the most holy Tarasius, the wise Nicephorus succeeded him on the throne of the Church of Constantinople; then the storm of the iconoclastic heresy arose again, stirred up by the impious emperor Leo the Armenian. The most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, having summoned the chosen hierarchs Emilian of Cyzicus, Euthymius of Sardis, Joseph of Thessalonica, Eudoxius of Amorium, Michael of Synnada and the blessed Theophylact, Bishop of Nicomedia, went with them to the wicked emperor. The holy fathers in-

6. This council took place in 787. Having anathematized the iconoclasts, the council established the veneration of icons in the sense that worship proper to God alone should not be offered to icons, but that they should be honoured in the same way as the holy life-giving Cross (whose veneration the iconoclasts did not reject).

structed the emperor much from the Divine books, exhorting him not to sow strife in the Church of Christ with that heresy which the Seventh Ecumenical Council had anathematized. But they could not persuade the frenzied emperor, full of serpent's venom, who breathed upon them fury and wrath. When the holy fathers fell silent, the blessed Theophylact said to the emperor:

"I know that, offending God's long-suffering and neglecting your salvation, you oppose the ancient tradition of the holy fathers and trouble the Church; but, like a storm, a fierce ruin and unexpected calamity will overtake you suddenly, and you will find no deliverer for yourself."

Hearing this, the emperor was filled with still greater fury and dismissed the bishops from his presence with dishonor, condemning them to confinement in various places: the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus to the island of Proconnesus[7], St. Michael, Bishop of Synnada, to Eudokiada, the others to other places, and St. Theophylact of Nicomedia to the seaside city of Strobilus, in Kiverreotai[8]. There the Confessor of Christ and great champion of piety spent the rest of his life, about thirty years, in many afflictions and sorrows, and reposed in the Lord.

The emperor Leo the Armenian perished, as had been foretold by the saint, by an evil and sudden death: he was cut down by the swords of his own soldiers on the day of the Nativity of Christ, in a church during Matins (820). After him there reigned and died Michael, surnamed the Stammerer (829), and Michael's son Theophilus (842), iconoclast emperors. When the Empress Theodora (842–855), with her son Michael (855–867) (this was the third emperor named Michael), took up the sceptre of the kingdom, St. Methodius was raised to the patriarchate (842), the lawless heresy was destroyed, and Orthodoxy shone forth. Then the honorable body of our Venerable Father Theophylact was transferred from exile to Nicomedia and laid in the church he had built, as a protection for the city of Nicomedia, to the honor and strength of Christ our God.

7. *Proconnesus*, an island in the Proconnesian Sea (now the Sea of Marmara) to the northwest of Cyzicus; it was known for its marble quarries.
8. *Kiverreotai* or *Karia*, a south-western region of Asia Minor.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou didst appear as a lamp shining at the ends of the earth, O Hierarch Theophylact; proclaiming the Word consubstantial with the Father and the Spirit, thou didst make clear the Divine Council of the Fathers, and didst appear as a servant of the Trinity. Standing before Her, pray unceasingly for us all.

* * *



THE NINTH DAY OF MARCH

March 9

9 марта

New Calendar March 9 · Old Calendar March 22 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Forty Martyrs, in Sebaste of Armenia

Страдание святых сорока мучеников, в армянской Севастии

In the reign of the impious emperor Licinius, a cruel persecution was raised against Christians,[1] and all the faithful were compelled to offer sacrifices to idols. In the Armenian city of Sebaste,[2] the military commander at that time was Agricolaus, a man of fierce temper and a zealous champion of idol-worship. Since at that time many Christians were also already serving in the imperial regiments, a command was issued that they too should offer sacrifices to the demons. In the regiment of the voivode Agricolaus there were soldiers, forty in number, from the province of Cappadocia,[3] who formed a particularly honored band, devoutly believing in Christ God and distinguished by unshakable courage, always invincible in martial deeds. Among them were Quirion, Candidus and Domnus, learned also in the Divine Scriptures. When it became known to the voivode Agricolaus that the soldiers of this band were Christians, he resolved to compel them to idolatry. Summoning them to himself, the voivode addressed them with this speech:

1. Licinius, son-in-law of Constantine the Great, emperor of the western half of the Roman Empire, was emperor of the eastern half from 307 to 323. In 313 the two emperors issued an edict by which the Christian religion was declared the religion of the state, being made equal to the ancient pagan religion. But Licinius, a pagan, being hostile to Constantine, who had become a determined protector of Christianity, and preparing for war against him, resolved, at the oracle's urging—for it had promised him victory—to destroy Christianity within the bounds of his empire, especially among his troops, for fear of treachery.
2. Armenia, with the city of Sebaste, lay in the northeastern part of Asia Minor and belonged to the Eastern Roman Empire.
3. The region of Cappadocia lay in the eastern part of Asia Minor; its chief city, Caesarea, was renowned for its learning.

"As in battles with enemies you were always in agreement and of one mind and showed courage, so now, with the same unanimity, show with one accord obedience to the imperial decree: offer sacrifice to the gods of your own free will, so that you do not undergo torments."

To this the saints answered boldly:

"If we, fighting bravely for an earthly emperor, always remained victors, as you yourself bear witness, wretch, how much more, struggling for the Immortal King, shall we overcome your malice and defeat your guile."

Agricolaus said:

"One of two things lies before you: either to offer sacrifices to the gods and to be granted great honors, or, in case of disobedience, to be deprived of military rank and subjected to dishonor. Consider this, and choose for yourselves what you find more advantageous."

"What is advantageous for us," said the soldiers, "of that the Lord takes thought."

"Do not reason at length," said the voivode, "and abandon your empty words, and in the morning be ready to offer sacrifices to the gods."

And having said this, Agricolaus ordered them to be locked in prison. Brought there, the holy soldiers, kneeling in prayer, cried out to God:

"Deliver us, O Lord, from temptations and from the snares of lawless men."

In the evening they began to sing a psalm:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 90:1–16).

Having sung the psalm to the end, the holy soldiers offered prayer to the Lord; after the prayer they again took up psalmody and so remained without sleep until midnight. The leader in the singing was St. Quirion: he proclaimed the verses, and Sts. Candidus and Domnus, with the others, repeated after him. At midnight the holy soldiers heard the voice of the Lord appearing to them:

"Good is the beginning of your will, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Mt. 10:22).

All of them heard this voice of the Lord and were seized with dread, but their fear was dissolved in unearthly joy. And they did not sleep until morning.

In the morning Agricolaus, gathering to himself his friends and counselors, ordered the holy band of forty soldiers to be brought from the prison, and addressed them with this deceitful speech:

"What I shall say to you, I say not flatteringly and not falsely, but in truth itself: our emperor has many soldiers, but all of them cannot compare with you in wisdom, courage or beauty, and they do not enjoy my favor as much as you do; so do not bring it about that my love for you turns into hatred. In your hands, and from you alone, it depends whether you keep my love for you or bring my hatred upon yourselves."

To this St. Candidus answered:

"Cruel flatterer, Agricolaus! Your name[4] accords with your nature."

The voivode repeated:

"Did I not tell you that it is in your power either to keep my love or to arouse my hatred?"

St. Candidus said:

"Since your love or your hatred toward us depends, as you yourself say, on us, we choose hatred, for we too hate you, and we seek mercy only from our God; you, a fierce and cruel man and enemy of our God, do not love us, being lawless and envious, enveloped in the darkness of error and bearing a beastly nature that justifies your savage name."

Enraged by such a bold answer from the saint, the voivode, gnashing his teeth like a lion, ordered fetters to be placed on the holy soldiers and that they be locked in prison; but St. Quirion said to him:

"You have no authority from the emperor to torment us, but can only interrogate us."[5]

Alarmed by such a rebuke made by the holy soldier, Agricolaus ordered that they be led away without rough violence and placed in prison, and that no fetters be put on them; only he commanded the pris-

4. "Agrios" means "wild, savage"; "kolax" means "flatterer."

5. So too St. Apostle Paul, suffering for Christ, demanded of his judges that, in giving vent to their malice, they not trample upon the laws of men and of the state by subjecting him—a Roman citizen—to torture at their own discretion. (Acts 16:37; Acts 22:26–30).

on guard to watch them closely. At that time the voivode was awaiting the arrival of Lysias, a prince who held great powers.

While in prison, the holy soldiers spent days and nights in prayer, in the singing of psalms, and in listening to the instructions of St. Quirion.

"By God's providence," he said among other things, "we, brethren, have become friends in temporary and vain military service; but let us strive not to be separated even for ever. As until now we have lived in unity and of one mind, so let us also accomplish the struggle of martyrdom together: as we were pleasing to the mortal emperor, so let us strive to be most beloved of the immortal King, Christ God."

After seven days, during which the holy soldiers were held in prison, Prince Lysias arrived in that country, and upon arriving in Sebaste he at once turned his attention to the valiant soldiers. On the very next day, appearing together with the voivode Agricolaus in the court, he ordered the holy band of forty soldiers to be brought for torture. On the way to this unrighteous court, the blessed Quirion thus exhorted his fellow-combatants:

"Let us not fear, brethren! Did not God help us in battles when we called upon Him and overcame our enemies? Remember how once it happened that we took part in a great battle, when all the comrades of our regiments took to flight and only we, forty, remained among the enemies; we then offered a tearful prayer to God, and with His help we slew some and drove off others who were wounded, and despite the great multitude of opponents and the severity of the battle, not one of us was wounded. Now three enemies have arrayed themselves against us: Satan, Lysias, and the voivode Agricolaus; or rather, one enemy wages war against us, an enemy unseen; and shall he overcome our band of forty? Let it not be so!... We must now act as we have always acted: let us turn with warm prayer to God! And He will help us, and neither bonds nor torments will harm us. It has always been our rule, entering into battle, to sing a psalm:

'O God, save me by Thy name, and judge me by Thy strength. O God, hear my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth' (Ps. 53:3). So let us, brethren and comrades, do the same now, and God will hear us and help us."

And the holy soldiers sang this psalm the whole way from the prison to the place of judgment. To such a spectacle the people of the whole city gathered.

The band of forty stood for judgment before Lysias and Agricolaus. The prince Lysias, looking at the holy soldiers, said:

"I think these men desire and deserve the highest ranks."

Then he addressed them with this speech:

"Honors and gifts, more than others, you will receive from me, only submit to the imperial command: offer sacrifices to the gods. You are free to choose one of two things: either to bow down to the gods and be granted greater rewards and honors, or, in case of your refusal to do this, to be immediately deprived of military rank and subjected to torments."

To this the holy Candidus answered:

"Take from us not only our military rank, but our very bodies also, for to us there is nothing dearer and nothing more honorable than Christ our God."

Then the haughty prince ordered the saints to be struck on the mouth with stones; but St. Candidus remarked at this:

"Prince of darkness and zealous promoter of lawlessness! Begin yourself to do this, and you shall see vengeance."

Boiling with anger and gnashing his teeth, the voivode said:

"Wicked servants! Why are you so slow in carrying out the prince's command?"

The servants took up stones, but when they began to throw them, they struck not the saints but one another, each striking his fellow. Seeing this, the holy martyrs were still more strengthened in boldness toward the Lord. The enraged prince Lysias himself seized a stone and threw it at one of the saints, but the stone struck Agricolaus in the face and broke his mouth. Then St. Quirion said:

"Our enemies who fight against us have grown weary and been put to shame; truly 'their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken' (Ps. 36:15)."

The voivode, with his broken mouth, said:

"I swear by the gods, some magical power is helping them!"

St. Domnus answered him:

"And I, in the name of Christ, assure you that it is not sorcery but God who helps us, and His power has covered your shameless faces, which spoke untruth against His Son, with shame. Are you not ashamed, madman, a stranger to the truth, filled with the darkness of the diabolical underworld, sower of temptations! You, Agricolaus, are the head of the devil's malice, and the prince who is with you is the tail of his rage; both of you are servants of Satan. But if you are not yet convinced of the divine power present in us from the beginning of the torments to which you have subjected us, then begin other torments."

Some among the servants were found who wished to support their shamed masters:

"Mad enemies of our gods," they said to the holy martyrs, "why do you not wish to offer sacrifice to them?"

St. Quirion answered them:

– We worship the one God and His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and we strive boldly to accomplish our struggle, that, having overcome your flattery, we may receive the crowns of everlasting life.

And Prince Lysias commanded that the holy warriors be led back to prison again, that he might consider what to do with them.

The holy soldiers, shut up in the prison, occupied themselves with psalm-singing.

"Unto Thee I lift up mine eyes," they sang, "O Thou who dwellest in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a handmaid unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look unto the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us" (Ps. 122:1–2).

And after prayer they were a second time granted encouragement from on high: at the sixth hour of the night they heard the voice of the Lord, who appeared to them:

"He that believeth in Me, though he die, yet shall he live" (Jn. 11:25). Take courage and fear not the torments of short duration, for they will soon pass; endure a little while, suffer lawfully, and you shall receive the crowns.

Strengthened by such consolation from Christ God, the holy warriors spent that night rejoicing in spirit.

On the following day the holy warriors were again brought before the impious judges, and again, without hesitation, they declared:

"Do with us whatever you wish; we are Christians, and we do not consent to bow down to idols."

At that moment there was seen beside Agricolaus, in the form of a man holding a sword in his right hand and a serpent in his left, the devil, whispering to the voivode:

"You are mine; press on!"

The tormentors ordered that the forty holy warriors be bound and dragged to a deep lake that lay near the city of Sebaste. It was winter, a strong wind was blowing with a severe frost, and the hour was already drawing toward evening. The holy warriors were set naked in the midst of the lake for the whole night, and a guard was posted to watch them, headed by the chief of the prison. To tempt the holy warriors, a warm bathhouse had been built near the lake, which beckoned the condemned to abandon their endurance of the bitter cold, and promised speedy help to whoever of the company of forty, faltering from the frost, would bend toward idolatry and wish, by leaving the water, to warm himself. In the first hour of the night, when the cold reached its utmost severity, so that the bodies of the saints were growing numb, one of the forty could not bear the struggle; he separated himself from the company of the saints and ran to the bathhouse. But no sooner had he crossed the threshold and felt the warmth than he melted away and fell dead. Seeing such shameful flight, the holy warriors cried out to God with one accord: "Is Thy wrath kindled against the rivers, O Lord? Is Thine indignation against the rivers, or Thy fury against the sea?" (Hab. 3:8). "He that has departed from us has been poured out like water, and his bones are scattered" (Ps. 21:15). "But we will not turn away from Thee; quicken us, and we shall call upon Thy name" (Ps. 79:19).

"Thou, whom all creation praises, whom the great fishes and all the depths glorify, fire and hail, snow and mist and stormy wind (Ps. 148:7–8), who walked upon the sea as upon dry land (Mt. 14:25) and

calmed the raging waves with a motion of Thy hand (Lk. 8:24)! Thou, O Lord, art the same now; Thou who didst hearken to the prayer of Jacob, fleeing from the threats of his brother Esau (Gen. 27:1–46, 28:1–22); who didst bring help to Joseph and deliver him from his affliction (Gen. 39:1–23); who didst hear Moses and grant him power to perform signs and wonders in Egypt before Pharaoh and his courtiers (Ex. 7:1–25, 11:1–10); who didst divide the sea and lead Thy people into the wilderness (Ex. 14:1–31); who didst stretch forth Thy hand at the prayer of Thy holy Apostles, for healing and for the working of signs and wonders by the name of Thy Holy Son Jesus (Acts 4:24–31, 16:25–26) – Thou, O Lord, hear us also: let not the watery deep destroy us, nor the abyss swallow us, for we are utterly impoverished; help us, O God our Saviour, for behold, we stand in the water and our feet are stained with our blood; lighten the burden of our affliction, and tame the savage air, O Lord our God! Upon Thee we rely, and let us not be put to shame; but let all men know that we, calling upon Thee, have been saved."

In the third hour of the night a light shone upon the holy martyrs, like the summer sun at harvest time; it dispelled the cold, melted the ice, and warmed the water. Meanwhile the soldiers entrusted with the watch over the saints had fallen asleep, and only one prison guard remained awake. Hearing that the martyrs were praying to God, he reflected: "What does it mean that the one who ran to the bathhouse melted at once like wax from the heat, while the rest, even in such great cold, remain alive and unharmed?" Struck by the light that illumined the holy martyrs, and wishing to see whence this wondrous light came, he looked upward and saw thirty-nine most bright crowns descending upon the heads of the saints. Pondering why there was no fortieth crown, corresponding to the number of the forty who had been delivered to suffering, he understood that the one who had fled to the bathhouse had been cast out from the company of the saints, and therefore the fortieth crown was lacking. He at once woke the sleeping soldiers, threw off his garments, and, naked before the eyes of all, ran into the lake, crying out: "I too am a Christian!" Joining the host of the holy martyrs, he called upon God:

"O Lord God! I believe in Thee, in whom these also believe; count me among their number and grant that I suffer with these Thy servants; let me too, having passed through the struggle of trial, be worthy of Thee!" And thus the number of the holy martyrs was again made complete – **forty**[6]; the place of the one who had fallen away was taken by the prison guard, who became the holy completion of the fourth decade[7]. His name was Aglaius.

At this wondrous completion of the forty-strong host of holy martyrs, the devil, seeing himself defeated and put to shame, took the form of a man and wept aloud, crying out for all to hear:

"Woe is me! I am overcome by these men; now I am a laughingstock and a reproach to all! I have found neither friends nor like-minded servants to defend my victory! What, then, can I finally do? Nothing more than win over the hearts of the prince and the voivode devoted to me—to persuade them that the bodies of these saints should be burned and their ashes cast into the river, so that nothing whatever of them, not a single remnant, shall remain."

Meanwhile St. Quirion cried out:

"Who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God who workest wonders" (Ps. 76:14–15). Thou, O Master, hast brought it to pass that those who were against us have become with us and for us; Thou hast completed the lack in the fourth decade and put Satan to shame!

6. The number 40 has always been held to be significant and sacred: for 40 days and nights the rain fell in the time of Noah, and the earth was cleansed of the fleshliness of the people before the Flood (Gen. 7:12); for 40 years the Hebrews wandered in the wilderness, and only then entered the promised land (Josh. 5:6); Moses spent 40 days and nights on Sinai and received the tablets of the Law (Ex. 34:28); on the 40th day after birth, the firstborn of the Hebrews were dedicated to God (Lev. 12:2–4); for 40 days and nights the Prophet Elijah journeyed to Mount Horeb and was granted a vision of the Lord in the breath of a gentle wind (3 Kgdms. 19:8); the Lord Jesus Christ Himself fasted for 40 days and nights in the wilderness (Mt. 4:2); and He remained on earth for 40 days after His Resurrection, appearing to His disciples and speaking of the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).

7. The same thing happened here as happened with the Apostles: "Judas went away, and Matthias was appointed in his place" (Acts 1:25–26); a new Paul appeared, who yesterday breathed anger and threats against the disciples of Christ, and today was preaching the Gospel. And he, like the other, received his calling neither from men nor through a man (Gal. 1), believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and was baptized into Him by no one else, but through his own faith—not in water, but in his own blood." (St. Basil the Great, "Homily on the Holy Forty Martyrs.")

And all the martyrs began to sing the psalm: "Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any righteous man" (Ps. 11:2).

Morning came; the impious tormentors came to the lake and, seeing the holy martyrs standing in the water, alive and unharmed by the winter cold, they were amazed, but explained this wondrous sight by some sorcerer's cunning of the passion-bearers. Their amazement increased still more when they saw among the martyrs the prison guard standing with them. They questioned the soldiers appointed to keep watch, asking why and how this had come about. The soldiers answered:

"We fell into a deep sleep during the night, but he, the prison guard, did not sleep the whole night, and suddenly he woke us. On waking we saw a great light shining upon those standing in the water; and this one quickly took off his clothes, threw them down, and rushed into the water and joined those standing there, crying aloud: '**I too am a Christian!**'"

Then the hearts of the tormentors were inflamed with rage; ordering the bound saints to be dragged out onto the shore and thence led to the place of torment in the city, the judges sentenced the holy martyrs to a new torture – their shins were to be broken with hammers.

While this inhuman torture of the saints was being carried out, the pious mother of one of the youngest of them, Melito, drew near the place of torment and, standing beside the sufferers, encouraged them with words to bear the struggle valiantly. Above all she feared lest her young son should be terrified and give way under the torments; looking upon him with love and stretching out her hands to him, she strengthened and comforted him, saying:

"My sweetest son! Endure a little longer and you will be made perfect; do not fear, child, behold, Christ stands before you, helping you!"

The holy martyrs, enduring like despised criminals the terrible agony of their shins being broken (Jn. 19:31), and not weakening in zeal, cried out with spiritual joy in their final moments:

"Our soul has escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are delivered. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 123:7–8).

And, having said "Amen," they all gave up their souls to God, and only one, Melito, comforted by his mother, remained alive, barely breathing. After that the tormentors ordered their servants to place the bodies of the dead saints on carts and carry them off for burning, leaving the young Melito alone in the hope that he would still live. But his pious mother, seeing her one son left in the place of torment, cast off the weakness natural to a woman and, roused to courage, lifted her son onto her shoulders and fearlessly followed the carts on which the bodies of the holy martyrs were carried like sheaves of ripe wheat. When the martyr borne by his mother breathed his last, rejoicing in the Lord, his body was placed by his mother's own hands upon the cart beside the bodies of his fellow-contestants[1786]. When the bodies of the holy martyrs were brought to the place of burning near the river, the soldiers, by order of the impious judges, gathered a great quantity of logs and brushwood, prepared a very large pyre, placed the bodies of the saints upon it, and set it alight. The pyre burned down, and only the bones of the martyrs remained. But the malice of the tormentors was not appeased!

“If we leave these bones as they are,” they reasoned among themselves, “the Christians will take them and fill the whole world with them, breaking them apart and preserving them in their memory; therefore let us cast them into the river, that not even their dust may remain.”

And the remains of the holy relics were cast into the river, that the memory of the valiant Passion-bearers might be utterly destroyed. But the Lord, “who keepeth all the bones of His saints” (Ps. 33:21), did not permit even one particle of them to perish in the water, but all were preserved whole. After three days the holy Martyrs appeared to the bishop of the city of Sebaste, the blessed Peter, and said to him:

“Come by night and bring us out of the river.”

The blessed bishop summoned devout men from among his clergy, and in the dark of night went with them to the riverbank. And lo, a wondrous sight appeared before their eyes: the bones of the saints shone in the water like stars, and even the places in the river where their smallest particles lay were bright. Having gathered every bone of

the saints, the bishop placed them in an honored place. Thus those who suffered for Christ and were crowned by Him shine like luminaries in the world.[8]

They believed in God, confessed Christ, did not resist the Holy Spirit, and were glorified by the holy Life-giving Trinity, leaving the memory of their struggle for the instruction and salvation of all who believe in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The names of the forty holy Martyrs are these: Quirion (Quirius), Candidus, Domnus, Hesychius, Heraclius, Smaragdus, Eunoicus (Eunicus), Valens (Ual), Vivian, Claudius, Priscus, Theodulus, Eutychius, John, Xanthius, Ilian, Sisinius, Aggius, Aftius, Flavius, Acacius, Ecdicius (Ecdit), Lysimachus, Alexander, Ilius, Gorgonius, Theophilus, Domitian, Gaius, Leontius, Athanasius, Cyril, Sacerdon, Nicholas, Valerius, Philoctimon, Severian, Hudion, Melito, and Aglaius.

The forty holy Martyrs were taken to suffer for Christ on the 26th day of the month of February, and they gave their souls to the Lord on the ninth day of the month of March,[9] when the pagan Licinius still ruled the empire—or, rather, when our Lord Jesus Christ already reigned. To Him be glory, honor, and worship, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 1:

O most honored Passion-bearers, forty warriors of Christ,
steadfast wielders of arms: through fire and water ye passed, and

8. The memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs in all the most ancient calendars of the East and West is counted among the most venerated feasts and commemorations of the saints (see the Complete Menologion of the East by Archimandrite Sergius, vol. 1, pp. 17–19; vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 75). According to the Typicon, two canons are included in their service; on the day of their memory the strictness of the fast is relaxed: wine and even oil are permitted, and the service is prescribed to be always and invariably performed in the order of the service of the Forerunner, with the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

9. The holy martyrs suffered in 320, and in 323 the Emperor Constantine became sole ruler of the whole Roman Empire. The commemoration of the Forty Martyrs is celebrated on 9 March, but according to the Typicon it is sometimes transferred to other days, namely: if it falls on any day of the *first week* of the Great Lent, the service to the martyrs is performed on Saturday; if it falls on a Wednesday of the Cross-veneration week, the service is performed on the Tuesday of the same week; likewise, if it falls on a Thursday of the Great Canon, the service is performed on the Tuesday of the same fifth week; but if it falls on a Saturday of the Akathist, it is transferred to the Sunday of the same fifth week of the fast.

became fellow citizens with the Angels. With them pray ye to Christ for those who praise you in faith. Glory to Him Who gave you strength; glory to Him Who crowned you; glory to Him Who through you granteth healing to all.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Urpasian

Страдание святого мученика Урпасиана

When the impious Maximian[10] began to reign in the Roman Empire, being an implacable punisher of those who failed to honor the pagan gods, he subjected to torture the Christians who lived in the regions around Nicomedia,[11] and burned with fury against the rest, who dwelt in all the other parts of the empire, like a great flame. Once, having assembled his like-minded companions and, so to speak, fellow soldiers, as well as all the dignitaries under his authority, he spoke to them in a loud voice:

"If any of you has given himself over to the impious faith and worship of the God of the Christians, and does not wish with due zeal to serve our renowned gods, nor to worship them and address prayers to them, let him at once, before all, remove his belt[12] and depart from our court and our city; for the inhabitants of this city have been accustomed from the time of their ancestors to serve the gods, and not the One God Who was crucified."

These words plainly showed the contempt with which the lawless emperor regarded the Christian faith. Therefore all who believed in Christ were then seized with fear and dread. Some of them sincerely promised the emperor to serve the gods; others did so only to escape

10. Here is meant Maximian Galerius, son-in-law and co-ruler of Diocletian in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. At his insistence, in 303 Diocletian issued a general law against the Christians; but even before the issuing of this law Galerius had persecuted the Christians privately: he removed them from his court, expelled them from military service, and so on.

11. Nicomedia was the capital of the eastern empire and the residence of the Emperor Diocletian; a magnificent city on the shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) in the northwestern Asia Minor region of Bithynia.

12. In the Roman Empire the belt served as a special distinguishing mark of a military commander.

torture; but those who had true love for God, caring nothing for their bodies, answered the tormentor by removing their belts and departing from him. At that time the wise and stout-hearted Urpasian, one of the emperor's dignitaries, burned with zeal for God, approached the lawless emperor and, casting down before him, in the sight of all, his mantle and belt, said:

"Emperor, since from this day I am a soldier of the heavenly and immortal King, the Lord Jesus Christ, my God, take back the tokens of honor and glory that you gave me, for this honor and glory are fleeting, and I have no further need of them."

The words of Urpasian were so unexpected to Maximian that, when he heard them, his face changed, and for a long time he could not utter a word. Then he wiped his face and, glaring furiously at the holy Martyr, roared like a wild beast, saying:

"Hang this contemptible man at once, and beat his body with ox sinews."

The emperor's command was immediately carried out. As the holy Martyr was subjected to prolonged and merciless torture, he turned his gaze toward heaven and prayed, feeling no pain. After this the tormentor ordered that the saint be taken down from the tree, and said to those standing by:

"Lock this traitor in a dark dungeon until I devise what death to put him to."

In prison the holy Martyr rejoiced and was glad, offering his prayers to the Lord. Meanwhile Maximian ordered a certain instrument of torture to be brought and prepared: an iron cage. The saint was brought out of prison and placed in this cage, suspended from its top. When the emperor's command had been carried out and St. Urpasian was hanging there, the cruel tormentor ordered torches to be lit and his body to be scorched with them on every side. While this was being done, the holy Martyr of Christ, hanging within the cage, gave himself to prayer. His tormentors burned him with torches until his whole body dripped down to the earth, melted like wax and mingled with the dust of the ground, while his bones were consumed by fire and became like the dust on a threshing floor. As the holy Martyr was thus burned, im-

mersed in prayer, the air was filled with the fragrance of myrrh; at last his holy soul, in the form of a bright star, as some of the faithful were privileged to see, ascended to God.[13] Then the fierce and hard-hearted emperor, still burning with anger against the holy Martyr, ordered that the earth upon which his body had dripped, and where the dust of his bones lay, be carefully gathered up and cast into the sea in his presence. All this took place in the city of Nicomedia.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Caesarius

Память святого Кесария

St. Caesarius, the brother of St. Gregory the Theologian, was a friend of Emperor Constantius and the chief physician at the court in Constantinople. In 368, during an earthquake in Nicaea, he was miraculously saved from beneath the ruins. Shaken by this event, St. Caesarius, at the urging of St. Gregory, renounced the world and dedicated himself to the service of God. But soon after his Baptism he fell ill and died.

NOTES

1786. St. Ephraim the Syrian, in his *Panegyric on the Forty Martyrs*, puts into the mouth of the blessed mother of one of the martyrs this touching address: "Rest a little while, my son, upon the chariot; mingle thy blood with the blood of those most honorable; lie down for a moment with them, that together with them thou mayest attain the heavenly abode. Go with them into the sensible fire, that with them thou mayest be clothed in the true light; enter with them into the crucible, that with them thou mayest enter in purified as gold. I know from what storm ye have been saved, and into what haven ye are hastening. I know that ye are going to the Heavenly Father... ye hasten to occupy the country whence sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled, where there is no grief, no corruption, no gnawing envy, no evil enemy. Why, my son, did I not die together with you? Why am I not included in this bright triumph of yours, and cannot enjoy it with you? Is it because I am sinful and worthy of tears and extreme regret?... No, it is not for this reason that I do not go with you, but because you do not require completion: you have become for God one Forty, called by tens and tens to the Gospel feast (Mt. 25:1–13)... Therefore, my son, since thou hast been deemed worthy of such glory,

13. St. Martyr Urpasian died around 295.

pray for me to the Savior Christ, when He shall say to you: 'Come, inherit the Kingdom which I have prepared for you' (Mt. 25:34). Remember me together with thy equals in honor, and beg of the Father of lights a reward for me, that as thy flesh breathed out upon me, so the bounties of Christ may breathe upon me, and as thy blood stained my rags, so the mercy of the Lord may bedew me, and as I have passed this one course with thee, so I may attain together with thee the abode of the saints, that I too with you may sing and say: 'There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beside Thee; neither is there any rock like our God' (1 Kgdms. 2:2). He has exalted the horn of His faithful servants and put their enemies to shame. To Him belongs glory forever."



THE TENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 10

10 марта

New Calendar March 10 · Old Calendar March 23 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Quadratus and Those with Him

Страдание святого мученика Кодрата и прочих с ним

The Holy Martyr Quadratus was born and raised in the following circumstances. During the cruel persecution of Christians by impious tsars and princes, the Confessors of Christ were subjected to dreadful tortures and violent death; therefore many believers, fearing unbearable torments, left their cities, dwellings and property. Fleeing, they hid in mountains and deserts, in order to preserve the Holy Faith in Christ unharmed, choosing rather to live with wild beasts than with impious idolaters.

In those grievous times a pious woman named Rufina, fleeing from Corinth[1] out of fear of torments, took refuge in the desert and hid there in impassable places. During her flight from the city Rufina was with child, and when the due time came she gave birth in the desert to a male infant; then, having lived only a few days, she died. God, who gives food to all flesh, who opens His hand and satisfies every living thing (Ps. 103:27–28), did not forsake the orphaned infant, but appeared to him as father and mother, teacher and provider. By the command of Almighty God a cloud descended from on high, and spreading itself over the earth distilled sweet dew upon the infant's lips. Thus the clouds nourished the infant as it were with milk or honey, until he grew and began to feed himself on the wild grains of the desert. Like St. John the Baptist, the infant lived in the desert, guarded by God and instructed and taught the knowledge of God (Lk. 1:80) by the Holy Spir-

1. Corinth, the chief city of Achaia, enlightened by the Apostle Paul.

it. Already in his youth he was found by believing people, who brought him into the city, where he learned to read books and acquired the art of healing. Yet he healed diseases not so much by his learning as by the grace given him from above. Accustomed from childhood to the silence of the desert, he especially strove to withdraw from worldly bustle: loving solitude, he spent most of his life in mountains and deserts, given over to contemplation of God. When, however, for the satisfaction of his needs, he came into the city, he showed innumerable blessings to all, healing bodily ailments and, by the word of God, curing the sicknesses of the soul. But he did not remain long in the city, hastening back to the desert solitude he loved, and there he drew near to old age. Here, into the desert, came to him those who loved him in Christ, desiring to delight in the sight of his radiant face and to receive instruction from his God-inspired conversations; such were Cyprian, Dionysius and Anectus, Paul and Crescens, who together with him also suffered for Christ.

Their sufferings came about in this way. By the command of the impious Roman emperor Decius,[2] the eparch Jason came to Corinth to torment and slay Christians. Seizing Christians, he cast them into prison. At this time St. Quadratus was seized together with his blessed friends Cyprian, Dionysius, Anectus, Paul and Crescens; they were thrown into prison together with many Christians who were already there in bonds. After some time Jason sat in the impious tribunal and ordered the Christians to be brought out of the prison and presented to him for interrogation. Among them the eldest was St. Quadratus: like a commander he walked at the head of the chosen host of Christ, desiring to answer the tormentor fearlessly on behalf of all. The tormentor addressed the saint with these words:

"Quadratus! What has made you so mad that you wish of your own accord to surrender yourself to savage torments? And relying on what do you fearlessly choose chains and prison, forfeiting your homeland and friends? Why do you not obey the imperial laws, so that, bowing down to the gods, you may enjoy with us the pleasures of this life?"

2. Emperor Decius governed the Roman Empire from 249–251 A.D. He was one of the most cruel persecutors of Christians.

"No one," answered St. Quadratus, "who has sound reason will renounce this life. But since God has granted this life, it is necessary to love the Giver more than the gift, to offer thanksgiving to the great Benefactor, offering Him praises, leading a virtuous life, and everywhere spreading His glory through our sufferings. One must not love this brief life so much as, out of fear of losing it, to render to idols the honor due to the one God alone! For what other God can we regard as truly perfect, except He who from the beginning has enriched us with the eternal gifts of His love? And in these great gifts, whom can we know, if not Christ the Savior Himself? And whom can we truly call Savior, if not Jesus, who suffered torments and death for us? And we, who wish to be virtuous, must first of all endure torments for the true faith and piety, and in no wise fall away from them. The intention of those who seek to beguile and seduce the true zealots of the Divine mysteries is evil, and their prayer is sinful. Each must choose what is better. One must take care not to hasten after people who bear only the image of virtue, but must look into their very deeds—whether they are not wicked and bring great fear of perdition. Know that we, fulfilling the precepts of our fathers, are directed toward what is best; therefore do not try by hostile actions to persuade us that, turning aside from our path, we should abandon Christ. For us the best counselor is the truth of God, and the laws of piety have great power of persuasion; agreeing among themselves, they unite us with God. Consider also this: that by the universal law of nature all must die, and no one can be free from this law. When the hour of death comes, all unjust deeds and human thoughts perish, and fleeting glory turns to dust. On the contrary, deeds born of a good life bring to those who perform them an eternal glory which outlives their death. So we too, firmly resolved not to abandon our purpose of suffering bravely for Christ, will leave an example for those who wish fully to imitate us. For those who think rightly and believe truly think only of this: to have the holy examples of a better life, to imitate them, and thereby to advance toward perfection."

To these words Jason said to the saint:

"Quadratus! If you honor that God, by whose benefactions you have enjoyed from earliest youth, then you do well in being grateful. But see

that, in preaching about Christ as a man, you do not diminish the divine nature."

St. Quadratus answered the eparch:

"If you wish, laying aside anger and exchanging fury for gentleness, to hear me, then although it is not fitting to speak on such great matters, and I myself am little able to do so, nevertheless I will tell you something."

"Set forth then," proposed the eparch, "as clearly as you can, your teaching about Christ."

St. Quadratus answered him:

The beginning of the creation of the world God established in His own good pleasure: He created the world by the Word and confirmed it by the power of the Holy Spirit. The One who willed the existence of the world is the Father; the Word who created it is the Son; and the Holy Spirit who confirmed it. When the beautiful world had been created, destined by the Creator for a definite purpose, the Creator was pleased that someone should enjoy the good things He had made and glorify Him in thanksgiving. Therefore He created the human race, that to it He might hand over all that is visible. Breathing the breath of life into the first man, He brought him into Paradise, the place of ineffable delights. The man, together with the helpmate created for him, beholding the manifold variety of the most beautiful world, rejoiced, and received from God the authority to enjoy the gardens of Paradise. Our forefathers, reflecting on the great purpose for which God had placed them in Paradise, resolved that they should worthily give thanks to the Creator and Benefactor, and began to live a virtuous life, keeping the commandment given them by God, not to eat of one tree. But the crafty seducer, the devil, moved by rage, bearing flattery on his lips and malice within, poured out upon the forefathers all the poison of his malice, desiring to deprive them of the life of Paradise: by ruining their honor, he implanted in them a passionate desire to break the commandment of God, and that with their own consent to his crafty counsel. As a result, those who lived in Paradise with God fell away from the grace of God and lost Paradise, being expelled from it. From this time, those who had formerly been partakers of the glory of God, as if bound by

the chains of sin, began to suffer distress, serving empty desires. But God had compassion on His creature and looked graciously upon human weakness; He was pleased, concealing His Divinity by the flesh He had assumed, to come to us wretched and perishing, that He might free us from the chains of the enemy, bring us out into liberty from the kingdom of death enslaved to it, and deliver us from perdition. Therefore He willed that His Word, dwelling *at the end of the years* (Gal. 4:4) in the most pure womb of the Theotokos, the Virgin, should through the Incarnation clothe Himself in the whole man. The most pure Virgin, having conceived of the Holy Spirit, bore God in the flesh. And thus God was truly seen in the flesh with human eyes, whom we name Christ. And He manifested Himself to men as the True God, truly clothed from the Virgin in the whole man, rising against the power of the enemy and extending the bounds of His heavenly kingdom. He abolished the laws of death and by Divine power broke its bonds, despoiled hell, and led out from it the forefathers with the multitude of men descended from them; and as the first to deliver all peoples and lands from perdition, He was called the Savior. Having opened the treasures of His mercy, He desired that they be common to all. Having freed all from the seduction of the tormentor, He keeps His inheritance free and unharmed from perdition. Nothing is hidden from Him: neither the beginning of our birth, nor the span of our life, nor the mortal end, nor anything else unknown; but all that is ordained by the law of the Father is known and clear to the Son, who carries out His will. He is that Christ whom we preach. He is the One who has cared for the salvation of the human race. Being always and everywhere, He gives us the unfailing riches of His goodness, is unfailingly present with those who serve Him, and helps them.

The eparch, although he marveled at the words of St. Quadratus, nevertheless, unwilling to believe the truth revealed, said:

"It seems to me, Quadratus, that you speak falsehood about lofty matters, for you attribute to God purely human properties, asserting that the womb of the Virgin could contain Him, and that she who bore Christ in her womb gave birth to Him. And so you maintain that one

God was seen on earth bearing a human body, while another, the True God, was somewhere else."

St. Quadratus answered:

"Impious men should not try to probe the mysteries of piety, for the great matter of their knowledge is not easily attained by everyone, and we do not permit unbelievers to penetrate them. The Son of God voluntarily humbled Himself, condescending to the form of a servant, and, being God, was pleased to become man, that He might rescue us from slavery to the devil. You, as a man full of unbelief and godlessness, cannot understand this; but know that you will not tear us away from Christ either by cunning deceit or by fierce threats."

Then the eparch ordered the faithful servant of Christ to be stripped and beaten without mercy with a rod, which the merciless executioners carried out with cruelty. But the holy martyr bore the blows bravely, and during them said to the tyrant:

"Do you not know, eparch, that everything extorted by force is contrary to freedom and is not fit for persuasion? One who persuades in this way shows himself to be a violator, while one who counsels and exhorts appears gentle and humane. Therefore you too, by torments urging us to worship idols, do not hope by violence to draw us to your impiety, so that out of fear we should cast off piety. Filled with love for Christ, we pay no heed either to flattering caresses or to the tortures which you may devise; Christ eases all sorrows and sicknesses by the hope of recompense, strengthens us not to obey the adversary, and makes us invincible and steadfast in the contest of suffering."

Still more enraged by these words, the tyrant ordered the holy man to be hung head downward, his body to be scraped with iron claws, and the passion-bearer to be scorched, a fire being kindled beneath him. But he, bearing everything with courage, remained unshaken.

After this the eparch addressed flattering words to St. Cyprian, trying to win him over to agreement with himself. But St. Cyprian, though still young, nevertheless fearlessly prepared himself for the torments. St. Quadratus said to him and to the others who were preparing with him for the torments and were already taking off their garments:

"O my friends and fellow-warriors! Consider how many good things have been prepared for you by the Lord: for piety, honor; for martyrdom, glorification; and above all do not forget that you are becoming worthy of the mercy of Jesus Christ, who will soon manifest to you His help from on high. Therefore it is now incumbent upon us to show unshaken faith in Christ God. Now the time of struggle has come, so fulfill without hesitation the law of love, laying down your soul for Him whom you love. You must show yourselves as an example to all who wish to be granted the suffering contest for Christ. Serve by your steadfast endurance, to the wonder of all who look upon you. Now the true distinction between the good and the wicked is revealed. Now special care must be taken to preserve piety, lest any discord arise in the faith: hold to one faith and one confession, for soon you will stand before God at the Last Judgment. Do not turn aside from the path of virtue, as those who are soon to pass over to Christ, having finished their course. Confess the Good God with a good heart; spare not the flower of your youth, since you are about to pass soon into life that does not grow old. Consider that *the end is near, even at the doors* (Mt. 24:33), and that being young, you can more easily, as having bodily strength, endure torments for Christ God. Therefore boldly give yourselves up to torments and bear them manfully: having conquered the enemy, you will receive glorification from the Lord and will be numbered in heaven among the holy martyrs."

These words of St. Quadratus, addressed to the band, filled the tyrant with rage: at once he ordered St. Cyprian, stripped and hung like Quadratus, to be beaten, scraped, and burned with fire. After them he subjected Dionysius, Anectus, Paul, and finally Crescens to the same torments. Put to shame and defeated by them, the tyrant first condemned them to be torn by wild beasts. When the beasts did not touch the holy martyrs, he condemned them to be beheaded with the sword, first ordering them to be dragged through the city by the feet. While this was taking place, an innumerable crowd of people, and especially children, struck the saints with sticks and stones until they were dragged outside the city to the place appointed for execution. Here the saints, having asked for themselves a little time, prayed fervently to the

Lord, then bowed their honorable heads beneath the sword, and were beheaded on the tenth day of the month of March. In the place where the earth was reddened with the honorable blood of the holy martyrs, a pure spring of water appeared, as a reminder to Corinth of the saints' suffering. After the slaying of the six martyrs, Quadratus, Cyprian, Dionysius, Anectus, Paul, and Crescens, the other Christians who had been seized were also tormented and destroyed in various ways. Another Dionysius was stabbed with a knife, and Victorinus, Victor, and Nicephorus (after Tertius had already become the successor of the eparch Jason) were put into a stone mortar and pounded in it. Claudius died after his hands and feet were cut off; Diodorus threw himself into the pyre prepared for him, and in it, as in a bright chamber, he rested in peace. Serapion was beheaded, Papias was cast into the sea. Also Leonidas, having suffered terrible and manifold torments from the eparch Venustus, who succeeded Tertius, was drowned in the sea.

Holy women also resolved to face torments for Christ, imitating St. Quadratus and keeping in their hearts his instructions: Charissa, Nunechia, Basilissa, Nika, Gali, Galina, Theodora, and many other women, as well as men. Some of them departed to the Lord, being beheaded with the sword; others were drowned in the waters or put to death by other tortures. All of them, together with their leader and teacher St. Quadratus, were numbered among the choir of martyrs, receiving the crowns of victory from the right hand of Christ God, to Whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Quadratus of Nicomedia, and with him the Holy Martyrs Satorinus and Rufinus, and others

Страдание святого мученика Кодрата Никомидийского и с ним святых мучеников Саторина и Руфина и прочих

In the times of the impious Roman emperor Decius[3] and his successor Valerian[4] (when St. Quadratus of Corinth also suffered with

his companions), Christians were seized from various cities and villages and brought to Nicomedia, a city in Bithynia,[1797] where they were kept in prison. Among the Christians living in Nicomedia itself there spread then a great fear, especially because the emperor Decius himself was drawing near to those regions, for he was already in Caesarea.[5] Therefore many of the Christians, hiding from the hands of the tormentors, fled to the mountains and deserts, while others boldly remained in their homes, awaiting the hour in which they might be granted to glorify the Lord by some kind of torment.

Among such was St. Quadratus, of whom our account speaks. He was distinguished by beauty, of noble birth, rich, pious, and endowed with the gift of eloquence. By distributing money to the prison guards and soldiers, he had unhindered access to the prison; here St. Quadratus ministered to the brethren of the faith who were held in chains, bringing each one what he needed. He besought them with entreaties to be courageous, not to heed the torments they endured out of love for Christ God, who was preparing for them an eternal recompense in His Heavenly Kingdom.

The day of judgment came. The proconsul[6] Perennius, who had come to Nicomedia by the emperor's command, sat in the presence of the people on the judgment seat and ordered all the prisoners to be brought before him for interrogation. When they had been brought, the chief of the prison (commentarisius) said to the proconsul:

"My lord! By the command of your authority, a crowd of lawless Christians, who until this day have been held in the prison, now stands

3. Emperor Decius governed the Roman Empire from 249–251 A.D.; he was one of the most cruel persecutors of Christians.

5. Caesarea was situated on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The Apostle Paul, during his journeys, was several times in this city (Acts 9:29–30; Acts 18:28; Acts 21:8) and spent two years here as a prisoner (Acts 23:33; Acts 24:27; Acts 26:4 ff.). In this city lived the centurion Cornelius, whom the Apostle Peter converted to Christ (Acts 10:1; Acts 10 ff.); here also lived the Apostle Philip (Acts 21:8). Here too died Herod Agrippa, struck down by an Angel and eaten by worms. Originally Caesarea was called the city or tower of Strato. The city was rebuilt by Herod the Great, who named it Caesarea in honor of the emperor Augustus (Caesar — in Latin, "cut," "hewn").

6. *Anthypatos* is a Greek word meaning proconsul. This is the name of a Roman state office (the ruler of a province, that is, of a region).

before you at the tribunal!" Then the proconsul said to the servants of God:

"Let each of you state his name, rank, family, and place of origin."

Blessed Quadratus also came to witness the interrogation of the Christians; noticing that some of the Christians had lost heart and grown pale from fear, he feared lest one of them, unable even to bear the thought of torments, might renounce Christ. Therefore, standing behind all, St. Quadratus said in a loud voice:

"We are called Christians; by calling and station we are servants of the invisible God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and our city and fatherland is heaven, where God settles those who hope in Him. Do you hear this, proconsul?"

The proconsul was amazed, almost to the point of terror, at the boldness of St. Quadratus, and said to the servants:

"Seize this fool and bring him closer to me."

Hearing the proconsul's words, blessed Quadratus, pushing through the crowd, hastily came up himself and stood before the face of the proconsul, while all turned their gaze upon him. Making the sign of the cross over himself, St. Quadratus said to the proconsul:

"Behold, I myself have come to you of my own will and not under compulsion, to give answer on behalf of my brethren and to stand against the devil. Therefore, quickly carry out what you desire, and having tested our courage, be convinced that we are the invincible soldiers of Christ!"

"Madman!" said the proconsul. "First declare your name and family."

"I have already told you," answered the saint, "that I am a Christian, and my brethren are servants of Christ; our name and nobility consist in being called and being servants of Christ."

"Listen to me, friend," continued the proconsul, "I will report about you to the emperor, and he will appoint you a voivode, of course, if you offer sacrifice to our gods."

"Proconsul," answered the saint, "do not err, affirming that there are many gods: 'but to us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things' (1 Cor. 8:6)."

"There are many gods," continued the proconsul, "but at present the emperor has commanded sacrifices to be offered only to the twelve[7] gods, to whom you too must bow down."

"There ought not to be many rulers," cried out St. Quadratus in a loud voice, "there is One Lord, One King and God, our Lord Jesus Christ!"

"Have you not heard," continued the proconsul, "what Homer[8] says of Poseidon[9] (Neptune): 'the father of the gods brought down the clouds, stirred up the winds, covered the sky, and thundered terribly, because Poseidon had risen to seize the earth,' and so on. So do you hear of the power of Poseidon?"

"Does Homer and the others like him tell the truth about your gods or not?" asked blessed Quadratus.

"They tell the truth," answered the proconsul.

"If they tell the truth," continued the saint, "do they not then relate that your gods are adulterers, insatiable and shameless lechers, who committed unnatural abominations? I am truly ashamed for you, that you worship such gods, whose evil deeds you yourselves judge in men convicted of them! Thus you judge those guilty of shameful deeds, and at the same time you consider as gods those who commit far greater lawlessness. Should you not rather condemn and punish the gods for

7. According to the conception of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the higher or chief gods dwelt in the airy space between the earth and the heavens, and their abode was in magnificent palaces on the summit of Mount Olympus in Greece. Hence these gods, twelve in number, are also called the Olympian gods. The gods are: Zeus (Jupiter), Hera (Juno), Poseidon (Neptune), Demeter (Ceres), Apollo (Apollo), Artemis (Diana), Hephaestus (Vulcan), Pallas-Athena (Minerva), Ares (Mars), Aphrodite (Venus), Hermes (Mercury), and Hestia (Vesta).

8. A famous singer of antiquity, who lived at the end of the tenth or the beginning of the ninth century B.C. The ancients depicted Homer as a blind old man. For this reason some derived the very name of Homer from a word meaning "sightless." To him are attributed the epic works the Iliad and the Odyssey, of which the first describes the events of the tenth year of the Trojan War (1184 B.C.), occurring during fifty-one days, "the wrath of Achilles" (the hero of the war) and its consequences, while the second, the Odyssey, relates various episodes from the wanderings of one of the heroes of the war, the king of the island of Ithaca (in the Mediterranean Sea), Odysseus, from the destruction of Troy, and embraces a short span of time of forty days.

9. Poseidon was the son of Cronus and Rhea, the brother of Zeus, with whom the latter divided his dominion by lot. To Poseidon fell as his portion the sea, with which was inseparably joined the principal dominion over the winds and the power to produce earthquakes, for which reason Poseidon was called the Earth-Shaker. Poseidon was depicted as a gloomy old man with a large beard and with a trident in his hand.

their so many and so great disorders? You do not spare men who transgress the law, yet you honor and praise gods who acted lawlessly; such gods of yours are by right not gods, but frenzied dead debauchees!"

To these words of the saint the proconsul said:

"Since you have begun to condemn the gods, I fear that the emperor may be angry with me, for in my long-suffering I have permitted you to revile our gods with your tongue. Therefore change your way of thinking quickly, lest the hands of the tormentors seize you at once!"

"My resolve," continued St. Quadratus, "no one can take from me: neither you, nor your emperor, nor even your father, Satan himself."

Enraged, the proconsul ordered the saint's clothing to be removed, had him laid naked on the ground, and beaten with sinews, with the words: "Tell your name." But the saint was silent and answered not a word. Then the proconsul began to question those standing around about the holy martyr: who he was and what his name was? Those who knew the saint answered the proconsul that the martyr was of noble family and his name was Quadratus. Then the proconsul said to the executioners:

"Spare him and release him!"

When the saint had thus been freed from the torments and clothed, the tormentor called him closer and asked:

"What have you done to yourself and to us, not informing us of your high birth? For through ignorance of your noble origin we have done you dishonor, and you yourself have brought reproach upon yourself and your family. And why, considering your noble family as nothing, have you joined the senseless Christian faith?"

"I would rather be at the threshold in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps. 83:11), answered the saint.

"Submit to me," continued the tormentor-proconsul, "and offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you do not die as a criminal! Have you not heard of the command of the emperor and of all his counselors, by which they decreed that not one Christian should live on earth, and freed from the Christian error many good and wonderful men?"

"Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the assembly of cor-

rupters" (Ps. 1:1), not enticed by the allurements of this vain world; but those who were seduced and obeyed you will perish like dust driven by the wind from the face of the earth (Ps. 1:4), and have already perished!

Enticing St. Quadratus, the proconsul spoke seductive words to him with tears and sighs; at last he said:

"Quadratus, by choosing death of your own will, do not deprive yourself of this light so dear to men, do not deprive yourself of this sweet life."

At these words the seducer wiped his face with a handkerchief.

"Ravening dog!" answered the holy martyr to the proconsul. "Do not think by serpent's guile and feigned tears to seduce me! You will by no means catch me, a servant of God!"

With the proconsul Perennius was the general Maximian. He said to the saint:

"Ill-disposed man! My most honorable lord, the proconsul, pities you, and you insult him."

The saint answered:

"Let him, if he was born to perish, weep for himself and for the hour of his birth; but why do you reproach us? If the proconsul is conducting the judgment, who are you, speaking at the trial before him? For us one judge is sufficient; but if you too desire to pronounce judgment upon us, may our Lord Jesus Christ destroy you!"

After this the chief of the prison said to the proconsul:

"Master! I swear by your power that if you allow him to speak boldly, he will presume after this to utter insults and blasphemies even against the emperors themselves, and we will be exposed to no small danger!"

"Truly," answered the saint, "the Holy Scripture says: 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed (Christ)' (Ps. 2:1–2). And so now Christ is condemned by senseless men and suffers in His members, such as the faithful servants of Christ."

"Strip this wretch," said the proconsul, addressing the servants, "and beat him more severely than the first, until he obeys the laws of the emperor and worships the gods!"

During the second beating, St. Quadratus said:

"Glory to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that for Thy holy Name's sake Thou hast vouchsafed that I, Thy sinful and unworthy servant, should suffer, that I might be numbered among Thy beloved servants. I thank Thee and beseech Thee: fill me with Thy Holy Spirit, instruct me, and grant me strength to preserve my faith unwavering; enlighten me with Thy wisdom, that the lawless may not overcome me. Be my helper, O my Master! Now is the time for Thy help; now is the hour of Thy intercession! Strengthen me, that through Thy servant Thy holy name may be glorified! Bring me to Thy heavenly Father and present me before Him, saying: 'This one also is Thy servant!' Yea, Lord Jesus Christ! Help me to accomplish my struggle successfully!"

Thus the saint prayed, while the executioners who beat him, overcome by weariness, changed places five times—for so long was the saint beaten! From the cruel blows the blessed martyr's back swelled to the length of a cubit,[10] blood flowed in streams, and his flesh fell away from his bones.

"Though now," asked the proconsul, "do you believe in our gods, Codratus?"

"The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed" (Ps. 2:2).

"Their idols are silver and gold, the works of men's hands," the saint answered. "They have mouths, but they speak not.... Let those who make them and all who trust in them become like them" (Ps. 113:12–13).

"By addressing us in unintelligible speech, do you think," said the proconsul, "to hide your blasphemy against the gods?"

"To you, blinded madman," the saint replied, "the bright truth appears dark, while the darkness—the delusions of this age—seems light to you! Hear me, then, as I speak to you in the words of the holy fath-

10. *Cubit* — the forearm, a measure from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. The Biblical cubit is 10 1/2 vershoks.

ers. Know that I will not sacrifice to your gods, nor obey the command of the emperor and his counsellors. Therefore, if you wish to torment me, carry out your will, and thereby send me the sooner before the King of Heaven!"

"I swear by the gods," said the tormentor, "that I will not spare you, but with astonishing torments and a cruel death I will destroy you, wretch!"

At sunset the saint was released from his torments and led with the other Christians to prison. The proconsul ordered that small nails be strewn beneath the martyr's back, that a huge stone be laid upon his chest, that his feet be fastened in stocks,[11] and that his whole body be bound in heavy iron. The saint was left in this condition for many days, courageously enduring such grievous torments as no man could suffer and remain alive; but the almighty right hand of Christ strengthened the sufferer, to the glory of His divine might.

After a long time the proconsul Perennius decided to set out for Nicaea,[12] and ordered the imprisoned Christians, together with St. Codratus, to be taken along. At Nicaea the proconsul was offering sacrifice to demons in a pagan temple, and ordered the Christians to be brought there also, to compel them to do likewise. When the servants of Christ were brought to the demonic temple, St. Codratus prevailed upon the soldiers to take him inside first, to the proconsul. By the power of Christ, after enduring grievous torments, St. Codratus was well and unharmed; and as he walked ahead of the company of Christians, his face shone, revealing not only bodily strength and vigor, but

11. This name designated an instrument used to prevent the escape of criminals. It consisted of the following. Usually a thick log was taken and split in two with wedges; two small hollows were cut in both halves to receive the feet; having placed the criminal's feet in them, the wood was joined together, then holes were bored at both ends and firmly nailed shut with wedges; in an improved form both ends were locked with padlocks, and sometimes the ends were simply bound with cords.

12. Nicaea, the chief city of Antioch, in which were held the first and seventh Ecumenical Councils: the first in 325 under Constantine the Great, presided over by Eustathius, Archbishop of Antioch; the council condemned Arius, composed the Symbol of Faith up to the eighth article, established the time of Pascha, established the primacy of the bishops of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, and issued 20 canons of the Church; the seventh Ecumenical Council was in 787 under the Empress Irene, presided over by the Patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople; it condemned the iconoclasts and, in 22 canons, confirmed the church order.

also courage of soul. When St. Codratus was brought into the shrine before the others, he amazed the tormentor. Terror seized the proconsul when he saw that the saint was sound in body and cheerful in countenance.

"Offer sacrifice to the gods!" commanded the proconsul.

"I am a servant of Jesus Christ," the saint replied, "and I offer myself as a sacrifice to Him; but may your gods, who created neither heaven nor earth, perish!"

"Submit to the laws of the emperor, and not to those of Christ," the proconsul continued.

"I submit to the laws of the King of Heaven," the saint replied, "and not to the mad command of men who know not God. Moreover, Holy Scripture commands us to pray for them, that they may turn and come to know the truth."

The proconsul answered:

"If you pray for the emperor, you must also obey his commands, for your Scriptures too say: 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's' (Mt. 22:21)."

"You speak rightly," the saint observed, "that what is Caesar's should be rendered to Caesar, and what is God's to God. I rendered to the emperor what was due to him when I paid him for my possessions; but I am still bound to fulfill completely the piety owed to God. The earthly emperor commanded that Christians either offer sacrifice to idols or die. And we are ready to die for Christ our God—not once only, but many times!"

"Do you know," asked the proconsul, "how many Christians have offered sacrifice to our gods? Do you really think yourself much better than they?"

St. Codratus answered:

"Since I have not bowed my knees before idols, I am truly much better than all those who have forsaken their God and Creator. Where are those who offered sacrifice to your gods? I see them not!"

The proconsul ordered that such men be summoned. Meanwhile the saint asked to be unbound, for until then he had remained bound. The

proconsul, supposing that the saint wished to worship the gods, ordered him to be loosed. But he quickly approached, seized a huge idol by the legs, overturned it to the ground and smashed it; then he would have rushed at the other idols as well, but the soldiers and priests restrained him. Then the proconsul, enraged, ordered the saint to be hung outside the temple and scraped with sharp iron over his whole body. Meanwhile those who had fallen away from the Christian faith came up, and St. Codratus, enduring his torments, spoke to them:

"Wretches! What have you endured, that you so hastily renounced Christ the Master and willingly surrendered yourselves to the devil? Did you not believe that there would be a resurrection of the dead, the Judgment of God, and the depths of hell? Have you not heard of the unquenchable fire and the unsleeping worm? What answer will you give on the most glorious and great day of the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who will judge the living and the dead? Open the eyes of your minds and consider from what you have fallen away! For the sake of a fleeting and worthless life you have abandoned the eternal and heavenly Kingdom. Having despised the sweetest and most merciful Master, you have given yourselves into slavery to the vile servant, the devil, who beats and slays whoever he gains mastery over. When our Lord comes, He will bind the devil with unbreakable bonds and cast him into the fiery abyss, together with those who have given themselves over to his service. Understand, then, what you have done! Fearing a brief torment, you have surrendered yourselves to eternal torment. You will see what is to come when you stand before the righteous Judgment of Jesus Christ, Who will reward each according to his deeds. Have you not heard the words of the Lord written in the holy Gospel: '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 (fiery)'?" (Mt. 10:28).[13]

13. Gehenna — the place of eternal torments. This name derives from Hebrew words meaning the valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem, where children were burned in honor of Moloch (3 Kgdms. 11:17; 4 Kgdms. 16:3–4). After Josiah abolished this terrible sacrifice (4 Kgdms. 23:10), the corpses of executed criminals, carrion and all manner of uncleanness were cast into the valley of Hinnom, where all of this was burned.

As the saint spoke these words, the fallen ones cried out with tears, saying in a loud voice:

"Servant of God, we feared the torments and were deceived like speechless beasts; like lost sheep, we became food for wolves and were torn apart. Our sins have taken us captive, and behold, in wishing to live here for a little while, we have died to the future life eternal. What shall we do, wretches that we are? We know not!"

Seeing their tears, blessed Codratus was filled with joy and said:

"Brethren! Take courage and despair not! Christ the Lord is merciful. Fall down before Him with repentance and tears, and stand openly for Christ, that each of you may have the opportunity to cleanse himself of his sins with his own blood."

Then those who had fallen away from Christ cast themselves to the ground and for a long time wept bitterly, sprinkling ashes upon their heads and striking their breasts with stones. Their weeping and lamentation raised such a cry that the inhabitants of the whole city of Nicaea came running, and they marveled at their sincere repentance for having fallen away from the faith.

Coming out of the idol temple at the sound of this cry and seeing what was happening, the proconsul ordered the holy martyr to be scraped more severely and his scraped ribs to be seared with hot candles. But the saint prayed long and earnestly to God for those who repented, that their conversion might be accepted. As he ended his prayer, he said: "Yea, Master, Lord Jesus Christ, let my soul be for their souls—but have mercy on them alone." Immediately the executioners who were inflicting the torments grew weak and fell to the ground as though dead. Meanwhile a bright cloud overshadowed St. Codratus and all the Christians standing there, bound and repentant. But darkness enveloped the proconsul and his counsellors, together with all the pagans; terror fell upon them, and they trembled with fear, thinking that the city itself was about to collapse.

After a long silence the faithful heard from on high the singing of the holy Angels, praising and glorifying God. When two hours had passed, the darkness began to disperse, and the pagans, turning their eyes to the saints, began to notice the heavenly light. The proconsul,

scarcely come to himself, at once commanded that all those who, under the influence of the martyr's words of exhortation, had turned back again to Christ in repentance be seized. Binding them together with the other Christians present at the tribunal, he ordered them led away to prison. Likewise, the holy Codratus was at once untied from the tree and again put back into his former bonds.

On the following morning the proconsul Perennius reopened the court, ordering that all the Christians held in prison, except the holy Codratus, be brought out. Throughout that day he conducted interrogations of them, seeking by flattery and torments to incline them to the offering of abominable sacrifices. Observing that the Christians were unshaken and unbending in the confession of their faith, Perennius, after many beatings, ordered each of them to be taken to his native city and burned there. And all the holy sufferers went in great joy, glorifying God. And so each of them died, burned in his own fatherland, and passed over to the heavenly fatherland.

After this the proconsul set out from Nicaea for Apamea[14], leading the holy Codratus with him. He came here too for the purpose of seizing Christians and compelling them to offer sacrifice to the idols. He had been commanded by the emperor Decius to go about the cities and regions, delivering the Christians who would not worship the gods to torments and death. Arriving at Apamea, the proconsul Perennius entered the pagan shrine, worshipping the idols. Bringing the holy martyr Codratus here also, he asked him:

– Will you, crafty sorcerer, offer sacrifice to the gods or not?

The holy Codratus answered with a courageous soul:

– Call your father Satan a sorcerer and a deceiver, for he truly is such. But I am a Christian, and I know neither sorcery nor deceit, and I will not offer sacrifice to demons!

Then the proconsul said to his friends:

– I do not know what torment I shall inflict on this wretched Christian!

They, however, were silent, for they saw that the martyr no longer had a body, only bare bones, and his whole body had been torn and

flayed. The tormentor commanded that the saint be placed in a sack of coarse cloth, that all manner of reptiles be put in with him, and that he then be cast into a deep, marshy ditch, which was done. In the morning the tormentor, thinking the saint already dead, ordered him drawn out of the ditch, and, to the general amazement, the saint was found unharmed. The martyr, lifting his eyes to heaven, said:

– I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, for the arrows of the infants (of the mind) have become wounds for those who shot them, and their strength has been weakened. But Thou hast strengthened me and given me power to put them to shame, for the glorifying of Thy holy name.

Then the saint said to the proconsul:

– Senseless man! Do you not perceive that your cunning has no success? Do something still worse to me, do it quickly, without wasting time in vain.

– Wretched man, – the proconsul answered in fury, – I will torment you all along the way, though you trust in your sorcery.

Then Perennius went to Caesarea, taking the holy martyr with him; here, performing the customary sacrifices in the shrine, he summoned the saint and said to him:

– You have had enough of every kind of torment. Come forward at last and offer sacrifice to the gods!

– You have been playing with me in torments, – the saint answered, – and I truly marveled that you have already grown weak in inflicting them upon me. But I, receiving torment, do not weaken; rather I desire to suffer for my God such and even more savage torments.

Then the proconsul, in anger, again commanded that the saint be beaten without mercy with sinews upon his naked body, stretching him on the torture beam. Indeed, only the bare bones were beaten, for there was no flesh left on them. During the blows the saint sang: "Many have afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me. Upon my back the plowmen plowed; they made long their furrows" (Ps. 128:2–3). Meanwhile the proconsul cried out to the executioners:

– Strike harder, for he does not feel the torments.

14. Apamea — a city in Asia Minor on the borders of Phrygia and Pisidia.

Turning to the tormentor, the saint said:

– Strike, strike my humble wineskin, for when the latter is being torn, my soul is made strong!

– Wretched man, – the proconsul exclaimed, – I suppose you are possessed by an evil demon!

– Not only am I not possessed by a demon, – the saint answered, – but on the contrary I myself hold dominion over your father Satan, and not him alone but all his servants, and by the grace of my Christ I command all his host: all the infernal power fears and trembles, seeing upon me the terrible and invincible sign of Jesus Christ and His grace abiding with me.

Then, after a brief silence, the saint cried out:

– Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

The people of Caesarea who were present there cried out "Amen!", for among the people were many Christians. Then, in furious rage, the proconsul commanded that two men of rank standing nearby be seized from the crowd, stripped, hanged at once on the place of torment, and beaten and flayed. The executioners, leaving the holy Codratus, began to subject those two Christians, named Satorinus and Rufinus, to torments. They were tormented until their entrails were ready to fall out upon the ground. During their torments Satorinus and Rufinus begged the holy Codratus and all the brethren standing by to pray to the Lord for them. The holy Codratus, calling upon God, said:

– Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the invisible Father! Send help to Thy servants, mercifully look upon the humble and have mercy on them! Give patience and invincible strength to Thy sufferers, that they, enduring to the end, may conquer and put to shame the enemy rising against them!

A long time passed; the holy martyrs were silent, unable to speak from the severe sufferings. At last the tormentor commanded that they be untied and their heads cut off. Thus the two holy martyrs, Satorinus and Rufinus, ascended into heaven to the Lord Christ, who exists in two natures, for whom they had suffered.

After this the proconsul Perennius, departing from Caesarea, came to Apollonia[15], leading the holy Codratus about everywhere with him, taking along also other Christians for torment. Entering the temple of Apollo, Perennius said to the martyr:

– Acknowledge the gods, and you will be healthy: I will order physicians to look after you. So come forward to the god Asclepius[16], and he will heal you. Fear the majesty of the gods: honor great Apollo[17], and Heracles[18], and Zeus[19], king of all the gods, glorious Ares[20], and terrible Poseidon. Have you never sailed on a ship over the sea and perceived the dread power of the god? Bow also to the sun shining from heaven upon the earth. Has it died, and is it no longer in the heavens?

The holy Quadratus answered:

– I worship the True God the Father and His Only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit, and I tremble before His might, majesty, and inaccessible glory. I always praise and glorify His ineffable power and almightiness; but I will not bow to lifeless idols, nor will I honor the works of human hands. I fear neither demons nor you, who hold power for a brief time. After a few days I shall go to my God, but you will groan bitterly forever, because you did not wish to know God, who gave you this present life. Son of Satan, brother of the devil, accomplice of

15. Apollonia — a city in Illyria, not far from the sea, renowned for the flourishing of the sciences during Roman rule.

16. Asclepius or Aesculapius — the god of the medical art, son of Apollo and of the daughter of the Thessalian king Coronis. He was depicted as a venerable, bearded man with a grave and benevolent expression, in white clothing, with a staff around which a serpent coils. Sometimes, besides the serpent, a rooster, which was sacred to this god, was also depicted with Aesculapius.

17. Apollo, son of Zeus and Leto, brother of Artemis, god of light. Ancient belief assigned Apollo eternal and unchanging youth and strength, signifying by this the ever-youthful power of light and warmth. He was depicted in the form of a beautiful, strong youth, with a bow or a curved shepherd's staff in his hands, and with a quiver of arrows on his back. Sometimes he holds a lyre (a musical instrument) in his hand. His feet are bare or shod in elegant sandals, and on his head is a laurel wreath.

18. Heracles, or Hercules, the most famous Greek hero, son of Zeus and Alcmene, wife of King Amphitryon. He was usually depicted as an unusually well-developed, sturdy man in the very flower of his age, naked or clad in a lion's skin, with curly hair and a heavy club in his hand.

19. Zeus, god of the sky. He had many epithets. Son of Cronus, the oldest of the gods. He was depicted seated on a throne, with the aegis in his hands.

20. Ares, son of Zeus and Hera; god of the alarms and tumults of the sea, the terrible god of war, of battle and of the melee of combat, who delights the soul with slaughter and is drunk with blood. He was depicted in the form of a youth with a shield and spear in his hands.

impious demons, surpassing swine in your brutishness, mad dog, blood-sucker, serpent, more greedy than beasts in devouring the abominable flesh in the shrines. Are you not ashamed of your madness, and do you not understand your blindness? You slaughter oxen and birds as sacrifices to the gods — are your gods, being lifeless, subject to hunger? If you set food before the mouth of an idol, will it taste it? And if your gods demand sacrifices, ask them, let them answer: which of your gods, of stone or of wood, desires that a goat or an ox or a hen be slaughtered for him? O ruinous men! You have fallen yourselves into the ruinous ditch, and you wish to push us into it as well.

The proconsul, enraged at these words, ordered that vinegar mixed with salt be poured upon the saint's wounds, that they be rubbed with hair cords, and that red-hot iron be applied to his ribs. Then, since the day was already drawing toward night, the tormentor ordered the sufferer cast into prison. In the morning the proconsul left Apollonia, making for the Hellespont,[21] and took with him the Christians he had seized, bound together; with them was also carried the holy Martyr Codratus, for from the cruel torments he could not even move his legs. The proconsul, having crossed the river called Runtok, was met by the voivode of that region. From the surrounding villages large crowds of Christians also gathered, ostensibly to meet the proconsul Perennius, but in reality desiring to see and honor the holy Great Martyr Codratus, whose fame was spreading throughout all Asia and the whole world. The proconsul, entering with the regional governor a village that lay on the way, spent the night there; at daybreak he wished to offer sacrifice to the demons, since the village held a multitude of idols, and at the same time he of course wished to compel the Christians also to offer sacrifices. First the proconsul ordered that the holy Codratus be set before him, and since he had no strength to walk, he was brought to the pagan shrine in a chariot. But although the holy Codratus was weak in body, nevertheless he appeared cheerful, smiling and rejoicing in God his Savior. There stood the whole assembled

21. The strait connecting the Sea of Marmara with the Aegean Sea.

people, wishing to see the sufferings of Christ's martyr. The proconsul asked Codratus:

"Codratus! Have you decided to acknowledge the gods, or do you still persist in your madness?"

The saint answered in a loud voice:

"From my childhood I have been taught to know the True God Christ; I am a Christian from my mother's womb, and I know no other God than the One in whom I have believed from my swaddling clothes!"

Then the proconsul ordered a huge fire to be kindled, an iron bed to be set upon it, and, when it had grown hot, the martyr to be laid upon it.

"There is no need," said the saint at this, "for anyone to lead me and lay me upon this bed; I will go onto it myself!"

And so, strengthened by the power of Christ, he himself went into the fire, and, signing himself with the sign of the Cross, lay down upon the red-hot bed and rested on it as on a soft couch, experiencing no harm whatever from the fire. The fire, having lost its natural force, served the servant of God, giving him only as much warmth as was needed to soothe the much-suffering and much-afflicted body of the holy martyr. Meanwhile the servants of the devil heaped pitch, oil and cotton beneath the bed, and the saint sang: "Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord. Let them be put to shame and confounded that seek after my soul" (Ps. 69:2). Mocking the tormentor, he said:

"Your fire is cold, and the iron of this bed is far softer than your hardened heart. You did well to order me, weary from the road, to rest on this soft bed!"

With such words the saint turned from side to side on the bed as though on a couch. Much time passed, and the holy martyr remained alive, healthy and unharmed in the fire; then the tormentor, burning with anger, ordered that the saint be taken off the bed and his head struck off outside the village. Coming out of the fire on firm feet, the saint no longer needed a chariot or supporters, but walked of his own accord to the place of execution, singing on the way:

"Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as a prey to their teeth" (Ps. 123:6).

Some of the brethren who followed him sang with him. And, giving thanks to God, he bowed his honorable head beneath the sword.

Thus died the holy Great Martyr of Christ, Codratus, beheaded by the sword on the tenth day of the month of March, on which day he was also crowned with martyrdom together with his company, and his namesake and friend Codratus of Corinth; this was in the reign over the Greeks and Romans of Valerian, and over the Christians in the endless reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory and dominion, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Mother Anastasia, who was renamed Anastasius the eunuch

Память преподобной матери нашей Анастасии, переименованной Анастасием скопцом

In the reign of the Emperor Justinian the Great[22] there lived at Constantinople a certain pious, God-fearing widow, the daughter of wealthy and noble parents, the first patrician woman in the imperial palace, named Anastasia.[23] Keeping the fear of God in her heart, she unswervingly and attentively observed the commandments of God. Anastasia, possessing outstanding bodily beauty, was even more distinguished by her beauty of soul: she was so meek and of such good character that all who knew her life regarded her as an example, and many strove to imitate her virtues. The emperor himself greatly honored Anastasia; but the sower of tares, the one who envies the virtuous, who never ceases to wage war against the human race and who sows discord among men, the devil, brought upon the blessed Anastasia a hate-

22. Venerable Anastasia died in 567. Emperor Justinian reigned from 527 to 565; during his reign the Fifth Ecumenical Council was convened at Constantinople in 553 for the purpose of putting an end to the Monophysite movements.

23. Patricia: the wife of a patrician. This was the name in Rome for people of noble birth. This rank was very high, and it was granted to the wives of famous men, for example Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, or for special merits of their own.

ful enmity. He stirred up hatred against the saint in the empress Theodora,[24] and the latter began to be angry with the blameless servant of God. Hearing of this from a man well disposed toward her, and being filled with divine understanding, Anastasia, gathering her thoughts, reasoned thus with herself:

"Anastasia! Surely save your soul, making use of the present calamity as a timely opportunity. Free the empress also from the sin of unjust hatred, and win for yourself the Kingdom of Heaven!"

Having reflected thus to herself, Anastasia secretly hired a ship, and taking with her a portion of the gold that belonged to her, leaving the rest, she sailed unnoticed to Alexandria.[25] There she founded, in one place five stadia[26] from the city, a small monastery, and dwelt in it, laboring for God and striving to please Him alone. Anastasia always held in her hands handiwork fitting to her sex, and on her lips was unceasing singing of psalms and glorification of God. The monastery she founded, called after the founder, the patrician Anastasia, the Patrikian monastery, later, even before the time of Muslim rule,[27] became large and famous, abounding in every kind of wealth. But let us return to the original account of Anastasia.

Some years after the departure of the holy Anastasia from Constantinople, the empress Theodora, who had been angry with her, died. The emperor, remembering the patrician Anastasia, sent envoys everywhere, searching for her with great diligence. Soon learning of this, the Lamb of God left her monastery by night, withdrew to the skete of Abba Daniel,[28] and told this blessed elder all that had happened to her. Then the elder Daniel clothed her in men's monastic garb, named her Anastasius the eunuch instead of Anastasia, led her to a cave far from the Lavra, and enclosed her there; having given Anastasia a rule and a

24. Theodora, the wife of Justinian, through whose influence the revolt of Nika was suppressed, a revolt which threatened to overthrow Justinian.
25. Alexandria, the chief city of Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great. Here, on the island of Pharos, the translation of the Old Testament of the Bible into Greek was made in 72 days.
26. Poprishche: a measure of distance, equal to approximately 690 sazhens.
27. Muslim rule in Alexandria began at the end of the seventh century.
28. The monk Daniel mentioned here is the same one who caused a 22-day-old infant to speak.

manner of life, he ordered her never to go out of the cave herself and not to allow anyone to come to her.

To one of the brethren who served him, Daniel pointed out a place near the cave where, once a week, he was to bring a small loaf of bread and a jug of water and leave them on that spot in front of the cave, and then, having received a prayerful blessing from the recluse, immediately withdraw. Here the steadfast, courageous Anastasia lived for twenty-eight years without ever going out, unseen by anyone, strictly keeping the rule appointed by the elder. No one came to Anastasia, and no one but the brother who brought bread and water knew of her. Yet even he did not know that she was a woman by nature, but regarded her as a eunuch man. Who is able to grasp with his mind, or recount with his tongue, or set down in writing the labors and exploits of the holy Anastasia, offered to God in solitude during twenty-eight years in the cave? Tears, groaning, weeping, vigil, singing, prayers, reading, standing, kneeling, fasting, deprivation of necessities, and above all the assaults of demons and the struggle against them, which constantly reminded her of the sweetness of the flesh left behind in the world and all other worldly pleasures! How did she, who had earlier lived for many years in the imperial chambers as a noblewoman and the first patrician woman, sometimes spending time with many women and men at worldly feasts and amusements, endure and overcome all this and remain without going out through all the days of those years? The mind involuntarily shudders at the thought of how the holy Anastasia disregarded all this and blotted out the memory of it from her mind! How did she attain such humility, fasting, abstinence, and the narrowness of the sorrowful way? By striving so valiantly, the saint became a vessel of the Holy Spirit, and, having pleased God to the end, drew near to her blessed death.

Foreseeing her departure to God in advance, Anastasia wrote this on a tile for the elder Daniel:

"Holy father! Hasten to take with you the disciple who brings me bread and water, take also the implements necessary for burial, and come to bury your child, the eunuch Anastasius."

Having written this, Anastasia placed the tile outside the cave before its door. At the same time the elder, having learned of it through a revelation from God that had come to him in the night, said to his disciple:

"Child! Hasten to the cave where our brother, the eunuch Anastasius, dwells, and look about the cave. There you will find an inscribed potsherd; take it and return quickly to us."

Having withdrawn and, at the old man's word, found the inscribed potsherd, the brother brought it to the elder. Upon reading what was written on the potsherd, Elder Daniel burst into tears, and taking everything necessary for the burial, he set out with the aforementioned brother for the cave. Having opened it, they found the eunuch stricken with fever. Abba Daniel, falling upon the breast of the eunuch, wept and said:

“Blessed are you, Brother Anastasius, for, having unceasing care of the day and hour of death, you have despised the earthly kingdom!”

“Blessed are you also,” replied Anastasia, “O new Abraham!”

"Therefore," continued the elder, "pray for us to the Lord."

"Honorable elder," replied Anastasia, "at this hour I have greater need of your prayers."

“If I had ended the last day of my life before you, then I too would have prayed for you,” continued the elder.

Then Anastasia, sitting upon a mat, kissed the head of the elder and, praying for him, pronounced words of blessing. The elder, taking his disciple, brought him near to the feet of the saint, saying:

“Bless this my disciple, and your child.”

"The God of my fathers, who stands before me at this hour to free me from this body," said Anastasia, "who knows my steps in this cave and my privations of life for His name's sake, and who sees my present bodily sickness, may He rest upon him the spirit of his father, even as the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha!"

Then, turning to the elder, the eunuch said:

"Father, for the Lord's sake, do not remove from me the garment in which I am clothed, lest anyone learn of what concerns my sex."

Then, having partaken of the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ, Anastasia said:

"Father, mark me with the sign of Christ and pray for me."

After this, Anastasia looked toward the east, and her face shone like fire. Then, making the sign of the Cross over herself, Anastasia said:

"Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and with these words she died.

After this, Abba Daniel and the disciple dug a grave before the cave, and then the elder, taking off the cassock he wore, said to the disciple:

"Child! Clothe the brother."

The disciple, dressing the saint, chanced to notice her female breasts, dried like withered leaves, and, not telling the elder of it, kept silent. They buried the honorable body of Anastasia with the customary funeral chant.

When they then returned home, the disciple said to the elder:

"Father, did you not know that the eunuch Anastasius was a woman?"

"Yes, child, I knew it," answered the elder, "and for that reason I clothed her in men's clothing and named her Anastasius the eunuch, so that there would be no suspicion and so that no one would learn of her and rumor would not spread everywhere. Concerning her there had been much searching on the part of the emperor in all lands, and especially in these regions. But, by the grace of God, she was hidden with us."

Then the elder related to the disciple in detail the whole life of the saint, which afterward became known throughout the world and was written for the benefit of those who read and hear it, to the glory of Christ God, glorified in His saints forever.[29] Amen.

* * *

NOTES

1797. Bithynia is the northwestern province of Asia Minor. It lies along the shores of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and the Strait of Constantinople. This land has been

known since remote antiquity and received its name from the Bithynians, who migrated into it from Thrace. Bithynia was picturesque, fertile and rich in livestock; Bithynia was divided into two provinces. In the first the chief city was Prusa (in antiquity Prusiada), in the other Nicomedia. Until the middle of the sixth century B.C. the Bithynians were free, independent and known as skilled sailors. In 546 they fell under Persian rule, but not for long, and from 327 Bithynia was again an independent state. In 75 B.C. King Nicomedes III, dying, bequeathed his country to the Romans, who annexed it to their empire as an independent province governed by a special proconsul. Christianity appeared in Bithynia already in apostolic times (1 Pet. 1:1); in the time of Pliny the Younger, who governed Bithynia, and of the Emperor Trajan (98–117 A.D.), there were very many Christians here, not only in the cities but also in the villages and hamlets. Under Diocletian (284–305) there were terrible persecutions of Christians in Bithynia. In the fourth and fifth centuries Bithynia was especially remarkable in an ecclesiastical respect: many church councils were held in it on the occasion of various heresies. Passing successively under the rule now of the Seljuks, now of the Saracens, in 1332 Bithynia was subjected to the Turks, under whose rule it remains even now. It is included in two governorships (vilayets), Kadavendkiakht and Kastamonu, and has 700,000 inhabitants. At the head of church administration stands the Archbishop of Nicomedia, to whom 12 bishops, appointed by the Synod of Constantinople, are subordinate.

✠

29. The relics of St. Anastasia were transferred to Constantinople, and in 1200 they were located near St. Sophia.

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 11

11 марта

New Calendar March 11 · Old Calendar March 24 (civil dates)

Commemoration of our Holy Father Sophronius the Wise, Patriarch of Jerusalem

Память иже во святых отца нашего Софрония Премудрого, патриарха Иерусалимского

St. Sophronius, whose very name signifies chastity,[1] was born at Damascus[2] to pious and chaste parents; they were distinguished citizens, and their names were Plinthos and Myra. From his youth the Blessed Sophronius lived in accordance with his name, loving both spiritual and secular wisdom and preserving virginal purity from his mother's womb. These two virtues, spiritual wisdom and virginal purity, are both called chastity; thus, according to St. John Climacus,[3] chastity is the general name for all the virtues; and chaste Sophronius diligently acquired all of them. First of all he studied secular[4] philosophy, for which he was called a sophist, that is, a wise man; this title

1. From the Greek.
2. Damascus is the chief and wealthiest commercial 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. In the history of the Church of Christ, Damascus is remarkable in that the first preaching of St. Apostle Paul after his conversion to Christianity took place precisely here (Acts 9:1–43).
3. Venerable John Climacus took monastic vows at twenty years of age and during the last four years of his life was hegumen of the Sinai monastery; he died at the age of eighty, about 606 A.D. His memory is celebrated on March 30. He is known chiefly as the compiler of the famous guide to monastic life under the title "The Ladder of Paradise" (*Klimax tou paradeisou*), whence he also received the name Climacus, "of the Ladder"; here monastic life is presented by him as the path of continual and difficult ascent up the ladder of spiritual self-perfection; this ascent is accomplished through struggle with one's own passions and vices, the monk finding the chief help in the constant thought of death.
4. That is, the secular sciences.

"sophist" was in those times very honorable, and was conferred upon outstanding philosophers, for example Libanius the sophist, an acquaintance of St. Basil the Great. Desiring, after secular philosophy, to acquire spiritual wisdom, the Blessed Sophronius went about the monasteries and the hermitages of the desert recluses and received benefit for his soul from the God-pleasing fathers. He came also to the holy city of Jerusalem, and visiting the nearby monasteries, he entered the coenobium of the Great Theodosius, where he found the monk John, called Moschus and Eviratus, a presbyter in rank, a virtuous man, and very skilled both in secular and in inner wisdom. Sophronius attached himself to him with all his heart, as a son to a father, as a disciple to a teacher, and followed him everywhere until his death, going with him together through the monasteries and deserts, visiting the holy fathers and writing down their lives for his own benefit, as attested by the book written by the two of them, entitled "Leimonarion," or "Garden of Flowers," and approved at the VII Ecumenical Council.[5] In this book the teacher of St. Sophronius often calls him a sophist, as one equal to himself in philosophical education; but the Venerable John calls the Blessed Sophronius not only a sophist and his master, but even father; he regarded him not as a disciple but as his friend, companion and fellow-worker, as a man of outstanding life, and moreover he foresaw in spirit that Sophronius would be a great shepherd and an unshakable pillar of the Church of Christ. With this Venerable John, St. Sophronius, even before his tonsure, lived for a considerable time, first in Palestine, in the same coenobium of the Great Theodosius, and in the Jordan desert, and in the so-called New Monastery built by St. Sabbas; and afterwards both, John and Sophronius, left Palestine out of fear of the invasion of the Persians and went to the region of Great Antioch. At this time the Persian king Chosroes the Younger made war upon Greek land for the following reason. The tyrant Phocas (as the Greek historian Nicephorus writes in detail) murdered the Greek emperor Maurice and seized the imperial throne. Now Emperor Maurice had once shown a great benefaction to Chosroes of Persia: when Chosroes

5. In 787, against the heresy of the iconoclasts, who rejected the veneration of icons.

had been expelled from the Persian kingdom and fled to Greece, Maurice was to him as a father, and helped him with his riches and military force to regain his throne in Persia; thus a firm peace was established between the Greeks and the Persians. When Chosroes heard of the murder of his benefactor, the Greek emperor Maurice, he greatly grieved for him, and, breaking the peace treaty with the Greeks, went to avenge the murder of Maurice. The Persian armies entered many Greek domains, chiefly Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, and subdued them. Then the holy fathers who were living the ascetic life in those lands left their monasteries and desert dwellings and fled, each wherever he could. At this very time the holy John and Sophronius also departed from Palestine; and after their departure the holy city of Jerusalem was taken by the Persians, and the holy Wood of the Life-giving Cross of Christ, together with the most holy Patriarch Zacharias, was carried off captive; it remained in captivity in Persia for fourteen years, to the great sorrow and grief of all Christians. Before the capture of Jerusalem the holy John and Sophronius, as has been said, came to the region of Antioch and, in their custom, like bees flying among flowers and gathering honey, went about all the places where they heard of virtuous fathers, and gathering a spiritual honeycomb sweeter than honey, they wrote down their lives in the aforementioned book "Leimonarion." When the Persian armies began to approach there too, they sailed to Egypt, to Alexandria,[6] where they did the same. They brought great benefit to the whole Christian posterity by describing the deeds and teachings of many holy fathers, whatever they saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears. St. Sophronius, when he arrived at Alexandria, had not yet been tonsured into the monastic habit, as is seen

6. Alexandria: the famous city founded by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C. on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, in Lower (Northern) Egypt, at the mouth of the river Nile. After Rome, Alexandria was the first city on the sea, and it served as a center of trade, industry and especially of pagan learning; in the first centuries of Christianity it was a nursery of Christian enlightenment. According to tradition, Christianity was brought here by St. Mark about A.D. 59–60. At present Alexandria (in Turkish and Arabic, Iskandery) belongs to the number of the most fortified port cities and the most important trading points on the Mediterranean, with a population of more than 230,000.

from the sixty-ninth chapter of their "Leimonarion," where the teacher of Sophronius, John Eviratus, says the following:

"We came to Alexandria, I and Kyr[7] Sophronius, my brother, before his tonsure, and went to Abba[8] Palladius, a virtuous man and servant of God."

And again in chapter one hundred and ten he says:

"My lord Sophronius and I went to the Lavra, which is eighteen poprishches[9] from Alexandria, to a certain elder, very virtuous, an Egyptian by birth, and said to him:

'Lord and father, speak a word to us, how we should live with one another; Kyr the sophist (Sophronius) wishes to withdraw from the world and become a monk.'

Then the elder said to us:

'You do well, children, to leave the world for the salvation of your soul; sit in silence in your cell, guard your thoughts, and pray unceasingly with hope in God—He will give you His wisdom and enlighten your mind.'"

From this is seen the wonderful virtue of the holy chaste Sophronius: while still a layman he labored so much, visiting monasteries and deserts at various times, and seeking with such zeal his soul's benefit, as one who would stand on the path of salvation, that before his tonsure into the monastic life he was already entirely like a monk, living a virtuous monastic life. Afterwards he was tonsured by his teacher during a sickness that befell him, from which he thought he would die, and he had a vision; about this his teacher writes in the hundred and second chapter as follows: "When my brother Sophronius the Wise was at the point of death, we stood around him with Abba John the Scholastic, and Sophronius said to us: 'It seemed to me that I was walking along some road and saw a whole chorus of maidens, who spoke with rejoicing: "Sophronius has come, Sophronius has been crowned!" The maidens rejoiced before him because his very name signifies chastity.'"

7. Lord, father.
8. The same.
9. A *poprishche* was equal to approximately 690 sazhens.

Thus wrote his teacher about him. Recovering from his illness, and now a monk, he labored and cared even more for his own salvation and the salvation of others.

At that time the heresy of Severus spread in Egypt,[10] and the two of them with their teacher struggled much against the heretics; wise and well-read in Divine Scripture, they disputed with the heretics and overcame them. For this the most holy Patriarch of Alexandria, John the Almsgiver,[11] loved them very much and honored them as sincere friends who helped him against the heretics and comforted him in his sorrow. In his Life, written by Leontius, Bishop of Neapolis, it is related that St. John the Almsgiver had the custom of sitting on Wednesdays and Fridays at the entrance of the church, allowing anyone who wished to come freely to him, and he heard the needs of each, helped, settled quarrels and disputes; thus he made peace among men. But if it happened that no one came to him while he sat so, and no one asked anything of him, he would rise sorrowful and go home in tears, saying:

"Today humble John has found nothing, has brought nothing to God for his sins."

But the Blessed Sophronius (of whom we are speaking), his friend, consoling him, said to him:

"Truly, father, you ought to rejoice today, for your sheep live peacefully without discord and quarrels, like the Angels of God."

From this it is seen with what reverence and love this most holy patriarch regarded St. Sophronius and his teacher.

10. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, was one of the chief defenders of the Monophysite heresy, which maintained that Christ, though born of two natures, does not subsist in two; for at the Incarnation of God the Word, the human nature He assumed lost all its own actuality and could be distinguished from the Divine only in thought.

11. John the Almsgiver (†617), Patriarch of Alexandria, was the son of an official on the island of Cyprus. Having lost his family, he devoted himself to an ascetic life and to the care of the poor; although he was neither a monk nor a cleric, he was chosen Patriarch by the wish of the people. Upon becoming Patriarch, he first counted all the beggars in Alexandria, and, distributing to them all his possessions, sent generous alms to the Holy Sepulchre, gave shelter to the needy in his own house, and ransomed captives. When the inhabitants of Alexandria, fearing the invasion of the Persians, began to flee, John set out for Constantinople to ask for troops to defend the city. But on the way he died (617). His memory is celebrated on 12 November.

Both these saints were accustomed to strive each day to learn something new, seeing or hearing something useful for themselves. And the following happened to them, as John relates.

"My lord Sophronius the Wise and I went to the house of Stephen the Philosopher, who lived on the way to the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, built by Patriarch Eulogius to the east of the great Tetrapylon; it was midday. When we came to the philosopher's house and knocked at the gate, the doorkeeper said to us:

'My lord is still asleep; wait a little.' Then I said to my lord Sophronius:

'Let us go to the Tetrapylon and stay there.'

This place is held in honor by the inhabitants of Alexandria: it is said that Alexander the Great brought the relics of the holy prophet Jeremiah from Egypt and laid them there when he founded this city in his own honor. Coming there, we found no one except three blind men, and silently sat down beside them with our books. In conversation with one another, one blind man said to another:

'Friend, how did you go blind?'

And he answered:

'In my youth I was a sailor; when we were sailing from Africa I had to look at the sea very much; cataracts formed on my eyes, and I went blind.'

Then the other, asked how he had gone blind, answered:

'I worked at a glass factory, and once, making glass carelessly, I burned myself; so from the fire I lost my sight.'

Having told the cause of their blindness, the two blind men asked the third how he had gone blind.

He answered them:

When I was young, I did not love to toil and work, but preferred to be idle; and being ambitious and having nothing to eat, I began to steal and do much evil. Once I saw them carrying out to bury a dead man clothed in costly garments; I went after the bearers to see where they would lay him. The dead man was buried near the church of St. John. When night came, I opened the tomb, went inside, and took everything from the dead man, leaving him only his shirt. As I came out of the

tomb, evil thoughts spoke within me: "Go back and take the shirt also, for it is very good." And I, wretch that I was, went back to strip off the shirt too and leave the dead man naked. And then the dead man rose, sat up before me, raised his hands, and with his fingers tore my face and gouged out both my eyes. Then I, wretch that I was, from such a calamity and from the pain, scarcely got out of the tomb. This is how I became blind!

Hearing this, my master Sophronius beckoned to me, and we left the blind men. And Sophronius said to me:

"True it is, Father John, there is nothing more to learn today; we have learned enough that is profitable, that no one who does evil can hide from God."

From this it is clear how both these saints, John and Sophronius, cared for their own daily profit. By the words "there is nothing more to learn today; we have learned enough that is profitable today," he shows that each day they strove to acquire some benefit for themselves.

During their stay there in Alexandria, the blessed Sophronius wrote an account of the miracles of the holy Martyrs Cyrus and John, in thanksgiving for the healing of his eyes. For when his eyes fell ill and he had recourse, with prayer and faith, to those holy unmercenary physicians, he received from them the healing he asked for in their church in Alexandria; therefore he honored them with zeal. Some years later, Egypt, where Alexandria is situated, began to be threatened by a Persian invasion, and the blessed Fathers John and Sophronius had to flee from there as well. The most holy patriarch John the Merciful, out of fear of the barbarians, also took flight. Together with him they set out for Constantinople and boarded a ship, desiring to be with him who would not part from them. On the way the most holy patriarch fell ill and reposed in his native city of Alsaphuntos. The wise Sophronius honored his excellent life and countless mercies with a commendable funeral oration. After the patriarch's burial, he set out for old Rome together with his teacher John and with the brethren gathered around them, up to twelve in number. After living some years in Rome, the Venerable John, teacher of Sophronius, being by then an old man, went to the Lord. Dying, he bequeathed to his beloved disciple and spiritual

son, the blessed Sophronius, that his body should not be buried in Rome, but placed in a wooden coffin and carried to Mount Sinai; but if Mount Sinai could not be reached for fear of attack by the barbarians, then his relics were to be buried in the coenobium of St. Theodosius the Great,[12] where the Venerable John had first been a monk. So he did. Like the Old Testament Joseph, who carried the body of Jacob out of Egypt to the place of burial of his fathers (Gen. 50:12–13), he took from Rome[13] the body of the Venerable John, his spiritual father, and sailed with the brethren to the Greek lands. Arriving at Ascalon[14] and learning that it was impossible, because of the barbarians, to reach Mount Sinai,[15] he came to Jerusalem, which was occupied by the Persians, and buried the body of his spiritual father in the Theodosian coenobium; and he himself remained to live with his brethren in Jerusalem. The patriarchal throne there was then occupied by Modestus, in place of Patriarch Zacharias, who had been taken captive to Persia together with the Precious Cross. Not long after St. Sophronius's arrival from Rome in Palestine, God was pleased to restore from captivity to Jerusalem the Holy Cross-Tree and Patriarch Zacharias. This came about thus. The voivode Heraclius, having slain the tyrant emperor Phocas[16] and himself taken the Greek throne,[17] began war with Persia; and having won many victories over the armies of Chosroes, he held his cities for seven years. Then Siroes, son of Chosroes, having slain his father and himself become king of Persia, sought to make peace with the Greek emperor Heraclius. The emperor Heraclius made the first

12. Theodosius the Great was Roman emperor from 379 to 395. During his reign the Christian faith was finally established in the Roman Empire.
13. Rome, the chief city of the Roman state (now the Kingdom of Italy), lies in the central part of Italy, on both banks of the river Tiber where it flows into the sea.
14. Ashkelon was one of the five principal Philistine cities (Judg. 1:18). Herod the Great adorned it magnificently, as his own homeland. Even in the Middle Ages it was a military seaport, and it was destroyed during the Crusades (1191).
15. Mount Sinai is properly a group of mountains composed of granite cliffs, cut through and surrounded by steep and rugged valleys; the Arabs now call it Mount Tur, or Jebel Tur Sina. It lies almost in the middle of the known arms of the Black Sea that form the Sinai Peninsula. It consists of three mountain ridges. Mount Sinai proper, at which the Israelites entered into covenant with God and received from Him the commandments of the Law, is the highest southeastern peak of the middle ridge; its lower northwestern peak is Mount Horeb.
16. The Byzantine emperor Phocas reigned from 602 to 610.
17. Heraclius reigned from 610 to 641.

condition of peace that the Persian king should yield Jerusalem to the Greeks and return the Precious Tree of the Holy Cross, and with it Patriarch Zacharias. This was carried out: after fourteen years of captivity the Cross-Tree was returned from Persia with great honor, and the emperor Heraclius himself carried it on his shoulders into the holy city (as is written under September 14); and the most holy Patriarch Zacharias again occupied his throne. Some years later the Precious Tree of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord was carried from Jerusalem to Constantinople by the same emperor Heraclius, so that so great a Christian treasure should not again be seized by some enemies; indeed, afterwards Jerusalem was again taken by enemies, as will be told below. Patriarch Zacharias remained on the throne only a short time after his return from captivity, and departed to the Lord; his successor on the throne was again Modestus, but he lived only two years. After the death of Modestus, St. Sophronius was chosen for the patriarchate in Jerusalem. At this time arose the heresy of the Monothelites, that is, "one-willers," who acknowledge in the Person of Christ, in His two natures, Divine and human, one will and one operation, as though each nature had no particular and proper operation and desire of its own. Those who profess such teaching blaspheme Christ, holding Him imperfect in both natures. About this heresy more is written in the life of Maximus the Confessor, January 21. This heresy was especially supported and spread by the Alexandrian patriarch, who gathered a Local Council and commanded that such be believed; he was followed by the Constantinopolitan patriarch Sergius, and after him Pyrrhus and others; many then suffered for not accepting this heresy. The most holy Patriarch of Jerusalem, St. Sophronius, most strongly opposed this heresy: gathering a Local Council, he anathematized the heresy of the one-willers and sent copies of the decrees of his council everywhere, which were afterwards read at the VI Ecumenical Council, confirmed by the holy Fathers, and accepted as orthodox. St. Sophronius also wrote many other words, instructions and hymns profitable to the Church of Christ, and lives of some saints, for example of St. Mary of Egypt, who lived in the desert like the Angels longer than the ordinary span of human life.[1840] He shepherded God's Church well, stopping the

mouths of heretics and driving them far away, like wolves, from the rational flock.

Then again, by God's permission, a barbarian invasion fell upon Syria and Palestine, but now not of the Persians, but of the Muslims,[18] who first took the city of Damascus, and then besieged the City of God, Jerusalem, and in two years took it. When the Greek army in Syria had been defeated by them and the voivode Sergius slain, the most holy Patriarch Sophronius, with the Palestinian Christians, shut himself up in the holy city. His word spoken to the people on the day of the Nativity of Christ during the siege has been preserved; in it, like a new Jeremiah, he laments the ruin and desolation of the holy places, permitted by God for men's sins. He especially grieves that on the day of the Nativity of Christ it was impossible to celebrate as usual in Bethlehem, since Bethlehem was already in the hands of the Hagarenes. At the end of the second year of the siege, the Christians, brought to extremity, were compelled to surrender and open the city to the enemies. But first the most holy Patriarch Sophronius sent to the Hagarene prince Omar the terms of peace, the first of which was: not to inflict any violence or insult upon the Christian faith and the holy Church of God. Omar promised to fulfill this and the other terms. When the agreement was made, the Christians opened the city gates to the Hagarene prince; he, hypocritical and crafty, pretended to be meek and humble as a lamb, while inwardly a rapacious wolf; he clothed himself in tattered garments of camel's hair, entered the city on foot, and asked where the Church of Solomon was, desiring to perform there his abominable prayers. The most holy Sophronius went out to meet him, and seeing him in such hypocritical guise, said:

"Behold, the abomination of desolation in the holy place, foretold by the prophet David!"

And he wept much with all the Christians and urged the prince to take off the sackcloth and put on princely garments fitting to him. So the holy city was taken by the Hagarenes, and Christianity was oppressed with heavy bondage. And this impious Hagarene prince did not

18. Of the Arabs.

keep the terms of peace which he had promised the most holy Patriarch Sophronius, and began to inflict many woes upon the Jerusalem Christians. Seeing this, St. Sophronius constantly wept and prayed God to take his soul from the land of the living, that he might no longer see the sufferings of the Christians and the abomination of desolation defiling the holy places; and he was heard: soon ending his tearful life, he passed[19] from the earthly tearful Jerusalem to the heavenly joyful one, into the abode of all who rejoice in Christ Jesus, our Lord, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Pionius, Presbyter of Smyrna, and of those with him

Страдание святого священномученика Пиония, пресвитера Смирнского, и прочих с ним

The Apostle bids us honor the memory of the saints: "Remember your leaders," he says, "who spoke to you the word of God" (Heb. 13:7). This is so that, calling to mind their faith, their life and their virtuous repose, we may strive to imitate them. It is therefore fitting that we should also honor the memory of the holy martyr Pionius, for while he was still in the world he turned many to God from the seduction of the demons. He was a man of apostolic character, and when, having received the crown of martyrdom, he was called to the Lord, he left us a pattern of virtues, so that to this day we keep the memory of his teaching. The beginning of his martyric struggle came about as follows.

On the twenty-third day of the sixth month (that is, February, the sixth in count from September), on which the memory of the holy Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was celebrated, in the city of Smyrna[20], where a very great number of Jews dwelt, the presbyter Pi-

19. Smyrna was a famous trading city of ancient Ionia, on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea (or Archipelago). The Church in Smyrna was founded by the Holy Apostle John the Theologian. Smyrna at present belongs to the Turks, but the Christian faith is preserved and flourishes there to this day.

20. Decius, Roman emperor, reigned from 249 to 251.

onius, Savina, a zealous woman of piety, Asclepiades, Macedonius and Linus, a presbyter of the cathedral church, were seized by the impious pagans. At that time there was persecution of Christians under the reign of Decius[21]. Pionius, however, had learned before this day that they would be seized on the feast of St. Polycarp. Therefore, fasting together with Savina and Asclepiades, he took three braided chains, put them on himself, on Savina and on Asclepiades, and sat at home, waiting for them to come and take them.

On the very day of the memory of St. Polycarp, when, after prayer, they had partaken of a little bread and water, Polemon, the overseer of the sacrifices to the idols, came with soldiers. He was searching for Christians in order to compel them to offer the defiled idol sacrifices, and he said to Pionius:

"Do you know the imperial decree? Do you know that you are commanded to offer sacrifice to the gods?" Pionius answered:

"We know the commandments of our God, by which He commands that He alone be worshipped."

"Go to the assembly," said Polemon, "there you will submit, whether you wish it or not." Savina and Asclepiades answered:

"We submit to the living God."

And Polemon led them without compulsion, and the people, seeing how they willingly bore their fetters, ran after them, pressing one upon another, as though at some unheard-of wonder.

When the saints came to the assembly before the city governors, an innumerable crowd of pagans, and still more Jews, filled all the places at the entrances and in the halls. Setting the saints in the middle, Polemon said:

"Pionius! Submit to the imperial command, as the others have submitted, and offer sacrifice to the gods, lest you be cruelly tortured."

But Pionius stretched out his hand and, with a radiant face, began to speak to the people:

"Citizens of Smyrna, you who boast of the beauty of your city and of the fact that Homer[22] lived here, and you Jews who are present here,

21. 641 or 644.

listen to the few words that I shall say to you. I hear that you laugh and rejoice that some of us have come to you; you consider it a laughing matter and a game that a sin is committed when sacrifice is offered to idols, not of one's own will but under compulsion. But you pagans ought to listen to your teacher Homer, who says that it is not good to rejoice in the destruction of a man. And you Jews, Moses commands you: 'If you see the ass of your enemy fallen under its burden, do not leave it; unload it together with him' (Ex. 23:5).

You should also listen to the words of Solomon: 'Do not rejoice when your enemy falls; and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles' (Prov. 24:17). And I, listening to my Teacher, prefer to die rather than transgress His words, and with all my strength I strive not to turn aside from His commandments, which I learned long ago myself and afterwards taught to others. Why do you laugh at us, Jews? Even if we are your enemies, as you say, still we are men; you say that we wrong you when we speak the truth; but tell me: whom have we wronged, whom have we persecuted, whom have we compelled to bow down to idols? Do you not count your own sins as equal to the sins of those who now, from fear of men, transgress God's commandment and bow down to idols? But who compelled you to serve Baal-peor[23], or to eat the sacrifices of the dead[24], or to laugh with the daughters of strangers, or to offer your sons and daughters in sacrifice to demons, or to murmur against God, or to revile Moses, or to plan to return again to Egypt? I say nothing of your other deeds; and yet you still say that no one can seduce you. Have you not read your own books: Exodus, Judges, Kingdoms and the others, in which you are convicted? You point out to us some of us who turned to idols not under compulsion but of their own will, and because of these few you accuse and condemn all Christians. But, Jews, consider the present life: it is like a threshing floor where a great heap stands on the ground—of what? Of tares or of

22. Homer, the Greek poet who, according to tradition, wrote the poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It is not known where he was born, and many cities, among them Smyrna, claimed the honor of being his homeland.

23. Beelphegor, or Baalpeor, a Syro-Phoenician (Moabite) deity whose worship was marked by immorality.

24. Here is meant sorcery and witchcraft carried out with the help of human corpses.

wheat? When the worker comes to winnow with a shovel, then the light tares are easily blown away by the wind, but the wheat remains on the ground. Look at a net cast into the sea: is everything that fell into it and was drawn out good? No. So it is with the present life. How then do you want us to suffer: as the guilty or as the innocent? If as the guilty, then you too must suffer, since your own deeds convict you of unrighteousness; but if as the innocent, what hope of salvation will there be for you who are unjust, if the righteous suffer? 'If the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?' (1 Pet. 4:18). The judgment of the world is drawing near, and its signs are evident. I traveled through all the Jewish lands, crossed the river Jordan, and saw a land that still bears the mark of God's wrath for the sins of the people who live on it and who commit murders and many evil deeds against travelers. I saw the smoke rising from it, fields and plowlands scorched by fire, without any fruit, deprived of moisture. I saw also the Dead Sea (that is, the asphalt lake, which produces pitch), and water that has lost its properties through the wrath of God; it cannot give drink to an animal, nor can it support a human body, and whatever is thrown into it, it immediately casts out. But why do I recall such distant places! You see Decapolis in Lydia[25], burned by fire, and to this day it lies scorched in punishment for the wicked... Remember the eruption of Mount Etna and the burning of the island of Sicily[26]. If this seems far from you, then consider the warm waters that rise out of the earth: why are they heated and become hot? Is it not from the fire prepared for sinners within the earth? From this we learn that there will be a judgment upon the world and a punishment by fire for sinners from God, through His incarnate Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore we do not serve the pagan gods, nor will we bow down to the golden idol."

Saint Pionius spoke still further, and Polemon, the city governors and the whole people listened in deep silence. Then some of the citizens together with Polemon began to beg Pionius, saying:

25. Lydia, a province in Asia Minor.
26. Sicily, one of the large islands of the Mediterranean Sea, now part of the Kingdom of Italy.

"Obey us, Pionius, for we love you for your good disposition and gentleness, and we want you to remain alive. Is it not good and sweet to live and to see the light of the sun?"

The saint answered:

"This temporal life is pleasant to me also, but far more pleasant is the life that we Christians desire; this light is cheerful and agreeable, I acknowledge it, but even more joyful and pleasant is the true light, which we hope to see. All that is visible to the bodily eyes is beautiful; we neither condemn nor hate God's creation; but there is also another, invisible, which is truly more beautiful and which we place above all that is visible."

A blasphemer named Alexander, a crafty man, said:

"Listen to me, Pionius!" The saint answered him:

"You had better listen to me, for all that you know I know as well, but you do not know what I know." Alexander, mocking the saint, said to him:

"Why are these bonds upon you?"

"So that you should not think," answered the saint, "that we are going to worship your idols, but that you may know for certain that we are going to prison and to death for our God."

For a long time Alexander went on exhorting Pionius with various enticements, but achieved nothing, and at last he said:

"Why waste many words, when they do not wish to remain alive."

The people wanted Pionius to be set in a prominent place so that all could hear his words; but Polemon would not allow it, fearing that some disturbance and differing opinions might arise among the people. He said to Pionius:

"If you do not wish to offer sacrifice to the gods, then at least enter their temples." The saint answered:

"What benefit will it be to the idols that I come to them?"

"Agree, Pionius," Polemon repeated.

"Oh, if only I could," replied Pionius, "persuade you all to become Christians!" They laughed and said:

"No, please do not do that, so that we would be burned alive in the fire." And the saint said to them:

"It is even worse after death to burn eternally in unquenchable fire."

The blessed Savina smiled, and Polemon and the others said to her:

"Why are you laughing?" She answered:

"I rejoice that I am a Christian, for whoever is steadfast in the faith of Christ will rejoice forever." The impious said to her:

"You will laugh when you endure what you do not want: women who do not bow down to the gods are taken to a house of debauchery."

And she answered:

"The holy, true God will take care of me."

After this they began to record the names of the saints and their answers, by which they confessed Christ and rejected the idols. When they wished to record Savina's name, St. Pionius quietly told her not to give her true name, but to call herself Theodotia; he did this so that her deed might not become known to her mistress. The matter was that St. Savina was the slave of a certain notable Greek woman, who, several years earlier, in the reign of Gordian[27], being unable to turn her slave, blessed Savina, away from Christ, had driven her, bound, into the desolate mountains, where the faithful secretly provided her with food; later, through the great efforts of St. Pionius, she had been freed from her chains and from slavery to her mistress. St. Pionius feared that her mistress might somehow recognize her by name and wish to take her back into her service; therefore he told St. Savina to call herself Theodotia. When Polemon asked her name, she answered:

"My name is Theodotia."

"Are you a Christian?" Polemon asked.

And the saint answered:

"Yes, I am a Christian."

Her answers were recorded, just as were those of Pionius and Asclepiades. Polemon asked further:

"What God do you worship?" The saint answered:

"The Almighty God, who created heaven and earth and all of us; whom we have come to know through His Word, incarnate of the Most

27. Gordian, Roman emperor, reigned in 238 (only 36 days).

Pure and Unwedded Virgin, the Theotokos, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Having recorded the names of the saints, they led them to prison, and all the people followed after them.

Some said of St. Pionius:

"Look: he was always pale, but how ruddy he is today!"

Others shouted:

"These must be tortured if they refuse to offer sacrifice to the gods."

St. Pionius replied:

"Torture us—who is preventing you? We are not guarded by armed attendants, nor defended by soldiers; we are in your hands. Torture us!"

Someone pointed to St. Asclepiades and said:

"This man wishes to offer sacrifice to the gods."

"You lie," St. Pionius replied. "Not one of us will do this."

Others spoke of those who had fallen away from Christ and, naming them, said:

"So-and-so and so-and-so have offered sacrifice; why will you not?"

St. Pionius replied:

"Each has his own will; what have I to do with others? I am Pionius."

The people were angry with St. Pionius and his companions; scarcely had they reached the prison when the crowd nearly beat them.

Entering the prison, they found there Linus, a presbyter of the cathedral church, bound in chains for Christ's sake, and a woman from the village of Carina, named Macedonia. Many of the faithful came to them and brought them what they needed, but they would not accept it, and gave it to the prison guards. Some of the pagans, too, visited the saints and tried to convert them to their impiety; but, hearing their steadfast answers, they departed in amazement. There also came to the prisoners for Christ's sake those who had formerly been Christians, but against their will had been compelled to fall away from the faith: fear of torments had induced them to offer sacrifice to the idols. For whole hours and days they wept bitterly in the prison before the saints. St.

Pionius, too, wept bitterly for them, especially for those who had been distinguished by a good and honest life, but, fearing the torments, had offered sacrifice to the images; he wept and said:

"I suffer a new torment in my heart; my soul is torn apart when I see swine trampling the pearls of the Church[28], when the stars of heaven are cast down to earth by the serpent's tail (Rev. 12:4), and when the vine planted by the right hand of God is devoured by the wild boar and plundered by passers-by. My children, I grieve for you, until Christ again dwell in you; my beloved foster-children, nourished with heavenly bread, why have you turned aside to the sinful path? Now the lawless elders have defamed chaste Susanna—that is, the Church of Christ; now Haman rejoices, while Esther and all her people are troubled; now famine has come—not a lack of bread or water, but of the word of God; now all the Gospel virgins have grown drowsy and sleep. The word of the Lord has been fulfilled: 'When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?' (Lk. 18:8). And this other word of His: 'Brother shall deliver up brother to death' (Lk. 21:16); I hear that now each man betrays his neighbor. Truly Satan has asked to sift us as wheat; but let the fiery shovel in the hands of the word of God winnow His threshing floor. The salt has lost its strength, and is cast out, and men tread it underfoot. But let no one think, children, that the Lord has grown weak: it is not the Lord, but we who have grown weak, for He says: 'Has My hand grown powerless to deliver you? Or has My hearing become heavy, that I should not hear you? But your sins have separated you from your God.' We have sinned, brethren; we have transgressed the commandments of the Lord and committed lawlessness, angered God and grieved our neighbor; we have reproached one another, lied, and slandered one another, and devoured one another, whereas our righteousness ought to have exceeded the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes. I hear, moreover, that the Jews are inviting some of you to their assemblies; beware lest you fall into still worse snares and incur an unforgivable sin—that is, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Do not join the Jews in being rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah,

28. That is, the teaching of Christ (Mt. 7:6).

whose hands are stained with blood. We neither killed a prophet nor betrayed and crucified Christ. Why speak at length? Remember what you have often heard from me before. You know well that the Jews say Christ was a mere man and, as a mortal, was put to death. But let them tell us: if He was a mere mortal man, how did the whole world become filled with so many of His disciples? How do so many suffer cruelly for His name? How, through the name of a mere mortal man, were demons cast out so many years after Him—and are cast out now, and will be cast out until the end of the age? And many other miracles are wrought in the Church of the faithful by His Almighty name. The wretched Jews do not understand that Christ, our Lord, suffered of His own will, died for us, and rose again in glory on the third day. But the lawless say that Christ was a sorcerer and rose from the dead by the power of magic. Let them show you, then, which of their writings or ours says this of Christ, or which righteous man has ever said it. Is it not plain that this is a lie, and that those who tell such lies are the most vile law-breakers? And why believe such people more than the righteous? I heard these false words of theirs even in my childhood. It is written in Scripture how Saul came to the sorceress and asked her to raise the Prophet Samuel from the dead. The woman performed her enchantments, and Saul saw an old man coming up out of the earth, clothed in a long robe; and he understood that this was Samuel, and asked him what he wished. Could that sorceress truly have raised Samuel from the dead, or not? If the Jews say that she could, they admit that falsehood is stronger than truth and sorcery stronger than holiness, because the holy prophet could not disobey the sorceress; those who say this are vile and accursed. But if they say that the sorceress could not truly raise the Prophet Samuel by her enchantments, then neither can they say of Christ our Lord that He rose from the tomb by magic power. The account in Holy Scripture is explained thus. How could the devil dwelling in the sorceress bring into this world the soul of the holy prophet, who rested in Abraham's bosom? For the lesser has no power over the greater, and the devil cannot command a saint; but the angels who fell away from God obey those who have forsaken God, serve them, and are summoned by their sorcery. Whatever sorcerers ask of

them, the devils perform: the sorceress asked the devil who obeyed her, and he assumed the appearance of the prophet. Nor is this surprising, since Satan himself, according to the word of the Apostle (2 Cor. 11:14), transforms himself into an angel of light; therefore his servants also can assume the appearance of the servants of God, just as the Antichrist will assume the form of Christ. Thus the sorceress did not raise Samuel from the dead, but showed Saul, who had fallen away from God, a devil in Samuel's likeness. Scripture itself bears witness to this: for the one who appeared in Samuel's likeness said to Saul, 'And tomorrow thou shalt be with me.' How, then, could Saul, the enemy of God, be with the holy Prophet Samuel? Would it not be better for him to be with the devil, to whom he had submitted after falling away from God? Let the lying Jews know that no one can truly raise the dead by any sorcery; and just as the sorceress did not raise Samuel by enchantment, so Christ did not rise by magic, but by His divine power destroyed the power of death; and as He suffered and died of His own will, so He rose of His own will, by His own authority as God. If they will not believe even this, then tell them: even if we have offered sacrifice to idols, we are still far better than you: you offered sacrifice to demons of your own will, while we were compelled to do so by force." And St. Pionius exhorted the apostates, saying: "Do not despair, brethren. Although you have committed a grievous sin and offered sacrifice to idols, repent truly and turn again with all your heart to Christ your God. He is merciful and ready to receive all who come to Him in repentance, and He will gladly receive you as His children."

And with great lamentation they repented of their sin and turned again to Christ God.

After this Polemon, the overseer of idol worship, and Theophilus the magistrate[29] came to the prison with soldiers and the people; they brought the saints out and said:

– Your bishop Euctimon has bowed down to our gods and offered sacrifice to them. Obey, and you too do as he did; but if you do not do

29. A magistrate was an important state official among the Romans, who concentrated in his hands military and judicial power.

so, you will be judged by the priest Lepidon and by Euctimon in the temple of the gods.

St. Pionius answered:

– If Bishop Euctimon has offered sacrifice to idols, that is his own will; what is it to us? We will not offer sacrifices. But it is the antipatos[30] who ought to judge us, not Lepidon, nor Euctimon, nor yourselves. How is it that you, without waiting for the arrival of the antipatos, take upon yourselves his authority?

Those who had come, having poured out their vexation upon the saints, withdrew. Afterwards they returned again with an army and a crowd of people, and falsely declared:

– The antipatos has sent an order to lead you to judgment at Ephesus[31]. Pionius answered:

– Let the one sent come, take us, and lead us. Then Theophilus said:

– Why do you not believe me? I am a prince, and it is right to believe me.

And, throwing a rope around the neck of St. Pionius, he ordered the soldiers to lead them all into the temple of the idols. They seized them all and dragged them by force, since the saints did not wish to go to the idols and loudly cried out:

– We are Christians; why should we go to idol-images?

But the soldiers dragged the saints with force, and they nearly strangled Pionius, pulling him by the neck with the rope.

When they were brought to the middle of the square and were near the pagan shrine, St. Pionius fell to the ground, saying that he was a Christian and did not wish to enter the idol-house. Then six servants, falling upon him, began to beat him with their hands and feet and knees, striking his ribs; but he paid them no heed. Then they took him up in their arms, carried him and threw him into the idol-house before the unclean altar, where the wretched Bishop Euctimon was still standing, performing the sacrifice to the idols. After this Lepidon said:

30. Antipat, or proconsul, the governor of the province.

31. Ephesus, a city of Asia Minor situated on the shore of the Aegean Sea. In antiquity it was famous for its wealth and trade.

– Why, Pionius, do you not wish to offer sacrifice to the gods?

The saint answered:

– Because we are Christians.

– Which God do you worship? asked Lepidon.

– The One, answered Pionius, Who created heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. Lepidon asked:

– Who, then, was crucified? The saint answered:

– He was crucified Whom God the Father sent for the salvation of the world.

The princes burst out laughing, and Lepidon began to revile and reproach the blessed Pionius. Then they forcibly placed upon the holy martyrs the wreaths with which the impious were accustomed to perform their sacrifices, and compelled them to eat of the sacrificial meat. But they, tearing off the wreaths, threw them to the ground, trampled them under foot and spat upon the sacrifices. The impious idol-worshippers raised a clamor and led the saints back to the prison with abuse and blows.

As St. Pionius was entering the doors of the prison, one soldier struck him heavily on the head with something and wounded him. Immediately the one who struck felt pain in his hands; he was seized all over by sickness, his body was covered with sores and swelled, so that he could scarcely breathe.

Then the antipatos Quintilian arrived at Smyrna, and, seating himself in the court, called St. Pionius alone for interrogation. Having questioned him and seeing that he did not submit, he ordered him to be hung up naked and his body to be scraped with iron hooks. They tortured the saint in this way and said:

– Why are you hastening to death? The saint answered:

– I am hastening not to death, but to eternal life.

After this torment the saint was condemned to death, and, according to the Roman custom, the following sentence of death was read to him:

– Pionius, who has himself acknowledged that he is a Christian, we command to be crucified and burned alive.

Brought to the place of crucifixion and burning, he himself undressed, and, looking at his body, rejoiced greatly at its bodily purity; then he looked up to heaven and gave thanks to God for having preserved him thus in unblemished purity to the end.

On the ground lay a piece of wood in the shape of a cross, on which he was to be crucified; he himself lay down upon this wood, stretched himself out and gave himself up to the soldiers to be nailed to it. When he was already nailed, they said to him:

– Obey, Pionius, submit to the imperial command: we will take out the nails, the physicians will heal you, and you will be well.

But the saint, after keeping silent, said:

– I wish to fall asleep, that I may rise the better at the general resurrection.

Having nailed Pionius, they raised the wood, set it upright, fixed its lower end firmly in the ground, heaped wood around it and set it on fire. The strong flame enveloped the saint on all sides, and he, with his eyes closed, prayed inwardly to God, and was not burned. All, seeing him with closed eyes, thought that he was already dead. But he, after a considerable time, when the flame began gradually to subside, having completed his prayer in the secret of his heart, opened his eyes.

The people were greatly astonished that he was still alive in such a fire. Then with a cheerful countenance he pronounced "Amen" at the end of his prayer, adding: "Lord, receive my spirit," and gave up his soul.

The fire went out, and his body was found entirely whole, and not even the hair of his head had been burned. His face was bright and shone with Divine grace: this was the sign of the joy of his holy soul, which had entered into heavenly joy and received from the right hand of Christ the crown.

This took place in the reign of Decius[32], in the city of Smyrna, under the antipatos Quintilian, on the fifth day of the March Ides by the Roman reckoning, and by the Eastern reckoning in the seventh month (that is, in March, the seventh month from September), on the eleventh

32. Decius, Roman emperor, reigned from 249 to 251. The martyric death of St. Pionius followed in 250.

day, on Saturday, at the tenth hour of the day. Thus Metaphrastes[33] writes concerning St. Pionius.

Concerning the other holy martyrs who were taken and held in prison together with St. Pionius, it is not written in what torments they completed their struggle; yet it is beyond doubt that they suffered for Christ and attained heavenly life together with St. Pionius.

This holy presbyter Pionius wrote the life and passion of the holy Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and afterwards was himself, together with him, granted to share in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of our holy father Euthymius, Archbishop of Novgorod

Память святого отца нашего Евфимия, архиепископа Новгородского

The parents of the blessed Euthymius lived in Great Novgorod[34]. His father, who was a priest at the church of St. Theodore, bore the name Micah, and his mother's name was Anna. Having been joined in lawful marriage and living in honorable wedlock, they had no children and grieved greatly over this. In their sorrow they prayed diligently to God and to the Most Pure Theotokos for the removal of their barrenness. The Lord heard their prayer: Anna conceived and bore a son, who was this blessed Euthymius. Soon after his birth the infant was baptized, and in holy Baptism he was given the name John. He was still in swaddling clothes when his parents brought him to that church where they had prayed for the granting of a child, and, laying him before the icon of the Mother of God, they said:

– O Queen and Lady! Behold, we have brought you him whom you have granted us. According to the word which our lips uttered to you in

33. Symeon Metaphrastes was a remarkable Byzantine public figure and church writer of the eleventh century. Of his writings the most notable are the Lives of the Saints. In composing this work, Symeon did not limit himself to collecting the ancient accounts, but retold and rendered them in the colloquial language. Hence his surname Metaphrastes (from *metaphrazein*, "to paraphrase").

34. This was the name borne in antiquity by the present city of Novgorod. It was one of the oldest and best-known cities of ancient Rus.

the sorrow of our hearts, as to the Queen and Lady, we give up our child. Order his life as you yourself wish. Now, however, we take him to ourselves, that he may remain with us in our house, since an infant cannot live without a mother.

By the cooperation of the grace of God the infant grew successfully, and when the time came, his parents gave him over to be taught the Divine books. God, glorified in the Holy Trinity, Who desires all men to be saved, bestowed upon the youth John sharpness of mind, and he studied the Divine Scriptures with success. Throughout the whole time of his instruction he occupied himself with no other pursuits than those which led him to meditate upon divine things; and when he reached the age of fifteen, he was inflamed with love for God and desired to renounce the world and receive the monastic calling. He did not know whither this calling would lead him, since the judgments of God are unsearchable; but he diligently sought to fulfill his good desire, and God, seeing from on high all that was to befall him in the future—which, as is seen from the present narrative, came to pass in its time—soon indeed fulfilled his desire.

One monk, named Euphrosynus, and two other monks, Ignatius and Galaktion, who had dedicated themselves to the service of God, resolved to labor in solitude, and they set about to find a suitable place for this. Before long such a place was found. It was called Vezhishche[35], and there was nothing on it except forest and marshland. When the monks came to this place, they sensed a certain fragrance in the air, and they considered this not a mere natural occurrence but a special indication of Divine Providence. They built here a chapel in the name of the Hierarch of Christ Nicholas, and afterward they erected cells for themselves. Soon there came to them a priest named Pimen, who desired to live and labor together with them. Then by common consent they built a wooden church in the name of the same wonderworking saint Nicholas[36] and began to live an ascetic life. They endured many hardships from the local inhabitants, especially from one nobleman, who, at the prompting of the devil, did not wish monks to live near him;

35. Vezhishche, or Vazhishche, a locality twelve versts west of Novgorod.
36. This was in 1411.

but the wonderworker Nicholas, who never leaves in need a monastery dedicated to his name when they pray to him with faith, always provided sustenance also for these monks. It soon happened that the nobleman living near the monastery developed on his leg a malignant abscess, from which he suffered greatly. In his sickness he came to his senses and turned with a prayer for help to the holy wonderworker Nicholas; after this he went to his monastery and, having prayed there, received healing. Grateful for this healing, he gave to the monastery a plot of land, which is near it to this day, and from then on he began to honor the monastery of St. Nicholas with reverent faith. After this, by the grace of God and through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, the number of monks in the monastery began to increase, and the aforementioned Pimen, the first hieromonk of the monastery, also became its hegumen[37].

To him, by the arrangement of Divine Providence, there came the blessed youth John, asking him to perform over him the tonsure into monasticism. Pimen, seeing the youth, received him as one sent to him by God Himself, tonsured him into the monastic life, and gave him at that time the name Euthymius. This event, which took place by the will of God, was directed by Divine Providence so that through Euthymius the monastery might be still more glorified, which in time came to pass. Living in the monastery, Venerable Euthymius showed such strict obedience in everything to his superior and the brethren that it aroused general amazement, as well as praise that, being of so young an age, he possessed the mind of a man of many years. Therefore, even before his ordination to the pastorate, everyone recognized in him the future shepherd, and before reaching full age he became a guide for all in the monastic life. When Venerable Euthymius had acquired such renown in his monastery, Archbishop Symeon also learned of him[38]. Summoning him to himself, and seeing that he was filled with good intentions and skilled in speech, he came to love him warmly, and although he did not wish to leave his monastery, he entrusted to him the management of

37. In monasticism, Pimen was named Pachomius.

38. Symeon (Sampson), Archbishop of Novgorod, who rose from simple monk, governed the Diocese of Novgorod after the death of Archbishop John, from 1416 to 1421.

the church property[39]. Having taken upon himself these new duties, Venerable Euthymius continued to bear his monastic labor and in nothing departed from the observance of the rules of monastic life.

After some years, Vladyka Symeon, having worthily governed the Church, departed to the Lord, passing into eternal blessed life, and after him Euthymius was raised to the archiepiscopal throne of Novgorod[40]. At that time Venerable Euthymius withdrew to the monastery of the Holy Savior, called Khutyn[41], and remained there to dwell. But after some time, at the request of the elders of the monastery of the Most Pure Mother of God, which was on Lisya Gora[42], he was appointed hegumen of that monastery, where, presiding over the monks, he gave them all a perfect example for edification, since he was merciful to all and at the same time treated all with reverence.

Soon after this, the assembly of the whole people of Great Novgorod desired to elect him for ordination to the Novgorod archiepiscopal throne[43], and included him among the other candidates[44], not knowing that from his youth he had been called to the episcopal service, as it is written in the prophet: "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect" (Ps. 138:16)[45]. And since the Apostle says that all authority is ordained of God (Rom. 13:1), how could a man receive it unless it were

39. In the practice of the Novgorod hierarchs, this was the first instance in which the administration of church property was entrusted to a monk; until then the stewards of the archiepiscopal house in Novgorod had been chosen from among the laity.

40. Here is meant Euthymius I (Emelian) the Bearded, who occupied the archiepiscopal see of Novgorod after the brief rule (1421 to 1423) of Theodosius, who was elected but not consecrated. Euthymius I was Archbishop of Novgorod from 1423 to 1429.

41. The Khutyn Monastery (Khutyn) was founded in 1192 by a distinguished Novgorodian named Alexis, who in monasticism was called Barlaam. It stands on the river Volkhov, on its right bank, ten versts below Novgorod along the course of that river.

42. The Monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos on Lisitsa (on Fox Mountain) stood seven versts from the trading quarter of Novgorod. It is mentioned in 1392.

43. The Novgorod bishops bore the title of archbishop from 1165.

44. From 1156, the election of the Novgorod hierarch did not depend on the metropolitan with a council of bishops, but solely on the Novgorodians themselves, on their *veche*. Three candidates were usually chosen, and their lots were placed on the Holy Table in the church of St. Sophia; after the Liturgy, two of the lots were drawn one after another by the protopriest and announced to the whole people; finally, the lot that remained on the Holy Table indicated God's chosen one. Thus St. Euthymius was elected.

45. That is, from my conception in my mother's womb Thou didst see me and didst determine my destiny in life.

given to him from above (Jn. 19:11)? This was fulfilled in Venerable Euthymius. Having sealed the lots of the chosen, the popular assembly and the clergy of Great Novgorod carried them into the cathedral church of St. Sophia[46] and placed them upon the Holy Table. As for the lots, this was a human act; but which of the chosen should occupy so high a divine throne was indicated by what came to pass afterward: by the will and judgment of God the lot fell upon Euthymius, that he should possess this throne. After this the Novgorodians joyfully went to the venerable man and, on the very day of the memory of John Chrysostom, with honor led him into the church of St. Sophia[47]. For a long time Venerable Euthymius refused and did not wish to accept the archbishopric, pleading especially that he considered himself unworthy of so high a rank; but since he could not resist the judgment of God, he at last submitted to the will of those who had chosen him. This brought great joy to all the inhabitants of Novgorod, since all considered him fully worthy of the dignity of the archiepiscopal rank. However, after his election Venerable Euthymius remained in the monastic state, since his consecration was hindered by the fact that at that time there was no metropolitan in Rus'[48]. Remaining unconsecrated for more than four years[49], he went to the city of Smolensk, where the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus', Gerasim, was then staying[50], and from him received ordination to the rank of archbishop. And here Venerable Euthymius astonished everyone by his mind and discernment, so that even the metropolitan himself expressed amazement and spoke with praise of his understanding. After his consecration, Vladyka Euthymius returned with

46. The cathedral of the Novgorod hierarchs, which has survived to this day.
47. This was in 1429.
48. After the death of Metropolitan Photius, which occurred on 1 July 1431, the metropolitan's see in Moscow remained vacant until 1448, if the brief rule of Isidore is not counted.
49. St. Euthymius governed the Diocese of Novgorod, without the episcopal rank, from 1429 to 1434. It was customary in Novgorod to govern a diocese before consecration as bishop. Thus John, not consecrated as bishop, governed for eight months; Theoctistus and Moses for a year each; Clement for two years; and Archbishop Theodosius died without having been consecrated to the episcopal rank.
50. After the death of Metropolitan Photius in 1433, the Lithuanian prince Svidrigaila sent Bishop Gerasimus of Smolensk to Constantinople to be consecrated Metropolitan of Lithuania; but the Patriarch appointed him Metropolitan of all Rus. Suspecting Gerasimus of treason, Svidrigaila seized him near Smolensk and burned him at Vitebsk. This was in July 1435.

great honor to his cathedral city of Great Novgorod and entered upon the full governance of his flock. Conscious of the whole greatness of the rank he had taken upon himself, he devoted himself to the labors of his ministry with even greater zeal than he had borne them before his consecration, remembering the words of Scripture: "to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Lk. 12:48). Therefore by his labors he sought to bring forth fruit, according to the Gospel, not thirty or sixty but a hundredfold[51]. Before, when he had not yet received the high episcopal rank, he had care only for his own soul; but now, as a bishop, there arose the need to care for many souls, so that he could say with boldness to the Lord and Master: "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me" (Is. 8:18). Pondering this and many other things in his wise soul, Venerable Euthymius felt great perplexity in his heart, yet he cast all upon God, and the Lord, to Whom be glory now, always and forever, did not put his hope to shame[52].

Troparion, Tone 4:

Chosen of God from thy youth, O Hierarch Euthymius, and for this honored with the rank of archbishop, thou didst shepherd the people entrusted to thee by God; wherefore, even after thy repose, thou hast received from the Lord the gift of healing various infirmities. Intercede with Him for us who celebrate thy honorable memory, that we may all unceasingly praise thee.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a fellow-sitter with hierarchs and an excellent champion of the hierarchs wast thou, O Hierarch Euthymius; cease not to guard thy fatherland, the city, and the people who honor thee in faith and bow down before thy honorable relics, that we may all cry out to thee with a loud voice: Rejoice, O Hierarch divinely wise.

* * *

51. The expression is taken from the Savior's parable of the sower (Mt. 13:8).
52. St. Euthymius died on 10 March 1458.

NOTES

1840. A large number of the writings of St. Sophronius have survived, and he is recognized as one of the foremost dogmatic theologians. Besides his synodal epistle, containing the teaching on the Trinity and on the Incarnation of God the Word, in which the unity of hypostasis is proved (against Nestorius) and the duality of natures (against Eutyches), his notable works include: 1) On the Baptism of the Saviour, a defense of the two natures in Jesus Christ, and at the same time the teaching on the two actions and wills; 2) On the Cross, two discourses; in the second he sets forth the teaching on fasting and on the feast of the veneration of the Cross during our Great Lent; 3) an apology to Basil the Great concerning his interpretation of the words *thysis* and *ousia*; 4) On the Meeting; 5) a discourse on John the Baptist; 6) a discourse in praise of St. Mary of Egypt, from which passages in the original are quoted in the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council; 7) an account of the life of the martyrs Cyrus and John; 8) an "Explanation of the Liturgy," one of his most remarkable works from the theological standpoint; 9) the "Triodes," beginning with the days of Great Lent and ending with the feast of the Ascension; 10) troparia, or self-voiced stichera, of the hours of the feast of the Nativity of Christ, with the complete order of the Hours; 11) the order of the Hours of Great Friday with stichera, not wholly similar to the present one; 12) stichera for the blessing of water on the day of Theophany; 13) some poetic compositions; 14) finally, while a hieromonk, St. Sophronius revised and corrected the "Typikon of the Monastery of St. Sabbas the Sanctified."

THE TWELFTH DAY OF MARCH

March 12

12 марта

New Calendar March 12 · Old Calendar March 25 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Theophanes the Confessor

Житие святого отца нашего Феофана исповедника

Venerable Theophanes was born in Constantinople to noble parents, Isaac and Theodotia. Isaac was related to Emperor Leo the Isaurian and to his son Copronymus[1], and for this reason he was called Isaurius, since he was of the same imperial lineage and came from the land of Isauria. At the imperial court he held honorable offices, and under the reign of Copronymus he was a voivode.

At this time the iconoclastic heresy arose, and a severe persecution began against the pious.

The God-fearing Isaac and his wife Theodotia held firmly to the Orthodox teaching, and they were granted to become the parents of a son who was soon to shine forth like the dawn in the Church of Christ. They named him Theophanes, which means "manifested by God"[2]. He was so named first of all because he was born on the feast of the Theophany of the Lord, which in Greek was called Theophania[3]; but chiefly he received this name by the providence of God, as a sign that, as of old the Lord chose and sanctified the Prophet Jeremiah from his mother's womb, so He chose Theophanes to be a great lamp of His Church (Jer.

1. The Emperor Leo the Isaurian (717–741) was the first iconoclast, who issued the command to cast the holy icons out of the churches and destroy them. The Emperor Constantine Copronymus (741–775) strongly supported the iconoclastic heresy. He convened at Constantinople a council, which he called Ecumenical, at which the veneration of icons was rejected. Isauria, whence both the Emperor Leo the Isaurian and Theophanes' father Isaac came, is a small, little-known country in Asia Minor, bordering on Lycaonia and Cilicia. At present only ruins remain near Ulubunar.

2. Theophanes – Greek Θεοθανοσ – manifested by God or manifesting God.

3. Θεοθανεια (from Θεος, God, and θαινω, I manifest) – Theophany.

1:5). As the librarian Anastasius testifies, he was sometimes also called by his father's name, Isaac; but this was before his tonsure into the monastic rank, to which he had ardently aspired from his youth, as will be related in his Life.

After the birth of the blessed and Theophany-born Theophanes, his father Isaac, having lived three more years, passed to endless life. Dying, he wrote a will in which he entrusted his three-year-old son, together with his mother, to the care and protection of the emperor Constantine Copronymus, as his kinsman.

Studying the Divine Scriptures and advancing in a virtuous life, the youth with the years became remarkable for an extraordinary intelligence. When Theophanes was twelve years old, one of the senators desired to betroth his ten-year-old daughter to him, since the young Theophanes was handsome, very intelligent, wealthy, and a relative of the emperor. Theodotia, Theophanes' mother, gladly agreed to this betrothal. But since none of this could take place without the emperor's will, the senator made an earnest request about it to the emperor himself, seeking to be united with him by marriage of his daughter to the imperial nephew. When the emperor consented, the betrothal of the children took place, although earlier than the age permitted for marriage; but the marriage itself was postponed until the betrothed had come of age.

At this time the emperor Copronymus died; after him there ascended the throne his son Leo IV, called by his mother's name Khazar[4], for she was the daughter of a Khazar khan, and in her idolatry she had been called Khazara, but in holy baptism she was named Irene.

Some years later Theodotia, the mother of Theophanes, also died. She died before the marriage of her son, leaving him an immeasurable wealth.

In the house of Theophanes there lived at that time a certain God-fearing and chaste servant; Theophanes loved him greatly for his virtuous life and considered this servant his best counselor. Inspired by frequent edifying conversations with him, and still more instructed by the

4. The Emperor Leo IV, surnamed the Khazar, reigned from 775 to 780. He also supported iconoclasm, though more weakly than his predecessors.

Holy Spirit who works in all things, Theophanes came to love chastity, thinking of only one thing: how to preserve his virginal purity incorrupt; and, ardently desiring the monastic rank and life, he began to distribute all his wealth to the beggars and the poor.

Learning of this, the father-in-law of Theophanes, against the wish of the bridegroom, sought to hasten the marriage, the more so since the bridegroom and the bride had come of age.

When the day appointed for the marriage arrived, and according to custom the wedding feast was already under way, the Theophany-born youth Theophanes, raising his mind to God, prayed in the secret of his heart that the Lord by His grace would preserve him in pure virginity.

And so, when the youth Theophanes with his bride was already in the bridal chamber, he sat down on the bed and, sighing from his heart, disclosed the thought that was hidden within him and spoke thus to his bride:

"O beloved, do you not know that the time of our life is short, but our end is unknown, and a merciless judgment awaits those who, passing their life in pleasures and wealth, often provoke the Lord to anger? Marriage, though it was established by God Himself, yet the worldly cares necessary in married life draw the human mind away from the Lord, render people's pious thoughts vain, and do not allow the soul's bright eyes to look toward the life to come. We know that Lazarus, for his temporary suffering, was carried by the Angels into the bosom of Abraham, while the rich man, who lived in abundance, was cast into hell and could not obtain even a drop of water to cool his tongue (Lk. 16:24). We also hear the Gospel beatitudes prepared in the Heavens (Mt. 5). To whom are they promised? Not to the rich who live in the merriment of this world and in every prosperity, but to the poor, the mourning, the hungry, the thirsty, those who suffer persecution and reproach for Christ's sake; in short, the narrow and strait way leads into life eternal, but the wide gate and broad way lead into Gehenna (Mt. 7:13–14). We also know that whoever lives luxuriously in this age, in vain pleasures, will in the age to come endure sorrow and grief, and it cannot be otherwise. Therefore, my beloved bride, if you desire it, let us refrain from carnal conjugal union and together remain

in pure virginity; for now let us live a little together as if in carnal marriage, for the sake of your cruel father, but under the appearance of wedlock let us remain as brother and sister; and then, when the Lord sends us a suitable time, let us go to a monastery: I to the men's, and you to the women's. Thus we shall devote ourselves to the Lord for our whole life, that in the age to come we may be granted a part with His holy saints."

The holy bride of Theophanes, like good earth, having received this good seed, answered the blessed Theophanes with joy in her soul:

"I know, my beloved lord, the words of our Savior, who says in the Gospel: 'If anyone does not hate his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, and does not take up his cross and follow Me, he is not worthy of Me' (Lk. 14:26; Mt. 10:38). Let us therefore make ourselves worthy followers of our Lord and, if you wish, leave behind all that is vain. If you agree, I agree too; if it pleases you, it pleases me too; and if you desire to remain in virginity, I too desire this. And let us present ourselves blameless to the Heavenly Bridegroom, keeping pure not only our souls but also our bodies. What benefit will it be to us if we, having lived this brief life in vanity, are deprived of the eternal goods? And if we have children, we shall be filled with still greater sorrow, caring day and night for their sustenance and their fate, falling at the same time into the manifold snares of this world. And when unknown death comes, where shall we then pass – into Paradise or Gehenna – we do not know even now. Therefore let us live in purity, secretly keeping our virginity, until the Lord grants us the monastic rank."

The blessed youth, hearing these words of his chaste bride, marveled at her prudence, and falling to the earth gave thanks to God, who had instructed the maiden by His Holy Spirit to such a decision, which was wholly in accord with his intention. And they spent that whole night in prayer, asking for help from above, that the way of life they had begun might be brought to perfection.

When morning came, they fell asleep for a short time, and both saw the same dream: there appeared to them in a vision a youth with a bright face; smiling, he spoke to them kindly:

"The Lord has accepted your intention and has sent me to bless you in the life to which you have consented, that you may stand before Him holy and blameless."

Having said this, he signed them with the sign of the Cross over their whole bodies and became invisible. Rising from sleep, they told each other the dream that both had seen alike. At this time they perceived an indescribable fragrance proceeding from the presence of the Angel, and they marveled. And then, falling to the earth before the Lord, they offered Him fervent praise. This same heavenly fragrance, for a long time, was perceived by many not only in their chamber but throughout the whole house. And this holy couple lived like Angels in the flesh, burning before God with the flame of divine love, like two priests or like two olive trees pouring forth the oil of mercy, for every day they gave countless alms, generously distributing all their possessions to the needy.

After some time the father-in-law of Theophanes, learning about his son-in-law and daughter, that they were living in virginity and distributing all their wealth to the beggars, was greatly grieved. Going to the emperor, he made this known to him and complained of his son-in-law:

"Woe is me, unhappy one!" he cried out. "Woe to my wretched old age because of my vile son-in-law! He senselessly squanders the wealth and in vain ruins my young daughter, not living with her as a husband, and I have no hope at all of being comforted by grandchildren. And why did he take her? Why did he not, before the marriage, break the vow of betrothal and renounce her, so as not to bring her, so young, into such misfortune, and not to subject my old age to still greater sorrow? I have a twofold grief: I lament for my daughter, that being married she has no husband and cannot be a mother, and for the wealth squandered in vain, since Theophanes has squandered not only his own estate but already a considerable part of what I gave with my daughter as her dowry."

And he begged the emperor to punish and persuade his son-in-law to live according to the law of marriage and not to squander his property in vain.

The emperor, filled with wrath, summoned the Blessed Theophanes and, glaring at him fiercely, began to threaten him, ordering him to change his manner of life; and in case of refusal, he vowed to put out his eyes and send him into confinement.

But the God-pleasing youth paid no heed to the threats of the emperor, and did not abandon his so beautifully begun pure and virginal life: he sought to win favor rather with the Heavenly King than with the earthly emperor.

Soon after this, Theophanes was commanded by the emperor to set out for the land of Cyzicus[5], on certain affairs of the people. This journey was contrived deliberately by his father-in-law: on the one hand, so that amid the cares of the business entrusted to him by the emperor, Theophanes would cease and forget to perform his customary prayerful labors, fasts and abstinences; and on the other hand, so that he would stop distributing his estate, over which his father-in-law now became the steward.

When Theophanes, fulfilling the emperor's command, set out for Cyzicus, the emperor and his father-in-law ordered that his wife go with him as well, for the father could not bear that his daughter be separated from her husband, even for a short time.

It happened that they had to cross a river which was formerly called the Rhyndakos, but which the people later named the Great; on one bank of it lay the Olympian region, and on the other the Sigrian region[6].

The Blessed Theophanes wished to travel along this river by boat, though one could also travel by land; but because of a bodily infirmity that had then come upon him, he preferred the river route as the easier. All this came about by the providence of God. Having sent his friends and servants on by land with the horses and chariots, he himself took a boat with his blessed wife and a few attendants; sailing along the river, Theophanes admired the beautiful Sigrian mountains, hills and deserts,

5. The land of Cyzicus (with the principal city of Cyzicus) lies in the northwestern part of Asia Minor, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara.

6. The Sigrian region – a part of Asia Minor extending from the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) between the rivers Rhyndacus (in antiquity Lycus, now Lünad, and in its lower course Mikalitsa) and Esepus, which separated Mysia from the Troad.

and burned in spirit for a life of silence in them. And he saw in one place, among the mountains, a spacious valley on which a dense forest grew; and this place greatly pleased him. Putting in to shore to spend the night, and bidding all the others to remain in the boats, Theophanes went up into this valley and, walking about that desert place, was moved in his soul. Standing in one spot in the thick forest, he began to pray fervently to God. Raising his hands to heaven and, with tears in his eyes, many times falling prostrate to the earth, he said:

"Show me the way wherein I should walk" (Ps. 142:8).

Seized by a great desire for the life of a hermit, and resolving at once to leave everything behind, Theophanes withdrew into that desert. Wearied from prayer, he sat down to rest, and saw that light-bearing Angel who had once appeared to him and his bride in their bridal chamber. This heavenly being, pointing his finger at the desert, said to Theophanes:

"It is fitting for you to settle here; but wait a little, until those who block your way are taken from the earth; they will soon be removed from here, and then you will go without hindrance wherever you wish."

St. Theophanes was greatly gladdened by this vision. Returning to the boats in joy, he continued on his way. Noticing the desert monasteries and the huts of hermits in those Sigrian mountains, he visited them, going about with his chaste wife. In these places he met a certain discerning elder named Gregory, surnamed Strategios, who lived in a locality called Polychrony. The Blessed Theophanes disclosed to this elder his intention and desire, and from him heard what the Angel who had appeared had said to him before. This holy elder, granted by God, for his angel-like life, the gift of foresight, said to Theophanes:

"Wait a little, good youth; soon both the emperor and your father-in-law will be destroyed from the face of the earth, and you, being free, will fulfill your good intention."

To the virtuous bride of Theophanes the holy elder said quietly in her ear that her beloved brother Theophanes would in his time receive the crown of martyrdom.

After this St. Theophanes went to Kyzikos and carried out what the emperor had commanded him concerning the administration of the

people. There he often went with his servants into the neighboring Sigrian mountains, where he visited the holy fathers. Seeking their blessing and prayers, Theophanes at the same time edified their souls with God-inspired conversations.

He especially often went to the discerning Gregory Strategios, and to Christopher, abbot of "Malo Selo" — that was the name of that monastery. Once, when Theophanes was passing through the Sigrian mountains to visit the desert-dwellers, he was obliged to tarry in one place. At that time it was very hot, for it was harvest-time, and therefore Theophanes and all who were with him became very thirsty.

That place was desert and without water. When the day was already declining toward evening, they had to lie down and spend the night there. At this time both they themselves and their livestock were truly faint from thirst. The Blessed Theophanes, having prayed, sat down under a hill, so that he might sleep a little and drown out his thirst in sleep. And so, just as he fell into a doze, suddenly a spring of living water flowed over his head and bathed him. Thus the Lord did not despise His servant, who once brought forth water from the rock for the ungrateful Jewish people; all the more did He grant this to His grateful servant in such a need. The saint, awakened by the unexpected sound of the water that had splashed over him, at once rose from his place and called together all who were with him. And all, gathering, marveled at that unexpected and sudden miracle and glorified God. And they not only quenched their thirst, but gave drink to their livestock as well.

When they rose the next day, the spring was no longer there: the place had become dry, and there was not even a trace of water upon it.

They especially marveled at this and glorified the wondrous power of God, that the Lord, in time of thirst and in a land wholly without water, brought forth a spring, and when there was no longer need of water, He dried up the water, thereby clearly showing that in every place the Lord is ready to supply all that is needful to him who first seeks the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6:33).

After that Theophanes spent some time in Kyzikos, and having duly carried out there all that the emperor had commanded, returned to Constantinople.

At this time the prediction of God's Angel and the prophecy of the Venerable Gregory came to pass: Emperor Leo Khazar, son of Copronymus and grandson of Leo the Isaurian, died; and Theophanes' father-in-law also died. And he, like his holy bride, became free. At once they distributed all their wealth and all their estates, as they had desired. Then Theophanes tonsured his bride in one of the women's monasteries in Bithynia[7], giving that monastery many lands for her sustenance; at her tonsure she was named Irene. In the monastic life Irene pleased God and performed many miracles, receiving from God the gift of healing diseases and casting out demons. Of these miracles the most holy Patriarch Methodius of Constantinople later told.

After the tonsure of his blessed bride, the maiden Irene, St. Theophanes gave the remainder of his estate to the poor in Constantinople, and, leaving only a little money, went to the aforementioned discerning Gregory Strategios. It was by him that Theophanes was tonsured into the monastic habit. There, from the remaining money, St. Theophanes built a monastery for this elder and lived beside him for a fairly long time, growing in monastic labors.

Then, on the counsel of the same elder, St. Theophanes went to an island called Kalonymos[8]; on this island Theophanes had a small village, remaining from his parents, which he had not yet had time to distribute to the poor. There he established a monastery, to which he transferred the whole brotherhood from the Theodore monastery called Monocheraria; he appointed for them an abbot, a reverent and experienced man. Theophanes himself shut himself into his cell and took up the copying of books, for he was a skilled scribe. These books he sold, and with the money he fed not only himself but others as well.

After some years the abbot of that monastery died, and the brethren insistently besought the Venerable Theophanes to consent himself to be

7. Bithynia – the northwestern province of Asia Minor.
8. The island of Kalonim or Kalonimos (now Kalomios, in antiquity Besbicon) lies opposite the mouths of the river Rhyndacus, in the Sea of Marmara.

their abbot. But the saint did not agree, and again set out for the Sigrian mountain; and recalling that desert where he had been granted the appearance of the Angel when he was sailing to Kyzikos, Theophanes went there and lived in that desert, pleasing God. Soon the Venerable Theophanes peopled that desert with God-pleasing desert-dwellers, for many came to him and settled about him, so that soon there arose the need to establish a monastery.

In that desert there was a certain place belonging to a farmer; this place was called "Great Selo." St. Theophanes, sending to his acquaintances and borrowing money from them, bought this place and established a monastery there, with the help of the Lord, who by His Divine providence supplies all that is needful for us. Soon the Venerable repaid the borrowed money, and in his monastery had in abundance everything needful for the sustenance of the brotherhood that had gathered to him.

St. Theophanes could not but accept the dignity of abbot in his monastery, for all the desert-dwellers implored him to do so, and it was indeed necessary.

Being abbot, Theophanes was the kind of leader whom Christ commands in the Gospel to be: "Whoever would be great among you, let him be your servant; and whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave" (Mt. 20:26–27). The Venerable Abbot Theophanes labored with his own hands, serving all, for the Lord had then granted him great bodily strength, and he took part in every monastery work more than all others, and was an example to all of a life both virtuous and diligent.

At this time, in the reign of Constantine, son of Leo and grandson of Copronymus, under his pious mother Irene and the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople Tarasius, the Seventh Ecumenical Council was convened at Nicaea against the iconoclasts[9]. At this Council the holy Church anathematized the iconoclastic heresy, and reverent veneration

9. Saint Empress Irene, wife of Leo the Khazar, after her husband's death first governed the empire, on behalf of her young son, the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (780–792), and afterwards in her own name (797–802). Saint Tarasius, Patriarch from 784 to 806 (his memory is celebrated on February 25). The VII Ecumenical Council, which confirmed the veneration of icons, was convened in 787.

of the holy icons was restored once more. The Venerable Theophanes, Abbot of the Great Village in Sigriane, was also summoned to this Council[10]. Confirming the true Orthodox faith at this Council, Theophanes shone among the Holy Fathers like a bright star. His presence at the Council was of great benefit to many; where many made a display with fine vestments, chariots and horses, he came there on a poor donkey, in old clothes and patched rags. All who had known his former life, when he was rich, noble and close to the emperor and a member of the senate, were moved to tears at seeing him in such humility and poverty, and all were taught that for the sake of the Lord one may thus humble oneself and become poor, and count everything in the world as nothing.

When the holy Council had ended, the Venerable returned to his monastery, bringing with him the pious dogmas of the holy faith confirmed at this Ecumenical Council, as the finest adornment of his monastery. Here Theophanes continued to labor in his customary ascetic struggles, enlightening by the example of his virtuous life not only his monastery but the whole surrounding region; word of him spread everywhere, and all glorified the Heavenly Father on his account. For his pious life he was also granted by God the grace of working miracles: he healed diseases and cast out demons from people. Once, when the Venerable had fallen asleep, a demon resolved to attack him; taking the form of a wild boar, it began to gnaw at the thumb of the saint's hand, so that he felt great pain. Rising at once from sleep, Theophanes saw on his finger the marks of his enemy's teeth, which had sought to bite the finger off entirely; the wound caused the saint severe pain, but taking the myrrh he had from the Life-giving Tree of the Cross, he anointed the injured finger with it and was healed at once. From then on, having received power over demons, Theophanes by his word cast them out of the suffering people brought to him.

This Venerable Father, once sailing on a ship, stilled a storm. To the wayfarers and the poor who came to his monastery he gave bread and

10. The Sigrian monastery was situated 22,000 paces from Cyzicus and from the sea. – The Great Village (Megagrit, Μέγας Αγρός) was in the same region; another monastery, the Little Village, where Christopher was abbot.

other food in abundance, and the bread did not diminish, just as the Prophet Elijah did with the jar of meal of the widow with whom he lived (3 Kgdms. 7:16).

Once the cellarer began to murmur against the saint for distributing bread to the beggars, when there was not enough even for those living in the monastery. Then the Venerable Theophanes bade him count and measure everything that was in the storeroom, and it was found that nothing had diminished; all the brethren glorified God for this, and the murmuring cellarer, falling to his knees, begged the Saint's forgiveness.

When he was already fifty years old, the Venerable Theophanes fell ill with the stone disease and suffered grievously. From that time he spent the rest of his life on a bed, and he who by his prayer healed others of sickness did not ask the Lord to heal his own infirmity, but endured it with thanksgiving. In this illness there came for him the time of his confessor's death, according to the prophecy of that far-seeing elder Gregory, who quietly said in the ear of his betrothed, a holy maiden, that in due time her bridegroom too would receive the crown of martyrdom.

Many years later, when the Venerable had grown old and several Greek emperors had reigned in turn (for after the aforementioned Emperor Constantine, who reigned together with his mother Irene, Nicephorus ascended the imperial throne together with his son Staurakios, and after them Michael Curopalates reigned), it was after these emperors that Leo the Armenian took up the scepter of the Greek kingdom[11]. This emperor raised up the iconoclastic heresy. He greatly troubled the Church of Christ, expelling the holy Patriarch Nicephorus and his disciples from the throne[12]; many other Christians he tormented and put to death outright for venerating icons.

The church historian George Cedrenus[13] writes the following about St. Theophanes. When the Patriarch of Constantinople Nicephorus was sailing by sea into exile, and the ship passed the region where the mon-

11. The Emperor Leo the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820.

12. Saint Patriarch Nicephorus governed the Church of Constantinople from 806 to 815; he died in confinement in 828. His memory is marked on March 13 and June 2. Theodore the Studite – abbot of the famous Studium monastery; his memory is celebrated on November 11.

astery of the Venerable Theophanes was located, the latter learned of this through his far-seeing spiritual eyes; he bade his disciple bring a censer with burning coals, placed incense upon them, and, ordering candles to be lit, bowed down to the earth as though conversing with someone passing by. Then the disciple asked Theophanes:

"What are you doing, Father, and to whom are you bowing and speaking?"

The Venerable answered:

"There goes the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, exiled for the sake of orthodoxy, and now he is sailing past our land by ship. It is for him that I have lit the candles and incense, so that we may render the fitting honor to the Patriarch."

The most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, who was sailing on the ship, also foresaw this, for suddenly kneeling down he answered the holy elder with a bow in return, and raising his hands he blessed him. One monk who was with the most holy Patriarch asked him:

"Whom are you blessing, most holy Father, and before whom have you knelt?"

To this Patriarch Nicephorus answered:

"Just now the confessor Theophanes, Abbot of the Great Village, greeted us with lit candles and incense; I have bowed to him in return, for he too, like us, will soon have to suffer."

All this soon came to pass.

Some time later the impious Emperor Leo the Armenian, wishing to win the Venerable Theophanes over to agreement with himself, sent envoys to him and summoned him with honor to Constantinople; at the same time he wrote to him deceitfully: "Soon I must make war upon the impious, but before going out against them I need to arm myself with your prayers, and so, honorable father, do not refuse to come to us."

The Venerable Theophanes, although he saw the emperor's guile and was at that time afflicted with a grievous illness, nevertheless re-

13. George Cedrenus – a Byzantine writer of the late eleventh or early twelfth century, author of the so-called *Synopsis of Histories*. His work begins from the creation of the world and covers Jewish, Roman, and Byzantine history up to the accession of Isaac Comnenus to the throne (1057).

solved to set out, that he might suffer for the true faith. Embarking on a ship, the saint soon arrived at Constantinople, but he was not brought before the emperor, for the emperor was ashamed of and feared Theophanes' reproofs. Instead he sent to the Venerable Theophanes his noblest courtiers, so that with flattering promises they might win him over to his heresy.

"If," he said through them to the holy man, "you will be in agreement with us, I will build up your monastery with high stone buildings and enrich it in every way; and you will be exalted with me above all in honor, and I will also grant high rank to all your close kinsmen."

To these promises the emperor, however, added a threat:

"But if you," he went on, "oppose us, you will yourself be to blame for great dishonor."

To this, St. Theophanes answered the emperor through the envoys:

"I desire nothing of the riches of this world. If, as a young man, for love of Christ I abandoned all my gold, silver and all the estates I had, shall I now in old age desire them? Far be it. As for the monastery and my brethren, the Lord Himself cares for them, above all the earthly kings and princes. Why then, Emperor, do you frighten me with your threat, as one would frighten a little child with a rod! Prepare tortures for me, kindle the fire, and though, because of my illness, I cannot walk as you see, yet for the sake of orthodoxy I will throw myself into the fire."

When the envoys heard these words of the saint, spoken with great boldness, they went and reported it all to the emperor. The emperor, astonished at such unheard-of courage, ordered a certain sophist John, a crafty sorcerer and heretic, to go to the Venerable and converse with him; but before the God-inspired words of the Venerable Father he proved as though mute and vanquished by him, and returned in shame to the emperor who had sent him.

Then the emperor, filled with anger, ordered the Venerable Theophanes to be imprisoned in a dark and cramped chamber at the so-called Eleutherius Palace, and guards to be set over him. In this gloomy confinement the Venerable, already old and sick, spent two years; here every day they tried to draw him into iconoclasm, now by caresses, now

by threats, and impious heretics sent to him on purpose mocked and reviled him. Once, when the emperor sent an envoy to the saint with kind words, wishing him to sign the decree for the overthrow of the icons, the Venerable Theophanes answered him:

Know, O emperor, Him Who gave you the kingdom, Him by Whom kings reign and tyrants rule upon the earth. Know, I say to you, that the Lord, being uncircumscribable, was pleased to become visible and, having taken our nature, became in all things like us, except for sin; and through this nature, deified in Himself, He raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, cleansed lepers, and wrought many other miracles. In this same human nature He willingly accepted death from the Jews, rose on the third day, ascended with glory into heaven, and is never again separated from the Father. The Gospel teaches us concerning this human nature in Christ; therefore we receive this Gospel book with reverence, believing all that is written in it, all the wondrous deeds of Christ, so that in the Gospel we honor, as it were, Christ Himself. And if we are not condemned for believing in the deeds of Christ described in words, why then are we condemned if we receive and honor the same Gospel history, but depicted only in icons? Even barbarians who have come to our faith readily learn, through the icons, the whole life of Christ upon earth among men and all His wondrous deeds. And how many unlettered people, beholding the miracles of Christ depicted in icons and His voluntary death, have glorified the Lord Who suffered for us! But you, rejecting the icons, must surely have envied their salvation. And what Council ever considered it a sin and sacrilege to honor the holy icons? Was it not Christ Himself Who sent to Abgar, prince of Edessa, for his healing, an image of His Face, made without hands?[1889] And did not the holy Apostle Luke leave us an icon of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos painted in many colors?[14] There is nothing here contrary to the tradition and teaching of the holy Fathers: St. Basil the Great, examiner of the ineffable Mysteries, said that the honor shown to an icon passes to the one depicted upon it. Likewise John, with his golden mouth, declared: "I love even an image made of wax."[15] And St.

14. According to tradition, the holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke was a painter, and with the consent of the Mother of God he painted several icons of her (see his Life, October 18).

Cyril,[16] that harp of the Holy Spirit, said: "Often, when I see on an icon the image of the Passion of Christ, I cannot pass by that icon without tears." Therefore, if the first six Ecumenical Councils, held before the seventh Council, did not forbid the honoring of holy icons, with honor rendered to the persons and events depicted upon them, do you imagine yourself wiser than they? Your task, O emperor, is to wage war against foreign peoples; to examine the dogmas and laws of the Church belongs to the holy Fathers, not to emperors.

When the emperor had read this letter of the Venerable Father, he was filled with indescribable fury. At once he sent one of his cruel officials to the region of Sigriane, to lay waste the monastery of Theophanes, called "Great Village," and burn it utterly; and, after beating his disciples mercilessly, to scatter them. The emperor sent another messenger, no less savage, to the Venerable Theophanes, who had already been confined for two years in the dark dungeon of Eleutherius' castle.[17]

This messenger stripped the holy elder, already wasted by fasting and a prolonged illness, and beat him mercilessly across the back and belly with ox sinews. After giving him three hundred blows and confining him once more in the dungeon, he went away.

In the morning, by the emperor's command, this tormentor came again to the Venerable Father; bringing him out of the dungeon, he beat him cruelly. Then St. Theophanes was sent into exile on the island of Samothrace.[18] The Venerable Father had foreseen this beforehand with his prophetic eyes, and several days earlier had told the novice who served him that they would be sent to this island. Having lived in that place only twenty-three days, the holy Martyr departed from earthly exile, adorned with the crown of confessorial suffering, to his heavenly homeland,[19] and his precious body was laid there in a wooden coffin. God glorified His holy servant not only during his life, but also

15. His memory is celebrated on November 13 and January 30.
16. The memory of Saint Cyril is celebrated on January 18.
17. The Eleutherian castle (or palace) was located in the part of Constantinople where the Seraglio (palace of the Turkish Sultan) now stands.
18. Samothrace – an island in the Aegean Sea, 5½ miles from the Thracian coast.
19. Saint Theophanes died about 818.

after his repose: He granted healing power to his holy relics, and many sick people received healing merely by touching his coffin.

After the impious Emperor Leo the Armenian had been slain, the exiled disciples of St. Theophanes returned to Mount Sigriane and rebuilt the monastery that had been burned. There they brought from the island of Samothrace the holy relics of their Venerable Father Theophanes and reverently laid them in the church; and through them many miracles were wrought, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.[20]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having received divine revelation from on high, thou didst diligently depart from the midst of worldly tumult; and having withdrawn, O Venerable One, thou didst receive the working of miracles and the gift of prophecy, having been deprived of riches and wife.

* * *

Life of Our Father among the Saints Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome

Житие во святых отца нашего Григория Двоеслова, папы Римского

St. Gregory, Pope of Rome,[21] surnamed the Dialogist, or "the Converser," for his eloquent dialogues,[22] was born in the city of Rome. His father, named Gordian, and his mother, the blessed Sylvia, were both of senatorial, noble, and wealthy families.

Yet the kindred of this holy Gregory was noble not so much through its senatorial ancestry as through the pious and holy persons related to him. Thus the blessed Felix,[23] Pope of Rome, was

20. Saint Theophanes left behind the *Chronography*, in which he described the events of the Church from 285 to 813.

21. The title "pope" (Greek *pappas*, father) until the end of the fifth century was used as an honorary designation of all bishops; from the end of the fifth century it applied chiefly to the Roman archbishop, and from 1075 exclusively to him.

22. Saint Gregory the Great was called the Dialogist (interlocutor, one who converses) for his work "Conversations or Dialogues on the Life and Miracles of the Italian Fathers."

23. Saint Pope Felix III governed the Church from 483 to 492.

the grandfather of Gregory the Dialogist; St. Tarsilla, who at her death beheld the Lord Jesus coming to her, and the blessed Emiliana, who with Tarsilla was deemed worthy of eternal heavenly life, were Gregory's aunts; and Sylvia, the mother of the Hierarch, was also numbered among the saints by the Church of Rome.

But of all this holy family, the blessed Gregory adorned it most with his holiness, striving from his youth in virtue and in a life pleasing to God. Having loved the reading of books from childhood, he later became a renowned scholar and rhetorician; he was a man of great understanding and good intentions, and therefore was appointed to the office of praetor.[24] Yet Gregory's thoughts and desires were directed not so much toward worldly matters as toward spiritual ones: he wished to become a monk. But while his parents were alive, the future Hierarch deferred his tonsure until a more favorable time, though even in the world he lived as a monk, keeping his life in pure virginity.

When Gregory's father died, he began spending the great estate left to him on alms and on building holy monasteries, hospitals, and guesthouses. Thus in Sicily[25] he founded six monasteries, providing them with everything necessary, and in Rome he founded a monastery in honor of the holy Apostle Andrew. He began this monastery in his own house, which stood near the church of the holy Martyrs John and Paul, by a hill called "Scuara."[26] Having been tonsured there, Gregory laid aside his worldly garments woven with gold and clothed himself in garments of haircloth of the monastic order, under the guidance of the experienced elders Hilarion and Maximian; and after some time he became abbot of that monastery.[27]

At that time the blessed Sylvia, St. Gregory's mother, lived near the gate of the Apostle Paul. Serving the Lord, she spent her time in fasting and prayer, and day and night "she was occupied in the house of the Lord."[28] Her food was raw greens, which she sent every day also to her

24. Praetor (Latin *praetor*) was the title among the Romans of an official to whom the highest judicial power was entrusted.
25. Sicily – one of the large islands of the Mediterranean Sea, part of the Kingdom of Italy; it is separated from the mainland by the Strait of Messina.
26. That is, near the Caelian hill.

son, the blessed Gregory. She was so merciful to the poor and needy that she gave them absolutely all her possessions.

Her son also, the blessed Gregory, loved the poor so much that he begrudged nothing, not even the last thing he had, but immediately gave everything to those who asked of him.

Once, as he sat in his cell and, as was his custom, was copying books, a beggar came to him (he was an Angel of the Lord in the guise of a beggar) and said:

"Have pity on me, servant of the Most High God! I was a sailor, and at sea I lost not only what I myself possessed, but also what belonged to others."

The lover of the poor and true servant of Christ, St. Gregory, was moved with compassion for him, called the brother who served him, and ordered him to give the man six gold coins;[29] and the beggar, taking what was given, went away.

That same day, a few hours later, the same beggar came again to the blessed man and said:

"Have mercy on me, servant of God; I have lost so much, and you gave me so little."

St. Gregory again called the brother who served him and said:

"Brother, go and give the beggar another six gold coins."

He did so, and that day the beggar received twelve gold coins from St. Gregory and went away from him.

After some time the beggar came to the blessed Gregory for a third time and cried out to him:

27. At this time Pope Paschal II ordained Gregory, despite his unwillingness, to the rank of deacon – in 577. In the following year he sent him to Constantinople as his apocrisiarius (envoy) – partly on the matter of the new pope Pelagius, and partly to seek help for Rome against the Lombards. During his stay in Constantinople, Gregory sought to acquire accurate information about the rites of the Eastern Church, where after the apostles so many men of faith had flourished. It was also at this time that he began his famous work "Exposition on the Book of Job, or Thirty-five Books on Morality." In 585 Gregory returned to Rome and was elected abbot of the monastery he had founded.

28. This expression is taken from Ps. 83:11. *Primetatisya* – to lie at a threshold, to take refuge somewhere.

29. *Zlatitsa* – a gold coin, a ducat.

"Have compassion on me, Father, and give me yet more from your bounty, for I have lost a great deal of other people's wealth at sea."

Then the blessed Gregory again said to the brother who served him:

"Go, brother, and give the petitioner another six gold coins." But the brother replied:

"Believe me, honorable Father, we have not a single gold coin left."

But the blessed Gregory said to him:

"Have you nothing else to give—some garment or some vessel?"

"I have only one vessel," replied the brother, "namely, the silver dish on which your mother sent you fermented grain porridge."

"Go, brother," said then Gregory, the servant of God, "and give the beggar that dish as well, so that he may not leave us sorrowing, since he seeks consolation in his distress."

The beggar, taking that silver dish, departed from the saint rejoicing, and no longer came openly as a beggar to ask Gregory for alms; but invisibly he remained with him at all times, guarding him and helping him in everything. For the Angel of the Lord had been appointed to the saint with the power of wondrous grace, by which Saint Gregory was afterwards glorified, performing great wonders in his monastery.

After the death of Pelagius, Pope of Rome,[30] all unanimously chose for the throne Saint Gregory, abbot of the monastery of St. Andrew; but he, shunning so great a dignity and honor, fled from the city and hid himself in desert places. The Roman people, seeking their shepherd Gregory and not finding him, gave themselves over to great sorrow; and all began to pray earnestly to God that He would reveal His servant to them. And behold, a pillar of fire appeared, visible to all, descending upon the place where Saint Gregory was hiding, in a certain desert mountain. Then all knew that the heavenly pillar had appeared for the sake of Saint Gregory. Immediately they all set out for that place, where they found Gregory and with unspeakable joy led him away, although he did not wish it.

In the reign of Maurice,[31] Saint Gregory was appointed Pope of ancient Rome.[32] Here he became especially renowned for his inexpressible

mercy toward the poor and the needy, the orphans and the widows. He built hospices and shelters for the poor not only in Rome but also in other cities. To Jerusalem Saint Gregory sent, on purpose, a large sum of money with Abba Probus, so that he might establish a hospice there. To Mount Sinai[33] he sent a great alms each year for the sustenance of the monks. In Rome the hierarch fed every day all the beggars and the sick, whom he had recorded by name in a special book.[34] He often seated strangers and the poor at his own table, and always served them himself. Once he ordered his sakellarios[35] to summon twelve strangers to his table, to dine with them; but when all were seated at the table, the holy pope saw thirteen strangers seated. Then, calling the sakellarios, he said to him quietly:

"Did I not tell you to summon twelve strangers? Why, disobeying me, have you summoned a thirteenth?"

The frightened sakellarios answered him:

"Believe me, most honorable vladyka, there is no thirteenth here."

Indeed, neither he nor anyone else saw the thirteenth; only the holy pope saw him. During the meal Saint Gregory looked at this thirteenth stranger, seated at the very end of the table, and saw that his face often changed: at one moment he appeared as a gray-haired elder, at another as a young man. When all rose from the table, Saint Gregory dismissed everyone; but this thirteenth stranger, so wondrous in appearance, he detained, and taking him by the hand, led him into his bedchamber and there said to him:

30. Pope Pelagius II governed the Roman Church from 578 to 590.

31. The Emperor Maurice reigned from 582 to 603.

33. Mount Sinai is located in the middle of the Sinai Peninsula; it is properly a group of mountains, consisting of granite rocks, intersected and surrounded by steep and rugged valleys. In the Old Testament, at Mount Sinai, the Israelites entered into covenant with God and received from Him the commandments of the Law (Ex. 20). In the fourth and fifth centuries after the Nativity of Christ, Mount Sinai was renowned for the habitation of Christian desert-dwellers, who lived in its ravines and caves.

34. When a poor man was found dead in the street, Saint Gregory refrained for some time from celebrating the Eucharist, as if considering himself the cause of his death.

35. *Sakellarios* (from Greek *saxella*, *saxellion* – a bag, a money-box, a treasury) means in general a treasurer. In the Church of Constantinople the sakellarios was charged with the management of the church treasury proper, consisting of money and other valuables. In our Russian Church the title of sakellarios was in a later period assigned to the keepers of the keys of some of the most famous cathedrals in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

"I adjure you by the great power of God Almighty, tell me: who are you, and what is your name?" To this the wondrous stranger said to him:

"Why do you ask my name? It is wondrous. Remember only this: I am that same beggar-pilot who once came to you at the monastery of Saint Andrew, when you were sitting and writing in your cell, and from you received twelve gold coins and that silver dish which your blessed mother Silvia sent you with pottage. Let it be known to you that from the very day on which you, with a loving heart, gave it to me, the Lord named you head of this holy Church, for which He poured out His Blood, and heir of the holy supreme Apostle Peter, whom you imitate in your virtuous life."

The blessed Gregory answered him:

"How do you know that the Lord had already then determined that I should be pope?"

"I am the Angel of the Lord Almighty," he replied, "and therefore I know; He sent me then to learn whether you were doing alms truly out of love for mankind, and not out of vainglory."

Hearing this, the blessed Gregory fell into great terror: until that time he had never openly seen an Angel of God, and now he was conversing with him as with a plain man. Then the Angel who had appeared said to the saint:

"Do not be afraid, for the Lord has sent me to remain with you all your life and to bear your prayers to God; therefore, whatever you ask of Him with hope, you shall receive."

Then the holy pope, falling face down on the ground, bowed to the Lord and said:

"If for so small an alms the Lord has bestowed upon me so many blessings, making me pope of His holy Church and assigning to me His holy Angel to guard me, what then will He bestow upon those who abide in His law and do righteousness?"

After this the Angel became invisible, and the saint, offering to the Lord his great thanksgiving, became yet more zealous in benefactions to men and in pleasing God.

On another occasion, when he was entertaining strangers at dinner, Saint Gregory, in his humility, wished to pour water over the hands of one of them; but when he turned to take the vessel, he saw that the man was no longer there. Searching for him and finding him nowhere, Gregory was greatly astonished. The following night, while the holy pope was sleeping, the Lord appeared to him and said:

"In those days you entertained My members, that is, the poor; yesterday you received Me Myself."

Of the great humility of Saint Gregory the Limonarion of the most holy Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, also speaks.[36] This is what is written there about him:

"Once we were with Abba John the Persian; he told us about the great and blessed Gregory, Pope of Rome. 'I once wished,' he said, 'to venerate the relics of the holy supreme Apostles Peter and Paul, and for this I set out for Rome. When I once stood in the midst of the city, I heard among the people that the pope was to pass by; then I waited to see him. When he came past me, I resolved to bow to him; but I tell you, brothers, God is my witness, that he, anticipating me, fell to the ground, bowed to me, and did not rise from the earth until he saw that I had risen before him; then, kissing me with great love, he gave me with his own hand three gold coins and ordered that everything necessary for my sustenance be given to me. And I glorified God, who gave Saint Gregory such great humility, love for all, and mercy.'

Nor can we pass over in silence the terrible miracle wrought by the prayers of this great hierarch of God over the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ. A certain woman, very well known in Rome, brought prosphora to the Divine sanctuary; at that time the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated by the most holy Pope Gregory himself. And behold, when he was giving the Divine Communion to the people, that woman also came forward to partake of the Holy Mysteries. But when she heard Gregory's words, "The life-giving Body of our Lord Jesus Christ is giv-

36. The *Limonarion* or *Zimonarion* (from the Greek word λειμών – meadow, pasture). This title belongs to the book of Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (7th century), containing a collection of narratives about the deeds of certain desert-dwellers who shone with holiness of life.

en," she laughed. Then Pope Gregory, holding back his hand, asked her:

"Why are you laughing?"

"It seems strange to me, vladyka," she answered, "that the bread which I have baked with my own hands from flour you call the Body of Christ."

The saint, seeing her unbelief, prayed to God, and immediately the bread, in its appearance, was transformed into a real human body. This bloodied human flesh was seen not only by that woman but also by the people present in the church; all who beheld this miracle glorified Christ God and were yet more firmly established in the faith, having no doubt that in the Most Pure Mysteries, under the appearance of bread, the true Body of Christ is given, and under the appearance of wine, His true Blood. After that the holy pope prayed again, and the appearance of human body was again changed back into bread. Then that woman communed with great fear and steadfast faith, receiving the bread as the Body of Christ and the wine as the Blood of Christ.

This great luminary of the world, the most holy Pope Gregory, adorned the Church of Christ not only by his angel-like life and wondrous miracles, but also by his numerous writings, which rendered great service to the Orthodox faith. And when he wrote them, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, hovered over him; this was often seen by Gregory's archdeacon Peter, a man of great virtue. The conversations of Saint Gregory with this archdeacon are contained in four special books, full of great spiritual benefit; they contain brief narratives of the lives of saints who lived pleasingly to God in the land of Italy, and edifying instructions.[1913] Saint Gregory shepherded the Church of Christ for thirteen years, six months and ten days, and reposed in the Lord in the reign of the Greek emperor Phocas.[37]

All other deeds, miracles and ecclesiastical governance of this great Gregory, Pope of Rome, as well as of his wondrous and holy life, were written in four books by John, deacon of the great Roman Church;[38] in

37. Saint Gregory the Dialogist (known in history also under the name of the Great) died in 604, on 12 March. His body rests in the Vatican Cathedral of the holy Apostle Peter, in the side chapel dedicated to this Saint Gregory.

these books there are about two hundred and sixty chapters. Taking from these books the smallest portion, yet entirely sufficient for the benefit of the souls of the faithful, we glorify Christ our God, who glorifies His saints, who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit is glorified unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thou who didst receive from God the divine grace from on high, O glorious Gregory, and strengthened by its power, didst choose to walk in the way of the Gospel. Wherefore thou didst receive from Christ the reward of thy labors, O all-blessed one; entreat Him that He save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thou didst show thyself a shepherd like the Chief Shepherd Christ, O Father Gregory, leading the ranks of monks to the heavenly fold, and from thence didst teach the flock of Christ His commandments; and now thou dost rejoice and exult with them in the heavenly mansions.

* * *

Memory of the Righteous Phinehas

Память праведного Финееса

The Holy Righteous Phinehas, son of the Jewish high priest Eleazar and grandson of the high priest Aaron, was originally a priest of the Jewish people.

Saint Phinehas was a worthy servant of the God of Israel. Throughout his whole life he was a zealous defender and guardian of the true worship of God. His activity as a servant of God was directed, on the one hand, to the glorifying of the glorious name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and on the other hand to the eradication of all

38. The deacon John, who lived in the middle of the ninth century, left an extensive life of Saint Gregory, composed by him on the basis of ancient, trustworthy testimonies, and the account of later miracles on the basis of eyewitnesses.

vices and departures from the law of God which were at times observed among the Hebrew people.

It once happened that the Moabites[39], who lived as neighbors of the Israelites and were distinguished by their impiety, drew the Israelites into the impious and abominable service of their god Baal-Peor[40]. Kindled with wrath at so great a lawlessness, the Lord severely punished the impious apostates: immediately a plague began to strike them, and many thousands of Israelites died of it. Besides this, God commanded Moses to put to death (by hanging) those leaders of the people who gave themselves over to impiety. Many Israelites, seeing the wrath of God, abandoned their lawlessness, repented, and gathered at the door of the tabernacle to offer the Lord a general repentance.

At this time a certain Zambri, a leader of the tribe of Simeon, in the sight of Moses and the whole assembly brought a Midianite woman into the Hebrew camp and led her into his tent. Then Phinehas, filled with wrath and indignation at the leader who had seduced the people, entered the tent of Zambri and pierced both him and the Midianite woman with a spear.

This deed of the valiant Phinehas, in which his fervent zeal for God was so plainly manifested, turned the wrath of God away from the people of Israel. At once the plague that was striking the people[41] ceased.

After this God said to Moses:

"Phinehas, son of the high priest Eleazar, has turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, being zealous for My name. Therefore say to him: Behold, I give him My covenant of peace. I give him and his descendants the covenant of an everlasting priesthood."

Some time later, by the command of God, the Israelites began to gather an army to punish the Moabites for their impiety. Twelve thou-

39. The Moabites were a pagan tribe related to the Israelites, who lived along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. Their progenitor was Moab, son of the elder daughter of Lot (Gen. 19:37). The Moabites, like many other peoples living near the Dead Sea, from the very beginning of their history were distinguished by moral dissoluteness.

sand Israelites were gathered in all (one thousand from each tribe). Phinehas was chosen as leader of the army, and on this occasion too he showed himself a faithful executor of the commandment of God.

Moreover, Saint Phinehas proved himself a wise leader of his people in those cases when some disorder arose among them. He reconciled those who were at enmity with one another, skillfully stopping and removing mutual quarrels and strife.

For all these merits, after the death of his father, Saint Phinehas was unanimously chosen high priest. The high priesthood of Phinehas, according to the promise of God (Num. 25:13), continued in his descendants and passed only temporarily to the family of Ithamar.

Saint Phinehas died in deep old age[42] and was buried on the mountain in the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. 24:33).

* * *

NOTES

1889. During the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ there was in the city of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, a prince Abgar, who was stricken with leprosy. Having heard of the healing by Jesus Christ of all kinds of sickness, Abgar sent to Him, with the painter Ananias, a letter in which he asked Him to come to Edessa and heal him. The Lord replied that He could not come to him, but that, when He had accomplished His work on earth, He would send to him one of His disciples, who would heal him. After that the Lord washed His Face and wiped it with a towel. At that moment the image of the Lord was impressed upon this cloth. Abgar, receiving it and kissing it, felt great relief from his sickness. After the Lord's ascent into heaven, Saint Thaddeus, one of the seventy apostles, came to Abgar and fully healed him of his leprosy. The inhabitants of Edessa, together with the prince, received baptism from the apostle, and the holy cloth was placed in the wall above the main gate of the city, where it remained until 944, when it was transferred from Edessa to Constantinople; this translation is celebrated on August 16.

1913. This work is called "Conversations or Dialogues on the Life and Miracles of the Italian Fathers." Of the other writings of Saint Gregory the Dialogist are known: (a) the

40. Baal-Peor – a god greatly revered by the Moabites and other pagan peoples, whose worship was marked by a particular impiety and debauchery. The actual name of this god was Baal (from Hebrew, "lord"), while the word "Peor" is the name of a mountain located on the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea. Probably the idol of Baal stood on this mountain.

41. A plague destroyed 24,000 Israelites (Num. 25:9).

42. Saint Phinehas died about 1500 B.C.

Pastoral Rule, containing instruction for a pastor, and (b) the letters of Saint Gregory, up to 848 in all, containing many moral admonitions.

As regards the liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, which is ascribed by inscription to Saint Gregory the Dialogist, it must be borne in mind that, if he did set out the order of this liturgy, he did so exclusively for the Western Church (as, in general, he was concerned with the ordering of worship proper to that Church), and not for the Eastern Church, in which this order had been in practice from remote antiquity, and from which Saint Gregory borrowed it for his *Sacramentary* for the Western Church. The tradition which ascribes the composition of the order of the Presanctified Liturgy to Saint Gregory arose chiefly on the ground of the profound veneration with which the Orthodox East regarded the name of this holy man. It is certainly reported that, on returning from the East and becoming Bishop of Rome, Saint Gregory the Dialogist began to restore in the Roman Church some of the ancient rites, forgotten there and preserved in all their primitive purity in the East. In this he showed himself a reverer of the apostolic liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, used in the East, and a zealot for its firm establishment and spread in the West. He published this liturgy in Latin and introduced it into use in the Western churches, whereby he may be said to have earned for himself a preferential right, above the other fathers of the Universal Church, to the constant association of his name with this liturgy. The Eastern Church has not forgotten the care of Saint Gregory concerning the liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. In the Greek synaxaria, from the eleventh century, there appear reports that Saint Gregory arranged for the Romans the celebration of the full liturgy during the days of fasting; later this report came to be explained and translated in such a way that he arranged for the Christians of the Roman Empire (which was considered to be the Greco-Byzantine Empire) the celebration of the Presanctified Liturgy. In the Western Church this liturgy is now celebrated once a year, namely on Great Friday of Holy Week. (See more on the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Smirnov, *Orthodox Interlocutor*, 1892, pp. 6–7.)



THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 13

13 марта

New Calendar March 13 · Old Calendar March 26 (civil dates)

Translation of the Honorable Relics of Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople

Перенесение честных мощей Никифора, патриарха Цареградского

The great hierarch of God, St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, was cast down from his throne by the impious Emperor Leo the Armenian for his pious veneration of the holy icons, and was sent into exile on the island of Proconnesus.[1] There he spent thirteen years in confinement and reproach, and having reposed in the Lord, he was buried at the church of the holy martyr Theodore, in the monastery which he himself had founded.[2]

Some years later, after the death of the impious emperors Leo the Armenian, Michael Balbus, and his son Theophilus, the scepter of the Greek kingdom passed to the pious Empress Theodora, who governed the realm together with her son Michael, who was then still very young.[3]

At this same time there also died the false patriarchs of Constantinople: Theodotus Cassiteras, Theodore Spassarokandidatos, then

1. *Proconnesus* – one of the islands of the Sea of Marmara; at the present time this island is called "Marmara." This island served as a place of exile for many confessors during the iconoclastic disturbances.

2. *St. Nicephorus* first was an official at the court of the Empress Irene, and in his secular rank he gloriously defended the veneration of the icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council; in the reign of the Emperor Nicephorus, in 806, he was raised to the patriarchal throne and governed the Church for 9 years, at the end of which he was exiled to the island of Proconnesus. He died in 828 on June 2, and until his very death he did not cease bearing witness, through his writings, to the truth against the iconoclasts. His memory is celebrated on June 2.

Antony Phasimat, and finally John, called Annes.[4] By his cunning he appeared to be a magician, and, as one unlawfully installed, he was cast down from the throne by the pious. After him, the holy Methodius ascended the Constantinopolitan see, and he restored the veneration of the icons to the holy Church.[5] At this very time the honorable relics of the Confessor of Christ, St. Nicephorus, were also brought back from the island of Proconnesus to Constantinople.

The most holy Patriarch Methodius gave the following counsel to the pious Empress Theodora:

"It is unseemly," he said to her, "that the best of patriarchs, St. Nicephorus, cast from his throne for Orthodoxy, should, even though he has died, still remain in exile. His holy body must be returned to his throne, for we shall not escape sin if we leave his relics in confinement; we would seem even to approve of his exile and to agree that his casting down from the throne was just. We know that the tribe of Joseph was granted a blessing because, four hundred years later, it carried the bones of its father out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. Shall we, the sons of piety, nurtured in the true faith by the divine teaching of our father, allow the absence of his relics to continue any longer? This royal city itself, one of the finest under heaven, longs for the honorable remains of its holy leader and shepherd, and is ready to keep them with reverence. Let the Church, the bride, rejoice again in her bridegroom. While he was alive, the Church was deprived of him through royal injustice; now, by the command of the shepherd-loving empress, let her

3. Emperor Leo the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820; Michael Balbus *(the Stammerer)* reigned from 820 to 829; Theophilus reigned from 829 to 842. Emperor Michael III (from 842 to 867) ascended the throne at the age of 4, and therefore the state until 855 was governed by his mother, the holy Empress Theodora.

4. These patriarchs governed the Church in the period from 815 to 842.

5. St. Methodius, for his zeal for the veneration of the icons under Michael Balbus, was cast into prison. Michael's successor Theophilus commanded that he be struck on the cheeks: his jaw was broken to such a degree that a disfiguring scar, as a seal of martyrdom, remained on his face for the rest of his life. To conceal it, Methodius, while patriarch, cut the ends of his klobuk and tied them around his jaw. Out of respect for the confessor, from that time all monks began to wear a klobuk with slits. Afterwards Theophilus exiled him to an island, where he was shut up in a stifling underground cave with two robbers. The Empress Theodora raised him to the patriarchal throne, and with his help restored the veneration of the icons. This hierarch shepherded the Church of God for 4 years and a little over 3 months; he died in 847 on June 14.

receive the body of him who has fallen asleep in the Lord. O pious empress, you see how the people, whom you have brought to peace in the true faith, burn with desire to hear, even in spirit, of their dead shepherd. If they see even a shadow of him brought to them, they will consider him as though alive; and receiving him as living, they will keep his remains as a most precious treasure."

To these words of the most holy Patriarch Methodius, the Christ-loving Empress Theodora at once agreed, saying:

"This will also be profitable for our souls, and our name will be kept in honor in the ages to come."

Then the most holy patriarch, without delay, taking with him presbyters and monks, set out for the island of Proconnesus, accompanied by a multitude of people.

Coming to the monastery of the holy martyr Theodore, the patriarch opened the tomb of St. Nicephorus, and all saw the honorable body, nineteen years after its burial, wholly preserved; it bore not even a trace of corruption, and it gave forth a fragrance.

Having served the All-night Vigil and the Divine Liturgy, St. Methodius entered the tomb, and embracing the honorable relics of St. Nicephorus, he spoke to him as though he were alive:

"O most blessed man, in all things made like unto St. John Chrysostom! For you bore the same labors and endured the same sorrows as he; like St. John, with bold words you rebuked lawlessness, you suffered unjust exile, and now for more than thirty years, first living and then dead, you have remained in confinement. Now give yourself to us, your beloved sons, and departing from here, return to your country; and your people, who love you, will receive you with joy as before. The godless emperor who unlawfully cast you out of the Church has received the punishment fitting for his deeds, losing both his kingdom and his life. Now the pious emperors return to you, as to one living, your Church; together with me, as Christ-loving sons, they have cleansed the Church from heretical defilement and have adorned it as splendidly as it was before, after your labors. Look upon and behold your gathered children; all of them have come from the nearby cities, and the rest, who live much farther away, await you eagerly. Do not leave them as

orphans, sorrowful, nor turn away from them, that your city may have your relics as a precious gift; adorned by them, it will be more exalted and beautified than by a royal crown."

Having said this, the most holy Patriarch Methodius raised the relics of the saint and laid them in a new reliquary; then, together with the Sacred Council, lifting them upon their shoulders, they carried the holy relics with psalmody into the ship; raising the sails, they soon reached Constantinople.

The pious Empress Theodora, together with her son Michael and the whole senate, the clergy, and a multitude of people, with candles, censers, and singing, filled with inexpressible joy and gladness, went out to the quay to meet the honorable relics of their holy patriarch Nicephorus. Taking up his holy remains, they first carried them into the cathedral church of St. Sophia, from which St. Nicephorus had been expelled.

This translation of the holy relics took place on the thirteenth day of the month of March,[6] on the very day on which St. Nicephorus had been expelled from the royal city by the heretical emperor.

When the day drew toward evening, the All-night Vigil was served over the honorable relics in the church of St. Sophia, and in the morning they were carried from the church of St. Sophia and laid with reverence in the church of the Holy Apostles. From that time it was ordained to honor the memory of the Confessor of Christ, Nicephorus, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyr Christina, who suffered in Persis in the fourth century.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Alexander

Память святого мученика Александра

St. Alexander was a glorious martyr during a persecution[7] of Christians by the pagans. Amid the darkness of pagan impiety he shone

6. In 846.

like a radiant star with his piety. Denouncing in the city of Pidna[8] the madness of the idol-worshippers and preaching the Christian faith, he baptized many pagans and converted them to Christ, and by such deeds he aroused the wrath of the worshippers of idols. They could not bear his boldness nor withstand the power of his God-inspired word; therefore, attacking him, they seized and bound him, and then subjected him to cruel and merciless tortures. By these torments they wished to compel him to offer sacrifice to the idols, but since they could not persuade him to this, they at last condemned him to be beheaded with the sword. With a prayer of thanksgiving to God, the holy martyr bowed his head beneath the sword, and thus committed his holy soul into the hands of the Lord.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyr Christina, who suffered in Persis in the fourth century.



7. This was the persecution raised by Maximian Galerius, the son-in-law of the Emperor Diocletian and his successor, from 305 to 311. The persecution began under Diocletian in 303.
8. The city of Pidna or Pinda, which no longer exists, was located in Macedonia, in the province near the Thermaic Gulf.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 14

14 марта

New Calendar March 14 · Old Calendar March 27 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Benedict

Житие преподобного отца нашего Венедикта

St. Benedict was blessed in his name[1] and blessed also by the grace of God. In his understanding he was like an elder from his earliest years, and in the conduct of his life he resembled a man of perfection even in his youth. He did not subject his soul to carnal and worldly desires; even in the flower of his youth, when he might have freely enjoyed all the delights of the world, he counted all these things as grass withered together with its flowers.

St. Benedict was a native of the city of Nursia,[2] and he went to Rome to study the secular sciences of that time. But seeing in those pagan schools a multitude of corrupt people living according to their passionate lusts, he withdrew from there, fearing lest, through a little book learning, he should lose the great intellect of his soul, and, corrupted by wicked people, should fall into the abyss of sin. Thus he left the schools an unlearned sage and a wise ignoramus, and despised outward philosophy in order to preserve inward chastity. At this time, moreover, he left behind not only the pagan schools but also the great wealth of his parents, who had by then died, and he strove only for the monastic rank and the life of the desert. An honest old woman, his former nurse, a woman who loved him greatly for his virtuous life, followed him into the desert. When they came to a place called Effide, Benedict was detained there by his acquaintances and lived there beside the church of

1. Benedict (or, according to the Roman pronunciation, Benedict—Benedictus) means "blessed" in translation.
2. Nursia is a small town in Umbria (Italy).

St. Peter. The pious people of that region, loving the blessed youth, treated him with great reverence. Once the old woman who lived with him borrowed from the neighbors a trough[3] to winnow wheat in it, and, having set it on her table, went away somewhere. By chance the trough fell from the table and broke in two. Returning, she saw it broken, was very grieved by this, and even wept, since the trough belonged to others. The blessed youth, seeing that the old woman was weeping over the broken trough, took both broken parts and, withdrawing to himself, fell prostrate on the ground before God. He prayed for a full hour, and when he rose from prayer he found the vessel whole; it was not even noticeable that it had been broken before. He took it and gave it back to his companion. The news of this miracle soon spread among all the local inhabitants. They took the trough and hung it on the church wall, by the doors, so that those entering the church might see it, to the glory of God and in praise of the youth Benedict, pleasing to God and filled with such great grace of God. But the saint, not bearing human honor and glory, secretly left that place without anyone knowing, abandoned his nurse, and withdrew into the desert. When he came to a place called Dol,[4] forty miles from Rome, by God's providence he was met there by a certain monk named Roman, who was coming from a nearby monastery governed by the abbot Theodotus. Sitting down with this monk, they began to converse about the salvation of the soul. Here the blessed Benedict revealed to him his thought and the desire of his heart, and found in him a helper of his intention. Roman clothed the blessed Benedict in the monastic habit in the desert, and having found in a deep wilderness, in a very inaccessible place, a cave, he settled him there; he brought him food from the monastery. For three years the monk Roman told no one about St. Benedict, but secretly taking a little bread at mealtime, he carried it on appointed days to the cave. But since the entrance to this cave from the mountain was inconvenient, and to reach it one had to go a long way around the mountain, he stretched a long rope

3. Noshtvy or nochvy (also noshtvitsa) is a trough or vessel resembling a trough, used for cleaning grain and for other agricultural purposes.
4. Dol (that is, a place by a lake); in this desert region (in the vicinity of modern Subiaco) there formerly stood the villas of the Emperors Claudius and Nero.

from the high mountain and lowered the bread to the blessed Benedict by it; a small bell was tied to the end of the rope, so that St. Benedict might hear when the bread was being lowered to him. The devil, who hates God's servants, planned to hinder Roman's good work, so that, by tormenting St. Benedict with hunger, he might drive him to cowardice. Once, when Roman, as was his custom, was lowering the bread from the mountain into the cave, the demon threw a stone at the bell and broke it; yet he gained nothing by this, for the honest monk Roman did not cease to serve St. Benedict until the Lord willed to give him rest from this God-pleasing labor and to reveal the blessed Benedict, the lamp hidden under a bushel, to the world for the spiritual benefit of many.

Three years later the Lord appeared in a vision to a certain priest who lived far from that mountain, at the time when he was preparing abundant food for the feast of Pascha, and said:

"Behold, you are preparing much food, while My servant Benedict, in a certain cave—and here He also named the place—out of love for Me is wasting away from hunger."

Then the priest, gathering up at once and taking food with him, set out to seek the man of God. Crossing mountain precipices, streams in the valleys and chasms, he at last reached the cave indicated to him, where he found the blessed Benedict. After kissing each other in the Lord, they both sat down and began to nourish their souls with edifying conversation. Then the priest said to the saint:

"Father, let us eat, thanking God, for today is Pascha."

The man of God answered him:

"Yes, today is Pascha for me, since I have been granted to see you."

The venerable one did not know that the feast of Pascha had come, for he lived far from people, and no one knew him except the monk Roman.

"Truly, Father," said the priest in reply, "today is the feast of the Resurrection of the Lord, and it is not fitting for you to fast, for I have been sent to you by the Lord for this very purpose, that we both might today be filled with His gifts."

And so, giving thanks to God, they both partook of food, and the priest, comforted by spiritual joy, went back to his monastery, glorifying God that he had been granted to see the servant of God. Soon after this the shepherds discovered the cave of the venerable one, and then many came to know of him. The people began to flock to him with complaints of their needs, and the holy father comforted them with spiritual food.

Seeing such a holy life in Benedict, the devil, burning with hatred, planned to hinder the venerable one's salvation. Once he transformed himself into a red bird called a kos,[5] and began to fly fearlessly before his face, so that this bird could have been taken in the hand, if only St. Benedict had wished it; but he paid no attention to it. Recognizing it as a hostile snare, he signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and the bird vanished. Immediately after its disappearance, by the working of the same devil, such a struggle of carnal passion attacked the saint as he had never known. The lustful demon, transforming himself into a certain woman whom the venerable one had once seen in his youth, appeared before his eyes and kindled in his mortified body such a passion that he almost fell into despair. The insidious thought came to his mind to return to the world, but the grace of God strengthened him and made him victor over the passion. Having calmed himself, he saw not far from him a multitude of growing nettles and thorns. Taking off his clothes, Benedict threw himself naked into the thorns and lay among them for several hours, enduring the most severe burns over his whole body; he continued this until he saw that he was covered all over with blood. Having thus freed himself from foul thoughts and lustful warfare, he fervently gave thanks to the Lord. From that time on, strengthened by the grace of God, St. Benedict lived so pure a life that the lustful demon no longer dared to tempt him for the rest of his life, as he himself later told his disciples for their edification.

When the report about the venerable one had already spread everywhere, it happened that the abbot of a monastery in that region died. Then the monks of that monastery went to St. Benedict and began

5. Kos (Lat. *merula*) – a blackbird.

earnestly to beg him to be their guide and shepherd. But he refused the leadership over them, considering himself sinful and unworthy of it; he said to them:

"My manners will not agree with yours."

But, persuaded by their entreaties, he finally consented and, against his will, became abbot of the monastery. St. Benedict governed the monastery diligently. Strictly observing the rule of a life of fasting, he allowed no one to live according to his own will, so that the monks began to repent that they had chosen as their abbot one who was wholly unsuited to their corrupt manners. The worst of the monks even planned the following: they mixed poison with wine, poured it into a cup, and dared to offer this deadly drink to the venerable father during dinner. He, with his pious hand, made the sign of the Cross over the cup, and the vessel immediately shattered by the power of the holy Cross, as if struck by a stone. Then the man of God knew that the cup had been deadly, for it could not endure the Life-giving Cross; at once he called the brethren to him and, without any malice, even with a smile on his face, said to them:

"O children! May the merciful Lord have mercy on you. Why did you plan to do this to me? Did I not tell you earlier that my manners would not suit yours? Therefore, seek yourselves another father; I cannot remain among you."

And having given them his blessing, he withdrew into the cave where he had formerly lived, and dwelt there alone before the eyes of God, the All-seeing. But it was not the good pleasure of the Lord, who orders all things for the best, that St. Benedict should accomplish the way of his salvation in solitude: it was fitting that he should also guide others to salvation. And so, in place of the small flock of rational sheep, the Lord gave him a greater one, and in place of the one monastery he had left, He entrusted to him twelve monasteries. For when the report of Benedict's angel-like manner of life spread, the faithful began to gather to him from every side: some desired to be granted a share in his prayers and blessing, others wished to nourish their souls with his God-inspired discourses, and others desired to settle beside him. Many at this time forsook the world and all worldly things; they built for

themselves small cells around his cave and began to live, obtaining their food by the labor of their hands. Within a few years the number of St. Benedict's brethren so increased that that desert wilderness could no longer contain them all. Then the saint divided all the monks into twelve groups, and each group began to live in a separate monastery; and the saint gave to each monastery one of his experienced disciples as abbot, while he kept the novice brethren with himself, for their edification.

To the Venerable Benedict there also came some of the distinguished citizens of Rome, who, dedicating their sons to the service of God, entrusted them to the Venerable for spiritual upbringing and edification. Such was Eutychius, a man of a famous family, who brought to the saint his son, the youth Maurus, and entrusted him to the Venerable for the service of God; likewise the patrician Tertullus, dedicating to God his young son Placidus, gave him into the fatherly hands of Benedict. Maurus served the saint, helping him in his labors, while the youth Placidus was brought up, delighting more in his spiritual food than in his bodily food.

In one of the monasteries of the Venerable Benedict there was a certain negligent brother; during the singing in church he had the habit of leaving the church, and although the abbot often punished him for this, he did not amend. Learning of this, the Venerable Benedict called this monk to himself, and after instructing him with a soul-profitable discourse, sent him home; but he still did not amend. Then the Venerable Father himself came to that monastery, and standing during the service in the church, he looked upon this negligent brother and saw beside him a devil in the form of a certain black youth, who, seizing the hem of the monk's garment, was dragging him out of the church. The Venerable said to those around him:

"Do you see who is dragging that brother out of the church?" They said:

"No, Father."

After this St. Benedict prayed to the Lord that He would open their spiritual eyes, and on the following day some of them saw a small Ethiopian who was dragging that monk out of the church, and they told

the saint what they saw. After the dismissal of the church service, the Venerable Father, for the salvation of that brother, changing his gentle disposition to a stern one, punished the lazy brother not only with words but with a rod, and by this he drove the devil away from him; the devil, as though himself having received the blows, never again returned to that monk, and from then on he was entirely amended.

One monastery, standing on a high mountain, had no water near it, so that water had to be fetched from a deep ravine; thus water was brought up to the mountain monastery with great difficulty. The monks of that monastery, coming once to the Venerable Father, begged him to move the monastery to another place where water could be obtained without toil. St. Benedict, however, bidding them wait a little, went himself by night with the youth Placidus to that mountain, and kneeling and praying to God, he brought forth a spring of water from the mountain, as Moses once did for thirsty Israel in the desert (Ex. 17:1–7). And this spring was not only sufficient for the needs of the monastery, but it also began to flow down from the mountain in a fairly considerable stream.

In another of his monasteries the following occurred: at a time when a certain brother was digging with a hoe[6] in the garden on the bank of a river, the iron head fell off the handle into the water, and that brother was greatly grieved: the iron part of the hoe could in no way be retrieved from the water, since the river was both deep and swift. At this time the Venerable Benedict happened to come to that garden, and seeing the grieved brother, he worked a miracle like the miracle of the prophet Elisha (4 Kgdms. 6:6): namely, he took the wooden handle of the hoe and laid it upon the river at the place where the iron had fallen, and immediately the iron itself rose up from the bottom and fitted itself to the handle. And the Venerable gave the hoe back to the brother whole, saying:

"Labor and do not grieve."

Once the Venerable was sitting in his cell, and the youth Placidus, taking a water vessel, went to the river for water, but as he was draw-

6. Motyka – a mattock, a spade.

ing it from the bank he fell together with the water vessel into the river, into the most rapid place, and was carried far away by the water. The Venerable, perceiving this with his spiritual eyes, called to his disciple Maurus, who served him:

"Run, run: Placidus has fallen into the river and is already carried far away by the swift current."

Then Maurus went to the river, and seeing Placidus drowning far from the shore, he ran across the river as over dry ground: he did not even notice that he was running on the water, but thought that he was on dry land. In terror he came back with Placidus and told the Venerable Father everything. The saint, however, ascribed this miracle not to his own prayers but to the power of Maurus's unconditional obedience; Maurus, on the other hand, thought that this miracle had been wrought by the prayers of the Venerable.

But Placidus said:

"I saw above my head the mantle of the Venerable, and it seemed to me that you yourself, Father, had taken me by the hair and drawn me to dry land; and on the bank I saw Maurus."

At this same time, when the Lord had glorified the Venerable Benedict with so great a power of working miracles, and the people from every side began to gather to him, a certain presbyter living in that district, named Florentius, at the instigation of the devil, conceived hatred for the holy father and began to slander him with shameful words and to disparage him among the people, desiring to deprive him of the reverence which all showed him. But he achieved nothing by this: no one believed this shameful slander, and no one heeded the presbyter. Then this impious man resolved to poison the saint; having prepared a prosphora with a deadly poison, he sent it as a gift to the Venerable Benedict. The far-seeing man, although he saw that the prosphora contained poison, received it with thanks. At the hour at which the Venerable ordinarily dined, a raven would fly to his cell from a nearby forest and feed there on food prepared for it especially. The Venerable Benedict, taking the poisoned prosphora sent to him from the presbyter Florentius, placed it before the raven and said:

"In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, take this bread and carry it into such desert places where no one, neither man nor bird, could find it."

The raven, opening its beak and cawing, began to fly around that bread, clearly showing by this that it wished to obey the command of the Venerable, but could not, because of the harmful diabolical poison in the prosphora. Then the man of God said again to the bird:

"Take it, take it, do not be afraid: you will not be poisoned by this bread; so carry it into the trackless desert."

And the raven, fulfilling what was commanded it, took that deadly prosphora in its beak with great fear and flew away; returning after three hours, it began to feed from the hands of the Venerable with its ordinary food. The guileless Benedict, seeing the malice and enmity of Florentius toward him, prayed more for him than for himself, that the Lord would not impute this sin to him but would correct him. Yet the malicious presbyter did not amend in the least: he even conceived something still worse.

Unable to put the body of St. Benedict to death, he planned by his satanic cunning to destroy the souls of his disciples. The disciples of the Venerable worked daily in his garden; and so Florentius bribed seven beautiful young girls and sent them into this garden, so that with songs and dances they might act wantonly before those young monks and thus stir up lustful desires in their young hearts. Seeing this, the Venerable Benedict feared the spiritual perdition of his young disciples and resolved to leave that place with them. Thus, on the one hand, he left the place because of the malice of Florentius, and on the other hand he also led the young ones away from temptation. Calling together the brethren and the abbots of his monasteries, he set over them an experienced father and committed them all to the will of God, while he himself, humbly withdrawing from human hatred and enmity, went away from there with his youngest disciples. The presbyter Florentius, learning of the departure of the Venerable Benedict from that district, rejoiced greatly. But the God of vengeances, the Lord, avenging His servant, destroyed that wicked presbyter by an unexpected death. When once he was sitting at home and making merry, the room in which he

was fell down, and the hater was crushed by the walls. None of his household suffered, and he alone died in this way.

This was known at once in the monasteries of Benedict, and the beloved disciple of the saint left in the monastery, the blessed Maurus, without the least delay sent word to the Venerable Benedict. He wrote to him: "Return, Father: the presbyter who was angry with you without cause has died an evil death."

The venerable one, on hearing of Florentius' death in such a manner, was filled with great sorrow and wept for him a long time. But with Maurus, his disciple, he was angry, because he had rejoiced at the death of Florentius, and he imposed a penance upon him. He himself would not return to the place of his former labours, but removed to another place. Yet, though he had changed his dwelling, the saint did not part from his former enemy, for the inventor of all evil, the devil, began with him a more fierce strife. But however much he fought against him, the servant of God, by the help of God, remained unconquered.

The venerable Benedict, having left the place of his first labours, went to the land of Campania, to a town called Cassino[7]. There, on a high mountain, he found a temple of idols in honour of the god Apollo, and around the temple stood a grove. Saint Benedict at once shattered the idol, overthrew the temple, and cut down and burned the grove. After a short time he erected on that spot a church in the name of Saint John the Baptist, founded a monastery, and gathered a still greater brotherhood[1935]. In that region there were many pagans, and Saint Benedict, mighty in deed and word, confirming his holy preaching with miracles, converted many to Christ. The demons, not enduring Benedict's coming into that region and not suffering the ruin of their shrines, began openly to attack him. As though breathing the flame of fury, they cried out to him in Roman fashion:

"Benedict, Benedict!"

When the saint made them no answer, they shouted:

"You are not Benedict, but Maledict, Maledict!"

7. The town of Casinum lies on the left bank of the river Liris, at the foot of Mount Cassino (in ancient Campania, to the north-east of the city of Naples).

"You are accursed, accursed, and not blessed! What is there between us and you? And why do you drive us out?"

But the blessed Benedict, by prayer and the sign of the Cross, drove them away from himself as dust is driven by the wind. When the monastery was being built, and the brethren labouring at the construction of the building were raising the bell-tower, the saint, praying once in his solitary cell, saw a demon going by.

"Where are you going, enemy?" the venerable Benedict asked him.

"I am going to the labouring monks."

The saint at once sent word to the brethren that they should be on their guard in every way against some unexpected hostile attack, since a demon had just gone to them. The messenger had hardly begun to speak to the brethren when suddenly a wall under construction fell and killed a young lad, and all the monks were greatly grieved: they mourned not because the wall had fallen, but because their brother had died. Coming to the saint, they told him of it with tears. He ordered the dead youth to be brought to him, but he could not be carried in their arms, for the stone wall had crushed not only his body but even his bones. The brethren laid him on a sackcloth and brought him to the cell of their venerable father. Saint Benedict ordered him to be laid on the mat on which he was accustomed to pray, and commanded everyone to leave the cell. He remained alone, and by his fervent prayer to God he raised the dead youth, and that same day sent him back to his former work among the monks, fully healthy, as one risen from sleep. In Benedict's monastery it had been established by the venerable one himself that brethren sent to work should eat and drink nothing until they returned to the monastery, and this rule was kept without exception. Once it happened that some brethren sent to work were a little late, for the way was very long. Hungry, on the road they called in at the house of a pious and virtuous maiden, where they refreshed themselves with food and drink; then, coming late, they asked their venerable father for a blessing. He asked them:

"Where did you eat?"

"We ate nowhere, Father!" they answered. Then the saint said to them:

"Why do you lie? Did you not refresh yourselves with food at the house of such-and-such a pious maiden? Did you not eat this and that? And did you not drink so many cups?"

Hearing this, the brethren were struck with terror that their far-seeing father knew everything that had been done so far from him; falling at his feet and telling him the whole truth, they asked his forgiveness. Saint Benedict likewise rebuked another brother who had eaten secretly on the way. With his far-seeing eyes he saw many other things also that were done in secret, and therefore everyone feared to do or say anything unwisely anywhere: each knew that in spirit their father was with him everywhere, that he heard and saw all his words and deeds, and rebuked those who sinned.

Totila, king of the Goths, who then held the Campanian region, learning of the far-sightedness of the venerable Benedict, resolved to visit him. But at first he did not go himself; he sent, under his own guise, a certain courtier of his, named Riga. By this he wished to test the venerable one's far-sightedness: whether he would know that the king himself had not come to him. And as soon as Riga, as if he were indeed the king, surrounded by boyars and soldiers, drew near to Saint Benedict, the venerable one, seeing him from afar, called out to him:

"Take off, child, those royal garments in which you have dressed yourself, for they are not yours but his who sent you to me."

Riga, terrified by this rebuke, bowed to the saint and at once returned. After this King Totila himself came, with humility and bows, to the seer of God; the venerable Benedict began to rebuke him and reproach him for his cruelty and evil deeds, and spoke prophetic words to him. The venerable one said to the king:

"By the permission of God you will take Rome and cross the sea, but in the tenth year of your reign you will die."

This prophecy of the venerable father came to pass in its time. Besides the gift of prophecy, Saint Benedict possessed also the power over demons granted him by God. A certain cleric of the church of Aquinum[8], tormented by a demon, on the advice of his bishop Constantius

8. Aquino (Roman Aquinum) – a small town in the Italian province of Caserta, in the Sora district; in this district was born one of the most renowned scholastic theologians, Thomas Aquinas.

went on pilgrimage to holy places, to the relics of the martyrs, but the holy martyrs did not grant him healing, as he was unworthy. Then he was brought to the servant of God Benedict and, by his prayers, at once received healing; having cast the demon out of the cleric, the saint gave him this commandment:

"Do not eat meat, and do not presume to enter the priestly rank, for on the day you resolve to accept the priesthood you will again be given over to the merciless torment of the demon."

The healed cleric, returning home, long kept these two commandments of the holy father: he did not eat meat and did not presume to accept the priesthood. But many years later this cleric, seeing that after the deceased presbyters others much younger than himself were taking their place, counted this a dishonour to himself and began to seek the priestly rank. And when he was ordained a priest, that very day, by the permission of God, a fierce demon attacked him, and tormenting the cleric without mercy, slew him. Thus the prophetic word of the venerable father Benedict was fulfilled.

A certain noble man, named Theoprobus, esteemed by all as a citizen of the town of Cassino, was turned from idolatry to the true faith by the God-wise instruction of Saint Benedict, and, by reason of his virtuous life, enjoyed great favour and love from his spiritual father and teacher. Once Theoprobus entered the cell of the venerable Benedict and found his spiritual father weeping bitterly and sobbing. Standing for a long time and looking at his uncontrollable tears, he was perplexed, for he saw him weeping not at the time of prayer (for at that time the venerable one always wept); but at this moment Benedict not only shed tears but also, with great sorrow, uttered mournful sobs and groans.

Astonished, Theoprobus asked the cause of his weeping, and the saint, scarcely restraining his tears and sobs, said:

"Do you see this monastery which, with God's help, I founded, and all that I have established here for the brethren? All this, by the judgment of the almighty Lord, will be given over to the pagans for destruction. And I have only just besought God that He preserve the lives of my brethren who live here in the monastery."

This prophecy of the venerable Benedict was fulfilled after his repose. Once at night, when all the brethren were asleep, the Lombards[9] suddenly attacked the monastery. But they took captive not one of the brethren: guarded by the prayers of their venerable father, all the monks escaped unharmed. The Lombards, however, having laid the monastery waste, ruined it greatly; yet during the lifetime of Saint Benedict this monastery, guarded by the Lord, enjoyed complete abundance. A certain pious man sent two vessels of wine to the venerable Benedict. The servant who was carrying them concealed one of these vessels for himself and hid it somewhere on the road, and brought the other to the venerable father. But the seer, dismissing the servant, said to him:

"Take heed, child, do not drink from the vessel you hid on the road, but pour it out, and you will see what is in it."

Ashamed at the saint's rebuke, the servant bowed to the venerable one and went away. Coming to the hidden vessel, he resolved to test whether the saint had spoken truly, and tilted the vessel to pour out the wine, and lo, together with the wine there crawled out of it also snakes. Greatly terrified by this, the servant repented of the sin he had committed.

Not far from the monastery of the Venerable Father there was a certain village. Its inhabitants had formerly remained in idolatry, but with the coming of St. Benedict to that country, through his efforts they were all converted to Christianity. A convent was established in this village. It was the Venerable Benedict's custom to send skilled and experienced brethren there to instruct the nuns in the word of God. Once, one of the brethren was sent to instruct them in this way. Having fulfilled his duty, as he was returning to his monastery, some of the

9. The Lombards – a warlike people belonging to the Germanic tribes. Originally the Lombards lived along the river Elbe, then moved to the Danube, where they united and formed a state as early as the beginning of the 6th century. In 568, under the leadership of King Alboin, they crossed into Italy and settled there. The conquest of Italy by the savage Lombards (who were accompanied by the no less savage Saxons, Suebi and others) was attended by extensive plunder, the extermination of the population, the destruction of cities and the forcible seizure of lands. In 774 Charlemagne put an end to the Lombard kingdom. For the first period the Lombards were Arians; in the 7th century they were converted to the Catholic Church.

nuns on the road prevailed upon him to take several towels. The monk took the towels and placed them inside his garment. On returning, he came to the Venerable Benedict; the saint looked sternly at him and then said angrily:

"Brother, why has lawlessness entered your heart?"

The monk was terrified and, in his fear, forgot the towels hidden inside his garment; he did not understand what the Venerable Father was saying to him.

But the saint said again:

"Was I not there with you when you took the towels from the nuns and hid them inside your garment?"

Hearing this, the monk fell at the saint's feet and began to ask his forgiveness for his sin.

Once, when the Venerable Father was dining in the evening, as was his custom, and it was already rather late, a young monk stood before his table, holding a candle to give him light. This monk was the son of a wealthy ruler; and, with pride in his mind, he began to think to himself:

"And who is this before whom I now stand, serving him like a slave by holding a candle? And why do I labor for this low-born old man?"

While the young monk was reasoning thus in his heart, this proud thought did not escape the discerning Father. He at once reproved him with fatherly concern, and gently said:

"Child, sign your heart with the sign of the Cross; why do such proud thoughts nest in you? Be watchful over yourself."

Then, calling another novice, he ordered him to take the candle from the monk's hands. The monk who had sinned went out of the cell with tears in his eyes. When the brethren asked him why the Venerable Father had sent him away, he confessed to them his proud thoughts. And all marvelled at the discernment of St. Benedict, from whom even the thoughts of the heart were not hidden.

Once, a famine occurred in the land of Campania[10], and no more than five loaves remained in the Venerable Father's monastery, so that they would not have sufficed even for one meal for the multitude of

10. Campania – a southern region of Italy situated around the Bay of Naples, with the chief city of Naples.

brethren there. While all the brethren in the monastery grieved and wondered where they might find bread to sustain them during the famine, the saint said to them:

"Why are you, O ye of little faith, so grieved over the lack of bread? Do you not hope in God, who forsakes no one who serves Him faithfully? And do you not remember the words of the Gospel of our Savior: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you; for your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him' (Mt. 6:8, 33)? Therefore, do not despair. Today you are in want, but tomorrow you shall have in abundance all that is needful."

And behold, on the following morning, by God's providence, two hundred measures of flour were found in sacks before the monastery gates, and no one could say whence or by whom so great a quantity of food had been brought. Then all concluded that the Lord Himself, through the prayers of their Venerable Father, had invisibly sent them this flour.

A certain God-loving man asked the Venerable Father to give his blessing for the building of a monastery in the village belonging to this God-loving man; the village lay not far from the city of Terracina[11]. The Venerable Father sent some of his disciples there, who were fairly skilled builders, and ordered them to clear the site and prepare everything necessary for the building of the monastery.

"And I," said the saint to them, "will come to you on such and such a day"—and he named the day—"and show you the precise place on which each building is to be erected."

The builders set out and, having made all the preparations, awaited the coming of their Venerable Father. When the appointed day arrived, early in the morning, while the builders were still asleep, St. Benedict appeared to them in a dream and pointed out the places where they were to build the church, the refectory, the infirmary, the cells, and all the other monastery buildings. When they awoke, they told one another their dream and, marvelling that they had seen the same thing in

11. The town of Terracina lies in the so-called Church Region, not far from the sea.

their sleep, began to await the Venerable Benedict. But the saint came neither that day nor the next; and the builders, coming to him in sorrow, said:

"Venerable Father! We awaited your coming, as you promised, to show us the site for the monastery buildings. Why, then, did you not come?"

Benedict answered them:

"What do you mean, brethren? Did I not come to you?"

But the builders denied this and said:

"No, Father, you did not come." Then the Venerable Father said:

"Have you forgotten that I came to you while you were still asleep, and pointed out with my hand all the places on which you were to build each of the buildings? Go, then, and build them on the places I commanded you in your dream."

And they bowed down before the saint, departed, and fulfilled all that he had commanded them.

In that same country there lived two maidens of noble birth. They had vowed to preserve their virginity and spent their days in fasting; but, though they lived in purity, they had unrestrained tongues and often judged, slandered, and reproached others. Learning of this, the Venerable Benedict ordered them to be told:

"Correct your tongues, or else I shall exclude you from Divine Communion."

But they did not abandon their folly, nor did they even answer the Venerable Father's fatherly admonition. After a few days, both maidens died in their pure virginity and were buried together in the church. When the Divine Liturgy was celebrated and the deacon, addressing the catechumens—who were not permitted to receive Communion—commanded them to leave the church, some saw both maidens rise from their graves and leave the church[12], for they could not remain there during the holy Liturgy; and this happened at every Divine Liturgy. When St. Benedict learned of this, he took pity on them. Taking a pros-

12. This takes place at the beginning of the second part of the Liturgy – the "Liturgy of the Faithful". At this time the deacon proclaims: "Let the catechumens depart... let all the faithful..." etc. Catechumens are those preparing to receive holy baptism.

phora, he ordered that it be carried to the church and offered as a holy sacrifice for the souls of the maidens. After this holy offering had been made, no one ever saw them leave the church again, and all believed that through this holy Mystery and the prayers of the Venerable Father, the maidens had received forgiveness from the Lord.

A young monk in the monastery of St. Benedict was excessively attached to his parents and often went to their home without the Venerable Father's blessing. Once, as was his custom, he secretly left the monastery, and as soon as he entered his parents' home, he fell dead. When the monks learned of this, they took his body and gave it the customary burial. But in the morning they found his body cast out of the grave; so they buried him again, and the next morning they likewise found him cast out of the earth. After this, the parents of the dead monk, weeping bitterly, fell at the feet of the Venerable Benedict and begged him, by the grace of God dwelling in him, to have mercy on their son, who had died in such a sin, and to command the earth to retain his body. Seeing their sorrowful hearts, the Venerable Father took a small portion of the Most Pure Mysteries and ordered that it be reverently placed upon the breast of the deceased, and then that he be buried. After this, his body remained in the grave and was no longer cast out by the earth.

The Venerable Father was most compassionate and merciful to all, loving toward the poor and generous. Whatever God sent to his monastery, he distributed to the poor and to all who were in need; he and his brethren themselves, however, remained in poverty. Once, a man who truly had fallen into poverty was pursued by his creditor, to whom he owed twelve gold coins[13]. Then he came to St. Benedict and, weeping, begged him to give him twenty gold coins to pay the debt, for the creditor was demanding them of him with threats. The Venerable Father, having not even a single penny[14] at that time, said to the man:

"Forgive us, brother; I do not now have what you ask, but come back in two days."

During those two days, St. Benedict continued in his customary prayers and asked God to free the debtor from his debt. On the third

day, the impoverished man came again and, bowing before the servant of God, asked him for the promised sum. At that time there was a vessel in the monastery filled with lentils; and behold, suddenly, through the saint's prayer, thirteen gold coins appeared on top of the lentils[15]. Taking them, the merciful Father gave them all to the needy man, saying:

"Go, child, and give twelve of them to your creditor, and take the one remaining for your own needs."

Once, the man of God went with the brethren to work in a garden in the countryside. On the road they met a farmer carrying his little dead son in his arms. Overcome with tears, he had come to the monastery and was seeking the Venerable Father Benedict; he was told that the saint was working in the countryside with the brethren and would be delayed there. Then the man left his dead son before the monastery gates, went to the Venerable Father, and met him as he was already returning to the monastery. Thereupon he began to cry out to him:

"Give me my son, Father, give me my son!" The man of God, astonished, said to him:

"Did I take your son?"

The grieving father said:

"My son has died, but go and raise him from the dead." Hearing this, the Venerable Father was deeply grieved and said to the brethren:

"Let us flee, brethren, let us flee, for raising the dead is not our work, but that of the holy Apostles."

The man, overcome by unspeakable grief of heart, swore to the saint that he would not leave him until he had raised his son from the dead. Then the Venerable Father, approaching the body of the dead boy together with the brethren, bent his knees and cried out in prayer to God:

"O Lord! Look not upon me, a sinner, but upon the faith of this man, who beseeches Thee to raise his son; restore the soul to this body."

The saint had not yet finished his prayer when the body of the dead boy began to show signs of life, feeling about with its hands and mov-

13. *Zlatitsa* – a gold coin, a ducat.
14. *Penyaz* – a small coin.

ing all over. The saint took the boy by the hand, raised him alive and well, and gave him back to his father. And all glorified God, seeing so wondrous a miracle. The Venerable Benedict performed many other miracles as well, of which St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome, wrote at length in the second book of his writings[16]; for our edification, however, this brief account, taken from the same book, is sufficient. Now let us pass to what follows in the Life of the Venerable Benedict.

The Venerable Benedict had a sister of his own, named Scholastica. Dedicated to God by her parents from childhood, she led a life of virginity and fasting, and was thereby pleasing to the Lord. It was her custom to visit her brother, this servant of God, once a year. Benedict received her not in the monastery itself, but in one of the monastery's buildings situated nearby; going out to her there, the Venerable Father held with her conversations profitable to the soul. In the last year of the blessed Scholastica's life, when she came as usual to her holy brother, Benedict went to her with some of his disciples and spent that whole day with her in holy conversation and God-inspired instruction. In the evening, when night had already fallen, a meal was prepared; but as they ate, they did not cease their God-inspired conversation, and thus they passed a considerable part of the night. The holy virgin said to the Venerable Father:

"I beseech you, my brother, do not leave me this whole night, that we may converse until morning about heavenly joy and everlasting life."

The saint replied:

"What are you saying? Am I to remain outside my cell all night?"

At that time the air was so clear and serene that there was not even the slightest trace of a rain cloud. Seeing that her brother would not heed her, the saint folded her hands and laid her head upon them, and in the secrecy of her heart, with tears, offered a prayer to almighty God. No sooner had she raised her head after her prayer than a terrible thunderclap suddenly sounded, with flashes of lightning and such heavy

15. *Sochivo* – a dish of boiled peas, beans and vegetables.

16. Here is meant the work of St. Gregory the Dialogist, *Dialogues on the Life and Miracles of the Italian Fathers*.

rain that neither St. Benedict nor the brethren who had come with him could go home, nor even open the doors a little. (Such was the power before God of the holy virgin's prayer.) Seeing that Scholastica had brought down such a sudden rain upon the earth by her prayer, the Venerable Father said to her:

"What have you done to me, sister?"

"I asked you, brother, to stay," she answered, "but you would not heed me; so I prayed to my Lord, and He heard me at once. Now, if you wish, you may leave me and go to the monastery."

And so St. Benedict, though unwilling, remained with her all night without sleep, conversing with his sister about eternal life. In the morning they took leave of one another and parted. Three days afterward, as the Venerable Father stood at prayer, he lifted his eyes to heaven and saw the soul of his holy sister ascending to heaven in great radiance and being received with glory into the heavenly dwellings. Learning from this vision of his sister's death, Benedict was filled with great joy, rejoicing that her soul had been vouchsafed such glory; and, giving thanks to the Lord, he told the brethren of her repose. He commanded them reverently to carry her body to his monastery, as a precious treasure, and laid it in the tomb he had prepared for himself.

Soon Deacon Servandus came to visit the Venerable Father. A man filled with heavenly grace, he was abbot of a monastery in Campania, built by the patrician Liberius. They spent their time in soul-saving conversation about the most sweet food of the Kingdom of Heaven. Though they could not yet partake of it fully on earth, with their minds directed toward God they already tasted it in part. When the time came to take bodily food, they ate it with sighs, mindful of the incorruptible food. At the time of night's rest, the Venerable Father went to his cell, while his guest, the holy Deacon Servandus, was led to a cell adjoining that of the Venerable Father. St. Benedict rested for a little while in the evening, then rose around midnight to pray. As he prayed by the window, he suddenly saw a great light emanating from heaven, so that the very night became brighter than day. Most wondrous of all, however, was this: as blessed Benedict himself later related, it seemed to him that he saw the whole universe, as though it all lay beneath a single ray

of the sun. Gazing attentively at this light, the Venerable Father saw the soul of blessed Germanus, Bishop of Capua, being borne up to heaven in a fiery circle. Then the Venerable Benedict, wishing his guest Servandus to witness this fearful vision, called him loudly by name two or three times. Servandus, wondering that the saint called him at such an unusual hour, was afraid and hastened into Benedict's cell. He saw the heavenly light, but no longer all of it—only a small portion; the Venerable Father himself told him all the rest. St. Benedict immediately sent to the city of Cassino, to his beloved disciple, the citizen Theoprobus, asking him to send someone quickly to Capua[17] and inquire after the holy Bishop Germanus. And from there came word that he had reposed. When Benedict learned the exact time of the holy Bishop Germanus's death, it proved to be the very hour at which Benedict had seen his soul borne up to heaven by the Angels in a fiery circle.

Soon afterward the time came for the Venerable Benedict also to depart from the body and go to the Lord. Having learned six days beforehand the hour of his death, he ordered the tomb he had prepared for himself to be opened and, falling ill, lay down upon his bed. Yet even then he did not cease instructing the brethren, and he even wrote rules for them concerning the monastic order. On the very day of his death, he ordered that he be carried to the church of John the Baptist, which, as was said above, he had erected upon the ruined shrine of Apollo. Having received the Divine Mysteries there, St. Benedict raised his hands to God and, with prayer upon his lips, departed from the body and went to the Lord in the most radiant heavenly dwellings, which he had been vouchsafed to behold even while on earth.

At the hour when St. Benedict was loosed from the bonds of the body, two monks—one on the road, having been sent on some errand, and the other in his monastery, praying in his cell—were vouchsafed one and the same vision. They saw a path leading from earth to heaven, all of it strewn with most precious garments, while on either side of the path stood many radiant candles. Above this path they saw a certain light-bearing man, whose beauty was ineffable, and they heard His

17. Capua (Capua) – a city and fortress in southern Italy on the left bank of the river Volturno. In antiquity it was the first city of Campania.

voice say that this path had been prepared for Benedict, beloved of God, and that at this hour he was to ascend to heaven along it. Both brethren were vouchsafed this vision while far apart from one another, though at that moment they saw themselves standing together. When they came to the burial of their holy Father, they told the assembled brethren of it. Then monks from all the monasteries of the Venerable Benedict gathered there, and with tears in their eyes they performed his honorable burial.

The holy body of the Venerable Benedict was laid in the church of John the Baptist that he had founded, while they glorified the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, glorified by all creation unto the ages. Amen[18].

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Thou wast enriched with the grace of God, and by thy deeds didst make known thy calling; thou wast revealed, O Benedict, servant of Christ God, filled with the gifts of the Spirit of God through prayers and fasts. Thou wast a healer of the sick, a banisher of enemies, and a swift helper of our souls.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Euschemon the Confessor

Память святого Евсхимона исповедника

Our holy Father Euschemon, Bishop of Lampsacus[19], a Christian teacher and Confessor of Christ, led a virtuous life from his youth, became a friend of God, and, being a perfect man, made himself a temple of the Holy Spirit. Having embraced monastic life and given himself with all his heart to the Orthodox faith, he attained the dignity of bishop and was filled with the grace of God. He burned with divine zeal and smote the heresy of the iconoclasts. He also worked great miracles. Thus, by prayer he raised a dead infant to life, whom his weeping

18. The Venerable Benedict reposed in 543.

19. The city of Lampsacus was located in Phrygia, a northwestern province in Asia Minor, on the shore of the Hellespont, now the Dardanelles Strait.

mother had brought to him. Moreover, he inspired wild beasts with fear, driving them away with a single word when they sought to harm the flocks. The Emperor Theophilus, who patronized the iconoclasts, first ordered him imprisoned as a venerator of holy icons, a preacher and defender of the Christian faith, and then sentenced him to exile, where he reposed[20].

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the repose of St. Theognostus, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia.

NOTES

1935. Today the famous monastery of Monte Cassino stands here. For a long time it served as a centre of scholarly and theological education and as a place of pilgrimage for the whole Western Christian world. The monastery was destroyed by the Lombards; its monks for the most part withdrew to Rome, where, near the Quirinal, they founded a new monastery. In 720 Pope Gregory II restored Monte Cassino; the popes who followed him granted it many privileges. The Saracens destroyed it again in 884, but it was later restored; in 1340 the monastery was once more destroyed by an earthquake and was restored by Pope Julius II, who assigned it to the Congregation of St. Justina. At the monastery there is an extensive library and fine paintings. Here also rest the relics of St. Benedict and of his sister Scholastica. St. Benedict wrote for this monastery a rule, which was afterwards adopted in many monasteries in the West. In drawing up the rules of monastic life he was guided by the regulations for Eastern monasteries of Cassian the Roman (his memory is celebrated on 29 February), but he moderated their strictness, accommodating himself to the weak development of monasticism in the West. Nevertheless, the Rule of Benedict prescribed renunciation of property, unconditional obedience and constant labour. Furthermore, the senior monks were required to teach children and to copy manuscripts. This latter provision proved very beneficial afterwards, since it helped preserve from destruction many monuments of antiquity in times of ignorance. And in the subsequent period the Benedictines (a name given to all monks who adopted the Rule of St. Benedict, or in Latin, Benedictus) accomplished much that was useful for the Church through their labours on the writings of the first centuries of Christianity.

20. The Venerable Euschemon reposed in the 9th century.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 15

15 марта

New Calendar March 15 · Old Calendar March 28 (civil dates)

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Agapius, Publius, Timolaus, Romulus, Alexander, Alexander, Dionysius, and Dionysius

Память святых мучеников Агапия, Пуплия, Тимолая, Ромила, Александра, Александра, Дионисия и Дионисия

The holy martyrs lived in the reign of Diocletian[1]. Agapius was from Gaza[2], Timolaus from the Pontus Euxinus[3], both Dionysii from Tripolis in Phoenicia, Publius and both Alexanders from Egypt, and Romulus was a subdeacon of the church of Diospolis[4]. All of them suffered at Caesarea in Palestine under the governor Urban, in the second year of the persecution of Christians then raised[5].

At that time a decree was issued in all lands and cities compelling Christians to worship idols and offer sacrifices to them. On the occasion of a pagan festival then being held, a spectacle was being prepared in Caesarea for the people gathered from all sides, namely, Christians held there in chains were being readied for torment. All the pagans present there gathered to watch this spectacle.

First of all, after many tortures, the holy martyr Timothy (his memory is on August 19) was burned on a pyre; after him the holy martyr Agapius and the holy martyr Thecla were given over to be de-

1. Diocletian, Roman emperor, reigned from 284 to 305 and ruled the eastern half of the Roman Empire. The western half was ruled by his friend Maximian.
2. Gaza was a considerable seaport city in Asia Minor, once belonging to the Philistines.
3. The Pontus Euxinus, that is, the Black Sea. "Pontus Euxinus" literally means "the hospitable sea." This name was given to the Black Sea by Roman settlers who established themselves near that sea.
4. Diospolis was located in Palestine, to the northwest of Jerusalem.
5. That is, in 303.

voured by beasts (not the Agapius who is commemorated today, but another of the same name, who had earlier suffered together with St. Thecla and is commemorated together with the martyr Timothy in the month of August).

While this bloody spectacle was taking place, six valiant Christian youths: Publius, Timolaus, Romulus, both Alexanders, and Dionysius, whose memory is celebrated today, kindled with zeal for Christ, bound their own hands as a sign that they desired to suffer for Christ and, out of love for Christ, were ready to go into the fire and to be devoured by beasts. Hastening to the very center of the spectacle, they stopped before the governor Urban and cried out with a loud voice:

"We are Christians!"

The governor, seeing that they were still young in years, and not wishing to destroy them, began to exhort them tenderly to worship the idols and not to ruin themselves in such flourishing years. When he did not succeed, he ordered them sent to prison.

A few days later, among the prisoners of Christ was numbered the holy Agapius, a man honorable and renowned among Christians, for he had earlier confessed the name of Jesus Christ with great boldness and had already suffered manifold torments for it. Agapius was at this time taken together with his servant Dionysius, an Egyptian, and imprisoned together with the six holy men mentioned, so that there were eight of them in all.

For a long time these holy martyrs were held in prison, and many times they were tortured in various ways, but they did not renounce Christ.

At last they were condemned to beheading, and all on one day laid down their honorable heads for the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, to Whom they committed their souls, and from Whom they were crowned with victorious wreaths in the Church triumphant in heaven.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Nicander

Память святого мученика Никандра

The holy Nicander lived in Egypt during the reign of Diocletian. This pious man, by his occupation, was a physician. He constantly visited the holy martyrs who were held in prisons and suffered for Christ, healed their wounds, supplied them with necessary food, and buried their bodies.

Once he saw the bodies of the martyrs cast out into a field to be devoured by beasts, but he did not dare to approach them by day, fearing lest he himself be seized by the tormentors, for he was a weak man and dreaded cruel torments, until he was strengthened by the grace of God.

When night came, he went to the bodies of the holy martyrs and, taking them on his shoulders one by one, buried them in a certain hidden place, wrapped in clean shrouds.

A pagan saw him at this work and reported him to the governor.

After this the holy Nicander was taken by the tormentors and subjected to cruel torments, but he did not renounce Christ; he bore bravely and joyfully all those torments which he had feared before.

The tormentor, seeing him so unshaken in his confession, like an immovable pillar or an unmoving mountain, ordered that his skin be stripped from him alive and that he be beheaded. Thus the holy martyr put off the old, earthly man and put on the new, heavenly one. After the severing of his honorable head, he, as an honorable member, was joined to the most honorable Head, Christ the Lord, and reigns with Him forever, glorifying the Holy Trinity together with the choirs of the other holy martyrs.

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Alexander, Priest

Память святого священномученика Александра иерея

During the persecution raised against Christians in the reign of Aurelian[6], in Pamphylia[7] the governor was Antoninus. Coming to the Pamphylian city of Side, he ordered that the priest of this city, Alexander, be brought before his tribunal.

6. *Aurelian*, Roman emperor, reigned from 270 to 276.
7. Pamphylia – a region of Asia Minor.

The governor subjected the servant of Christ to many tortures and torments. But first he asked him:

"Who are you?"

The saint answered:

"I am a Christian, a priest by rank, a shepherd of Christ's rational flock."

The governor asked him:

"Where is this flock of Christ?"

The saint answered:

"Christ God created the people living over the whole universe; those who believe in Him are the sheep of His flock. But those who have fallen away from their Creator, who serve the creature and the work of human hands, lifeless idols, as you do, cannot belong to His holy flock. On the day of the Last Judgment they will be set together with the goats on the left side."

The governor said to him:

"For two reasons I shall now torment you: first, that you show me those who believe in Christ, and second, that you offer sacrifice to our gods."

Then the governor Antoninus again asked St. Alexander:

"Who was Christ?"

The saint answered:

"Christ is the Savior of the world, Life and Light for those who believe in Him."

The governor said:

"How can that Man who died on the Cross be a Savior?"

Alexander answered:

"Indeed, it is wondrous and worthy of astonishment that He, having taken upon Himself the Cross and death in the flesh by His own will, by His Divinity destroyed the power of hell, loosed those bound and held in hades, put death to death, and rose from the tomb. And not only did He Himself rise from the dead, but He raised together with Himself many of the dead: 'And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city' (Mt. 27:52–53),

Jerusalem. Christ, together with Himself, raised up the whole human race."

The governor said to him:

"You are raving, for how could He help others who could not help Himself, being tormented by the Jews?"

The saint answered:

"It is not I but you who are raving, being blinded in soul and therefore not understanding the mystery of our salvation wrought by Christ the Lord."

Then the governor ordered that St. Alexander be tortured. They beat him with sinews, racked him on the wheel, cast him into a vessel of boiling pitch and oil, and burned him in a blazing furnace. But in all these tortures the saint remained unharmed, by the grace of the Lord Jesus. When they cast him into the furnace, heated very strongly, the impious tormentors saw in the flame two youths, wondrous in countenance, praising God together with the holy martyr. These were holy Angels, who cooled the furnace flames for the saint. The people marveled, knowing that one man had been cast into the furnace, and yet there were three.

The governor and those with him regarded all these glorious wonders as sorcery, since they did not believe in the almighty power of Christ God.

Nevertheless, one of the governor's servants believed in Christ, and falling to the ground, he bowed down to the saint and begged him to make him worthy to be with Christ. The governor at once slew this servant with the sword.

When the holy Alexander came out of the furnace unharmed, the governor ordered him hanged and torn with sharp iron. They tormented the saint until his body became one continuous wound.

His tormentors marveled at his steadfastness, saying:

"How does this man endure such tortures?! Already his bones are laid bare."

After that the saint was tormented a second time with fire, but he suffered no harm from it.

Then they pierced the saint's body with iron spikes and drew out all his entrails. Afterward the saint was given to be devoured by beasts, but the beasts did not touch him.

They tormented this sufferer for Christ with many other cruel tortures, but in all the tortures he remained steadfast and courageous, so that all who saw his suffering marveled at the power of his endurance, which surpassed human understanding.

At last the holy hieromartyr Alexander was beheaded with the sword.

But the governor Antoninus, who was at that time sitting in his judicial seat, was punished by God with a demonic seizure; the demon-gods whom he served began to torment him. His servants carried him home, weeping and wailing bitterly on the way, but before they could bring him to his house he breathed out his wretched soul.

The holy Alexander dwelt in the heavenly abodes together with Christ the Lord and His holy Angels, while the governor was cast into eternal torment with Satan and his servants.

After the beheading of the holy Alexander, a certain Eustathius, an honorable Christian man, took the much-suffering body of the holy martyr and buried it with honor, glorifying and praising Christ God.

* * *



THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 16

16 марта

New Calendar March 16 · Old Calendar March 29 (civil dates)

Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Aristobulus

Память святого Апостола Аристовула

Saint Aristobulus was one of the Seventy Apostles, a native of Cyprus[1]. He was the brother of Saint Barnabas, the Apostle, likewise one of the Seventy.

After the Ascension of the Lord he preached together with the Apostle Paul, teacher of the universe, traversing various lands.

The Apostle Paul mentions him in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says: "Greet the faithful of the household of Aristobulus" (Rom. 16:10), that is, of the household or family of Aristobulus, for some of the kinsmen of Aristobulus and Barnabas were then living in Rome. When Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, Aristobulus was at that time with Paul, which is why Paul in the epistle sent greetings to the relatives of Aristobulus both from himself and from Aristobulus himself.

When Saint Paul ordained many bishops, sending them to preach the word of truth throughout all cities and lands, he then ordained Aristobulus also as a bishop and sent him to preach in Britain[2], among unbelieving and cruel people[3].

Here Aristobulus labored much in the preaching of Christ's Gospel and suffered much from these cruel people: at times they beat him without mercy, at times they dragged him through the streets, mocking him. In a word, he received from these people many insults and tor-

1. Cyprus is an island in the north-eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea.
2. By Britain one should understand the Sicilian islands and Cornwall.
3. The inhabitants of Britain were the Celts, a stern and warlike people.

tures, until he enlightened them by the grace of Christ and taught them faith in Christ. Then the saint baptized them, built them a church, ordained presbyters and deacons, and died there[4].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Savinus

Память святого мученика Савина

The city of Hermopolis in Egypt was the homeland of the Holy Martyr Savinus, who was a man renowned throughout all that land, and a ruler in his own city.

On account of the persecution raised against Christians in the reign of Diocletian, when many Christians were tormented and put to death, Saint Savinus left his house, his authority, his riches, and all his kinsfolk, and secretly departed from the city of Hermopolis, taking refuge in a remote village together with other Christians.

Settling in a small house, he spent all his days and nights in fasting and prayer.

The servants of the idols, however, most zealously sought Savinus, the prince of Hermopolis, in order to subject him to torments, but nowhere could they find him, and they grieved greatly over this.

A certain beggar, who came for alms to the blessed Savinus and received food and everything needful from his hands, taking example from Judas the traitor, went to the pagans and said:

– What will you give me if I show you the one you are seeking, Savinus?

They gave him two gold coins[5]. Then they followed him, came to the house where the saint lived, surrounded it, and knocked at the door.

At that time there were six Christians with Saint Savinus. Thinking that one of the brethren had come, they opened the door of the house.

4. Some suppose that this St. Aristobulus was the father of the holy Apostles James and John and bore the surname "Zebedee"; but this is hardly correct. It is most probable that this St. Aristobulus came from Cyprus and had as his brother Barnabas; and there was another, different from the father of James and John, who was called Zebedee (this was not a surname of his but his actual name).

5. *Zlatnitsa*: in general a gold coin of indeterminate value.

Then the pagans quickly entered the house, seized them all, and bound them. Saint Savinus they bound especially tightly, with two heavy chains, and then brought him for judgment before the governor of that land, named Arianus.

Saint Savinus was for a long time questioned at the trial and many times compelled to offer sacrifice to the idols. But he did not renounce Christ. Because of this he was tormented even more cruelly: he was torn with sharp iron and burned with fire.

At last the saint was drowned in the river[6].

Thus the saint completed his contest[7] and passed to Christ, the Author of his struggle, to receive from Him the crown of victory.

Together with him the other six Christians who were taken with him were also tormented; and they were rewarded by the Lord in heaven with a glory equal to that of Savinus.

* * *

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Trophimus and Phal

Страдание святых мучеников Трофима и Фала

In the city of Laodicea (not the one in Syria, but the one located in Caria[8]), between the Asia Minor rivers Lycus and Maeander, there were two priests, brothers according to the flesh, Trophimus and Phal.

They were natives of Caria, from the city of Stratonicea. Both were men firm in the faith and preachers of the word of God. Desiring to turn the strayed souls to the path of salvation, they disputed with the pagans and unceasingly reproached their impiety.

Once the impious idolaters, unable to endure the rebukes of the saints, seized both of them and cast them into bonds.

At that time, in the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, the governor Asclepiodotus arrived in Caria and settled in a city called Vofor, located not far from Laodicea.

6. The river Nile is meant.
7. The saint's death followed in the year 287.
8. *Caria*: a province of Asia Minor, bordering on Lydia to the north and Phrygia to the east.

The commander of the military guard in Laodicea sent word to the governor about the two Christian priests taken into custody and asked how they should be dealt with. He received the reply: stone them both.

When the holy martyrs Trophimus and Phal were led out to be slain, the Christians surrounded them and shielded them from the stones, so that not one stone thrown at them harmed them; on the contrary, those who threw the stones, against their own will, struck themselves with them. Laboring fruitlessly for a long time and growing weary, the tormentors ceased casting stones.

Learning of this, the commander of the military guard released both saints. They continued to teach everyone without fear the faith of Christ and to expose the unbelief of the pagans.

After some time the city magistrates again took them into custody and sent them to the governor in the city of Vofor, saying: "These men, by your command, we stoned, but the stones did not touch them; therefore we send them to you."

The governor ordered the saints to be hanged and their bodies mercilessly torn with sharp iron.

Being tormented, they cried out with a loud voice:

– We are Christians! We will not bow down to idols, nor obey the impious command of earthly kings!

After all these tortures the governor condemned them to crucifixion, saying:

– Let them be crucified, as was that seducer in whom they believe.

Then the saints were led out of the city to the place where the crosses had been prepared for them. They went with joy, giving thanks and glorifying God that He granted them to die such a death, and thereby likened their suffering to the most pure Passion and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

Behind them followed a multitude of people, men and women, wishing to see their end.

When they had been brought to the crosses, some of the Christians brought them a little food and begged them to partake of it.

Not wishing to grieve those who asked, they tasted a little of what was brought; the rest they distributed to those standing around them.

Then they were nailed with iron nails to the crosses and crucified in the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

Hanging on the cross, they spoke much to the people, teaching them the knowledge of God and the holy faith.

After that there arose weeping and wailing among the people: some reproached the governor for his hardheartedness, for having delivered to such a cruel death men guilty of nothing. Others cried out:

– Glory to Thee, O God, for the power of Jesus has borne witness to itself in our times too!

A certain woman, a Jewess, bowed down before the saints hanging on the cross and exclaimed:

– Blessed are the mothers who bore such men!

Their mother also stood there, beholding with courage the sufferings of her two sons.

Many of those present gathered the honorable blood dripping from the saints, some moistening their handkerchiefs in this blood, others their rings, for the healing of their illnesses, both of soul and of body.

The martyrs of Christ, Trophimus and Phal, having prayed to God, committed their holy souls to Him on the sixteenth day of the month of March; the faithful prepared pure shrouds and fragrant spices for their burial.

To the place of torment came also the prison guard, and, bowing down before the martyrs of Christ, he confessed before all the people that he had seen two holy martyrs ascending to heaven, and three Angels accompanying them and conversing with them.

After that the people went to the governor and asked him to order the holy bodies of the martyrs taken down from the crosses and to permit them to be given burial.

The governor, hearing this request, at first grew angry and commanded his soldiers to beat those who had come. But after some time he calmed down and said that whoever wished might take the bodies of the dead.

After that the saints were taken down from the cross and laid in a new tomb. Among the Christians there arose a dispute about the place

where these holy bodies should be laid in honorable burial: some wished it here, others there.

Evening came. The people did not leave the holy bodies of the martyrs, but remained beside them all night with lit candles and psalmody.

When morning came, the wife of the governor brought perfume and spices and poured them over the bodies of the holy martyrs. Then she laid a precious covering on the tomb and said aloud:

– This night I saw in a dream these men, sent by God together with Angels to punish my husband for the unjust killing of these sufferers.

She said much more, reproaching her husband for cruelty and lack of mercy.

The mother of the holy martyrs and two honorable men, Zosimas and Artemius, fellow citizens of the holy martyrs, took the honorable tomb with the holy bodies and brought it to the city of Stratonicea, where they buried the saints with honor.

Meanwhile the day drew near on which the impious idolaters celebrated the birthday of Diocletian.

The governor, coming to Laodicea, held a great festivity here in honor of his impious emperor.

But suddenly there overtook him the punishment of God for the blood of the holy martyrs shed without cause: he suddenly fell to the ground and writhed like one possessed, trembling in all his limbs.

All who were there and saw this were filled with great fear.

The governor cried out:

– Where is the god Zeus?[9]

– Where is the god Heracles?[10]

– Where is the god Hermes?[11]

9. *Zeus* (or Jupiter) was honored by the Greeks and Romans as the chief god, the father of gods and men, lord of heaven and earth, of thunder and lightning, of winds and rains.

10. *Heracles* (or Hercules), a god who, in the view of the pagans, possessed great physical strength and performed, as Greek mythology tells, many deeds of various kinds, such as the victory over the Cithaeronian lion and the like.

11. *Hermes* (or Mercury), a pagan god who, according to the tales of Greek mythology, was the son of Zeus and Maia, daughter of Atlas, born on the Arcadian mountain Cyllene. His distinguishing trait in Greek mythology is his cunning and craftiness.

– Where are the other gods and goddesses? Let them come and help me!

Then the governor said:

– In vain did I worship them! Now I am given over to the eternal fire, sent from the God who dwells in heaven and from His servants, Trophimus and Phal.

Saying this, he cried out with a loud voice, so that his wail could be heard everywhere. From the weight of his torments he began to tear at his own body with his teeth and to bite his tongue, and in such agony he gave up his wretched soul.

The tormentor, with bitter weeping, departed to his impious gods, to be tormented in Hades; but the holy martyrs Trophimus and Phal went with joy to the Lord, their God, to reign for ever in the heavens, standing before the most bright throne of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To God be glory for ever. Amen[12].

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Papas

Память святого мученика Папы

St. Papas was a native of the Lycaonian city of Laranda, and lived in the reign of the emperor Maximian. For confessing the faith of Christ he was delivered to torment first in his native city, then in Diocaesarea, and finally in Seleucia of Isauria. He was beaten with rods, torn with iron claws, made to walk a long road in boots with iron nails, and he ended his life tied to a tree.

12. The holy martyrs Trophimus and Phal died about the year 300.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the commemoration of the holy martyr Julian of Anazarbus, who suffered at Antioch in the reign of Maximian, in the third century.

On the same day, the commemoration of the holy hieromartyr Alexander, Pope of Rome, who was burned in a furnace by command of the emperor Hadrian, in the year 119, May 3.

On the same day, the repose of St. Serapion, Archbishop of Novgorod, who died in the year 1516.



THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 17

17 марта

New Calendar March 17 · Old Calendar March 30 (civil dates)

Life of Venerable Alexis, Man of God

Житие преподобного Алексия, человека Божия

In Rome[1968], in the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, there lived a pious man named Euphemian. He was a very noble and wealthy nobleman, so that even his servants, whose number reached three thousand, wore silken garments. Yet for all this he was not entirely happy, for, because his wife was barren, he had no children. Euphemian strictly kept the commandments of God and was distinguished by his kindness: every day in his house he provided three meals for widows, orphans, the poor, strangers and the sick. He himself took food only after the ninth hour[1], sharing it with wandering monks, and until that time he always fasted. If it happened that on some day few beggars gathered to him, so that he had to distribute alms less than usual, Euphemian would then fall to the ground in grief and say:

"I am not worthy to live on the earth of my God."

His wife Aglaida was a God-fearing woman, loving toward her husband and generous in almsgiving. Grieving over her barrenness, she often turned to God with this prayer:

"O Lord, remember me, Thy unworthy servant, and deliver me from my barrenness, that I may be a mother. Give us a son who would be both a joy in life and a support in our old age."

1. The day among the Romans, just as the night, was divided into four parts, called the first, third, sixth and ninth hours. The first hour denoted our seventh, eighth and ninth hours of the morning; the third, our tenth, eleventh and twelfth hours of the morning; the sixth, our first, second and third hours after noon; the ninth, our fourth, fifth and sixth hours after noon.

The Lord, in His mercy, heard her prayer: to the great joy of her husband she bore a son, who at holy baptism was named Alexis.

From the age of six Saint Alexis began to learn, and having quickly mastered the secular sciences customary for that time, he especially studied well the Holy Scripture and the books of the Church. From a boy he grew into a wise and pious youth; having perceived the vanity of the swiftly passing goods of this world, he resolved to renounce them in order to obtain the eternal goods. Therefore he even began to wear a rough hair shirt to mortify his flesh. When Alexis came of age, Euphemian said to his wife:

"Let us marry our son."

These words greatly gladdened Aglaida, and she, falling at her husband's feet, said:

"May God bless your intention, that I might see the marriage of my son and his children. This great joy will move me to be yet more generous to the needy and the poor."

After this they betrothed Alexis to a maiden of royal lineage, and then over them was performed the sacrament of marriage in the church of Saint Boniface, and that whole day until night passed in gladness and rejoicing. When the festivities were over, Saint Alexis, with his father's blessing, entered the bride's chamber and found her sitting in an armchair. Taking his golden ring, he wrapped it together with a precious belt in a cloth of purple[2] and gave it to the bride, saying:

"Keep this, and may the Lord be over us, by His grace furthering the arising in us of a new, truly Christian life."

Having said this, he withdrew to his room; here Saint Alexis exchanged his rich garments for poor ones and secretly left the house and the city, taking with him from his own possessions a little gold and precious stones. Coming to the sea, he found a ship sailing to Laodicea[1971], and he boarded it, having first paid the fixed fare. During the voyage Saint Alexis prayed to God thus:

"O God," he said, "who hast saved me from the day of my birth, save me now also from the vain worldly life, and vouchsafe me, at Thy

2. The distinction of purple materials from others was their red colour; the dye for them was obtained from a special kind of sea-weed.

Dread Judgment, to stand at Thy right hand with all who have been well-pleasing to Thee."

When the ship arrived at its destination, Saint Alexis went ashore, where he met travelers heading to Mesopotamia[1972]; he joined them and went with them to Edessa[3], in which was kept the image not made by hands[4] of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He had sent during His earthly life to Abgar, prince of Edessa. At the sight of the image of Christ, Saint Alexis rejoiced greatly, and, selling the jewels he had taken from home, he distributed the money received from the sale to the poor, and himself clothed himself in rags and began to live on alms. The saint's place of dwelling was the porch of the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, and his life was strictly ascetic: he constantly fasted, eating only a little bread. He even drank water in extremely moderate amounts; every Sunday Saint Alexis partook of the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ, and he always gave all his alms to aged beggars. He walked with his head constantly bowed down, lifting his mind to God, incessantly contemplating Him. From such a severe life the saint's whole body withered, the beauty of his face faded, his eyes sank in and his sight weakened.

At dawn, when Saint Alexis had already left the house, the parents came into the bride's room and, to their surprise, found her alone, sitting in sorrow with a sad face. They began to search everywhere for their son and, finding him nowhere, wept bitterly; thus their joy turned into grief. The mother of the saint, entering her room, closed the win-

3. Edessa, the present Urfa, a city in the north of Mesopotamia on the river Euphrates, from 137 B.C. the chief city of the newly formed Osroene or Edessene kingdom; in 217 A.D. it was made by the Romans a colony of the East. Christianity spread early in Edessa; in the 4th century St. Ephraim the Syrian founded a theological school here, which in the 5th century inclined toward Nestorianism, a cause much furthered by the teacher of the Edessene school, the presbyter Ibas. In 641 Edessa was conquered by the Arab caliphs; in 1098 it was seized by Count Baldwin, who made it the chief city of the Principality of Edessa; in 1144 it was conquered by the Turks, and from this time it passed from hand to hand, until in 1637 it finally fell under the power of Turkey.

4. The Image of Jesus Christ not made by hands, or the Mandylion, with the Face of the Saviour imprinted on it, which He sent to the prince of Edessa, Abgar, for the healing of an eye disease. The Image not made by hands was kept in Edessa until 994, when it was bought by the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus and transferred on 16 August to Constantinople; from there it was stolen by the Venetians and sank in the Sea of Marmara. Feast on 16 August.

dows, spread out sackcloth, and, sprinkling it with ashes, cast herself upon it with sobs, praying and saying:

"I shall not rise nor come out of my seclusion until I learn what has happened to my only son, and why and where he has gone."

The bride, standing beside her, also said with tears:

"I too will not leave you, but, like a desert-loving and faithful dove, seeking with mournful song through mountains and valleys a lost husband, I shall patiently await news of my husband: where he is and what manner of life he has chosen for himself."

The father was also very grieved; he sent his servants everywhere to search for his son. Some of them came also to Edessa; seeing Saint Alexis, they did not recognize him but took him for a beggar and gave him alms. Saint Alexis, however, recognized them and thanked God, who had granted him to receive alms from his own servants. The latter, returning, told their master that they had not found his son, although they had searched everywhere.

Saint Alexis lived in Edessa at the church of the Most Holy Theotokos for seventeen years, and by his life he won the love of God. At this time there was a revelation concerning him to the sexton of the church of the Most Holy Theotokos: he saw her holy icon speaking to him:

"Bring into My church the man of God, worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven; his prayer ascends to God like fragrant incense, and the Holy Spirit rests upon him as a crown upon the head of a king."

After the vision the sexton sought a man of such righteous life and, not finding one, turned in prayer to the Most Holy Theotokos, asking Her help in fulfilling the command given to him. And again in a vision he heard a voice from the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos that the man of God was that beggar who sat at the gates of the church porch. The sexton, finding Saint Alexis, brought him in to dwell in the church, and many, learning of the righteous life of the man of God, began to honor him. But he, avoiding human glory, secretly left the city. Coming to the sea-harbor, he boarded a ship sailing to Cilicia[5], thinking to himself: "I will go to Cilicia, where no one knows me, and I will live at the

church of St. Paul the Apostle." During the voyage, suddenly, by the providence of God, a storm arose at sea, and the ship, borne by the waves for many days, unexpectedly arrived at Rome. Stepping off the ship, Saint Alexis said to himself:

"As the Lord my God lives! I will not be a burden to anyone, but I will go, as a stranger, to the house of my father."

On the way to it he met his father, returning home from the palace accompanied by many servants. Bowing to the ground before him, Saint Alexis said:

"Servant of God, have mercy on me, a poor beggar: permit me to dwell in some corner of your courtyard and to feed on the crumbs falling from your table; and the Lord will bless your days and grant you the Kingdom of Heaven. And if you have any kinsman of yours who is somewhere wandering abroad, He will return him to you in health."

At the beggar's words about wandering, Euphemian immediately remembered his beloved son Alexis, wept, and graciously granted his request, allowing him to live in the courtyard of his house. He said to his slaves:

"Which of you wishes to serve this beggar? If he pleases him, then, I swear, he will receive full freedom and a reward from me. Prepare for him a small dwelling at the doors of the house, that I may be able to see him more often; let food be sent to him from my table, and let none of you offend him."

After this, St. Alexis began to live at the doors of his father's house. Every day Euphemian sent him food from his own table, but he gave it to the poor, and himself ate only bread and drank only water, and that in such quantity as to keep from dying of hunger or thirst. All night he remained awake in prayer, and every Sunday he partook of the Holy Mysteries of Christ in the church. Wonderful was the patience of the

5. Cilicia, a region of Asia Minor lying to the southeast, first came under the rule of Macedonia and afterward belonged to the Parthian and Armenian kingdoms. In 68 B.C. its better, eastern part became a Roman province, and it was finally subdued under Vespasian (A.D. 69–79). The Apostle Paul was a native of Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia (Acts 9:11); after his conversion he withdrew here (Acts 9:30), and there he doubtless preached the Gospel. On his second journey the Apostle passed through Cilicia, strengthening the believers (Acts 15:41). Cilicia now belongs to Turkey.

man of God! Many insults and humiliations, especially late in the evening, he had to endure from the servants of his father, of whom some dragged him by the hair, others struck him on the ears, others poured slops over his head, and in general they mocked him in the cruelest way. He bore all this in silence, knowing that they treated him so at the instigation of the devil, and he armed himself with prayer against the devil's snares, overcoming them by patience. There was yet another circumstance which urged him to great patience: opposite his dwelling was the window of his bride's room. She, like Ruth[6], did not wish to go to her father's house, but sat grieving with her mother-in-law, and the saint often heard the weeping and lamentations of his mother and his bride: the one over the loss of her son, the other over her husband. Their tears filled his heart with pity, but through his love for God he overcame his fleshly love for his bride and parents; this patience amid almost unbearable sorrows for God's sake even comforted him. Thus St. Alexis lived in his parents' house for seventeen years, and no one recognized him, but all took him for a beggar without a shelter; over him who was the master of the house, the son and heir, the servants mocked as over a stranger and an alien. When the Lord willed to call him from this temporal life, in which he had experienced so much poverty and privation, to eternal life, He revealed to him the day and hour of his death. St. Alexis then asked the servant who attended him for ink, a sheet of paper and a reed pen, and he wrote down the whole story of his life; to convince his parents that he was indeed their son, he mentioned certain circumstances of his life known to them alone, and he also wrote about what he had said to his bride on the night he left home, how he had given her his ring and his belt. He concluded his letter with the following words:

"I beg you, my dear parents and my honorable bride, do not be offended with me that, in leaving you, I have caused you such great sorrow; I too have grieved in my heart over your distress; many times I have besought the Lord to grant you patience and to make you worthy

6. Ruth, a Moabitess, who was found worthy to enter the genealogy of David as his ancestress (Ruth 4:17), and therefore the genealogy of Jesus Christ Himself (Mt. 1:5); her history is contained in the sacred book that bears her name.

of the Kingdom of Heaven. I hope that He, in His loving-kindness, will fulfil my prayer, for out of love for Him I have chosen this so laborious life, not abandoning it for the sake of your tears, since it is better for every Christian to obey his Creator and Maker more than his parents. I believe that as great a sorrow as I have caused you, so great a joy you will receive in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Having written this, he prayed until his death.

Once, when the pope[7] was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the cathedral church of the Holy Apostles, at its conclusion a marvelous voice was heard aloud from the sanctuary:

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). Those present in the church fell to the ground in great terror, crying out:

"Lord, have mercy!"

Then the voice was heard a second time:

"Seek the man of God, who is already departing to the other life; let him pray for the city: his prayer will be very beneficial for you."

They searched for such a man throughout Rome and did not know what to do, since they could not find him. Therefore, gathering together again with the pope and the emperor in the cathedral church from Thursday evening into Friday, they celebrated an All-night Vigil in it, beseeching Christ to point out to them His servant. But in the morning on Friday St. Alexis departed to the Lord. Meanwhile in the church, as before, during the service a voice from the sanctuary sounded again:

"Seek the man of God in the house of Euphemian."

After this the emperor[1978], turning to Euphemian, said:

"Why, having such a treasure in your house, did you not inform us of it?"

Euphemian answered:

"The Lord is my witness that I know nothing of it."

And calling his chief servant, he asked him:

7. This was Pope Innocent I (A.D. 402–417). He struggled against the Donatist schism, persuading Emperor Honorius to issue a severe law against them; he confirmed the conciliar decision (A.D. 416) against the heretics the Pelagians, who denied the necessity of grace for salvation. He was the first to base the doctrine of the primacy of the pope, appealing to the fact that the popes are the successors of the Apostle Peter.

"Do you not know among your fellow servants some virtuous man who pleases God?"

"I do not," said the servant, "there is not one virtuous man; all live in a manner not pleasing to God."

The emperor and the pope resolved to go themselves to the house of Euphemian to seek the man of God. Euphemian, going on ahead, made preparations to receive the pope and the emperor with the nobles and arranged a solemn welcome for them. Euphemian's grieving wife, hearing from her room the commotion and talk in the courtyard and in the house, asked:

"What does this mean?"

She was greatly astonished when she learned of the arrival of the emperor with the pope and the reason for their visit. The bride too was perplexed, seeing from her room the emperor and the pope coming with a great crowd of people, and she tried to explain this spectacle to herself.

When the pope, the emperor and the nobles had sat down and silence had settled, the servant who had attended St. Alexis said to Euphemian:

"My lord, is not the beggar whom you entrusted to me a man of God? I am a witness of his great and wondrous deeds: he constantly fasts, taking only a little bread and water after the day has ended; he spends all night in prayer, and every Sunday he partakes of the Holy Mysteries of Christ; he bears with meekness and joy the blows and insults inflicted on him by some of the servants."

Hearing this, Euphemian immediately hastened to the beggar's dwelling, and calling him three times through the little window, received no answer. Then he entered the dwelling, where he found the man of God lying dead with his head covered and a folded sheet of paper in his right hand. Euphemian uncovered his face and saw that it shone like the face of an Angel; when he tried to take the paper and read it, he could not, because the hand would not release it. Quickly returning to the emperor and the pope, he said:

"We have found dead him whom we sought; he holds a paper in his hand and will not give it to us."

The emperor and the patriarch, ordering a precious bier to be prepared and covered with rich cloths, carried out the honorable body of the man of God and reverently laid it on that bier. Then, kneeling down, they kissed the holy remains and spoke to him as to one living:

"We beseech you, servant of Christ, give us this paper, that by what is written in it we may learn who you are."

After this the pope and the emperor took the paper without hindrance from the saint's hand and handed it to Aetius, the chartularius of the great church[8], to read; amid great silence on the part of those around, he began to read it. When he reached the place where it was written about the parents and the bride, and about the ring and the belt given to her, then Euphemian recognized in the departed his son Alexis. He fell upon his breast and, embracing and kissing him, said with weeping:

"Woe is me, beloved son of mine! What have you done to us? Why have you caused us such sorrow? Alas for me, my son! Living so many years with us and hearing the weeping of your parents, you did not reveal yourself, nor comfort us, though we are old, in the great grief caused by you. Woe is me! My son, my love, the consolation of my soul, I do not know what to do now: whether to mourn your death or to rejoice at your discovery."

Thus inconsolably wept Euphemian, tearing his gray hair.

Aglaïs, hearing her husband's weeping and learning that the dead beggar was her son, opened the doors of her seclusion; in torn garments, with her tear-filled eyes raised to heaven and tearing at her loosened hair, she walked through the crowd of pressing people, saying:

"Make way for me, that I may see my hope and embrace my beloved son."

Approaching the bier, she bent over the body of her son, embraced and kissed him, saying:

"Alas for me, my lord! My sweet child, what have you done? Why have you brought us such great sorrow? Alas for me, light of my eyes! How did you not reveal yourself, living with us so many years? How

8. The *chartularies* were the administrators of the chancery attached to the patriarch.

did you not have pity on us, constantly hearing our bitter weeping for you?"

The bride, who had lived thirty-four years without a bridegroom and had worn black garments as a sign of mourning, also fell upon the honorable body; bathing it with streams of tears and kissing it with love, she wept bitterly and inconsolably, saying:

"Alas for me, woe is me!"

Her weeping and sorrowful lamentations moved those present to tears, and all wept together with the bride and the mother.

The emperor and the pope commanded that the bier with the honorable body of the man of God be carried and set up in the midst of the city, so that all might see it and touch it; and when this was done, they said to the people:

"Behold, we have found him whom your faith sought."

And all Rome gathered together; all drew near the saint, kissing him. All who were ill were healed: the blind received their sight, lepers were cleansed, demons departed from those they possessed; in a word, whatever a person's sickness might be, each received complete healing from the relics of the servant of God. Seeing such miracles, the emperor and the patriarch wished to carry the bier themselves to the church, that they might receive grace through touching the saint's body. His parents and bride followed them, weeping; but so great a multitude of people gathered, eager to touch his honorable body, that the bier could not be carried because of the press. To make the people draw back and clear a way to the church, the emperor ordered silver and gold to be cast among the crowd, but no one paid any attention to it; all earnestly desired only to see the man of God and touch him. Then the pope addressed the people with an exhortation, asking them to draw back and promising not to commit the honorable body to burial until all had kissed it and received grace by touching it. With difficulty persuaded, the people drew back a little and made it possible to bring the holy body into the cathedral church, where it remained for a whole week, so that everyone who wished might venerate it; throughout that week his weeping parents and bride remained beside the bier of St. Alexis. The emperor ordered a tomb of marble to be made and adorned with gold

and emeralds, in which the man of God was laid; at once fragrant myrrh flowed from the holy body and filled the tomb. All anointed themselves with that myrrh for the healing of every kind of sickness, and with honor they buried the honorable remains[9] of St. Alexis, glorifying God.

St. Alexis reposed on the seventeenth day of the month of March, in the year from the creation of the world 5919, and from the Incarnation of God the Word 411, when Honorius reigned in Rome under Pope Innocent, and Theodosius the Younger in Constantinople; and over them all reigned our Lord Jesus Christ, who ever rules with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having risen to virtue and cleansed thy mind, thou didst attain unto the things desired and the highest; adorning thy life with dispassion, and receiving a surpassing fast with a pure conscience, thou didst abide in prayers as one bodiless, and didst shine forth in the world like the sun, most blessed Alexis.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Regarding the house of thy parents as a stranger's, thou didst dwell therein as a poor man; and after thy repose, receiving the crown of glory, thou wast shown to be wondrous on earth, Alexis, man of God, the joy of angels and men.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Marinus

Страдание святого мученика Марина

The holy Martyr Marinus of Christ, being a Christian and seeing how the pagans offered in sacrifice to their idols not only irrational animals and birds, but even human beings, was inflamed with divine zeal. At the time when a feast in honor of soulless idols was being celebrated, he went to the place where the sacrifices were offered,

9. His body was buried in the church of St. Boniface Martyr in 1216, and over it a magnificent church was built.

destroyed the altars, and trampled underfoot the sacrifices upon them. At the same time he rebuked the impious priests and confessed himself a Christian, saying:

"I believe in Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, who created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them."

For this the pagans seized him, first beat him with clubs, and then began to strike him on the mouth with stones, knocking out his teeth, and dragged him by the hair along the ground. After all this the holy Martyr was bound and brought before the governor of the province, by whose order, after he had suffered many kinds of torment, his head was cut off with a sword.

Life of Our Venerable Father Macarius of Kalyazin[1981]

Житие преподобного отца нашего Макария Колязинского

The Venerable Macarius of Kalyazin[10] was descended from the noble Kozhin family of Tver boyars. He was born in the village of Gribkovo, about eight versts from the town of Kashin[11]; today this settlement is called Kozhino. His parents, his father Vasily Kozha, who had distinguished himself in military exploits under Grand Prince Vasily Vasilyevich the Blind[12], and his mother Irene, were noted for their piety and brought up their children in good ways. Before his monastic tonsure, Macarius bore the name Matthew. When he was seven years old, his parents sent him to learn to read and write; young Matthew learned quickly and soon grew fond of reading. As he read the divine books, he considered their meaning and took their words to heart. His parents saw this and rejoiced. Matthew shunned childish amusements and, as he came to greater maturity, began to reflect upon the vanity of life in the world and to consider withdrawing from it. He constantly remembered the Savior's words: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven;

10. The designation *of Kalyazin* given to Macarius derives from the name of the monastery itself, as is said below.

11. Kashin is a district town of the Tver province on the left bank of the Volga, 12 versts from it, on the river Kashinka, and 19 versts from Kalyazin, likewise a district town of the Tver province.

12. Vasily Vasilyevich the Dark reigned from 1425 to 1462.

and come and follow Me" (Mt. 19:21), and he wished to follow these words. His parents, however, did not wish him to become a monk, although they saw that his desire was sincere. They told him that one could also be saved while living in the world, recalled the words of St. John Chrysostom "Against Those Who Forbid Marriage," and cited examples from the Bible and from the saints of the New Testament who were saved while living in the world and leading married lives. However fervently Matthew desired to withdraw from the world, he nevertheless understood the force of his parents' arguments and, as an obedient son, did not wish to grieve them; he said, "The Lord's will be done; I do not oppose your desire."

His parents were pleased with their son's decision; they arranged his marriage to a maiden, Elena, of the noble Yakhontov family. After marrying, Matthew nevertheless continued to think of withdrawing from the world in time. Living a pious and pure life in marriage, he made an agreement with his wife that whichever of them survived the other would not remain in the world or enter into a second marriage, but would become a monk.

A year after Matthew's marriage, his parents died, and then, two years later, by the will of God, his wife Elena also reposed.

Now Matthew desired nothing other than to fulfill his long-held intention—to leave the world and receive the monastic tonsure; nothing now hindered him from carrying out his desire. Immediately, in accordance with Christ's commandment, he distributed his possessions to the poor and went to the nearby Klobukovsky Monastery[13], near the town of Kashin, and was tonsured as a monk, receiving the name Macarius.

With ardent zeal he began to perform the monastery obediences, submitting not only to the abbot, but even to the youngest of the brethren, with all humility and meekness. Unfailingly attending the church of God and laboring without weariness at various monastic tasks, he devoted the rest of his time to prayer and vigil, diligently reading the Lives of the saints and other divine books, striving to imitate the examples of the ascetics of old and keeping in his heart the edi-

13. The Klobukovsky Monastery of St. Nicholas near the town of Kashin has been a non-staff monastery since 1764. In it, to the present day, the cell of St. Macarius is preserved.

fying words he had drawn from his reading. The struggles of the young monk aroused the wonder of the whole monastic brotherhood.

After spending many years in St. Nicholas Klobukovsky Monastery, Macarius began to consider a solitary life. Confirmed in this resolve, he disclosed it to the abbot and asked for his blessing. Seeing the sincerity of Macarius's desire, the abbot gave him fatherly counsel and blessed him to undertake this new path of ascetic life.

Macarius found a place suited to his desire, not far from Kashin, eighteen versts away, near the Volga River, between two small lakes, in a dense forest. There he built himself a cell and began to struggle in fasting, prayer, and vigil. Nothing disturbed his solitary ascetic life. Wild beasts did not attack him, but showed him affection, and he shared his scanty food with them.

But Macarius did not struggle long in complete solitude. Other ascetics soon began to gather around him, and first of all came seven elders from Klobukovsky Monastery. Quite a number of monks came from other places as well. New cells arose around Macarius's cell, and a brotherhood of hermits was formed.

This new brotherhood needed a church of God for common prayer and the reception of the Holy Mysteries. The Venerable Macarius and his fellow ascetics built a small wooden church in honor of the Life-giving Trinity, with the blessing of the archpastor of Tver.

The brotherhood of hermits continually increased, and it became necessary for them to have their own priest and abbot. Macarius himself, in his humility, did not wish to accept this dignity, but proposed others, although he himself directed the whole ascetic life of the new monastery. He introduced a strict order of common monastic life, with a strict rule. He established the rule that no intoxicating drink be kept in the monastery and that the brethren neither eat nor drink in their cells, but only in the common refectory.

He himself set an example of strict living, diligence, and humility. He treated everyone with simplicity and kindness. Whenever he met any of his brethren, regardless of age, he would say, "Dear little elder," and call him by name.

The rule of monastic life introduced by the Venerable Macarius was so strict that not everyone could observe it as the founder of the monastery desired. One after another, two abbots were removed for violating this rule.

At last the brethren entreated Macarius to receive the priesthood and the authority of abbot himself. After many refusals, Macarius finally consented and set out for Tver accompanied by several monks, where he was appointed abbot by Bishop Moses[14]. The brethren were indescribably glad when they learned that the Venerable Macarius was returning to the monastery as its abbot, and they arranged a joyful and solemn welcome for him.

Despite accepting the rank of abbot, Macarius continued to lead the simplest way of life, wearing poor garments and setting an example in all the labors of the monastery.

The founding by Macarius of a new monastery, though in a desert place, in a wild forest, was not, however, pleasing to everyone. The owner of the surrounding lands, a certain Ivan Kolyaga, had looked upon him unfavorably from the very time of Macarius' settlement; and when the church was built, the brotherhood increased, and Macarius became abbot, this dislike turned into malice and open enmity. Kolyaga feared that with the rise of the monastery his lands would in one way or another pass to it, and he resolved to remove Macarius, even if it should be necessary to resort to murder for this purpose. But by the will of God, this evil design not only did not succeed, but only served to the benefit of the monastery and the glory of the Venerable Macarius. First death struck Kolyaga's family, and then he himself fell into a grievous illness. In this misfortune he at last discerned God's chastisement for this grave sin, for the evil design against Macarius; he repented and ordered that he be carried to the Venerable. At Macarius' feet he told with tears of his intent and asked forgiveness and prayers. Macarius, seeing the sincere repentance of his enemy, said: "God will forgive you," and long instructed him, speaking of the corruptibility of earthly treasures and of worldly vanity. Macarius' gentle instruction so

14. Bishop Moses governed the Tver eparchy from 1453 to 1459.

affected Kolyaga that he resolved to leave the world himself, was tonsured by the Venerable Macarius, and gave all his lands to the benefit of the monastery, which from then on Macarius himself, out of humility, began to call Kolyazino.

Reports of the strict monastic life of Macarius in the new monastery, which had received from him the strict rule of coenobitic monasteries, began to spread not only in the surrounding area but also in distant places. To Macarius there began to flock various people who thirsted for salvation, laymen and monks, from near and far places.

Once there came to him two youths of boyar stock, whom he had known for a long time. Receiving them in his cell as ordinary travelers, he began to ask where and why they were going. The travelers answered that they had conceived the desire to leave the world and settle in some desert.

"Knowing you from childhood," they said, "and remembering your former love and instruction from Divine Scripture, and hearing now of your strict monastic life, we have come to ask you to accept us into your obedience."

The Venerable, wishing to test them, said:

"I am a sinful man, and therefore I have settled in the desert in order to pray God for the forgiveness of my sins; but you return to your parents, so as not to grieve them."

But the youths came with a firm intention to remain in the monastery under the guidance of a renowned though humble ascetic; they began to implore him with tears to receive them into the community.

Seeing in the youths a sincere and unfeigned desire to devote themselves to the monastic life, Macarius received them into his monastery and, after a sufficient period of probation, deemed them worthy of monastic tonsure.

Wisely governing the ever-growing brotherhood, Macarius passed his time in fasting, prayer, labors and vigil. He diligently read the Holy Gospel and other Divine Scriptures and unceasingly instructed both the brethren and all who came to him in the saving way.

An eyewitness and observer of the ascetic life of Macarius and of the strictness of his coenobitic monastic rule was the famous ascetic of

monasticism of that time, the Holy Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk. Intending to found a new monastery according to the rules of strict common life, he set out from the Monastery of St. Paphnutius of Borovsk on a journey through the northern Russian monasteries, to see the monastic life and to study monastery order and rules. On this journey he also came to the Monastery of Macarius at Kolyazin, saw the Venerable Macarius, conversed with him, and left the following account in his *Tale of the Holy Fathers*.

"I saw," says the Venerable Joseph, "also the blessed elder Macarius, abbot, founder of the Kolyazin monastery. He told me the following: 'When I came to this place,' he said, 'seven elders came with me from the Klobukov monastery; they were so perfect in virtues and in the ascetic and monastic life that all the brethren came to them to receive instruction and benefit; and they, enlightening all, taught what was useful; those who passed their lives in virtues they strengthened, and those who turned aside into disorder they restrained and forbade, and did not allow them to act according to their own wills.'"

Such, according to the words of Macarius (continues the Venerable Joseph), was the reverence and good order then in the monastery; everything was done in accordance with paternal and coenobitic traditions, so that the great elder Mitrophanes Byvaltsev marveled. He had then come from the Holy Mountain of Athos, having lived on the Holy Mountain for nine years. He said to the brethren:

"In vain have I labored and without success made such a long journey to the Holy Mountain, passing by the Kolyazin monastery: for one can be saved even by living in it; here everything is done like the cenobia found on the Holy Mountain."

From the Kolyazin monastery, distinguished by such a pious life, already during the lifetime of the Venerable Macarius several founders of new monasteries came forth. Such was the Venerable Ephraim of Perekomsk,[15] a native of Kashin, founder of a monastery in the

15. St. Ephraim of Perekomsk, a native of the town of Kashin, began his ascetic life in the Kalyazin monastery of St. Macarius, and received the tonsure in the monastery of St. Sabbas of Vishera. Withdrawing to a desert place on the western shore of Lake Ilmen, he laid the foundation of a monastery 25 versts from Novgorod. Today it is the *zashtatny* Perekomsk Monastery of St. Nicholas. The memory of St. Ephraim is celebrated on May 10.

Novgorod region on Lake Ilmen; he began his ascetic life in the desert of Macarius. The Venerable Paisius of Uglich was the own nephew of the Venerable Macarius, the son of his own sister Xenia, who was married to Ivan Gavrenev, a service nobleman of the appanage Prince Andrew Vasilyevich the Great of Uglich,[16] brother of Grand Prince John Vasilyevich.[17] He labored in the Kolyazin monastery of his uncle, the Venerable Macarius, and from there was summoned by Prince Andrew Vasilyevich of Uglich, and at his desire founded the Monastery of the Intercession,[18] three versts from Uglich, gathered no small brotherhood, and introduced a strict coenobitic life, setting the brethren an example in labors, fasting, prayer and vigil.

The pious life of Macarius was glorious before men and pleasing to God. His prayer was wonderworking. By the power of this prayer God granted to many consolation in sorrows and healing from infirmities and diseases.

In the Kashin district there was, and there still exists, the village of Kesovo, or Kesova Gora. There lived a certain Zacharias; he had been ill for a long time, being paralyzed. He had heard much of the power of Macarius' prayer before God, and began to ask his relatives to take him to the Venerable Abbot of Kolyazin. When he was brought, he wept bitterly before the abbot and implored:

"Venerable Father Macarius! Help me, lying here in paralysis."

The Venerable answered:

"They have brought you, brother, to test my weakness: how can you ask help from a sinner who has acquired only a little for his own correction!"

16. Prince Andrew Vasilyevich the Great was the fourth son of the Grand Prince of Moscow Vasily Vasilyevich the Dark and the full brother of the Grand Prince of Moscow John Vasilyevich III. By his father's spiritual testament, he received as his appanage the town of Uglich; his father died in 1462. In 1492 Prince Andrew was imprisoned in Pereyaslavl-Zalessky and died in 1494.

17. The Grand Prince John Vasilyevich III, son of Vasily Vasilyevich the Dark, ruled the Russian state from 1462 to 1505.

18. The Intercession Monastery founded by St. Paisius lies three versts from the town of Uglich (Yaroslavl province), on the left bank of the Volga; at present it is a third-class monastery. Paisius founded the monastery at the request of the Uglich prince Andrew Vasilyevich, to whose children John and Demetrius he was godfather. St. Paisius died in deep old age in 1606, on June 6, the day on which his memory is celebrated.

But the paralytic continued to cry out:

"I know, servant of God, I know that your prayer before God for me, a sinner and a wretch, will not be in vain!"

Seeing the sick man's sincere and deep faith, Macarius said:

"Child! The most merciful God does not desire the death of a sinner, but his life and conversion to salvation, and by whatever providences He knows, He will bring him to salvation through repentance. The visitation of God has befallen you, and if you repent and leave your former ways, God will send you healing; if not, you will suffer even more than this."

The sick man then with tears confessed his sins from the days of his youth before Macarius, and the Venerable, after praying, gave him his blessing, and with this restored the sick man's health. Afterwards he became a priest in his village and all his life did not forget the admonitions of the Venerable Macarius.

After some time there was brought to the Venerable a youth of boyar stock, Vasily Ryasin, who suffered from demonic possession. The Venerable, seeing the suffering of the sick man and the grief of the people who had brought him, was moved to compassion and began to serve a moleben for his health. When after the prayer the Venerable made the sign of the Cross over the sick man, he was healed at once, and rejoicing in the mercy of God he no longer wished to return to his parental home, but resolved to remain in the monastery and received monastic tonsure from Macarius.

Once thieves seized the monastery's oxen, which the brethren used for field labors. As soon as the plunderers wished to drive off their booty, they were suddenly struck blind and wandered for a long time about the environs of the monastery. In the end they found themselves again at the monastery with the stolen animals. The Venerable Macarius, surveying the monastery's household, saw the thieves and, as though not knowing what had happened, asked why they were there and how they had come to have the oxen. The malefactors confessed their evil intent and, falling at his feet, asked forgiveness. The Venerable forgave them their sin, freed them from blindness by his prayer, and forbade them to undertake such evil deeds again.

Having established a strict monastic common life, and having attracted a numerous brotherhood by the holiness of his life and by his tireless labors, the Venerable Macarius was able, even during his lifetime, to secure the material support of the brethren. He gave to the newly founded monastery his ancestral patrimony. Besides the neighboring landowner Ivan Kolyaga mentioned earlier, there were other tonsured followers of Macarius who entered their landed estates in the name of his monastery and made offerings of goods and money. The fame of Macarius's ascetic labors drew donations to the monastery from various quarters, as documents that have survived to our day attest. Around 1461 Prince Boris Alexandrovich of Tver assigned to the Kalyazin monastery the Nikolaevsky monastery on the Zhazna together with its lands; Princess Feodosia Ivanovna, daughter of Prince Ivan Borisovich, bestowed the village of Vasilyevskoye with the hamlets of Selishche and Spirovo; Prince Alexander Romanovich gave the village of Konstantinovskoye with seven hamlets. There were also many other gifts of wastelands and inhabited lands.

But the Venerable Macarius was concerned not so much with the material goods of the monastery as with his own salvation of soul, and with showing others the way of salvation by example and by instructive word. He acted according to the word of the Gospel: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). In such a life the Venerable Father attained deep old age. Although his bodily strength was failing, he continued to devote himself to vigil and prayer; his legs, like firm pillars, stood in prayer day and night. In March 1483 a grievous sickness came upon him. He felt the approach of his end and fell silent. Then he called the brethren to him and said:

"Beloved fathers and children! I, like all earthborn men, am departing on the way of my fathers, and I commit you to the Lord God, who is able to instruct you and to give you an eternal inheritance. Be careful in every way for your salvation; abide always in labor, fasting, vigil and unceasing prayer; keep purity of soul and body; do not render evil for evil or insult for insult. Know, brethren: if I have boldness before God,

then after my departure this monastery shall not diminish, but shall grow."

Having blessed and kissed the brethren, the Venerable Father was granted to partake of the Holy Mysteries, and, saying, "Glory to God for all, amen," he gave up his spirit to the Lord.

The repose of the Venerable Macarius took place on 17 March 1483, in the eighty-first year of his life.

Mourned by the brethren, the Venerable Macarius was buried near the wooden church he had built. Over his grave a wooden chapel was erected and adorned with holy icons.

The ascetic labors of the Venerable Father created admirers of the monastery he had founded, and these continued after his blessed repose. Donations flowed in without cease. Thus, in 1486 Prince Mikhail Borisovich of Tver granted to the monastery the village of Andreyevskoye on the Borshchina. Later, in 1511, Prince Yuri Ivanovich of Dmitrov counted several villages and hamlets as belonging to the Kalyazin monastery. There were many gifts from persons of lesser rank as well.

The wooden church of the Holy Trinity built by the Venerable Macarius gradually fell into decay. The admirers of the monastery and of its founder did not hesitate to come to its aid in this need.

In 1521 Mikhail Boronkov, a merchant of Dmitrov, wished to build a stone church on the site of the old wooden one. Boronkov had seen the Venerable Macarius in his childhood, had heard much from his parents of his ascetic and pious life, and throughout his life had kept a reverent regard for the monastery. The Kalyazin monastery lay within the appanage of the Prince of Dmitrov, Yuri Ivanovich, the brother of the Grand Prince of Moscow, Vasily Ivanovich. With the permission of this prince, likewise a zealous admirer of the memory of the Venerable Macarius and of his monastery, and with the blessing of Nil, Bishop of Tver and Kashin [19], Boronkov set about carrying out his intention, during the abbacy of Joasaph at the Kalyazin monastery.

The site for the new stone church, which the water of the lakes would not harm, was carefully examined. They settled upon a higher

place with firmer ground, some ten sazhens from the old wooden church. After a service of the blessing of water, Abbot Joasaph set up a cross on the spot designated for the sanctuary and blessed the digging of a trench for the foundation of the church. They began to dig. The place proved suitable, and no water welled up. In the digging, bones of brethren buried earlier came to light. But then, on the spot where the Venerable founder of the monastery had been buried, they found an entire coffin, not subject to corruption; a fragrance came forth from it. Not daring to touch it, the workmen at once informed Abbot Joasaph, who, with tenderness and tears, kissed the unearthed coffin, not doubting for a moment that this precious find was the coffin of Macarius. At his command the bell was rung; the brethren and a multitude of the people from the surrounding area gathered. Immediately beside the old church they set up a tent, and, reverently lifting the coffin out of the earth, carried it there and served a panikhida over it. Then they opened the coffin: an even greater fragrance spread from it, and the body of the Venerable Father, which had lain in the earth thirty-eight years, was found incorrupt; even his vestments were undamaged, and the gray hairs of the elder were bright. This event took place on 26 May 1521. The people, with tenderness, glorified the Lord, who wondrously glorifies His chosen ones. Many of the sick and infirm who came with faith to the newly uncovered relics received healing.

The abbot and brethren, rejoicing at such grace, hastened to inform Prince Yuri Ivanovich of Dmitrov about it. The dispatched hieromonk reported everything to the prince by word of mouth. The prince, gladdened, awaited a written report from the abbot concerning the miraculous healings accomplished by the relics. Abbot Joasaph took care that the most important miracles from the relics were recorded, with the names of those healed, and sent these records to the prince. Yuri Ivanovich immediately went to Moscow and informed his brother, the Grand Prince Vasily Ivanovich, as well as Metropolitan Daniel [20], of everything that had taken place at Kalyazin.

19. Bishop Nil, a Greek, governed the Tver eparchy from 1509 to 1521.
20. Metropolitan Daniel, a disciple of Joseph of Volokolamsk, was consecrated from among the abbots of Joseph's monastery in 1522; he left the see in 1539.

The Grand Prince and the Metropolitan charged Prince Yuri Ivanovich to present in Moscow in person at least some of those healed by the relics of the Venerable Father. Many were presented, and they bore witness to the truth. Then the Grand Prince and the Metropolitan sent to the Kalyazin monastery Archimandrite Jonah of the Moscow Miracle Monastery, to investigate on the spot everything concerning the uncovered relics. Archimandrite Jonah came to the Kalyazin monastery, convinced himself of the incorruption of the relics of Macarius and of their miraculous power, and bore witness to this in Moscow before the Grand Prince and the Metropolitan.

Then the Grand Prince and the Metropolitan convened in Moscow a council of bishops, archimandrites, abbots and other clergy. All the circumstances of the discovery of the relics of the Venerable Macarius were reported to the council; his holy life and his wonderworking, both during his life and after his death, through his relics, were examined. The council resolved to enroll the Venerable Macarius of Kalyazin among the saints, and established a local celebration in his honor on the day of his repose, 17 March, and of the uncovering of his relics, 26 May.

The incorrupt relics of the Venerable Macarius were soon transferred from the temporary tent into the old wooden church, and afterward were placed in a new oaken reliquary and solemnly set openly on the right side of the new stone church built by the merchant Boronkov.

At the Kalyazin monastery a service for the finding of the relics was sung, composed by Theodosius of Tver. The simplicity of Macarius's life troubled some even during his lifetime, and caused doubt about his holiness even after the uncovering of his relics. Thus, already ten years after the uncovering of the relics of Macarius, the eminent monk, the elder Vassian Patrikeyev, spoke reproachfully of the simplicity of Macarius's life and called him a "village peasant." But Metropolitan Daniel remarked to Vassian at the council that if you wish to judge the saints, you will condemn many, even among the prophets, the Apostles, the hierarchs, the righteous and the venerable; for God, in the matter of holiness, what matters is not outward, bodily nobility, but inward, spiritual [21]. At the Moscow church council of 1647 it was established "to sing and celebrate everywhere," among others, the Venerable Macarius of Kalyazin also, and he was placed among the "great wonderworkers" [22].

At the uncovering of the relics of the Venerable Macarius, the monks of the Kalyazin monastery recorded fourteen miracles. We cite some of them.

In the guesthouse, or almshouse, of the monastery there lived a poor man named John: his legs had dried up like wood and become contorted; for a full twelve years he only crawled, supporting himself with his hands on a small crutch. Once, seeing that priests were serving a moleben at the coffin of the Venerable Father, he crawled with difficulty to them and asked them to pray to the Lord and His servant on his behalf. The priests, sprinkling him with holy water and opening the reliquary, wished to lift the sufferer so that he might venerate the holy relics; but at that very moment his legs straightened, he stood up by

21. The monk Prince Vassian Patrikeev was judged at the council of 1531, and expressed his opinions about the new Russian wonderworkers here in a dispute with Metropolitan Daniel. For that dispute see the "Readings of the Society of Russian History and Antiquities at the Moscow University" for 1847; an account is given in the History of the Russian Church by Bishop Macarius, vol. 6, p. 200.

22. After the uncovering of the relics in 1521, a local celebration in honor of St. Macarius was established, and at the council of 1547 it became universal for the whole Church, and he was named "great wonderworker." See E. E. Golubinsky, *History of the Canonization of Saints in the Russian Church*, pp. 83 and 100.

himself, and was able to venerate the holy relics, to the amazement and terror of all. From that time on he became completely well.

Andrew, a deacon of the Kalyazin monastery, who had long suffered from severe pain in his bones, was brought to the relics of the Venerable Father, and when he venerated them with faith, he immediately received healing.

Other persons also received healing from various illnesses: two of the monastery's peasants from mental derangement; a pilgrim who had three fingers of his right hand bent and grown fast to the palm had his crooked hand straightened when, with prayer, he touched the tomb of the wonderworker. One woman suffered from a tumor and swelling of the whole body, another from long-standing deafness, and both received healing after fervent prayer to the man of God. A certain youth named Gregory, who had lain motionless for ten years with paralysis, was carried in on a bed and laid beside the grave of the Venerable Father; looking upon the reliquary with tenderness, he wept and prayed for healing. Little by little he began to feel his legs and arms beginning to move; gathering his strength, he rose from the bed to fall down before the holy relics. Those who had brought the sick man, together with the one who had been healed, glorified God and His man of God.

Once there came to the monastery a man named Lawrence, who related that he had suffered for two years from an ailment of the leg, and that when he made a vow to be tonsured at the Kolyazin monastery he received healing. As he was walking to the monastery, robbers attacked him; wounded, he turned back toward Moscow. There he was struck with blindness. In perplexity and despair he recalled his vow to take the tonsure in the monastery of Macarius, and he regained his sight. Now he has come to the monastery to fulfill his vow.

A certain distinguished man of boyar lineage, named John, came to the Kolyazin monastery and was met by the abbot with due honor. On his return home, the abbot blessed the pilgrim with an icon of the Venerable Macarius. At home the boyar told much about the miracles of the Venerable Father. Among his people was a paralytic named Theodore, who for six years had lain in bed without movement. The pious master brought him an icon of the Venerable Father and ordered a moleben

with the blessing of water to be served. When the sick man was sprinkled with the holy water, he rose from his bed healthy, to the amazement and consolation of all who were present.

A certain Onuphrius, a demoniac, brought with difficulty from Novgorod, would by no means draw near to the reliquary of the wonderworker, and uttered blasphemous speeches, so that his relatives were already minded to take him back, and some even dared to reproach the Venerable Father for being unable to heal the sick man. At last, however, they resolved to bring him by force to the wonderworking reliquary. As soon as the demoniac touched the reliquary, he cried out and fell to the ground with foam at his mouth; those present thought he was already dying, and sprinkled him with holy water. But the sufferer suddenly came to himself and began to ask, in full consciousness, where he was. Having received an answer, he reverently kissed the relics of the Venerable Father, offered a fervent prayer of thanksgiving, and, having given alms in the monastery, returned home healthy.

Especially many healings were received by the sick from neighboring towns, where the fame of Macarius spread both during his lifetime and after his death. Thus the inhabitants of Kashin received healing: the monk Barsanuphius, formerly archimandrite of the Dimitrievsky monastery[23], but now remaining to the end of his life in the Kolyazin monastery; the Kashin nun Maria, who had long suffered in her legs; a lay reader of the monastery of Macarius, named Timothy, who fell ill with paralysis in the town of Dmitrov; and finally another monk, named Simeon, who suddenly fell ill with a grievous sickness on the Volga.

The last words of the Venerable Macarius were fulfilled: the monastery he left did not decline but flourished; the Moscow tsars visited it and made rich donations to it. Thus, in 1553 Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich the Terrible visited the monastery and granted it the village of Gorodishche with all its wastelands and 28 villages. In 1599 Tsar Boris Fyodorovich Godunov came to the Kolyazin monastery with his consort and children, to pray and to seek the blessing of the man of God for the in-

23. The Demetrius, or Dmitrovsky, monastery in the town of Kashin on the bank of the river Kashinka was founded in the fifteenth century; since 1764 it has been a *zashtatny*.

tended marriage of Princess Xenia to the Danish prince John. The visitors brought as a gift to the Venerable Macarius a splendid silver reliquary, into which, in their presence, the relics of the man of God were transferred.

In the Time of Troubles, of the false pretenders and of Tsar Vasily Ivanovich Shuisky, the Kolyazin monastery became the center of important events and suffered great calamities. In 1609 the main headquarters of the famous leader of the Russian forces, Prince Michael Vasilyevich Skopin-Shuisky, was in the monastery, and on 14 August he inflicted a crushing defeat here upon Jan Sapieha with other Polish leaders and the Russian thieves or traitors. But in 1610 the monastery suffered a grievous disaster; Prince Skopin-Shuisky was no longer there, but part of the army still remained. One of the Polish leaders, the bold and greedy plunderer Lisowski, cut off on all sides, resolved to force his way from Suzdal to the Polish border by main force. Having crossed the Volga, he unexpectedly attacked the Kolyazin monastery. The voivode Zherebtsov, who was there, defended himself desperately and made sorties from the monastery, but the enemy succeeded in setting fire to the wooden walls of the monastery, whereupon other buildings also caught fire. Zherebtsov was obliged to surrender. The enemies slew the monks and the other people who were in the monastery, not excepting the voivode Zherebtsov; the monastery was plundered; the relics of the Venerable Macarius were cast out of the reliquary, and the reliquary itself, the gift of Godunov, was cut into three parts and carried off by the enemy.

It was not easy for the monastery to recover from so terrible a devastation. But the zeal of the pilgrims, grown greater because of the important services the monastery had rendered under Skopin-Shuisky and out of sorrow over the grievous disaster of the monastery, as well as the care of its superiors, made it possible in a short time to put everything in order, to restore what had been damaged, and even to undertake the building of new churches and other edifices.

In 1619 Tsar Michael Fyodorovich visited the Kolyazin monastery and with warm prayer and reverence venerated the wonderworking relics of the Venerable Macarius. The tsar then gave a bell to the monas-

tery, and afterwards, in 1635, the same tsar gave another large bell in memory of his father, Patriarch Philaret Nikitich. In 1648 a stone wall was built around the whole monastery. In 1654, when a plague was raging in Moscow, the consort of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich, Maria Ilyinichna, with her children and the whole court found refuge in the Kolyazin monastery; with her was also Patriarch Nikon. The tsarina with her court was lodged in the brotherhood building erected in 1641, which from that time received the name of the Tsar's building, while Patriarch Nikon was lodged in the abbot's building, which from then on received the name of the Patriarch's building. In the following year, 1655, Tsarina Maria, in memory of her stay in the Kolyazin monastery, obtained for it the rank of an archimandrite.

Both in the seventeenth century and later, new churches were built in the monastery, and former ones were rebuilt; other buildings were likewise rebuilt and renewed. The monastery was always visited, and still is, by pilgrims, especially from the neighboring districts of the Tver and Yaroslavl provinces, and also from the Vladimir and Moscow provinces. Pilgrims flock in especially in large numbers on 17 March and 26 May, the day of the uncovering of the relics of the Venerable Father; on this day the reliquary with the holy relics of the Venerable Macarius is carried around the principal monastery church of the Most Holy Trinity, in which it always rests, in the arch in the side-chapel of the Image of the Savior Not Made by Hands[24].

In 1764, when the monastery's staffing was established, according to the inventory of the Kolyazin monastery's holdings, 2803 peasant households with 12,000 males were registered to it. The monastery was classed among those of the first rank.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Thou didst mortify the fleshly thoughts, O Father Macarius, by abstinence and vigil; and the place whereon thy sweats were poured forth crieth out to God like a trumpet, declaring thy labors;

24. The relics of St. Macarius rest openly in a silver-gilt reliquary made in 1700; they were transferred into it by Archbishop Sergius of Tver together with four archimandrites on September 18, 1700.

and after thy death thy honorable relics pour forth healings. Wherefore we cry unto thee: Intercede with Christ God that He save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having desired the things on high, and having been delighted with abstinence, labors and sweats, and having bridled the desire of thy flesh, thou didst receive the gift of wonders from Christ God and wert revealed as a most radiant lamp. Wherefore Christ's Church doth praise thee with hymns, O Venerable Macarius, our father.

* * *

NOTES

1968. Rome, the chief city of the Roman state, lies in central Italy, on both banks of the river Tiber where it flows into the sea. According to ancient tradition, it was founded by Romulus (d. 707 B.C.) on the Palatine Hill in 753 B.C., and then spread over six neighbouring hills, whence it is called the City of Seven Hills; an indication of these seven hills of Rome is also found in the Apocalypse (Rev. 17:9). At the beginning of its history Rome was only a group of huts made of clay and covered with reeds, but it then grew rich through successful wars with its neighbouring peoples: the Sabines, the Volsci, the Latins, the Gauls and the Etruscans, all of whom were united under the power of Rome in 273 B.C. Then the Romans began to subject the peoples living outside Italy, and soon Carthage, Macedonia, Greece, Illyria and Asia, which passed peacefully to the Romans by the will of the Pergamene king Attalus III in 132 B.C., became provinces of Rome. In 63 B.C. the Roman commander Pompey, after a three-month struggle, entered Judea and took Jerusalem; from this time the Jews became tributaries of Rome and lost their freedom and independence for ever. Under Augustus, the first Roman emperor, in the thirtieth year of whose reign the Lord Jesus Christ was born, Egypt also was subject to Rome. Thus, before the coming of Christ the Saviour, Rome had attained power and glory, including in its empire almost all the peoples then known; riches from all the countries of the world flowed into it; the affairs of all peoples were decided in the Roman Senate. But the time of Rome's power was the beginning of its fall. Unceasing wars ruined and diminished the prosperous classes of Roman citizens, while the rich and noble families, buying up for a song the lands of the ruined families, grew still richer; therefore the population of Rome divided into two classes: the rich and the poor. While the luxury of the former reached almost incredible proportions, the latter lived in poverty and oppression; whole fortunes were spent on a single dinner, while the poor did not have a piece of bread. From the time of the conquest of Greece, philosophical teachings undermining the popular religion began to spread in Rome, and unbelief spread like a broad wave, first among the higher and then among the lower classes:

the objects of religious belief were openly ridiculed in stage performances. Together with unbelief immorality also began to spread; dissoluteness, reaching the point of committing unnatural vices (Rom. 1:26–27), replaced the former purity and strictness of morals. And only the revivifying power of Christianity saved Rome from final destruction. Christianity penetrated into Rome very early. Already the emperor Tiberius (14–37) is said by tradition to have heard the preaching about Christ; under his successor Claudius (41–54) there were strong dissensions in Rome between the Christians from among the Jews and the Jews. Under Nero (54–68), thanks to the preaching of the Apostle Paul, which continued for a full 2 years (Acts 28:30), the Christians multiplied; in the reign of this second emperor there was the first persecution of Christians, who were unjustly accused of setting fire to Rome: during this persecution the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul received a martyr's death. But the persecution did not destroy Christianity: under Domitian (81–91) it even penetrated into the emperor's family: Domitian's brother Flavius Clement was put to death for being a Christian; in the reign of this emperor St. John the Theologian was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he was granted a revelation of the future destinies of the world and the Church (Rev. 1:9). From the time of Nero and Domitian persecutions against the Christians were raised right up to 313. They were especially severe under the emperor Diocletian (285–306), who began the division of the Roman Empire; he chose Maximian as co-ruler and divided the state between himself and him, then each co-ruler chose an assistant for himself, so that the empire was divided into four parts. After Diocletian and Maximian renounced the affairs of government, power passed to Constantius Chlorus and Galerius; the first was succeeded by his son Constantine (306), who issued the edict of 313 permitting anyone who wished to embrace Christianity to do so. Having become sole ruler (324), he moved his residence to the east, to Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople. Here he surrounded himself with Christians, whom he appointed to the highest state offices; he established by law the observance of the Lord's Day, and built many churches; with his assistance the First Ecumenical Council was convened (325). Under the emperor Theodosius the Great, who by his edict of 392 forbade pagan worship, the Roman Empire was finally divided into the Eastern and the Western (395). The first fell under the blows of the Turks in 1453 under Mehmed II, and the second, which comprised Italy, Africa, Britain and Spain, in 476; in 476, after the abdication of the last Roman emperor Romulus Augustulus, the leader of the Heruli Odoacer became ruler over Italy.

1971. Laodicea, an ancient city of the Asia Minor region of Phrygia at the confluence of the rivers Lycus and Galis, was founded by Antiochus II (261–246 B.C.) in honour of his wife Laodice. In the times of Christ it was almost the first city of Asia Minor, since it lay on the trade route joining East and West. The beginning of Christianity here was probably laid not by the Apostle Paul himself (Col. 2:1), but by Epaphras, the teacher of the Colossian Church (Col. 1:7). To the Church of Laodicea the Apostle Paul wrote a special epistle; it is also mentioned in the Apocalypse among the most remarkable Churches of Asia Minor (Rev. 3:14–22). In 360 a local council was held in Laodicea, whose canons (60) concerning the order of worship and the conduct of clergy and laity entered the church canon. In 1255 the city was taken by the Turks, and in 1402 it was

destroyed by Tamerlane. Now only ruins on a low hill near the desolate village of Eski-Hissar speak of the ancient city that once stood here.

1972. Mesopotamia, that is, the land between the rivers, the ancient Shinar (Gen. 10:10), the birthplace and dwelling of Abraham before his departure for the land of Haran (Gen. 11:28; Acts 7:2); this is the name of the region lying between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, bounded on the south by the Persian Gulf and on the north by the mountains of Armenia. In a narrower sense Mesopotamia is the name of the northern part of this region, the so-called El-Jezira, while the southern part of the region is known by the name Babylonia, present-day Iraq-Arabi, that is, ancient Babylonia. In the Roman era the country was divided into two parts: Osroene in the west, which passed to Rome in 217 A.D. with its chief city Edessa, and Migdonia in the east, with its chief city Nisibis, conquered in 115 A.D. by the Roman emperor Trajan. The beginning of Christianity in Mesopotamia was laid by Judas or Thaddaeus, a companion of the Apostle Hermas, who according to tradition was one of the seventy disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ; Judas founded a church in Edessa. In the vicinity of Nisibis was born St. Ephraim the Syrian (3rd–4th centuries); the bishop of Nisibis, Thomas Barsuma, was a zealous champion of the Nestorian heresy, which taught that the Word of God, eternally begotten of the Father, merely dwelt in the man Jesus, remaining with Him in a special, moral union. In the eleventh century, at the attack of the Seljuks and Turks, Mesopotamia declined, and now it belongs to Turkey; its inhabitants are Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Armenians and Syrians. Mesopotamia had very great historical significance under Assyrian and Babylonian rule.

1978. Arcadius is meant here, the Eastern Roman emperor, son of Theodosius the Great. On his father's death (A.D. 395) he received the so-called Eastern Empire, while his brother Honorius received the Western; he was born in 377 and died in 408. Throughout his reign the state was governed by men who knew how to subject the weak-willed emperor to their influence. Thus, at the beginning of his reign the state was governed by Rufinus, who increased the already enormous burden of taxes and multiplied monetary fines, thereby filling the empire with terror. After Rufinus's death his place was taken by the eunuch Eutropius, who, for the sake of his own enrichment, persuaded the emperor to issue a harsh law (A.D. 397) punishing with death and confiscation of property every evil design not only against the emperor but also against the higher persons. Finally, the Empress Eudocia secured the execution of Eutropius (A.D. 399), and Arcadius submitted entirely to his consort, who was known for her hostile attitude toward St. John Chrysostom, then Patriarch of Constantinople. At her urging the emperor confirmed the decision of the "Council of the Oak" (A.D. 403) deposing John Chrysostom, and sent him into exile, but afterward recalled him, frightened by a popular uprising. In 404 he ordered him sent into confinement again, doing this, as the first time, under the influence of Eudocia, who was offended at John Chrysostom for his sermons denouncing the luxurious and immoral life of the court. Under Arcadius, missionaries furnished with his letters preached Christianity in the provinces to those pagans who had not yet turned to Christ.

Honorius, Western Roman emperor, brother of Emperor Arcadius. At the beginning of his reign the government was headed by Stilicho, a clever politician and famous com-

mander, who repeatedly repelled attacks on the empire by the Visigoths, Vandals, Suevi and Burgundians. After his fall and execution the affairs of the empire went from bad to worse. In A.D. 408 the Visigothic leader Alaric besieged Rome and forced it to pay a heavy tribute, and in 410 he took the city and gave it over to his troops for plunder. After Alaric's death his brother-in-law Athaulf made peace with Honorius, after which the Visigoths withdrew beyond the Alps. Under Honorius, in 411, a council was held against the Donatist schismatics, who had separated from the Church because it admitted penitent apostates during the persecutions, since in their opinion the Church ceases to be holy if sinners are among its members. By Honorius's order all the remaining pagan temples were destroyed, and the pagans themselves were removed from state offices.

1981. The Life of St. Macarius of Kalyazin, composed in 1546–1547 from monastic recollections and accounts, partly even from eyewitnesses of the life of St. Macarius, as well as from some written notes, is found in many manuscripts from the 16th century on, but has never been printed in full from the original. Here the basis of the account is the text of the collection Synodal Library LZ 555. In the manuscript of the Public Library No. 927, containing the so-called Volokolamsk Paterikon, there is an account of Macarius of Kalyazin by Dosifei Toporkov, on the words of St. Joseph of Volokolamsk; this account has been taken into consideration here, as well as the reference to Macarius and his monastery in the tale of Joseph of Volokolamsk about Russian ascetics. – Much information about St. Macarius and his monastery is contained in the authentic documents preserved in the monastery. See the booklets: "Inventory of Ancient Charters and Other Documents Preserved in the Archive of the First-Class Trinity Monastery of Kalyazin, Tver, 1891"; "Fodder Book of the Kalyazin Monastery," by I. A. Ivanov, Tver, 1892; "Description of the Trinity Kalyazin Men's First-Class Monastery of the Tver Eparchy," compiled by Alexei Lebedev, Yaroslavl, 1867.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 18

18 марта

New Calendar March 18 · Old Calendar March 31 (civil dates)

Memory of Our Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem

Память иже во святых отца нашего Кирилла архиепископа Иерусалимского

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, born of pious parents, received a strictly Orthodox upbringing. In the reign of Constantine the Great he took monastic vows, and under his son Constantius[1997] he was chosen, upon the death of Archbishop Maximus, for the see of Jerusalem. Zealous for the preservation of the Christian teaching in its purity, St. Cyril, as archbishop, struggled actively and unceasingly against the heresies of Arius[1] and Macedonius[2].

By this he drew upon himself strong enmity from the bishops who had fallen into the Arian heresy; among the latter was the Metropolitan

1. The founder of the Arian heresy was Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria. He denied the consubstantiality of the Son of God with the Father, regarded Jesus Christ as a creature, and did not acknowledge in Him the Divine perfections—omnipotence, omniscience, etc. The heresy of Arius was decisively condemned at the First (326) and Second (381) Ecumenical Councils, at which the equality of the Son of God with the Father was established, which every Christian confesses in the second article of the Symbol of Faith, which was composed by the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. In the fifth century Arianism disappeared from the Roman Empire, but it revived in Germany among the Goths, Burgundians, Vandals, and Lombards.

2. Macedonius was Bishop of Constantinople in the time of Constantius, and he shared the heresy of Arius. Later deposed for his cruelty even toward the Arians, he wished to be the head of a new teaching, and he developed the teaching concerning the Holy Spirit in the sense of Arius. Macedonius considered the Holy Spirit to be essentially different from the first two Persons of the Holy Trinity, not having part in the Godhead and the glory of the Father and the Son. The heresy of Macedonius was condemned at the Second Ecumenical Council (381), and in the eighth article of the Symbol of Faith the true teaching of the Church concerning the Holy Spirit was established forever. The heresy of Macedonius was combated with particular zeal by the Holy Fathers of the Church: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory the Theologian.

of Caesarea in Palestine[2000], Acacius, who afterwards became the chief instigator of St. Cyril's first banishment.

Once[3], on the feast of Pentecost, about three o'clock in the afternoon, the following miraculous sign was seen in Jerusalem: in the sky there appeared the outline of the Precious Cross, shining with dazzling light; beginning at Golgotha[4], it extended as far as the Mount of Olives[2003]. Since the Emperor Constantius, sharing the heresy of Arius, oppressed the Orthodox and gave every assistance to the heretics, St. Cyril informed him of the miraculous sign and urged him to abandon the path of error and turn to Orthodoxy.

Meanwhile Metropolitan Acacius, relying on the support of the emperor, to whom he was close, rose up against St. Cyril because the latter denounced him for heresy and did not submit to him, although at that time Jerusalem was under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Caesarea; this had come about through the decline of Jerusalem after its destruction by the Romans[2004]. St. Cyril, however, not only refused to submit to the heretic metropolitan, who moreover had been deposed by the local Council of Serdica[5], but also denounced him for abusing an authority that did not belong to him under the canons of the Church; for these reasons he did not consider it possible for himself to submit to Metropolitan Acacius. Besides this, St. Cyril held that, on the contrary, Caesarea in Palestine ought to be subject to Jerusalem, since the Church of Jerusalem is the mother of all churches[6]; all the more so

3. This was in 351.

4. Golgotha, the hill on which the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. It lay formerly outside Jerusalem (Mt. 27:32–33; Jn. 19:17–41; Heb. 13:12), on the north-western side. Its name, Golgotha, from the Hebrew for "skull", the Place of the Skull (Lk. 23:33), it probably received from its resemblance to a skull. According to tradition, Adam was buried here.

5. *Sardis*: an ancient and wealthy city of the Asia Minor region of Lydia, capital of the Lydian kingdom; in 545 B.C. it passed to Pergamum, and from them to the Greeks, Alexander the Great, and finally to the Romans. Under the emperor Tiberius (14–36) the city suffered from an earthquake; Tiberius restored it again. In apostolic times Sardis was still a considerable city. Christianity arose here very early: already in the Apocalypse there is mention of the church of Sardis (Rev. 3:1–5). Under the emperor Arcadius (395–408) the city was destroyed by the Goths; in the 10th century Tamerlane razed it to the ground. At present, on the site of the once rich and glorious city there is a small village, Oart.

6. The Church of Jerusalem is called the mother of all churches because from it the Apostles went forth by the command of the Lord to preach the Gospel, spreading the teaching of Christ *to the ends of the earth* (Acts 18:1–28).

since the Council of Serdica, which deposed Acacius, had transferred the authority he had held to St. Cyril's predecessor, the Archbishop of Jerusalem Maximus.

Animated by hostility toward St. Cyril, Acacius found a pretext for accusing him owing to the following circumstance. A severe famine arose in Jerusalem. The people, finding no means of sustaining life, turned for help to their archbishop. St. Cyril, out of his compassion, took the requests of his flock to heart and spent all his possessions on them. But since the famine did not abate, and there was nothing more with which to help, St. Cyril began to sell the church vessels — gold, silver and precious veils — buying wheat for the starving with the money obtained from the sale. At this time a rumor appeared that a woman had been seen dancing in the street in sacred vestments. When asked where she had obtained the sacred garment, the woman replied that she had bought it from a certain merchant, and she named him. The merchant, in his turn questioned, said that the garment had been given to him for sale by the archbishop himself. It is unknown whether any of this was true, but the rumor reached Metropolitan Acacius, who judged it sufficient for accusing St. Cyril. At a council he convened he proposed that St. Cyril be deposed, as one who had dishonored a sacred object by selling it, and the council agreed. Thus, with the help of the heretical bishops, the deposed heretic Metropolitan overthrew the Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem from his throne and forced him by force to withdraw from the bounds of Jerusalem. St. Cyril first withdrew to Tarsus[7], where he stayed with Bishop Silvanus. Seeing that the latter did not quite rightly understand certain dogmas of the faith, St. Cyril pointed out his deviation and confirmed him in Orthodoxy. Hearing of this, Acacius wrote a letter to Silvanus, informing him of St. Cyril's deposition, and advised him either to break off communion with St. Cyril or, at the least, to forbid him to celebrate the services in the church district under Silvanus' jurisdiction. But Silvanus did not

7. Tarsus, a city of the Asia Minor region of Cilicia, is notable for being the birthplace of the Holy Apostle Paul (Acts 22:3); the Apostle prepared himself for the preaching of Christ in Tarsus, and from there he was summoned by Barnabas to preach the Gospel (Acts 9:11–30; Acts 11:25). Therefore Christianity arose early in Tarsus (Acts 15:23–41).

heed Acacius: he honored St. Cyril as a pious man whose teaching had supported and instructed many Orthodox; and about the banishment itself Silvanus knew that it had occurred not through any fault on St. Cyril's part, but solely through the envy and hatred of Acacius.

After this there was a local council at Seleucia[8], to which as many as 150 bishops came; among them was St. Cyril. Before the session of the council began, Acacius insisted on the removal of St. Cyril, whom he had excommunicated. Many bishops did not agree to such an act. Then Acacius, leaving the council, went to Constantinople. There, before the emperor and the Patriarch Eudoxius, likewise an Arian, he slandered the council he had left, calling it a gathering of evil men who had assembled not for the benefit but to the detriment of the Church. Acacius succeeded in arousing especially strong indignation in the emperor against St. Cyril. He told him that St. Cyril had sold a precious sacred vestment, which Constantine the Great had given to the Jerusalem archbishop Macarius to wear during the celebration of the Mystery of Baptism, and that afterwards this vestment had been seen on a man dancing at places of public popular entertainment. The emperor became so greatly angered that he subjected St. Cyril to imprisonment.

After the death of Constantius, Julian the Apostate[2009] ascended the throne. In the first years of his reign, under the guise of piety, he repealed all the decrees of Constantius directed to the harm of the Orthodox: by Julian's order all the Orthodox bishops previously banished by Constantius were released from confinement. It was at this time that St. Cyril too was restored to his see. Having established himself on the throne, Julian openly renounced Christ. He gave great freedom to the enemies of the Christians, the Jews; among other things he not only permitted them to build a temple on the site of the one destroyed by the Romans[9], but also assigned part of the state taxes for its construction. When this blasphemous undertaking had only just begun[10], St. Cyril predicted to his attendants that the words of Christ concerning the de-

8. Seleucia, a city of Syria on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; in all probability it was founded by the Syrian king Seleucus Nicator about 300 B.C. Here the Apostle Paul, during his first journey, stopped to preach, and from here he sailed to Cyprus (Acts 13:4). In the 6th century A.D. the city was destroyed.

struction of the very stones of the Temple — "The days will come, in which of the things which ye see here, there shall not be left one stone upon another; that shall be thrown down" (Lk. 21:6) — would surely be fulfilled. St. Cyril prayed to the Lord Christ that He would not allow the undertaking to be carried out, but would destroy it together with the plans of the builders. The Lord heard the prayer of His servant and fulfilled His own words, which He had foretold would certainly come to pass. In one night a powerful earthquake occurred, so that even the surviving foundations of the ancient Temple of Solomon were shifted from their place, not to mention the stones only just laid by the Jews; and all of it — the remains of the ancient temple and the new constructions — was scattered like dust by the action of invisible divine power. When day came, everyone marveled at the miracle that had taken place. When the Jews wanted to take up the work again, fire immediately fell from heaven and consumed their tools; great terror seized them. On the following night a sign of the Cross appeared on the garments of the Jews, which they could not remove by any means.

After this St. Cyril, whose prediction of the fulfillment of Christ's words had been so solemnly confirmed, again suffered banishment. His substitute, as can with probability be supposed, was St. Cyriacus. He was a Jew and bore the name Judas; during the search for the Precious Cross of the Lord by Empress Helena, he indicated its hidden location; afterwards he was baptized and received the name Cyriacus.

However, after the banishment of St. Cyril, St. Cyriacus did not long occupy his place: he soon suffered a martyr's death at the hands of Julian for confessing Christ.

After the death of Julian, St. Cyril again ascended the throne of Jerusalem, but because the Arians gained strength in the reign of

9. The temple was originally built by Solomon on Mount Moriah in 488 after the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt (3 Kgdms. 6:37–38; 2 Chron. chs. 6–7); in 689 it was destroyed by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. After a 70-year captivity, having received in 531 B.C. permission from Cyrus to return to Jerusalem and build the temple, the Jews, returning to Palestine, laid its foundation in the second year and finished the construction in 616. Herod the Great especially contributed to the adornment of the post-exilic temple. During the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, one of the soldiers threw a burning brand through a window, and the temple became the prey of fire.

Valens, he was exiled a third time for his piety and steadfast struggle against the heretics. At last, under Theodosius the Great[11], St. Cyril was honorably restored to Jerusalem. For eight years he governed the Church with a truly pastoral zeal, and he peacefully fell asleep in the Lord, leaving as his inheritance his most profitable writings[12].

Kontakion, Tone 1:

With thy tongue, O wise one, thou didst enlighten thy people with divine inspirations to honor the one Trinity, undivided in nature, yet divided in Persons. Wherefore, rejoicing, we celebrate thy most holy memory, presenting thee as an intercessor before God.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Anin the Wonderworker

Житие преподобного отца нашего Анина Чудотворца

Venerable Anin was a native of Chalcedon[13]. His parents were Christians. Like Zacchaeus in the Gospel[14], he was small of stature, but, in compensation, great in spirit. From his earliest years he was distinguished by a gentle, guileless disposition and constantly strove to do good.

10. Julian permitted the Jews to rebuild the temple, mocking the prophecy of Christ the Savior concerning its destruction (Lk. 21:6).

11. Theodosius the Great dealt the final blow to paganism: having become sole ruler in 392, he issued a law by which the worship of the gods was regarded as the same crime as an offense against majesty.

12. Among his surviving writings, particularly notable are the 23 catechetical homilies, of which 18 are addressed to those preparing for baptism and to the newly baptized; in them is contained a clear and simple exposition, article by article, of the dogmas of the Symbol of Faith. There also survive a "Discourse on the Paralytic" and fragments of a "Discourse on the Changing of Water into Wine at Cana".

13. Chalcedon, a city in Asia Minor, situated on the southern shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara). In antiquity Chalcedon was the chief city of the Roman province of Bithynia. In church history this city is notable as the site of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (held in 451 on account of the heresy of the Monophysites, who taught that in Jesus Christ there was one nature, the divine, which supposedly swallowed up the human nature).

14. *Zacchaeus*: chief of the tax collectors in the city of Jericho, who lived during the earthly ministry of the Lord and was granted by Him special attention for his zeal in hearing the Lord's preaching. Being small of stature, Zacchaeus once climbed a sycamore tree in order to see the Lord over the great crowd of people surrounding Him (Lk. 19:1–10).

When the Venerable One reached the age of fifteen, his parents died. Soon after this the saint resolved to leave the vain life of the world, and for this purpose he settled in one of the monasteries, where he received the tonsure into monasticism.

Zealous for the life of silent ascetic struggle, St. Aninus soon left the monastery and withdrew to a distant wilderness, situated near the place where the River Euphrates[15] flows, separating Syria[16] from Persia.[17] Here Aninus met a hermit named Maiumas, who was living in a cave. The saint settled with him and imitated him in the ascetic labors of fasting and prayer. They both kept so strict a fast that throughout the entire Forty Days they ate absolutely nothing; yet, despite this, their faces were always cheerful, as though they were present at a royal feast. St. Aninus so advanced in his ascetic labors that he even surpassed his teacher, the elder. He spent many days entirely without food, praying day and night, so that even the elder marvelled at his ascetic feats.

In the place where St. Aninus and the hermit pursued their ascetic life, there was no water, for the River Euphrates lay five stadia[18] from their cave. St. Aninus carried water from the river in a small vessel, deliberately not using a large one, so that he might labor as much as possible by making frequent journeys for water.

Once St. Aninus set out for water at the river, but before he had gone even one stadium from his cave, his vessel was suddenly filled with water by an Angel who appeared to him. Noticing that Aninus had returned unusually soon, the elder understood that God had wrought a miracle for him, filling him with His grace. After this, he began to beg Aninus to be his teacher and guide; but, being unable to persuade him, he decided to leave him, lest he compel to serve him one

15. The Euphrates: one of the largest rivers of Asia.

16. *Syria*: a region of Asia Minor bordering: on the east, the river Euphrates; on the south, Arabia; on the west, Palestine, Phoenicia and the Mediterranean Sea; on the north, Cilicia and Cappadocia. The northern half of Syria is more fertile and rich in vegetation than the southern, which in places passes into desert.

17. Persia: a region in the south of Asia, lying between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

18. Stadion (stadium): originally an oblong area intended among the Greeks for foot races. Since this name designated an area always of a definite length (usually 600 feet), the stadion was adopted as a measure of length. It equaled approximately 88 Russian sazhens, or 190 meters.

whom he himself wished and considered himself bound to serve. Coming to a monastery situated near the River Euphrates, the elder told the brethren about St. Aninus. From that time the fame of St. Aninus spread ever more widely, and many people seeking the ascetic life began to come to him.

After the elder Maiumas had departed from the cave, St. Aninus said to himself: "Here I began my ascetic life, and here I shall remain until the end of my life"; and he remained in the cave. Yet St. Aninus often went from the cave deep into the wilderness; after spending twenty or thirty days there, he returned to his cave cell. By his constant ascetic labors, the saint attained such a state that he mortified in himself all carnal passions and utterly subjected the flesh to the spirit.

The Lord filled the saint with His grace, so that He even subjected to him the wild beasts dwelling in the wilderness. Wherever the saint went, two lions followed him; one of them he had healed of a wound on its leg.

St. Aninus was a healer without payment not only for animals but also for people, for God had given him authority and power to heal every infirmity and every disease among men. The saint's renown spread throughout that whole country. Many sick people were brought to him, and he healed them all by the grace of God. For this reason the saint no longer withdrew into the wilderness, but remained continually in his cell for the sake of those who came to him. God had bestowed him upon that country so that those who came to him, as to a certain fountain of healings, might not depart without consolation, but that each might receive from him a remedy suited to his illness: one received healing for bodily infirmities, while another healed the diseases of his soul by listening to his instruction and teaching.

Since the place where the saint lived was without water, and there was great need of water because of the great number of people who came to him, the saint dug a small well into which rainwater collected.

Once several people came to the saint and asked him to give them water to quench their thirst. The saint told one of his disciples (he already had six disciples) to draw water from the well. But the disciple

told him that all the water in the well had already run out, so that not a single drop remained there. The Venerable Father said to him:

"I trust in the wondrous power of God. Go, and you will find water with which the thirst of those who have come will be quenched."

The disciple went and, to his astonishment, found the well filled with water to the brim. Having glorified God, he drew water from the well and, bringing it to his teacher, told him of the miracle wrought by the power of God. This water lasted for many days. All this took place in the seventeenth year of the saint's ascetic life. When all the water had run out and there was still no rain, the saint did not wish to ask God again for a miracle, but, humbling himself, began to carry water from the Euphrates himself by night. The saint labored throughout the night until morning, continually glorifying God and remembering the words spoken by the Lord in His holy Gospel: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Mt. 10:42).

It once happened that some brethren from a neighboring monastery came to the Venerable Father, exceedingly thirsty after their long journey; meanwhile, there was absolutely no water in the well. Then the Venerable Father secretly took the water vessels and went himself to the river for water. Soon he was already returning. Noticing that the Venerable Father was returning too soon, the brethren thought that the saint had grown very tired and, without reaching the river, had turned back. The brethren went to meet him, intending to go for water themselves. But when they began to take the water vessels from the saint's shoulders, they saw that the vessels were filled to the brim with water. The brethren were greatly astonished at all that had happened, for the Angel of the Lord had filled the vessels with water, as had happened before in the presence of the elder Maiumas. Then the brethren cried out:

"Thanks be to the Lord! Through the merits of our holy father, the water vessels have been filled with water!"

But the saint, ever observing humility of mind, said to the brethren:

"Forgive me, brethren; I am a sinful man. This water was given you by God not on my account, but because of your great thirst, lest you should utterly faint while waiting for my return from the river."

The bishop of the city of Neocaesarea,[19] named Patricius, greatly esteemed the saint for the miracles God wrought through the saint's merits; he visited him repeatedly and, against his will, ordained him a priest.

Learning that the saint himself carried water from the Euphrates to quench the thirst of those who came to him, the bishop sent him a donkey as a gift, so that it might carry water from the river.

Several days later, a poor man came to the saint who had no means of paying his debt to his creditor. The man begged the saint to help him pay his debt. But the Venerable Father, being poor in spirit and having no possession that he could give away, said to the man who had come:

"Take this donkey, my brother, sell it, and pay your debt with the money you receive."

The man took the donkey and departed from the saint, who again began carrying water from the river himself.

When the bishop learned of this, he sent another donkey to the saint and instructed the messenger to say:

"I do not give you this donkey as your property, but you may use it to carry water; and when I need it, I shall take it back."

Some time later, a poor man came to the Venerable Father and asked him for alms. Having nothing he could give except the donkey, the saint gave it to the petitioner.

When the bishop later came to the saint and did not find the donkey, he ordered a large well to be dug and filled with water from the river with the help of many animals (in waterless and dry places, wells were commonly dug and filled with water obtained from rain or melting snow, or carried from a river). Having filled the well to the brim, the bishop took his animals back with him; and when the water in the well

19. *Neocaesarea*: one of the large cities of Cappadocia, a region of Asia Minor. In 316 a local council was held here, which dealt with questions of church order. On the site of ancient Neocaesarea there now exists the small town of Niksar.

ran low, the bishop again sent his donkeys to carry water to the well, and afterward took them back.

In Apamea[20] there lived a Stylite named Pionius, who led a strictly ascetic life. Robbers who lived among the people in the surrounding area came by night to his monastery, thinking to find great riches there. Having undermined the wall, the robbers entered the monastery, but after searching it found nothing anywhere and returned empty-handed. As one of the robbers was leaving, he picked up a stone and threw it at the holy Stylite. The stone struck the saint on the head and grievously wounded him.

When the evildoers had left that place, the Stylite was already intending to descend from his pillar and go to the judges to complain of the robbers.

St. Aninus, learning of this, summoned the lion that served him, set food before it, and said:

"Eat your fill, for you have a long journey ahead of you."

Then, taking a sheet of paper, the Venerable Father wrote upon it:

"O holy father! I know that, having suffered at the hands of evildoers, you intend to descend from your pillar in order to take vengeance upon your enemies. Abandon this intention, lest you lose the eternal reward for your labors in the Heavenly Kingdom."

The Venerable Father tied this paper around the lion's neck and, addressing it as though it were a man, commanded it to go to the aforementioned Stylite, harming no one along the way.

The lion ran swiftly and soon reached the monastery where the Stylite lived. Stopping at the monastery gate, the lion began to strike it with its paws. The gatekeeper looked through a small window, saw the lion, and hurried to the Stylite to tell him that a great beast stood at the monastery gate.

Having prayed to God, the Stylite told the gatekeeper to open the monastery gate without fear. Then the lion entered the monastery, approached the pillar, and laid the paper before it.

Having read the letter, the stylite was amazed at the foresight of St. Anin, who, though so far away, had known his thoughts; he was also

amazed at how God commands the beasts to serve His saints. After this the stylite abandoned his intention and placed all his hope in the Lord.

A certain pious woman, falling ill, set out to St. Anin, hoping to receive healing from him. On the way she met a robber with a spear in his hand, who intended to take from her all that she had; yet he found nothing with her except a small amount of bread needed for the journey. Inflamed with lust, the robber wished to commit violence against her. Planting his spear in the ground, he began to force her into sin. But the woman, striving to break free from his hands, called the Venerable to her aid and cried out:

"St. Anin, help me!"

At that very moment the robber was humbled; terror seized him, and he was about to flee. But when he reached for his spear, he could not draw it out of the ground, because his spear had taken very firm root in the earth. The robber was filled with still greater fear; and the woman, delivered from his hands, went to the saint. Coming to him, she told him everything that had happened, and having received healing from her sickness, she returned to her dwelling place.

The robber also came to the Venerable, repenting of all his evil deeds. After this St. Anin healed him, taught him the holy Christian faith, and granted him holy Baptism; afterwards he tonsured him into monasticism. And his spear, left in the earth, by the will of God grew into a great oak.

This great servant of God performed many other miracles as well: he healed the paralyzed, cast demons out of people, and cured many who were sick, being a healer not only of men but also of animals.

Once many people came to the Venerable. It was a sweltering day; all were tormented by thirst, and all the water had run out. But when the saint prayed, a cloud suddenly appeared, and abundant rain poured down upon the earth.

The Venerable foretold much that was to come to pass in the future; thus, for example, he foretold the invasion of the barbarians[21], and the

20. Apamea is a region in southwestern Syria, situated on the bank of the river Orontes.
21. A barbarian is, in general, a person of another tribe or nation; a foreigner.

deaths of many brethren, summoning to himself the brother who was destined to die and saying to him privately:

"Child! Take care for your soul, for your time is near!"

At last the saint himself drew near to the day of his death, having lived a hundred and ten years from the day of his birth. Knowing the day of his death, the saint summoned his rational flock (he had quite a number of brethren) and for a long time admonished and instructed them. Then the saint pointed with his hand to a very virtuous presbyter named Veronikian, and said:

"This man will be your abbot in my place." Thereupon the saint, after being ill for seven days, was already approaching the very end of his life. At the very hour of his death he was filled with fear and wished to rise from his bed, but, bowing his head, he said:

"Peace be to you, my teachers!" After being silent for a little while, he spoke again:

"Who are you, my teachers?" After being silent a little while more, he said:

"May the will of my Lord be done; behold, I go with you by the command of the Lord."

All who surrounded him were filled with fear and fell prostrate. But the God-fearing presbyter Veronikian, who had been named as abbot, said to the Venerable:

"My lord! For what hope, for what purpose did you labor all the days of your life? Tell us, what did you see?"

The saint answered:

"I saw the heavenly Jerusalem opened, a bright cloud proceeding from it, and three luminous men upon that cloud, who, coming to me, said: 'Anin! The Lord calls you; rise and go with us.' I asked them: 'Who are you, my teachers?' And they answered: 'We are Moses, Aaron, and Hur.'"

Hearing this, the brethren were filled with still greater fear and dread. But the saint said to them:

"Pray for me, my brethren, that I may not be afraid when I am brought before the terrible Judge."

Then the saint said:

"Lord, receive my spirit," and soon he reposed (on the eighteenth day of the month of March).

The brethren buried him with honor, glorifying and praising the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God, glorified by all forever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Trophimus and Eucarpus

Память святых мучеников Трофима и Евкарпия

When a persecution was raised against the Christians in Nicomedia, all the confessors of Christ were seized and held in prisons, and afterwards they were brought to trial, subjected to numerous tortures and various sufferings, and those who remained unshaken in confessing Christ our God were put to death. At that time the holy martyrs Trophimus and Eucarpus were known in the army as the most courageous and valiant soldiers, and therefore they proved to be the most powerful enemies of Christ. They seized Christians, shut them up in prisons, and, having received full power over them, at their own discretion delivered some to torments and left others to languish in the prisons. Once, as they were going to seize some Christians, they saw a great fiery cloud coming down from heaven and growing denser as it drew near to them. From the cloud there sounded a voice, saying:

"Why do you exert yourselves so zealously, threatening My servants? Do not be deceived: no one can subject to his power those who believe in Me, but rather join them yourselves, and then you will obtain the Kingdom of Heaven."

Seeing this vision and hearing such words, Trophimus and Eucarpus, these fierce and cruel persecutors of the servants of Christ, fell to the ground, for they could neither look upon the vision nor endure the thundering voice that came out of the cloud; and, lying on the ground, they only said to one another:

"Truly great is God, who has appeared to us now. Happy shall we be if we become His servants."

And while they were speaking these words in fear, the cloud divided, standing on both sides of them, and from it a voice again sounded, saying to them:

"Rise and repent, and your sins shall be forgiven you." When they rose, they saw seated in the midst of the cloud a certain man of fair appearance, exceedingly beautiful, and a great multitude standing before Him. Astonished at His extraordinary appearance, Trophimus and Eucarpus said to Him with one voice:

"Receive us, for our sins are evil and unspeakable. There is no other God but You, the Creator and the One true God, and we have not yet joined Your servants!"

When they said these words, the cloud immediately closed together and rose into heaven. After this Trophimus and Eucarpus remained in place for a long time and wept, and then, having prayed to God, they returned, and with fear they released from the prisons all those whom they had held in confinement. Kissing them as brothers, bowing to them, and removing their fetters, they escorted them all, and all the prisoners thus returned to their homes. The governor of the city of Nicomedia, learning of this, was greatly angered at Trophimus and Eucarpus, and summoning them, he began to interrogate them, wishing to learn the cause of such a change in them. They related to him in detail everything they had seen in the vision. Then he commanded that they be hung upon a tree and that their ribs be scraped, and afterwards that their wounds be rubbed with hair ropes. The holy martyrs bore the torment bravely, praying, rejoicing, and giving thanks to God. By this they brought the governor to still greater wrath, and he ordered a great bonfire to be lit and them thrown into it. When the fire was lit, the saints themselves entered the flames and, glorifying God, committed their righteous souls into the hands of God. Such was the martyr's end of the holy martyrs Trophimus and Eucarpus[22].

* * *

22. Sts. Trophimus and Eucarpius reposed around the year 300.

NOTES

1997. Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, after his father's death received the East, Asia, and Egypt; in 361, having defeated Magnentius, the murderer of his brother Constans, he united the whole Roman Empire under his own power. He destroyed pagan temples or handed them over to Christians to be converted into churches; on several occasions he issued a law, under pain of death, forbidding pagan worship. But by his sympathy for the heresy of Arius, Constantius greatly increased the religious strife of that time; he persecuted the Orthodox bishops who did not share the errors of the Arians, removed them from their sees, and even subjected them to imprisonment; under him the Arians held the highest positions in the state. Constantius died in 361 during a campaign against his cousin Julian, who had been proclaimed emperor by the troops in Gaul, whom he himself had appointed commander-in-chief there. Gregory of Nazianzus reports that before his death Constantius repented of his persecution of the Orthodox.

2000. Caesarea, a city situated on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Jaffa, ancient Joppa. It was built by Herod on the ruins of the ancient Canaanite city of Strato, in honor of Caesar Augustus. Under the emperor Vespasian (69–79) it was made a Roman colony. Even before the destruction of Jerusalem, Caesarea had become the seat of the Roman procurators (Acts 23:23–24). In apostolic times this city was notable for the fact that here the first Gentile, the centurion Cornelius, was converted to Christianity by the Apostle Peter (Acts 10:1–48); here lived the Apostle Philip, one of the first deacons (Acts 8:40; Acts 21:8); here the Apostle Paul came, and here he spent two years in bonds (Acts 9:30; Acts 18:22; Acts 21:8; Acts 23:23; Acts 24:1–27; Acts 25:1–27; Acts 26:1–32). After the destruction of Jerusalem, Caesarea was the chief city of Palestine and the seat of a bishop. In 638, with the spread of Mohammedanism, Caesarea came under the rule of the Turks, from whom it was liberated in the time of the Crusades by Baldwin in 1102, but in 1265 it was again conquered by the Turks and utterly destroyed, so that only ruins of the city remained.

2003. The Mount of Olives, or Olivet, one of the mountains of Judea, lies east of Jerusalem (Ezek. 11:23). It received its name of the Mount of Olives from the multitude of olive trees growing upon it. During His earthly life the Lord Jesus Christ often came to the mountain with His disciples (Jn. 8:1; Jn. 18:2). On the western slope of the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane, where the Lord prayed on the night before His sufferings and where He was betrayed by Judas (Mt. 26:30–60; Mk. 14:26–46; Lk. 22:39). On the south-eastern slope of the mountain was the village of Bethany, from which the Lord made His solemn entry into Jerusalem (Mt. 21:21; Lk. 19:29). According to tradition, the Lord ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12). In the 4th century, on the Mount of Olives, the mother of Constantine the Great erected a Christian church, which was later converted by the Turks into a mosque.

2004. This destruction took place some decades after the death of Christ the Savior, who often foretold to Jerusalem the sad fate awaiting it (Mt. 24:1–51; Mk. 13:1–37; Lk. 19:41–44). In the reign of Nero (54–68) the Jews rose up against the Romans. Nero sent against the rebels an army under the command of Vespasian, who soon

conquered Galilee and was already preparing to besiege Jerusalem; but, being chosen emperor in place of the slain Nero, he left the conclusion of the war to his son Titus. After a year-long siege, Titus took Jerusalem. The city suffered terrible destruction, so that only a few towers and buildings remained. Up to 1,100,000 (one million one hundred thousand) Jews perished from hunger during the siege; about 97,000 were taken captive. Then under the emperor Hadrian (117–138) the city underwent final destruction. But from the time of Constantine the Great the Christian religion triumphed over paganism, and Jerusalem began to grow and be adorned.

2009. Julian the Apostate, nephew of Constantine the Great, son of his brother Julius Constantius, was born in 331. In 345 he, together with his brother Gallus, was exiled to Cappadocia by Constantius, where under strict supervision he spent six years. In 351 he left the place of exile and spent several years in Nicomedia, where he was attracted to the study of philosophy; in 355 he was appointed by Constantius commander of the troops in Gaul; here he knew how to win the love of the army, which in 361 proclaimed him emperor. The study of philosophy under the guidance of a pagan teacher, and the dissensions among Christians resulting from the Arian disturbances, together with hatred of Constantius, aroused in Julian hatred also for the religion of his oppressor, Christianity. He set himself the goal of restoring paganism and destroying Christianity. But all his attempts ended in complete failure. Julian died in 363 on campaign against the Persians.



THE NINETEENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 19

19 марта

New Calendar March 19 · Old Calendar April 1 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria

Страдание святых мучеников Хрисанфа и Дарии

A certain Polemius, a man of noble birth, moved with his son Chrysanthus from Alexandria[1] to Rome[2]. There he was received with honor and was granted by the emperor the rank of senator. Wishing to give Chrysanthus an education, Polemius placed him in a school of philosophy. The young Chrysanthus, inquisitive and very intelligent, studied the various sciences with zeal, and by chance he found the books of the New Testament. Reading them attentively and penetrating into their meaning, Chrysanthus reflected thus:

"Until now, Chrysanthus, it was fitting for you to study the pagan writings, which are full of darkness, until you came to know the true light, to which alone you should cleave. For it would not be reasonable to return from light to darkness. You would lose the fruits of your learning if you rejected the fruits of those labors. Now the fruits of labors are given by God to those who seek them. For God Himself so commands, as you have read in the books of the New Testament: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you' (Lk. 11:9). But if you were to abandon what you have

1. *Alexandria* – a famous city founded by Alexander of Macedon in the fourth century before the Nativity of Christ, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, at the mouth of the river Nile. After Rome, Alexandria was the first city in the world, and it served as a center of commerce, industry, and especially of pagan learning; and in the first centuries of Christianity it was a nursery of Christian enlightenment. Christianity was brought there, according to tradition, by the holy Evangelist Mark about the year 60.

2. *Rome* – the chief city of the Roman state – lies in the central part of Italy, on both banks of the river Tiber, where it flows into the sea. In Rome the holy Apostles Peter and Paul died a martyr's death under Nero.

sought and found, you would be like senseless and mad people. Therefore hold firmly, with all your mind, to what one ought to hold to, lest you voluntarily forfeit the good that you have acquired with such toil: you have found gold and silver, you have found a precious stone. For you sought in order to find, and you found in order to make use of what you have acquired. See, then, that the treasure you have gained is not taken from you."

Reflecting in this way, Chrysanthus sought someone who might teach him the Divine Scripture. And as at first he had been a hearer of rhetorical and philosophical wisdom and a pupil of the most learned teachers, so now he desired to find unlettered teachers, such as once were the Apostles of Christ, unlettered fishermen who nevertheless brought the whole world to the knowledge of Christ. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Such teachers the wise youth Chrysanthus sought diligently, for he had read in the Apostle, who says: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:20–21; cf. Is. 33:18).

Thus reflecting and seeking a Christian teacher, Chrysanthus learned of a Christian named Carpophorus, who was very learned in the Divine Scripture; this Carpophorus lived, or rather hid because of the persecution, in a certain cave in a place unknown to anyone. Hearing of this Christian, the pious youth rejoiced greatly and earnestly begged the one who had told him of him to show him the place where that man of God dwelt.

Having learned of his dwelling, Chrysanthus came to Carpophorus, who was a presbyter by rank, and was taught by him the Divine Scripture and the Christian faith; often coming to him, he received from him instruction on the way of salvation. Instructed by the presbyter Carpophorus, Chrysanthus within a few months came to understand the mysteries of the Divine Scripture, and then received holy Baptism from

him. And Chrysanthus became so firm in the Christian faith and so steadfast in his love for Christ that, seven days after his Baptism, he began to preach openly to the people about Christ the Son of God. Hearing of this, some of Chrysanthus's noble relatives said to his father:

"Look, the guilt will be upon you, and you will be called to account for what your son dares to do, for he reviles the gods and acknowledges a certain Christ as the true God. If word of this reaches the emperor, then neither you nor we, his relatives, will be forgiven on his account, and we will all lose the emperor's favor. For whoever dares to speak such blasphemous words against the gods is by that very fact an opponent of the imperial laws."

Angered at Chrysanthus, Polemius shut his son in a gloomy and foul-smelling dungeon and starved him, giving him only a small amount of food in the evening. But the blessed Chrysanthus regarded that dungeon and the hunger not as punishment but as instruction in the fasting, silence and humility of the Christian life, and he rejoiced in his dark and cramped dwelling more than in spacious and bright chambers.

Learning of this, the members of the household and the relatives gave Polemius this counsel:

"If you wish to turn your son away from the Christian faith, then arrange that he remain at liberty and enjoy pleasures. Find him a beautiful and clever maiden and join him to her in marriage, and he will then forget about Christianity. As for the dungeon, the chains and the hunger with which you torment Chrysanthus, the Christians count these to their glory and honor, rather than as torment."

Hearing this, Polemius ordered a luxurious chamber to be prepared, its walls adorned with costly hangings, a precious bed set in it, and everything prepared there for merriment and pleasure. Then, bringing his son out of his dark confinement and clothing him in costly garments, Polemius led him into that chamber. Choosing then the most beautiful of his female slaves and dressing them in sumptuous robes, Polemius shut them up in that chamber with his son, strictly charging the maidens that they should by every means try to beguile Chrysanthus into carnal, lustful love and turn him away from Christ. And

into that chamber were brought in abundance every kind of food and the finest wine; and those maidens sang lewd songs before the holy Chrysanthus, danced before him, spoke shameless words, seeking by every means to ensnare the soul of the blessed youth into fornication and carnal pleasures.

But the youth Chrysanthus, not as a youth but as a tested man, regarded the games and allurements of those maidens, and remaining amid the snares he could not be caught. In this struggle he showed himself an invincible warrior of Christ, abstaining entirely from savory dishes and sweet drinks; and he looked upon those maidens as asps, avoiding their touch as if they were serpents, and he remained all the while in prayer. When he had need to refresh himself with sleep, he lay on the ground without a bed; and the seductive and shameless words of the maidens he regarded as arrows, and with the shield of faith he deflected them from himself, crying out to God:

"Take hold of shield and buckler, and rise up to help me; draw out the sword, and stop the way against them that persecute me; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation" (Ps. 34:2–3). Who could overcome this struggle which the devil has raised against me, unless Thy right hand overcome and prevail? He is deceived who thinks by his own strength to overcome carnal passion and keep chastity, unless the flame of the flesh is quenched by the rain of Thy mercy. The soul cannot attain Thy dwelling-places unless Thou Thyself lead it there; for carnal passion is like some cunning beast that lurks in the wilderness of worldly vanity for the destruction of human souls; and if anyone escapes its teeth, he must give thanks with his whole soul to God his Savior, for through Thee we are delivered from such ruin. Thus the chaste Joseph, by Thy help, escaped the hands of the harlot as from the teeth of an untamed beast, that Joseph of whom his father, weeping, said: "An evil beast hath devoured my son" (Gen. 37:33). For truly the wife of Potiphar, like a fierce beast, attacked him, and like a lioness tore at the guileless lamb Joseph with her nails, drawing him into lawlessness (Gen. 39:12). And what beast could be more fierce than the devil and a woman? Natural carnal desire stirred up the youth Joseph, and the woman drew him even more with the play of her eyes, costly garments, beauty

of face, wealth, power and flattering words, drawing the chaste youth to destruction and death. And wonderful it is that he escaped the cunning snare of the beast! Not in vain did his father say: "It is well for me if my son is alive" (Gen. 45:28); for he escaped a death great and inevitable, and more cruel than when his brothers wished to kill him; and he escaped this death by Thy all-powerful help, O almighty God! For Thou wert with him then. And now I, O Lord, humbly beseech Thee, give me help against these beasts and serpents, with whom my father has shut me up in one place. And as charmed serpents sleep, so let these impious maidens sleep during my prayer, that they may not be able to stir up carnal desire in my young body. Help me, my Savior, for I know Thee alone as the true God, who saves those who believe in Thee and gives them Thy invincible help."

After this prayer, the maidens shut in with Chrysanthus fell into so deep a sleep that they could neither awaken of themselves nor be roused by anyone, until they were carried out of that chamber. When they had been carried out of there, they immediately awoke; then, having taken food, they entered the chamber of the holy Chrysanthus again, and again fell into the same heavy sleep. And so it continued every day. When this was reported to Polemius, the father of Chrysanthus, he wept over him as over a dead man. Then some of his friends said to Polemius:

"Your son has learned sorcery from the Christians and has easily put those maidens to sleep. But betroth him and marry him to an educated and clever maiden, and she, even if he does not wish to marry, living with him constantly, will lead him into carnal union with herself and turn him away from Christianity."

Polemius said in reply:

"But where shall we find so clever a maiden, who could soften the heart of the hardened Chrysanthus, influence him by persuasion, and turn him to our laws?"

To this his relatives said to him:

– Among the maidens serving at the temple of the goddess Athena[3] is a young woman named Daria. She is very beautiful of face, intelli-

gent, and has studied all the books and all the wisdom of rhetoric; she is already of marriageable age. Therefore, hasten to betroth her to your son, before someone else takes her.

Heeding this counsel, Polemius asked his kinsmen to go to the maiden and, telling her about the youth Chrysanthus and his conversion to the Christian faith, to persuade her to entice him into marriage with her and turn him away from Christianity. The maiden agreed to marry Chrysanthus and prepared herself to incline her betrothed to carnal love by seductive words and to bring him to worship the Roman gods.

Thereafter the maiden was brought with honor into the house of Polemius and, adorned with precious garments and ornaments in addition to her natural beauty, was led into the saint's bedchamber. Left alone there with him, she used every kind of tender word and various enticements to draw the chaste youth into fornication. But Christ's warrior Chrysanthus remained firm as adamant[4], unshaken as a pillar and immovable as a mountain, overcoming carnal love by his love for God and repelling from himself, by the sign of the Cross, the arrows the devil had shot at him. Sighing deeply from his heart to God and calling upon the Holy Spirit to help him, Chrysanthus spoke thus to the maiden:

– Beautiful maiden! If you have dressed and adorned yourself thus only for a brief union with me, a mortal man, and utter such sweet words in order to turn me away from the life I have chosen of my own will, corrupt my soul, and divert all my thoughts, which are possessed by another love, how much more ought you to strive to win the love of the immortal King, the Son of God—and this is easily accomplished, if

3. *Athena* (also Pallas or Minerva) – the Greek goddess, daughter of the supreme god Zeus, born without a mother from his head. Among the Greeks Athena was in general the personified reason of Zeus: reason and strength were the chief traits of this goddess. Guardian of the city – Athena fosters everything that contributes to the welfare of citizens, agriculture and crafts; her wisdom invented many useful things; she also practices and teaches every woman's craft; she is the goddess of all the arts and crafts, of every wisdom and learning. She watches over the application of law and justice, over the courts and the popular assemblies. At the same time she is the goddess of war, and was sometimes depicted in military armor.

4. *Adamant* (diamond) – a stone of such hardness that it scratches and cuts other stones without being harmed. This name in church literature is applied to many saints (especially Fathers and teachers of the Church) who were renowned for the firmness of their faith and character.

only you desire it yourself. If you preserve your soul together with your body in purity, and as you have now adorned your body with precious garments, so adorn your heart with good conduct, then the Angels will be your friends, the Apostles your companions, and the Martyrs your neighbors; at their intercession Christ Himself will be your Bridegroom, and He will prepare for you in heaven an incorruptible bridal chamber, incomparably more beautiful and brighter than any on earth, and grant you the eternal joy of Paradise, make your youth immortal, and appoint you a dowry in the books of eternal life.

Hearing such words from the holy youth, Daria was moved and said:

– It was no carnal desire that brought me here to you in this rich attire, but love for you, and the tears and entreaties of your father, that I might bring you to serve our gods.

St. Chrysanthus answered her:

– If you have any arguments or clear proofs by which you could demonstrate the truth of the service you render to the gods, then I will listen to you and change my mind. Let us discuss this for our common benefit.

– There is nothing more useful or needful for people, said Daria, than to honor the gods and take care not to anger them; rather, we ought to please them with sacrifices, so that they may be our guardians.

– O wise maiden! the saint replied. How can those gods be our guardians who themselves require guarding, and are guarded at night by dogs tied to them, lest thieves steal them? For this reason they are also fastened with iron nails and soldered with tin, so that, if anyone overturns them, they may not fall to the ground and be broken.

– If the ignorant people could honor the gods without carved idols, said Daria, then there would be no need to carve and set them up. But they are cast of gold, silver, and bronze, and made of marble and wood, so that people, seeing them with their eyes, may know whom they ought to conceive in their minds, honor, and fear.

– Let us examine and judge, replied St. Chrysanthus, whom the idols represent, and whether those whose idols are set up are worthy of divine honor. He cannot be called God who does not possess all holiness

and righteousness and divine glory. What holiness, righteousness, and divine glory did your sickle-bearing Kronos possess, when he devoured his own children, as his own worshippers have written?[5] Or what will you find worthy of praise in Zeus himself,[6] who, for as many days as he lived, committed that many crimes, adulteries, and murders: a persecutor of his father, destroyer of his children, adulterer with other men's wives, husband of his own sister, tyrant over kingdoms, inventor of sorcery, agent of deaths, and guilty of so many crimes and abominations that they cannot even be heard of—for his deeds were so shameless and impure. Do you truly believe that such an impious man can be a god? That he was indeed such is attested by your own writers, who wrote that impious men called kings who were brave in war and had died in their own time gods. Tell me, what virtue was there in your god Zeus, who to the very end of his life was an enemy of all purity and honesty? For by abducting the youth Ganymede[7] he defiled the air, and he also defiled the earth by violating his sisters. And what do you find divine in your Hermes,[8] whose head resembles some winged monster? By sorcery he found gold hidden in the earth, and by witchcraft and a magic wand he neutralized the poison of serpents; but he did this with the help of demons, to whom he daily sacrificed a boar or a cock. And what holiness was there in Hercules,[9] who wearied himself by killing his neighbors and then, at God's command, cast himself into the fire and burned, wretched man, together with the club he carried and his skin?

5. *Kron* or *Kronos* (or *Chronos*, – time) – the god of time, son of Uranus (heaven); he devoured his own children, but his consort *Rhea* saved Zeus and hid him in the reeds of the island of Delos, where he was suckled by a goat.

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

7. *Ganymede* (or Ganymedes) – son of King Tros, the most beautiful of mortals, whom the gods carried off to heaven, that he might live there forever and pour wine for Zeus from the cup. (According to mythology, Zeus carried him off either through his eagle or in the form of an eagle himself.) Afterwards Ganymede became cupbearer of the gods, and especially of Zeus, becoming the favorite of the latter.

8. *Hermes* (Mercury) was regarded as the messenger of the gods, patron of commerce and of orators, and was one of the most popular pagan gods. (So the ignorant population of the cities of Lystra and Lycaonia was so struck by the miracles of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas that they called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes, *because he was the chief speaker.* – Acts 14:12).

9. *Hercules* (Heracles or Heraclius) was the son of the queen Alcmene and the god Zeus. He served as the highest ideal of Greek heroic strength; he was the national hero of the Greeks.

What good will you find in Apollo,[10] or in the secret sacrifices of Bacchus,[11] in drunkenness and intemperance? Let us remember also the goddess Hera, sister and wife of Zeus; the frenzied Pallas,[12] the shameless Venus,[13] who quarreled with one another, were jealous of one another, grew angry with one another, disputed each over her own beauty, and demanded the judgment of a shepherd. Who would consider worthy of divine honor all these, who possessed neither divinity nor holiness nor righteousness? And it is not fitting even to speak of the lesser gods, for the chief gods are like the head, whose other members must follow. Which of them should be honored as a god or goddess, when Kronos, Zeus, and Venus—whom impious men consider the greatest of the gods—are in truth no gods? Therefore, if your gods are contemptible and vain, then those who honor them as gods are all the more deserving of contempt.

Daria listened attentively to Chrysanthus' words and said:

– If the tales of our poets are foolish, let us turn to the philosophers, who teach us to renounce all wickedness and hold fast to virtue. In their writings, when they speak of the creation of the world, they explain the names of the gods as follows: by Kronos they mean time, which devours all things and reduces them to nothing; by Zeus, heat; by Hera, air; by Aphrodite, fire; by Poseidon, the sea; by Ceres, the earth; and by the other divine names, the remaining elements.

Chrysanthus answered:

– People commonly make an image of that which does not endure forever, but perishes with time; yet the earth exists always, as do the sea and fire, which all can observe, and likewise the air. Why it has been decreed that these elements should be honored as gods in idols resembling human beings and fashioned by human hands, I neither know

10. *Apollo* (or *Phoebus*) – son of Zeus and Leto, one of the most venerated Greco-Roman pagan gods. He was revered as the god of the sun and of intellectual enlightenment, and also of public welfare and order, guardian of the law, and the deity of prophecy of the future.

11. Bacchus (Dionysus) – son of Zeus and Semele, god of the vine and of wine-making, who with the gift of wine gladdens the hearts of men and dispels sorrow and care. Festivals in honor of Bacchus were accompanied by great licentiousness.

12. *Pallas* – see above under the word *Athena*.

13. *Venus* – the Greco-Roman goddess of love, beauty, voluptuousness and impure lusts.

nor understand. And why do you honor the symbols of the elements in humanlike statues, rather than honoring the elements themselves? Why do you not worship the earth, the air, and the sea? Is there any prince or king who would command that he himself be despised, while an image of him, made by someone, should be worshipped? Since there is no such king or prince, it must truly be said that in those images you depict not the elements and not the gods, but mortal men.

Daria said:

– Your arguments, Chrysanthus, confirm my own thought: simple and ignorant people honor carved idols, but we honor the very things whose images have been set up.

"If you wish to confirm your teaching by our proofs," said Chrysanthus in reply, "then let us take as an example all those who worship the elements. If they worship the earth, let them worship it worthily, as their goddess, and let them not do it any dishonor: let them not plough it, dig it, or work it in any other way; let the earth be free from cultivation and tillage. But whoever does not confess the earth to be a goddess, and if he is a farmer, let him till it with plough and spade, paying it no divine honor at all. And look: whose field and gardens are more fruitful? Is it the man who does not till or dig the earth, and honors it as a goddess? Or the man who tills and works it without any reverence at all? If the earth is truly a goddess, as you say, then she ought to bring forth all manner of fruits for you, her worshippers, without your labor, without being ploughed, worked, or sown. Likewise, if the sea is a god, then sail upon it without an oar; let it carry you wherever you wish. In the same way, if you desire to have fish, do not catch them or toil for them, but worship the sea as a god and ask them of it in prayer. You must understand the same of the other elements: they do not know their worshippers, for they have neither soul nor reason, but by God's command they serve the needs of man. Thus the earth, at the command of its Creator, being watered and warmed by the rays of the sun, causes the seeds to sprout, brings up the plantings, and in due time gives its fruits. Therefore it is fitting to honor the one God, the Creator, who made all these things, arranged them, and gave them to us for life, and not the creatures He has made. For children who study in schools

do not honor the little books, tablets, and papers, but their teachers; likewise a sick man, once healed and made well, gives thanks for his recovery not to the medicine but to the physician who made him well."

After Chrysanthus had said this and much more, Daria believed in the one true God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Then they both agreed to live in celibacy under the appearance of marriage, keeping their virginity in purity and abiding in the fear of the Lord. From this time Polemius, the father of Chrysanthus, granted him full freedom for the sake of his pretended marriage, for he was very glad of his son's wedding, not knowing the secret kept between the newlyweds. In the same way he gave his son the ownership of all his property, as his only heir. Soon Polemius died, for God so arranged it that the holy pair, Chrysanthus and Daria, who kept their marriage in virginity, might serve Him more freely.

When Chrysanthus had thus become wholly free in his life, he baptized his wife, the virgin Daria, and she soon studied all the Divine Scripture and all the Christian books, and became a saint in her life, a perfect servant and bride of Christ. Chrysanthus and Daria cared not only for their own salvation but also for the salvation of others: he converted many men to Christ and exhorted young men to a life of virginity, and she betrothed to Christ a multitude of women and maidens. Each living in houses arranged in the manner of monasteries, they each had their own assembly of virgins: Chrysanthus had the young men, who had despised all the pleasures of this world and had promised a pure life to God, and Daria had the maidens who had been betrothed to Christ.

After some years, when the assemblies of Chrysanthus and Daria had greatly increased in Rome, a sudden uprising and disturbance arose in the city. The people came to the eparch[14] Celerinus and slandered the holy Chrysanthus and Daria. The husbands cried out:

"We have lost our wives!"

And the young men called out:

14. *Eparch* – the ruler of a city or province.

"Because of Daria we have lost the brides who were promised to us!"

The wives also cried out:

"We have lost our husbands!"

And the maidens called out:

"Because of Chrysanthus we have lost the bridegrooms who were promised to us!"

And all the people cried, saying:

"How will children be born if marriage is rejected? The human race will come to an end if, following the teaching of Chrysanthus and Daria and their magical cunning, men withdraw from women."

Then the eparch ordered that Chrysanthus and Daria be seized and subjected to various tortures if they would not offer sacrifice to the gods. He handed Chrysanthus over to a certain tribune[15] named Claudius, and the tribune gave him to his soldiers, saying to them:

"Lead him outside the city to the temple of Zeus, and if he will not there bow down to the invincible Hercules, then torment him in various ways until he submits and offers sacrifice."

The soldiers took Chrysanthus and bound him without mercy with strong ox sinews, pulling them so tightly that they touched the martyr's bones; yet these bonds immediately broke, and so suddenly that the eye could not see it: all this happened faster than a word could be spoken. The soldiers labored long to bind Chrysanthus; achieving nothing, they fell into rage and threw him into a dark and foul cave. They fastened fetters upon him and bound him with iron chains, mocking him and subjecting him to various reproaches; but those fetters crumbled like dust. Besides this, they also poured various filth upon him, saying:

"Your sorceries and enchantments will not help you here!"

But suddenly the stench of that filth turned into a fragrance. After this the soldiers slaughtered a calf, stripped off its skin, and wrapped the martyr's naked body in the still-raw hide, and set him in the heat of the sun; yet the saint suffered no harm from this torment either. After this they bound him again in iron fetters and cast him into prison, but

15. *Tribune* (tribunus) – something like a colonel or company commander.

those fetters too suddenly broke, and in the prison a light shone forth as if from many burning candles. The soldiers told their tribune Claudius all that had happened. Claudius, coming to the prison and seeing the light there, ordered the holy martyr Chrysanthus brought before him and said to him:

"By what magical power do you work such wonders? I have subdued many sorcerers and enchanters and have found no such power in them. And since I see that you are a noble and wise man, I require of you nothing else than that you abandon the bold Christian teaching, because of which disorders and unrest arise among the Roman people. Therefore act as befits your birth, and offer worthy sacrifices to the almighty gods."

Saint Chrysanthus answered him:

"If you had even a small spark of wisdom, you would readily understand that it is not magical cunning but Divine power that helps and strengthens me. But you look upon me just as you look upon your gods, with eyes darkened by ignorance. For if your eyes saw rightly, you would see that your gods do not see; and if your ears heard the truth, you would learn that your gods do not hear the voice of those who call upon them; and if you possessed sound reason, you would understand that your gods have nothing within them but dust, earth, and tin."

Then the tribune Claudius ordered the martyr to be tied to a tree and beaten with a knotted stick. But in the hands of those who beat him the stick was hard and heavy, while on the saint's body it was soft as a twig. Seeing this, the tribune ordered the beating of Chrysanthus to stop, and, untying him from the tree, put his clothes back on him. Then he turned to the soldiers and said:

"Truly, it is not some human magical trickery at work here, but the Divine power Itself. For the strong bonds of ox sinews fell apart by themselves, the fetters broke, and the tree at his feet became like dust; and the raw hide put upon him, though it lay in the sun the whole day, did not dry out; the heavy chains were loosed and broken by an unseen power, the dark prison was lit with a great light, and the heavy staff, touching his body, became soft as a twig. Therefore, seeing in him the Divine power plainly at work, let us all fall at the feet of this man of

God and beg forgiveness for all the malice and torments we have inflicted on him. Let us implore him to reconcile us with his almighty God, who works such wonders, who makes His servants so strong and invincible in every affliction, as we ourselves see: for this sufferer, His servant, who has conquered us, will likewise conquer our princes and kings and put to shame, by the invincible power of the heavenly God within him."

Having said this, Claudius with all the soldiers fell at the feet of Saint Chrysanthus and said:

"Truly we have come to know that your God is the true God; therefore we beseech you to turn us to Him and make us His servants."

The saint said to them in reply:

"If you wish to come to my God, come to Him not with your feet but with your heart, for God is near to him who seeks Him with the heart and with faith."

And the holy Chrysanthus then long conversed with them about the true God. After this conversation, the tribune Claudius, his wife Hilaria, and his two sons Jason and Maurus believed in God; there also believed all their kinsmen, friends, and the whole of their household; and all the soldiers with all their dependents believed, and together they all received holy Baptism. And they all were constantly instructed by Chrysanthus, listening diligently to his words about the Lord Jesus Christ, and all of them desired to suffer for Him.

At that time Numerian[16] reigned in Rome. When word reached him of the conversion to Christ of the tribune Claudius, and of his baptism with all his household and the soldiers, he ordered Claudius to be drowned in the sea, with a stone tied about his neck; and he ordered all the soldiers and both sons of Claudius to be beheaded with the sword. At the place where the holy martyrs of Christ met their end there was an abandoned cave, where the dead had formerly been buried. The Christians cleansed this cave, took the bodies of the holy martyrs by night, and laid them in it. Claudius's wife, Hilaria, often came to this cave, to the relics of the holy martyrs, and prayed there at the place

16. The Emperor *Numerian* reigned from 283 to 284.

where her sons had been beheaded. Once, as she prayed in that place, she was seized by pagans, who led her away to be tortured as well. But she entreated them, saying:

"Let me finish my prayer, and then take me wherever you will."

When the soldiers had then given Hilaria a little freedom, she knelt upon the ground, lifted her hands on high[17], raised her eyes to heaven, and said:

"Master, Lord Jesus Christ, whom I confess with all my heart! Make me to dwell together with my sons, whom Thou didst call to the contest of suffering for Thee, and who laid down their lives for Thee, their Lord."

Having thus prayed, she gave her spirit to God. The soldiers who had seized Hilaria, seeing that she was dead, were moved in heart, and, leaving beside her the two maidservants who had been with her, departed. The maidservants took the body of their mistress and buried it with honor beside the ancient cave in which the holy martyrs had been laid.

Emperor Numerian ordered that the holy Chrysanthus and Daria be subjected to various torments. Chrysanthus was bound in chains and cast into a deep, foul-smelling pit, into which all the filth of the city flowed, while Daria was taken to a brothel. But God helped both martyrs, manifesting in them His almighty power: for in the dark and stinking prison of holy Chrysanthus a heavenly light shone, and instead of stench there was a great fragrance; while to holy Daria a lion was sent. Escaping from its confinement, it came to her chamber, where the saint lay prostrate[18] in prayer, and stood guard over her. The townspeople, not knowing this, sent a shameless young man to Daria, so that he might defile her. When he entered the saint's chamber, the lion immediately seized him, threw him down, and began to trample him underfoot; then, looking at St. Daria like some intelligent servant, it awaited its mistress's command as to what she would have done with the shameless young man—whether he should be killed or released alive. Understanding this, St. Daria said to the lion:

17. *Upward* (rope) – upwards, that is, toward heaven.
18. *Prostrate* (ниц) – face-down, on one's face.

"I adjure you by the Son of God: leave this young man, that he may hear the word of God from me."

The lion let the young man go, came out, and lay by the door, allowing no one to approach St. Daria's chamber. And Daria said to the young man:

"Behold, at the mere name of Christ the lion's fury has been stilled, and the beast, like an intelligent man, knows the true God, fears Him, and honors Him. But you, wicked man, though endowed with reason, do not fear God, living as you do in such wickedness and filth. What you ought to be ashamed of and repent of, you boast about."

The young man fell down before Daria and began to cry aloud, saying:

"Command me, servant of Christ, to depart from here unharmed, and I will proclaim to all that Christ, whom you serve, is the true God, and there is no other besides Him."

And Daria commanded the lion to give the young man free passage out of her chamber. Then the young man went throughout the city, crying aloud:

"Know, all you Romans, that Daria is a goddess!"

Then circus wrestlers[19] rushed to Daria's house and, with their customary boldness, sought to drive the lion from Daria's chamber. But the lion, strengthened by God, seized each of them and dashed him to the ground; laying them all beside St. Daria, it kept watch over them at her feet, neither killing them nor doing them any harm, but awaiting Daria's command. And the saint said to those men:

"If you believe in Christ, you may leave here without any harm; but if you do not believe, let your gods deliver you from death."

They all cried out with one accord:

"Whoever does not believe that Christ is the true God, let him not leave here alive!"

When they had cried out thus, Daria commanded the lion to release those men without harm. And, coming out, they cried aloud:

19. These *fighters* in the Roman circuses are known by the name of *gladiators*.

"Believe, peoples of Rome, that there is no other god but Christ, whom Daria proclaims!"

When the eparch Celerinus learned of this, he ordered a great fire to be kindled by the door of the house where Daria was with the lion, to burn them. Seeing this, the lion roared loudly in fear. But the saint said to it:

"Do not fear: you shall neither be burned, nor taken by anyone, nor slain, but shall die your own death at the appointed time. Therefore go out from here without fear and depart into the wilderness. He whom you have honored in me will protect you."

The lion bowed its head, went out, and passed through the whole city without harming anyone, then fled into the wilderness; and all those who had been delivered from the lion received holy Baptism.

When all this was reported to the Emperor Numerian, he ordered Chrysanthus and Daria to be subjected to cruel torments. Chrysanthus was hung upon a tree, and lighted candles were brought to scorch his body; but at once the tree broke, the ropes snapped, and the candles went out. As for those who sought to touch holy Daria, their hands immediately cramped, their whole bodies were tormented, and they cried aloud in great pain. Seeing this, the eparch was afraid and hastened to report all these things to the emperor. But the emperor, attributing these wonders not to the power of God but to magical artifice, ordered both martyrs, Chrysanthus and Daria, to be taken outside the city; there, on the road called the Salarian Way[20], a deep pit was to be dug, and they were to be cast into it and buried alive beneath stones and earth. The holy martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria were brought there, and with singing and prayer they descended into the pit and met their martyrdom together, being buried beneath earth and stones at the persecutor's command. And thus, as they had shared a spiritual marriage in life, so they died together, received by God as a living and acceptable sacrifice, and received crowns of immortal reward[21].

20. On this site there was an ancient aqueduct, which the Christians adapted for the burial of the dead.

21. The repose of the holy martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria took place in 283. (Some, however, date the repose of the holy martyrs to 256, in the time of the Emperor Valerian.)

At the place where the holy martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria met their end, after many miracles and healings had taken place there, a multitude of Christians—men, women, and children—gathered in a nearby cave, joyfully celebrated the day of their martyrdom, and partook of the Divine Mysteries. The persecutor learned of this and ordered the entrance to that cave to be blocked with earth; there a multitude of Christians also suffered martyrdom, among them the presbyter Diodorus, the deacon Marianus, and many clerics. It is impossible to enumerate the names of all who died there, for they were very many.

Concerning all this, I, Warinus, and Armenius, brothers, have written at the command of the most holy Pope Stephen of Rome, and have sent it to all the cities, that all may know how the holy Chrysanthus and Daria received from our Lord Jesus Christ the crowns of martyrdom in the Kingdom of Heaven. To Him be glory and dominion, now and ever and unto all ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Panchar

Память святого мученика Панхария

In the reign of Diocletian and Maximian,[22] the latter of whom resided in Old Rome, the worship of various gods was widespread throughout the Roman Empire, while those who confessed Christ were not only deprived of their property but also subjected to various torments. At that time there lived in Rome a certain man named Panchar. He was from the land of the Uzians,[23] from the city of Vilapata; he was descended from Christian ancestors and was distinguished by his great stature and beauty. Coming to Rome, he drew near to Maximian and attained the foremost place among his intimates, enjoying his special affection. To preserve this affection, he renounced his faith in

22. In 284 the Roman Empire was divided into an eastern and a western part. The first was governed by Diocletian, who resided in Nicomedia, and the second by Maximian, whose residence was Rome. Both reigned from 284 to 305.

23. The Uzi or Uzipetes dwelt in western Germany on the right bank of the river Rhine, north and south of a tributary of that river. The city of Vilapat is not marked on the maps, but it is thought that it bore the name Villa.

Christ. Out of love for him, Maximian entrusted him with receiving food and all kinds of other gifts brought as tribute, some according to established custom and others by virtue of his authority, and thus with building up a fortune for the pleasures of sight and the provision of life's comforts in the future. Panchar acted accordingly and shared the emperor's opinions in everything. Meanwhile, his mother and sister, learning of all this, sent him a letter, in which they urged him first of all to call to mind the fear of God, and then to remember the dread Judgment of Christ to come, since many, hearing of it, had boldly declared before kings and rulers their desire to inherit that promise of which they had learned from the Gospel account. Further, they advised him to consider what terrible condemnation awaited at that Judgment whoever renounced faith in the divinity of Christ (Mt. 10:33; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26); and finally, they reminded him of Christ's words, saying that if a man were to gain possession of the whole world but harm his own soul, what profit would he have thereby? For if anyone should harm his soul, with what could he redeem it (Mk. 8:36–37)? Receiving and reading this letter, Panchar came to himself, wept bitterly, and, falling to the ground in heartfelt sorrow, cried out:

"Lord Almighty! Have mercy on me, and do not put Thy servant to shame before angels and men at Thy Judgment, but spare me according to Thy great mercy."

Some of the courtiers, seeing Panchar weeping and uttering such words, told Maximian of it; and when Panchar came to him, he asked him:

"Dearest Panchar, tell me, are you too a Nazarene[24]?"

"Yes, O Emperor," replied Panchar, "I am a Nazarene, and I was one even before I became your fellow-believer."

"Renounce such a confession," said Maximian to him in reply, "for the love I bear you; otherwise, let it be known to you, I will show you no mercy, and I will not put you to death quickly, but you shall die only after I have worn you down with many and varied tortures."

To this Panchar replied:

24. The word "Nazarene" is used here in the sense of Christian, a follower of Christ, Whom the Jews called by this name because He spent the greater part of His earthly life in Nazareth.

"O Emperor! I am struck with horror as I call to mind my past, and I fear lest fire come down from heaven and burn me for having been your fellow-believer until now. But from this hour I will never again deny my Lord Jesus Christ, neither now nor during that long time in which you say you will subject my body to manifold torments."

Having heard such an answer from Panchar, Maximilian commanded that he be stripped and, before the eyes of all who were gathered there and of the imperial dignitaries who stood by, be beaten on his naked body with thongs of ox-hide. After this, turning to those present, he said to them:

"Now you have learned that Panharius, *sakellarios*[25] of my court and my close friend, has fallen into the Galilean[26] faith. Tell me, then, how I should deal with him."

To this the imperial dignitaries said to the Emperor:

"O Emperor! Command that he be led to the place of public spectacles[27], there to be stripped and given over to a public beating, and then send him to the governor of Nicomedia. Let him subject him to tortures, so that we ourselves may not become the cause of his death, since he enjoys your great love."

This counsel pleased Maximian, for he truly loved Panchar greatly and did not find in himself the strength to deliver him to death. Therefore he commanded that he be led to the place of spectacles and be subjected to cruel beating before the people; then he gave him over to soldiers to be escorted to Nicomedia, and sent with them a letter to the city prefect of Nicomedia, in which he ordered that Panchar be put to death after many torments. When the holy martyr arrived at Nicomedia and was brought before the governor of the city for interrogation, he said to him:

"Everything that the Emperor commands you concerning me, carry out exactly."

Then the governor of the city asked him:

25. *Sakellarios* – the chief steward at the court of the Roman emperors.
26. That is, Christian. Christians were called Galileans in mockery.
27. The place of public spectacles in Rome was the circus. Here the contests of fighters among themselves and with beasts took place. Here also, during the persecutions, Christians were given over to be torn by wild beasts.

"What is your name?"

"My name," answered the holy martyr, "is Panchar. From my forefathers I was a Christian, but by my own evil will I turned aside to the impious faith of the Emperor and was in everything his fellow-believer. But God, and also my mother and my sister, set me on the true path, and I returned to faith in my Christ; and now I burn with desire to die for Him, that by death I may atone for my renunciation, which I committed so criminally."

To this the governor of the city said to Panchar:

"Withdraw your words, which you utter so thoughtlessly, exposing yourself to dreadful calamities; rather, carry out the Emperor's will, and, being so distinguished and handsome, do not ruin the glorious memory of yourself on earth."

"The glory of which you speak," answered the saint, "is temporal, but it is a means to obtaining eternal life for those who renounce it for Christ's sake."

After this the governor of the city, seeing the saint's steadfastness, pronounced the sentence required by the Emperor. The holy martyr of Christ Panharius prayed, after which he was beheaded, and received a martyr's end. This took place on the nineteenth day of the month of March, in the city of Nicomedia[28].

* * *

28. The martyr's end of the holy Panharius took place about 302 A.D.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF MARCH

March 20

20 марта

New Calendar March 20 · Old Calendar April 2 (civil dates)

Sufferings of Our Venerable Fathers John, Sergius and Patricius

Страдание преподобных отцов наших Иоанна, Сергия и Патрикия

In the days of the most holy Patriarch Elias of Jerusalem, who was the second patriarch of that name in the holy city of Jerusalem, which at that time was already under the power of the Agarenes (and in Constantinople Constantine and Irene were then reigning), a civil strife arose among the Agarenes, which greatly ravaged the land. The barbarians, warring among themselves, laid waste not only villages but also cities, such as Eleutheropolis, Ascalon, Gaza, Scariphia and others. Attacking by surprise, they, if they did not kill all the people, nevertheless plundered all their goods and put to death those who resisted them. Setting ambushes along the roads, they seized travelers, beat and wounded them, and stripped them of everything down to their last shirt; it was considered fortunate if a traveler was let go alive, stripped, beaten and wounded. At that time the holy city of Jerusalem also lived in great fear. The inhabitants of the surrounding cities and villages flocked there; they guarded the walls and prepared to repel the marauding raids of the barbarians.

At that time the glorious monastery of St. Chariton was so greatly ravaged that it could never afterwards recover, but fell into final desolation; and the Lavra of the Venerable Sabbas also suffered much sorrow. Holy fathers gathered into it from various places, and under the abbot, the Venerable Basil, they pleased God by an ascetic life.

During the Agarene civil strife and the raids of the brigands, they did not go out anywhere from their monastery. Although they could, by

leaving the Lavra, have saved themselves from the barbarians in Jerusalem, they did not wish to abandon that holy place where they had first taken upon themselves the yoke of Christ. Having died once to the world, they did not fear death, but, trusting in Christ, they said:

"Our Master, if He wills, can save us from the hands of the barbarians; but if it pleases His righteous will to give us over to the barbarians for slaughter, then may the Lord quickly send us a torment profitable for the soul. Let us accept," they said to one another, "what is profitable from the hand of our Master. Let us not return in fear from the silent desert to worldly vanity, lest all judge us as timid and not keeping the commandments of our Lord, who says: '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). It is good to see those who withdraw from the world into the desert and follow in Christ's steps; but how bad to see those who, having lived a little in the desert, flee from it out of fear of men and return to the world. Let not the common enemy of all, the devil, laugh at us, who by fear of the barbarians drives us out of the silent desert into the city. He has been overcome by us many times with the help of Christ our King, and has fled from us like a dog, shamefully chased away. We have no need of stone walls for protection: instead of an impregnable wall we have our defender Christ, whom we learned from holy David to sing: 'Be thou my strong rock, an house of defence to save me' (Ps. 30:3)."

We have no coats of mail or helmets, we have no shields to repel the enemy's arrows, but we have the spiritual weapon of love, the breastplate of hope, "the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation" (Eph. 6:16), with which we arm ourselves. We have no military regiments to defend us from enemies, but "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 33:8). "For us to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). For it was not love and attachment to temporal life that persuaded us to enter this desert! Why have we settled in this desolate place? Is it not out of love for Christ? If we are killed here, we will be killed for Christ, for whose sake we live here.

With such words they comforted and encouraged one another, and, commending their bodies and souls to God, they remained in the Lavra. Yet another weighty reason kept them there: the neighbors living around them harbored enmity toward that holy place and wished nothing so much as to see the Lavra of St. Sabbas laid waste, the place left empty and without monks. If the brethren had left the Lavra for some time, the enemies would at once have come, burned the church and cells, and leveled the whole monastery to the ground. So that this should not happen, the holy fathers remained in the Lavra. They were not like a reed shaken by the wind, but like pillars founded on rock, unshaken by the wind and by the storms of temptations that arose. Not only for the defense of the walls did they not leave the Lavra, but still more for the glory of Christ the Lord, who had been glorified there in former times and was glorified in their days also in that place.

So those holy fathers continued to live in the Lavra, and the Most High Defender, through the prayer of our Venerable Father Sabbas, kept them unharmed from the barbarians until the hour of His holy will should come. Indeed, although the barbarian hordes, marching from Arabia or from somewhere else past that desert place to their camp, many times turned toward the monastery, they did no harm, but only demanded food. They looked fiercely at the monks, gnashing their teeth, but against the will of God they could do no evil to the servants of God; and taking food, as much as could be found in the monastery, they went off to their places, and instead of thanks they boasted that they would someday plunder the Lavra and lay waste that region.

Once a certain barbarian horde, wishing to carry out the evil deed they had devised, set out toward the Lavra to plunder and ravage the monastery; but by chance, near holy Bethlehem, they met an army that had been stationed there in case of a barbarian passage. A battle ensued, the barbarians were defeated and put to flight, so that, as was later learned, scarcely any of them remained alive. Another time, another horde, with the same evil intent, set out from its camp toward the Lavra; but having come to a village not far from the Lavra, the barbarians found much wine hidden under brushwood. They drank themselves

drunk, quarreled among themselves, and many of them killed one another; thus their plan was ruined, and the horde dispersed.

After this, God was pleased to send a trial upon His servants, as once upon the righteous Job, so that, like gold refined in the furnace, they might prove worthy of God; and He allowed barbarian hands to touch His champions, for whom He had prepared the crowns of martyrdom.

The Venerable Fathers, hearing that of the two hordes which had wished to attack the Lavra, one had been defeated by the Jerusalem army and the other had dispersed of its own accord, sat without fear in their cells, keeping the holy Lent in the usual fasting and labor.

At that time, by the devil's instigation, up to sixty Ethiopian barbarians gathered, with bows, arrows and swords. They planned to attack the Lavra in brigand fashion, hoping to find rich goods among the monks. At the end of the Great Fast, in the week before Palm Sunday, on March 13, at the second hour of the day, the barbarians fell upon that desert place. The monks quickly fled from their desert cells to the monastery and church, while the barbarians, with drawn swords and bent bows, as if in battle, rushed at the monastery with shouts. Some of the monks, wishing to calm their fury, went out to them and gently began to admonish them with kind words:

"Why have you come to us, who are unarmed and peaceable, as if to battle against an enemy who has done you evil? We live in peace with everyone, and we have never done evil to you or to anyone else. That is why we live in this desert, having left everything of ours in the world, so as to be far from enmity, strife and battles, so that we may in tranquility mourn our sins and please God. And we have not only never done evil to any of you, but, as far as we can, we strive to do you good: many of yours who have come here we have fed, rested, and given food for the road. Do not repay us evil for good; you ought rather to be grateful to us for the kindnesses we show you. And now we are ready to give you food and to shelter you as wayfarers."

But the barbarians shouted furiously:

"We have not come for food, but for silver and gold. Choose one of two things: either give us gold and silver (and they stated how many

litras), and you will live; or, if you do not wish to give it, you will die by our hands."

"Believe us," the fathers answered, "that we are poor and destitute, and so needy that we do not even have enough bread and clothing; as for the gold and silver you require, we have never dreamed of it even in sleep. We use only what is necessary for subsistence."

The barbarians were angered at these words of the saints and loosed arrows like rain upon the monks, not ceasing to shoot until they emptied their quivers. Thus they at once struck thirteen Venerable Fathers dead, and others they wounded slightly. Rushing to the cells, they broke down the doors with large stones and dragged out whatever they could of the poor monastic goods; then they set the cells on fire and wished to do the same to the church. But by God's providence, before they could bring brushwood and kindle the fire, they saw some men coming in the distance. Thinking that this was the Jerusalem army coming to defend the monks, the barbarians at once fled, carrying off the plundered goods of the monks. Father Thomas, who was a skilled physician, began to extract arrows from the wounded brethren, to wash their wounds and to give each whatever help he needed. The wounds were terrible: some had them on the chest, some on the shoulders, some on the face and forehead, and some had their heads broken by stones, and all were bathed in blood; it was terrible and pitiful for others to look upon them.

At the coming of the feast of Palms, during the All-night Vigil, someone informed the Venerable Fathers that the barbarians were gathering an even greater band of brigands to fall upon the Lavra once more. The blessed Fathers were in great fear and trembling, yet they did not flee; they prepared themselves for death, and, trusting in God, awaited the end. As the day of the Lord's Passion drew near, a day of suffering came for them too: on the twentieth of March, on Maundy Thursday, the Ethiopians a second time fell upon the Lavra, in still greater numbers, and cruelly tortured the Venerable Fathers in various ways: some they shot with arrows, from some they struck off the head with a sword, some they cut in two, from some they hewed off hands and feet, and others they stoned to death. The survivors they gathered

into the church and meant to torment, so that they would reveal the church treasures and the monastery's possessions. They surrounded the monastery and watched over the mountains and hills, so that no monk might escape from their hands. Many rushed to flee, but fell into the hands of the barbarians, and scarcely anyone was delivered from them. They seized the blessed John, the superintendent of the pilgrims, still a youth, who had tried to flee, and tormented him without mercy on the mountain: they severed the sinews of his hands and feet and dragged him by the feet over the stones from the summit of the mountain all the way to the church, so that all the skin on his back was torn off by the sharp stones. The Venerable Sergius, keeper of the church vessels, seeing what torments the Fathers were enduring, and fearing lest, unable to endure the tortures, he should reveal where he had hidden the church vessels, secretly fled from the monastery. He was already far off when the barbarian guards seized him and dragged him forcibly back to the monastery; when he resisted, they struck off his holy head. Several other Fathers hid from the murderers in a cave outside the monastery, but a barbarian sentinel standing on a hill saw them, and, pointing with his hand, shouted to his comrades that monks had fled into the cave. At once a terrible Ethiopian with a drawn sword stationed himself at the entrance of the cave and began to shout in a loud voice, commanding those who had hidden to come out. The monks trembled with fear, and the Venerable Patricius, who was among them, said in a whisper to the brethren:

"Do not be afraid. I alone will go out for you and die; but you sit still and be silent!"

He went out to the Ethiopian, ready to lay down his soul for his friends. To the Ethiopian's stern question whether there were other monks there, the Venerable one answered that he had been there alone; then the Ethiopian led him to the church. Having gathered the holy Fathers from everywhere into the church, the barbarians said to them:

"Ransom yourselves and your church for four thousand gold coins; but if not, we shall at once slay you all with the sword and burn your church."

The holy Fathers answered meekly:

"Forgive us for God's sake; do not shed in vain our innocent blood. We have not so much gold as you ask, and never have had; there is not a single gold coin now in all our Lavra. If you wish, take the garments that you see upon us; take everything that you see and find; leave us naked, but only spare our lives."

The barbarians, full of fury, then with still louder shouts set their swords to the necks of the holy ones, as if wishing already to cut off their heads, and said:

"Give us the church vessels, gold and silver, and show us the other treasures of the monastery."

The holy Fathers said that they had no treasure whatever. And the barbarians said:

"Show us your leaders: who among you is the abbot, and the other superiors?"

The Venerable ones answered:

"Our Father Abbot is not in the Lavra; he has gone to the Holy City on common business. We are all equal."

In the monastery there was a cave of our Venerable Father Sabbas. Taking all the holy Fathers, the barbarians led them to that cave, and at its entrance they kindled a fire and piled in brushwood and dung; smoke and stench rose up, and with that smoke they smothered the Venerable ones in the cave, so that they would reveal the church treasures and give up the leaders. Then they led them out to torture and compelled them, by a cruel death, to disclose the treasures to them; but from them they heard nothing except prayers to God. One cried out:

"Lord, receive my spirit!"

And another said:

"Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom!"

Then, gathering them all again into the same cave, the barbarians once more began to smother them with the grievous smoke; and eighteen Venerable Fathers died of the smoke, among them the aforementioned John and the blessed Patricius. The names of the others who died of smoke, sword, or torments, God alone knows, who has written them in the book of life. Those left alive after this torment by smoke, the cruel and inhuman barbarians severely wounded and beat, casting

them to the ground and trampling them underfoot. Having achieved nothing, and being themselves wearied of tormenting, they took all the church and Lavra goods they could find, loaded them on the monastery camels, and departed.

Then the brethren who were barely alive, and others who had hidden in mountain clefts and caves, gathered late into the monastery. They collected the bodies of the Venerable Fathers, slain in various ways and smothered by smoke, into the church (which had been saved by God from burning), and spent that whole night in the saving Passion[1], in inconsolable weeping, after which they committed the bodies to honorable burial. Those who were found half-dead and wounded the brethren strove to heal with the aforementioned physician Thomas, who had survived and afterwards became abbot of the so-called Old Lavra.

Thus did the Venerable Fathers suffer and die in the monastery of the Venerable Sabbas; and those barbarians, immediately after their departure from the Lavra, were struck by God with sudden death and fell dead without a sword in the deserts and fields, to be devoured by dogs, wild beasts, and birds. Their wretched souls went to hell, where the fire is not quenched and the worm does not sleep; but the souls of the slain Venerable Fathers were in the hand of God and were deemed worthy of the glory of martyrdom from Christ God and our Savior, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory forever, amen.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Photina[2]

Страдание святой мученицы Фотины

In the reign of the Roman emperor Nero[3], a cruel persecution was raised against the Christians, and after the martyr's death of the

1. This was the night before Good Friday.
2. St. Photina is that Samaritan woman with whom the Lord conversed at the well. The account of the Saviour's conversation with the Samaritan woman is found in the Gospel (Jn. 4:5) and following.
3. The Emperor Nero reigned in Rome from 64 to 68. The persecution of the Christians under him began in 65 and continued until 68, when this sovereign put an end to the bloodshed by suicide. In this persecution the holy Apostles Peter and Paul suffered at Rome.

holy First-Apostles Peter and Paul, they sought out those who had been taught the faith in Christ by them. At this time the holy Photina, dwelling in the African city of Carthage[4], together with her son Iosia, fearlessly preached the Gospel of Christ. Meanwhile her elder son, named Victor, bravely fought in the war which the barbarians were then waging with the Romans, and at the end of the war, by the emperor's command, was appointed commander of the troops in the city of Attalia[5], with the charge to subject to torments the Christians who were there. When the governor of the city, Sebastian, learned of this, he said to Victor:

"Voivode, I know for certain that you are a Christian, and that your mother with your brother Iosia are followers of Peter; therefore you will not carry out what the emperor has commanded you, for fear of losing your soul."

"I burn with desire to do the will of the heavenly and immortal King, Christ our God," answered Victor, "and the command of Nero to subject the Christians to torments I disdain."

Then Sebastian said to Victor:

"As a sincere friend I advise you: submit to the will of the emperor. For if you zealously carry out the royal command, and subject to judicial examination and torments the Christians whom you manage to seek out, you will both do what is pleasing to the emperor and acquire their property for yourself. And write to your mother and brother from yourself, that they should not go about so openly and thereby not draw the pagans to renounce the faith of their fathers, but let them secretly confess the faith in Christ, your God, if they wish that you should not, because of them, suffer the same torments together with them."

"I will never do this," answered Victor, "and not only will I not do it, but I do not even wish to think of subjecting Christians to torments, or

4. Carthage was an ancient seaport city in north Africa, founded by the Phoenicians and in antiquity a famous colony of theirs. Destroyed in 146 B.C., it was restored under the first Roman emperors, attained a high degree of prosperity, and in the first centuries of Christianity was distinguished by a strong development of the pagan Greco-Roman cult, on account of which superstitions, sorcery and so-called magic arts long prevailed in it. Today the city of Tunis stands on its site.

of forcibly taking anything from them, or of advising my mother and brother not to preach that Christ is the true God. On the contrary, I myself with all my soul wish to be a preacher of Christ, and I will be one just as they are."

To this Sebastian said to him:

"O Victor! We all know well what calamities await you, your mother, and your brother."

After these words the face of Sebastian suddenly flushed, and he fell to the ground from a sharp and cruel pain in his eyes, and at the same time completely lost the power of speech. The servants present, catching him up, laid him on a bed, and he lay for three days without speaking a single word. After three days, however, he cried out in a loud voice and said:

"There is one Christian God, who is the true God; there is one Christian faith, which is the true faith; and there is one baptism, the baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. There is no other true faith except the Christian faith."

Victor, coming in to Sebastian, asked him:

"Why has such a change so unexpectedly come upon you?"

"Most beloved Victor," answered Sebastian, "your Christ is calling me to Himself."

Victor at once instructed him in the faith, and he received holy baptism. Coming up out of the font, he suddenly regained his sight and glorified God. The servants present, seeing this wondrous miracle, were afraid lest, because of their unbelief, they too should suffer the same sickness as Sebastian, and they too were baptized.

Soon after this, word reached Nero that Victor, commander of the troops in Attalia, and Sebastian, the governor of that city, confessed the faith of Peter and Paul and were drawing all people to themselves, persuading them to follow their preaching; and that the same was being done by Victor's mother Photina and her son Iosia, who had been sent to Carthage by the Apostles. Learning of this, the emperor flared up in

5. *Attalia* was a city in the province of Pamphylia, situated on the southern coastal part of Asia Minor. This city was founded a century and a half before Christ by Attalus II Philadelphus, who gave it his own name.

anger and sent soldiers to Attalia to bring before his tribunal the Christians, men and women, who were in that city. At that time Christ appeared to the Christians of Attalia and said to them: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). "I will be with you, and Nero will be defeated, together with those who are with him."

To Victor He said:

"From this day Photinus [6] shall be your name, since many whom you have enlightened will turn to Me." Christ also strengthened Sebastian for the sufferings that lay ahead with these words:

"Blessed is he who shall complete his struggle to the end [7]." The Lord spoke these words and ascended into heaven.

Saint Photina was likewise informed by Christ of the sufferings awaiting her, and at once, accompanied by a multitude of Christians, she set out from Carthage for Rome. When she entered Rome, the whole city was stirred, and everyone said: "Who is she?" But she, without fear, preached the Gospel of Christ. Meanwhile, her son Photinus, formerly named Victor, was brought to Rome together with Sebastian and the soldiers taken with them. But Saint Photina went before him: she presented herself to Nero, with her son Iosia and the Christians who had come with her from Carthage. Nero asked the saint:

"Why have you come to us?"

"In order to teach you to honour Christ," Photina replied.

At this, those who were with the emperor said to him:

"The city prefect Sebastian and the voivode Victor, who do not believe in the gods, have come from Attalia."

"Let them be brought to me," Nero commanded. And when they had been brought, he asked them:

"Is it true what I have heard about you?"

6. The name Photin means "light-bearing" and derives from the Greek word *phos*, *photos*, which means light, especially the light of day, sunlight.

7. This expression is borrowed from the words of the Gospel: "he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Mt. 24:13).

"Everything you have heard about us, O Emperor," they replied, "is the plain truth."

Then Nero, turning to the holy women, asked them:

"Are you willing to renounce your Christ, or do you desire to die for Him?"

"O Emperor!" the holy women answered, raising their eyes to heaven, "never will it be that we renounce faith in Christ and the love we have for Him."

"And what are your names?" asked the emperor.

"I," answered Saint Photina, "received the name Photina from Christ my God. My sisters are called thus: the first, born after me, is Anastasia; the second, Photo; the third, Photis; the fourth, Paraskeva; and the fifth, Kyriakia. And the names of my sons are these: the elder, whom my Lord named Photinus, is Victor; and the younger is Iosia."

"So then, are you all," said Nero, "willing to undergo torments and die for the Nazarene Christ?"

"We all," replied Saint Photina, "are ready with joy and gladness to die for Him, and we all desire this."

Then Nero commanded that their hands be crushed with iron hammers. An anvil was brought, and the impious tormentors, laying the saints' hands upon it, began to strike them. They struck from the third hour until the sixth [8], the strikers being changed three times, but the saints felt no pain whatever. Nero, learning of this, became perplexed and commanded that their hands be cut off entirely. The tormentors then seized the holy martyrs with rage, bound their hands and laid them again upon the anvil. Saint Photina was the first to be tortured; the tormentors who hacked at her hands with axes were changed many times, and having no success, they fell exhausted as if dead. The holy martyr, remaining unharmed by the grace of Christ, prayed and said: "The Lord is for me; I will not fear: what can man do to me?" (Ps. 117:6).

After this Nero became perplexed, pondering what further torments to inflict on the saints, and at last he commanded that Sebastian, Phot-

ina and Iosia be blinded and confined in the inner chamber of the prison, while Saint Photina with her five sisters was taken to his golden chamber [9], and he ordered his daughter Domnina to remain constantly with them. While in the imperial chamber, Saint Photina instructed Domnina and her hundred maidservants in the Christian faith, and all of them received holy baptism. She also converted to Christ a sorcerer who once brought her and her sisters a potion of a poisonous herb to drink, after which she endured many torments.

Three years passed. Then Nero once commanded the release of a servant of his who was among his courtiers and had been cast into prison by his order. Those sent for this purpose, seeing in the prison the holy martyrs Sebastian, Photina and Iosia in good health, reported to the emperor that the blinded Galileans could see and were perfectly well, that the prison itself was bright and filled with a sweet fragrance, that from a place of confinement it had become a place for glorifying God and a holy house, that the saints possessed great riches even in their imprisonment, that people were gathering to them and, having believed in their God, were receiving baptism from them. Hearing this, Nero was struck with terror, and, commanding that the holy martyrs be brought before him, he said to them:

"Did I not forbid you by my imperial command to preach about Christ in the city of Rome? How then have you dared to do this while in prison? For this I will hand you over to many and terrible tortures."

"Do with us whatever you wish," said the holy martyrs in reply, "but we will not cease to preach about Christ, the true God and Creator of all."

At such words Nero fell into terrible rage and commanded that the saints be crucified head downward, and then that for three days their naked bodies be beaten with thongs until, he said, their limbs fell apart; and this was carried out. After this he commanded that a guard be pos-

8. The Romans reckoned the beginning of the day, by our reckoning, from six o'clock in the morning. Hence the third hour of the day corresponded to our nine o'clock in the morning, the sixth to twelve noon.

9. *Kouvouklion* here means the house, the palace of the emperor. Nero's "Golden House" is known for its extraordinary size, height and the richness of its decorations. Some of its chambers and halls were adorned with gold and precious stones.

ted to see that they hung for three days. On the fourth day his servants came to see whether the holy martyrs were alive, and when they saw that they were hanging and still living, they at once went blind. At that moment an Angel of God, descending from heaven, untied the saints, kissed them, and made them perfectly well. Then the saints, taking pity on the blinded servants of the emperor, prayed, and these at once regained their sight. Believing, they were baptized in the name of Christ our God and became followers of the saints. The impious Nero, learning of this, was greatly enraged and commanded that the skin be flayed from Saint Photina. And while the tormentors carried out this imperial command, the holy martyr sang: "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my sitting down and my rising up; Thou understandest my thoughts afar off" (Ps. 138:1, 2).

When the skin had been flayed from Saint Photina, she was thrown into a well. After this they seized Sebastian, Photinus and Iosia, cut off the bones behind their knees and threw them, together with their knees, to the dogs; then they flayed their skin and, by the emperor's command, cast them into a dilapidated stone building. Afterwards Nero commanded that the five sisters of Photina be brought before him, and he ordered their breasts cut off, and then their skin flayed as well. When the tormentors came for Saint Photida, she would not allow any of them to inflict this torment upon her as they had on the other holy women; instead, standing in the place of torment, she bravely flayed her own skin and threw it into Nero's face, so that he himself was amazed at her courage and endurance. Then the tormentor devised for Saint Photida a new, extremely cruel and deadly torment. By his command two trees were bent toward each other in his garden, and Photida was tied by the feet to their tops; then the trees were released, and the holy martyr was torn apart by them. Thus she commended her righteous and blessed soul to God. After this the impious Nero commanded that all the other holy martyrs be beheaded with the sword, and Saint Photina, taken out of the well, was shut up in prison, where she remained for twenty days. Then, having her brought before him, Nero asked her whether she would now submit to him and, repenting of her obstinacy,

offer sacrifice to the idols. Saint Photina spat in his face and, mocking his madness and foolish mind, said:

"O most impious blind man, deluded and insane! Do you really think me so senseless that I would agree to renounce my Lord Christ and offer sacrifice to blind idols like yourself?"

Hearing such words, Nero commanded that Saint Photina be thrown again into the well. When this was done, the holy martyr yielded up her soul to God, and with the crown of martyrdom she rejoices eternally in the Kingdom of Heaven together with all who suffered with her [10].

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Alexandra and Claudia

Страдание святых мучениц Александры и Клавдии

These holy martyrs suffered in the reign of the impious Maximian[11], who raised so cruel a persecution against the Christians that those who believed in Christ, without distinction of age, were subjected to various tortures. The governor of the city of Amisus[12], where these holy virgins lived, acted in the same manner; and so they were seized and brought before him. At the interrogation they declared themselves to be Christians, and called the governor himself cruel and inhuman. By his command they were first stripped and beaten with rods; then their breasts were cut off; after which, they were hanged and scraped along their bodies until their inner parts were laid bare; and at last they were cast into a red-hot furnace, where they gave up their souls into the hands of the Lord[13].

* * *

10. St. Photina's repose took place about the year 66. Her church and relics were at Constantinople, beyond the Blachernae Gates.
11. This refers to Maximian Galerius, who, after the abdication of Diocletian, independently governed the eastern part of the empire from 305 to 311.
12. The city of Amisus, now Samsun, lay in the Roman province of Pontus in Asia Minor, on the shore of the Euxine Sea (the Black Sea), at the gulf of the same name.
13. The holy martyrs died in the year 310.

Memory of St. Nicetas the Confessor

Память святого Никиты Исповедника

St. Nicetas was Archbishop of the city of Apolloniada. He was distinguished by piety, mercy and a profound knowledge of the Holy Scripture. During the persecution he was vainly pressed by the iconoclasts to cease to render veneration to the holy icons. He was sent into exile, where he ended his life in the reign of Leo the Armenian.



THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF MARCH

March 21

21 марта

New Calendar March 21 · Old Calendar April 3 (civil dates)

Memory of Our Venerable Father James, Bishop and Confessor

Память преподобного отца нашего Иакова, епископа и исповедника

The information we have concerning St. James the Confessor is very brief and incomplete.

We know only that from his earliest years, striving after the ascetic life, he took the monastic habit and mortified his flesh by constant fasting and prayer.

St. James greatly loved the reading of the books of Holy Scripture, and before reading he cleansed his mind by prayer. Afterwards he was raised to the rank of bishop.

In the reign of the iconoclast emperor Constantine Copronymus[1], St. James was compelled to renounce the veneration of icons. But he did not submit to the impious, for which he was subjected to many torments: he was driven into exile, imprisoned, and tormented with hunger and thirst; he endured many other kinds of torment that his tormentors devised. In the midst of his sufferings he delivered his holy soul to God, for whose sake he had labored; and from Him he received the Kingdom of Heaven, rejoicing eternally in the heavens.

* * *

Memory of Our Holy Father Cyril, Bishop of Catania

Память во святых отца нашего Кирилла, епископа Катанского

1. Constantine Copronymus, Byzantine emperor, reigned from 741 to 776 A.D. He was the most zealous of the iconoclasts. His reign was the time when iconoclasm reached its greatest height.

St. Cyril was a native of Antioch; he was a disciple of the Apostle Peter, and by him was ordained Bishop of Catania in Sicily. He shepherded his flock well and in a God-pleasing manner, brought the unbelieving to the faith of Christ, and worked many miracles, of which we will mention one. In that locality there was a spring of bitter water; and the hierarch of God, Cyril, having prayed to God, changed the bitterness of this spring into sweetness. Seeing this, the pagan governor, an idolater, believed in Christ, and with him many others also believed. Having attained deep old age, St. Cyril fell asleep in the holy and fair sleep of death and was buried with honor on that island (Sicily), granting healing to those who came to him in faith.

Memory of Our Holy Father Thomas, Patriarch of Constantinople

Память во святых отца нашего Фомы, патриарха Константинопольского

Our holy father Thomas, for his many virtues, wisdom and piety, was ordained deacon of the Great Church of Constantinople by the Venerable John the Faster, and in the reign of Maurice[2] was made sakellarios[3]. After the death of the most holy John and of his successor, the blessed Patriarch Cyriacus[4], in the reign of the tyrant Phocas[5], St. Thomas[6] was made patriarch and governed his throne admirably, carefully shepherding the rational flock of Christ. In the days of his patriarchate the following miracle took place in the land of Galatia[7]. There, in certain cities, during processions and litanies, large crosses were carried; these crosses of their own accord, with a wondrous and irresistible force, began to sway, struck against one another, and were broken. When the report of this miracle spread everywhere, the most holy Patriarch Thomas of Constantinople summoned from that country St. Theodore of Sykeon, a man of foresight and a wonder-

2. *Maurice*, Byzantine emperor, reigned from 582 to 602 A.D.
3. *Sakellarios* – the cathedral keeper of vessels and vestments, sacristan.
4. *Cyriacus* was patriarch from 595 to 606 A.D.
5. Emperor *Phocas* reigned from 602 to 610 A.D.
6. St. *Thomas* was patriarch from 607 to 610 A.D.
7. Galatia – a region of Asia Minor.

worker, and questioned him about this miracle and what this miracle might portend. St. Theodore related that the miracle had indeed occurred, but he refused to say what it signified, declaring that he did not know this unrevealed mystery. Then the most holy Patriarch Thomas fell at his feet with a request, and by this humility persuaded the elder to foretell the future. Afterwards the elder said that the crosses had swayed, struck, and broken of their own accord as a sign of many calamities and devastations upon the Church of God and the Greek kingdom, both from external and internal enemies: from without there would be a grievous invasion of barbarians, and within the state, among Christians, a schism in the faith would arise, and they would persecute and exterminate one another; and all this would come to pass soon. Hearing this, the patriarch was horrified and asked the venerable one to pray to God for him, that God would take his soul from the body before the foretold devastation came, so that he would not see such calamities upon the Church. Some time later, while the venerable Theodore still remained in Constantinople at the church of St. Stephen, the patriarch fell ill and sent word of his illness to the venerable one, who had shut himself in a cell and was fasting, begging him to intercede with God for a speedy end to his life. The saint refused, unwilling; but the blessed Patriarch Thomas sent to him again with earnest entreaty, desiring to be parted from the body before the calamities fell upon the Church. Then the venerable Theodore, against his own wish, fulfilled the will of the most holy Patriarch Thomas, prayed to God for his death, and sent him word:

"Do you command me to come to you, or shall we see each other there before God?"

St. Thomas answered him through the messenger: "Do not break your silence, Father; it is enough for me that you have said: 'there we shall see each other before God.'"

And on that same day, toward evening, the most holy Patriarch Thomas joyfully departed from the body and passed to the Lord, in the reign of the same Phocas. After the death of St. Thomas the patriarchal throne was taken by Sergius, a deacon of the same Great Church, who was at first orthodox but afterwards fell away and became the au-

thor of the Monothelite heresy, otherwise called the heresy of one will, which wrongfully acknowledges in the Lord Jesus Christ only one will[8]. Then calamities came upon the Church: schism, devastation, torment, and persecution of the orthodox by the heretics; at the same time, by the permission of God for the multiplication of heresies, a grievous war with the Persians began, and the Greek provinces suffered captivity and devastation by fire and sword; Jerusalem was taken by the Persians, and the Precious Wood of the Holy Cross was seized and carried off into Persia. Thus all the misfortunes foreshadowed by the aforementioned miracle with the crosses and foretold by the prophecy of St. Theodore of Sykeon came to pass. So that he would not see these misfortunes with his own eyes, the most holy Patriarch Thomas preferred to die rather than remain alive, and at his own request he received a blessed repose before this terrible time arrived. He shepherded the Church of Christ for three years and two months, struggled much against the heretics, preserving the orthodox teaching and truly honoring Christ our God, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

8. *Monothelites* – acknowledged in Jesus Christ only one will, the divine. This heresy was condemned at the Sixth Ecumenical Council, held in 680 A.D. at Constantinople.

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF MARCH

March 22

22 марта

New Calendar March 22 · Old Calendar April 4 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Basil, Presbyter of Ancyra

Страдание святого священномученика Василия, пресвитера Анкирского

Saint Basil, presbyter of the church in Ancyra, a city in Galatia, diligently strove to teach people the truth of the Christian faith and to turn them away from the path of the devil and from all his evil deeds. He constantly preached that a terrible time had come and that the princes of the hosts of hell had appeared, for Satan has servants clothed in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. They appear to people on the path of this short life in order to ensnare their souls to perdition, and their treacherous snares are manifest in the present time.

"Therefore," said the saint, "I point out to all the path that leads to salvation in Christ God, and I denounce the error of the impious. If anyone, forsaking the living and everlasting God, turns to idols, which are blind, deaf and dumb, he inherits the unquenchable fire of flame that comes from his gods. Therefore we all who love Christ and devoutly honor Him as the Leader of our faith, desiring to keep in our undefiled storehouses of the soul the inalienable treasure, shall trample underfoot the seduction of the devil and the joyful idolatrous feasts, and we shall escape the abominable enemies, strengthened by our Helper Christ, who grants eternal recompense."

This the saint did constantly, going through the whole city and persuading each person to keep the true faith and to be delivered from the future eternal torments. Saint Basil the presbyter lived in the time of Eudoxius the Arian, patriarch of Constantinople, and for his piety dur-

ing the Arian council at Constantinople he received a prohibition from celebrating the sacred rites; but afterward, by a council of two hundred and thirty bishops in Palestine, he was ordered to perform the holy mysteries. Confessing the right faith and living in a God-pleasing manner, he explained the truths of the faith and turned many from error. Therefore, in those times when every pious Christian was subjected to persecution, he was slandered before the emperor Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, as one who was disturbing the people. Being tormented for the truth, he taught many to believe rightly, for he himself was steadfast and firm in the faith and in the ancestral tradition, in no way deviating from the pious confession. When Julian the Apostate[1] ascended the throne and began to destroy human souls, having issued his insane laws concerning the vile idolatrous sacrifices, then also in the land of Galatia, by his command, people bowed down to idols for a whole year and three months. Saint Basil, seeing the perdition of human souls, prayed to God for his city of Ancyra, saying:

"O Savior of the world, Christ, unwaning Light, treasure of the eternal storehouses, who by the will of the Father dispellest darkness and by His Spirit dost hold all things together! Look with Thy holy and terrible eye, and destroy the vile sorcery of those who oppose Thy holy will. Let their feeble design be scattered, and let it not hinder the soul that abides forever in Thee, O God!"

The idolaters, hearing that Saint Basil prayed thus aloud, were greatly enraged at him, and one of them, named Macarius, ran and seized him, saying:

"Why do you go around the whole city, disturb the people, and abolish the law of the worship of the gods, which the emperor has decreed?"

The saint answered him:

"May God break your mouth, captive of the devil! It is not I who abolish your law, but He who is in heaven, who with invisible power overthrows it and will destroy it, and will ruin you all, until you are utterly exhausted and inherit the eternal death prepared for you."

1. Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363.

The impious men, full of fury, led him to the governor Saturninus, saying:

"This man disturbs our city, and beguiles and misleads many, and now he has come to such audacity that he orders the altars to be destroyed and does not hesitate to revile the emperor."

The governor Saturninus asked the saint:

"Who are you, that you dare to do such a thing?"

Saint Basil answered:

"I am a Christian; this name is for me the most honorable of all."

Saturninus said:

"Why do you not do what is required of a Christian?"

The saint answered:

"You advise me justly, governor. Indeed, it is necessary that the good works of a Christian be manifest to all, as the Holy Gospel teaches: 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven' (Mt. 5:16)."

Saturninus said:

"Why then do you disturb our city and revile the emperor everywhere, as though he had violated good laws?"

The saint answered:

"I do not revile your emperor; but I know the Most High King: He is God who dwells in heaven, and worthy servants of Him, our fathers, everywhere worship Him in purity of heart. He is able in a short time to destroy your senseless established impiety."

Saturninus said:

"Do you not consider just the law prescribed by our emperor?"

The saint answered:

"How can a law be just that commands, like a mad dog that devours flesh about the altar and barks before it, to lay human bodies upon the altar, to shed blood, and to slaughter infants as sacrifice to demons? How can such a law be called just?"

Saturninus said:

"Cease lying, proud man, and submit to the emperor!"

Saint Basil answered:

"To the Heavenly King I have submitted until now, and now I submit, and I will never depart from the holy faith in Him."

"Of what Heavenly King do you speak to me," said Saturninus, "to whom you submit?"

"I speak," answered the saint, "of Him who sits in the heavens and sees all; and that emperor whom you praise is an earthly emperor, and like a man he will immediately fall and will be in the hands of the Great King."

Hearing this, Saturninus was enraged and ordered the saint to be stripped, hung up, and his body scraped with iron instruments. He, hanging and enduring the torments, prayed to God thus:

"I thank Thee, Lord God of the ages, that Thou hast deemed me worthy to suffer for Thee and to find the path of life, walking along which I may see the heirs of Thy promises."

When the saint was being scraped, the governor said:

"Basil, now that you have endured such terrible torments, submit to the emperor."

The saint answered:

"O frenzied man, and a stranger to Christian hope! I have already said that I submit to my God as the True King, I believe in Him, and I may not depart from Him."

When the servants who were scraping the saint grew weary, Saturninus ordered them to stop and again said to the saint:

"Agree with us, and offer sacrifices to our gods."

The saint answered:

"I will not bow down to vain gods, nor will I be a partaker of sacrifices that destroy souls."

Then the governor ordered the martyr to be led to prison; on the way there, a pagan named Philix met the saint and said to him:

"How is it, Basil, that you yourself walk to perdition? Would it not be better for you to become a friend of the gods and receive the gifts promised by the emperor? For you will suffer cruelly, and for a long time, and justly so: you yourself desired it."

The saint answered him:

"Depart from me, debauchee and impious one! You do not know the true promises of the Eternal Heavenly King Christ, and you are not worthy to know them: how can you see the light of truth in darkness, and know the gloom that surrounds you?"

With these words Saint Basil entered the prison.

The governor Saturninus sent a letter to the emperor Julian and informed him of the case of the presbyter Basil. The emperor at once sent to Ancyra a certain Elpidius, a teacher of unbelief, who had formerly been a Christian and afterward became an apostate; and together with him he sent another impious man, also a former Christian who had fallen away from the heavenly treasures, named Pegasius. On the road to Ancyra, at Nicomedia, they found Asclepius, a pagan priest, and taking him with them, the three, like three commanders of the devil's army, came to the city of Ancyra; and Saint Basil, sitting in the prison, did not cease day and night to praise and glorify God. On the next day Pegasius came to Saint Basil in the prison and, greeting him, said:

"Rejoice, Basil."

The saint answered him:

"There is no joy for you, criminal and deceiver; there is no salvation for you, which you once drank from the fountain of Christ. Now you are a rotten swamp, devouring the sacrificial meat; formerly you were a partaker of the Divine Mysteries, now you sit in the first place at the demonic feast; formerly you were a teacher of truth, now a leader of perdition; formerly you celebrated feasts with the saints, now you make merry with Satan's servants; formerly you led the strayed from darkness to light, now you yourself are wholly enveloped in darkness. How did you destroy your hope and lose the spiritual treasure? What will you do when you are dying?"

Having said this, Saint Basil turned to the Lord with this prayer:

"Be glorified, O God, known by Thy servants, who leadest to the light those who desire to see Thee, their God, who glorifiest those who hope in Thee, who fillest with shame those who hate Thy law, praised by the inhabitants of heaven and honored by men on earth. Vouchsafe, O Most High God, to cast off all the devilish bonds from the soul of Thy

servant, that I may escape those who hate the truth and who boast that they will catch and overcome me!"

Pegasius, hearing this, departed from him in confusion, returned to his friends, and related to them all the words of Basil; then they were angered, seeing Pegasius confused, and went and told the governor about it. The governor at once ordered the saint to be brought to torture; the holy martyr, standing at the trial, said to the governor:

"Do what you wish to do."

Elpidius, hearing that Basil spoke so boldly, said to the judge:

"This lawbreaker has gone mad! If after the tortures he agrees to bow down to the gods, he will be pardoned; if he does not wish to, then let him be left to be tortured by the emperor himself."

The enraged governor ordered the saint to be hung up naked again and his ribs to be scraped with iron for a long time, and then to be shut up again in the prison, bound in heavy chains.

Several days later Emperor Julian, setting out for the eastern lands, arrived at Ancyra. Servants of the devil came out to meet him carrying an idol called Hecate[2]. Entering the palace, he summoned the idol priests and rewarded them with gold. On the following day, during the spectacles, Elpidius reminded the emperor about Basil, and the emperor, leaving the spectacles, ordered that Basil be brought to him in the palace. And St. Basil came and stood before the emperor with a bright countenance, in wondrous beauty. Julian said to him:

"What is your name?"

The saint answered:

"I will tell you in order who I am. First, I am called a Christian, and the name of Christ is eternal and higher than the human mind. Then, people call me Basil. If I keep unblemished the name of Christ given to me, I shall receive from Christ an immortal reward on the day of judgment."

Emperor Julian said:

"Do not go astray, Basil, for I know well your mysteries: you believe in the One who suffered a shameful death under Pontius Pilate."

2. Hecate: a deity of moonlight.

The saint replied:

"It is not I who am going astray; it is you, O emperor, who have become an apostate and lost the Heavenly Kingdom. I believe in my Christ, whom you have rejected, who gave you this earthly kingdom; but it will soon be taken from you, so that you may learn Whom you have angered."

"You rave, madman," said Julian, "it will not be as you wish!"

The saint continued:

"You do not remember the rewards prepared for the servants of Christ. You were not ashamed of the sanctuary that saved you from death, when, as an eight-year-old child, you were sought to be killed and were hidden in a sacred place. You did not keep the law which you often preached with your lips when you were a clergyman! For this, Christ, the Great King, will not remember you in His eternal Kingdom, and this temporal kingdom too will soon be taken from you. Your body will not be granted burial when you give up your soul in a cruel illness." (The saint foretold the swift death of Julian, whose corpse, after burial, the earth cast out from its depths.)

Then Julian said:

"Impious one! I wished to release you, but because you shamelessly repeat your mad words and reject my counsel, and moreover dishonor me with various reproaches, my majesty commands that seven straps be cut from your skin every day."

He ordered Frumentinus, the commander of the shield-bearers, to take Basil and each day tear off a part of his skin, cutting seven straps. Frumentinus diligently carried out the order, and the saint bravely endured such torments for Christ. When in a few days all his skin had been stripped off and hung from his shoulders in straps, both front and back, the sufferer said to the commander:

"I would now like to go to the emperor and speak with him."

The commander was very glad at his words, thinking that he wished to worship the idols. He went to the emperor and reported to him thus:

"Lord Emperor! Basil could not bear the torments and wishes to submit to your majesty."

The emperor went to the temple of Asclepius and ordered the martyr to be brought to him there. Standing before the emperor, St. Basil said to him:

"Where are your priests and prophets who usually attend you? Did they tell you why I have come to you?"

Julian answered:

"I think you are a wise man, that you have understood your position, want to unite with us, and will from now on offer sacrifices to the gods."

The saint said:

"Know, O emperor, that those whom you call gods are nothing; they are deaf and blind idols, and they draw those who believe in them into hell."

Having said this, he tore off one of the straps hanging from his body and threw it into the emperor's face, saying:

"Take it, Julian, and eat it, if you delight in such food. My life is Christ, and to die for Him is gain for me. He is my Helper; I believe in Him, and for Him I endure these torments!"

The news of this bold deed of St. Basil immediately spread among the Christians everywhere, and all glorified him for such a glorious confession of Christ and for the courageous act by which he shamed the tormentor.

Frumentinus, commander of the regiment of shield-bearers, who had brought the holy martyr Basil to the emperor, saw what Basil had done, how he tore a strap from his body and threw it into Julian's face with insolent words. He was ashamed and afraid of the emperor's wrath. He saw how the emperor changed countenance from anger, and the emperor was angered not so much at the martyr as at him, for he had brought the prisoner to such a dishonor of the imperial person. Immediately seizing the martyr, and hiding him from the emperor, he brought him to the praetorium, and breathing fierce rage, ordered that he be tormented even more than he had been tormented all those days. Not only did he strip all the skin from the martyr, but he so mangled his whole body that his entrails were exposed. St. Basil, amid such torments, prayed to God thus:

"Blessed art Thou, Lord God, hope of Christians, who raisest the fallen, who restorest the cast down, who deliverest from corruption those who hope in Thee, who knowest our sufferings, Good and Bountiful, Merciful and Long-suffering. Look down from the high throne of Thy glory, grant me to end my life faithfully, and vouchsafe me Thy eternal and immortal Kingdom!"

Then, when evening had come, Frumentinus ordered the saint to be shut in prison. Julian, very early in the morning, left the city without granting him an audience, and set out for Antioch. Frumentinus, seeing how the emperor was angry with him on account of Basil, grew still more furious against St. Basil. Bringing him out of the prison, he said to him:

"Well, most senseless of all men! Will you offer sacrifices to the gods as the emperor commanded, or not? What have you decided: to obey the imperial command, or to perish in torments?"

St. Basil the martyr answered him:

"Senseless and impious one! You have forgotten how many straps you tore from my body yesterday and on the days before, how everyone, looking at me, was moved to tears, seeing the torments to which you subjected me, sacrilegious one! And see: again, by the grace of my Christ, I stand before you healthy. Servant of the devils, fierce and inhuman! Report to your tormentor, Emperor Julian, what power there is in Christ God, whom he has forsaken. He, beguiled by the devil, has destroyed his soul. I will not even mention how Christ God delivered him from death, protecting him through His holy priests beneath the divine sanctuary of the holy Church. He forgot her benefits, renounced himself, and fled from her. But I hope in my Christ that He will soon repay him according to his deeds, and the wretched apostate will perish in torments!"

Frumentinus said to him:

"You rave, madman! The invincible lord Julian, out of his love for mankind and his mercy toward you, ordered you to keep the festival together with us, to offer sacrifices and to burn incense with fragrant censers. You did not wish to obey, but on the contrary, you first insulted the emperor insolently, and then brought me into trouble too. I will

repay you according to your deserts with such torments that you will quickly lose your life."

With these words Frumentinus ordered iron rods to be heated, and the saint to be pierced with them in the shoulders and belly. In such torments St. Basil fell to the ground, praying aloud to God and saying:

"My Light, Christ! My hope, Jesus! Quiet haven for those tossed by the waves! I thank Thee, Lord God of my fathers, that Thou hast snatched my soul from the depths of hell and kept Thy name unstained in me! Let me end my life as a victor and inherit eternal rest, according to the promise given to my fathers by Thee, the Great High Priest Jesus Christ our Lord! Now receive with peace my soul, which abides unchanged in this confession! Thou art merciful, and great is Thy mercy, Who livest and abidest unto ages of ages. Amen."

Having offered such a prayer, when the martyr's belly was already all pierced by the red-hot rods, he fell as if into a sweet sleep, committing his soul into the hands of God. Thus St. Basil died in the martyr's confession on January 28. Soon afterward, after the murder and destruction of the apostate Julian, on March 22, the Christians openly paid honor to the much-suffering body of the martyr, and on this day they established his memory. His valiant suffering strengthened all Christians in faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom be glory and an endless Kingdom forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having completed the course lawfully and kept the faith, O Hieromartyr Basil, for this reason thou wast granted the crowns of martyrdom, and thou didst appear as an unshakable pillar of the Church, confessing the Son co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, the indivisible Trinity. Beseech the Trinity to deliver from calamities those who honor thee, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, Basil, God-wise.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyr Drosis

Память святой мученицы Дросиды

By the command of the emperor Trajan[3], the confessors of Christ were put to death daily, and their bodies were cast into unclean and filthy places. At that time some Christian virgins, exercising themselves in the fulfillment of God's commandments and humbly performing their ascetic labors, lived in abstinence. Their instructresses, whenever they gathered the bodies of the holy martyrs, anointed them with aromatic oils, wrapped them in clean linen, and buried them in their dwellings. Drosis, the daughter of the emperor Trajan, learning of this, one night when all the servants attending her were overcome by deep sleep, came to these virgins, bearing precious garments, and asked them to allow her to go with them, so that she too might take the honorable body of a holy martyr. Meanwhile a certain Adrian, the betrothed of Drosis and a close friend of the emperor, gave him this counsel:

"Autocrat, lord! Command that soldiers be posted to guard the Christians put to death, so that we may learn who is stealing their bodies."

Trajan commanded that this counsel be carried out. The soldiers set on guard, keeping watch the whole night, seized the five Christian teachers mentioned above, together with Trajan's daughter Droside; and when morning came they brought them all before the emperor. Seeing Droside, Trajan was struck with horror and ordered the guards to keep her closely confined in a closed chamber, hoping that she might, perhaps, repent and be brought back to her senses. For the virgin teachers he commanded that a great cauldron be forged and that they be cast into it, together with a large quantity of copper for the alloy, so that the copper might fuse with their bodies and they might be burned in it. From this copper he further commanded that sacrificial tripods be forged and set up in a bath-house he had newly built, which on the

3. The Roman emperor Trajan reigned from 98 to 117. In 99 he renewed an earlier law forbidding secret societies, which touched indirectly on the Christians, and in 104 he issued a positive law against them. From that year the persecution continued until the end of his reign.

feast of Apollo[4] was to be heated for the first time and opened for the healing of sicknesses and the rest from labours of those who shared his pagan worship. When the emperor's command had been carried out, the holy martyrs of Christ were burned, and the tripods for sacrifice were forged; then the bath was heated and the people were summoned on every side, with the words:

"All whom the gods who save from misfortune favour, and who are devoted to the emperor, enter the bath worthy of curiosity, for its opening."

At this summons the people immediately began to gather at the bath. The first of those who came, hastening to cross the threshold of the bath's entrance doors, fell to the ground and expired. The same happened to all who approached the threshold with him, so that no one could enter even the first doors of the bath. When Trajan learned of this, he summoned the priests of his pagan gods and said to them:

"What has happened? Can it be that this comes from the sorcery of the Christians?"

"No, O Emperor," answered the priests, "this has come from the tripods made of the copper melted at your command, in which the Christian virgins were burned. Order them removed and others set in their place, and then the work you have planned will be accomplished without hindrance."

When this counsel of the priests had been carried out, Adrian said to the emperor:

"O Emperor, allow me to melt down the removed tripods again, to make from them five statues of naked maidens resembling the Christian teachers you have executed, and to set these statues before the entrance of your imperial bath, for their shame and disgrace."

Trajan at once consented to this, and the statues were made. When they had been placed in the appointed spots, Trajan saw in a dream five pure lambs grazing in Paradise, and a terrible shepherd tending them, who said to him:

4. Apollo, or Phoebus, son of Zeus and Leto, was one of the most venerated Greco-Roman pagan gods. He was honoured as the god of the sun and of intellectual enlightenment, and also as the god of order and public welfare.

"O most lawless and impious emperor! Those whose images you have planned to display for disgrace, the good and merciful Shepherd has taken from you and settled in this place, whither in time the pure lamb Droside, your daughter, shall also come."

Awakening, the impious and lawless Trajan fell into a frenzy, since the holy virgin martyrs, even after their death, had put his designs to shame. He ordered two furnaces to be kindled at opposite ends of the city, and to be heated daily, and upon them an inscription was to be placed, expressing his imperial command and containing the following:

"Men of Galilee,[5] who worship the Crucified, spare yourselves great multitudes of torments, and spare us toil: offer sacrifice to the gods. But if you are unwilling to do this, then let each of you of his own accord, by whatever means he wishes, cast himself into this furnace."

After this command had gone forth from the emperor, and the report reached the holy Droside that Christians, out of faith in Christ and love for Him, were casting themselves into the furnaces, she raised her eyes to heaven and said:

"O Lord, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, if it is Thy will that I be saved and escape the mad worship of my impious father Trajan, then Thou Thyself help me to be freed from marriage with the lawless Adrian and to ascend into heaven, where those five teachers already dwell, who established me in Thy fear. Lull to deep sleep those who guard me, that I may escape from here."

Having spoken these words, the holy Droside took off the marks of her royal dignity and quietly left her confinement, so that none of the guards noticed her. As she went, intending to cast herself into one of the furnaces, she reflected, saying within herself:

"How shall I go to God without wearing the wedding garment (that is, without having received baptism)? For I am unclean. But, O King of kings, Lord Jesus Christ, for Thy sake I have left my royal station, that Thou mayest deem me worthy to be at least a doorkeeper in Thy Kingdom. Baptize me Thyself with Thy Holy Spirit."

Having said this, the holy Droside took out the myrrh which she had brought with her from all her treasures, anointed all her limbs with

it, and then entered the water of a stream that lay across her path, and baptized herself, pronouncing the words:

"The handmaid of God Droside is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

After this, given over to strict fasting, she remained hidden for seven days. At this time some Christians found her, and from her account of herself they learned all that has been related above. On the eighth day after her baptism, the holy martyr, having prayed, did what she had earlier planned, and so departed to the Lord.

* * *



5. The Christians were called "Galileans" in mockery.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF MARCH

March 23

23 марта

New Calendar March 23 · Old Calendar April 5 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of Saint Nikon, Hieromartyr

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Никона

In the city of Naples, in the region of Campania[1], there lived a noble and valiant warrior of extraordinary beauty, by the name of Nikon.

His father, a Greek pagan, raised his son in idolatry; but Nikon's mother was a Christian, and she always taught him the knowledge of Christ. Pointing him to the power of the Cross of the Lord, she said:

"My beloved son! If it should ever befall you in war to be in danger, guard yourself often with the sign of the Cross, and you will escape not only captivity but will be delivered from all wounds; neither arrow, nor spear, nor sword will strike you, and you will remain unharmed even in the most perilous time of battle."

It happened one day that the Roman soldiers set out for war. Nikon also had to go with his detachment. During one most bloody battle, Nikon found himself in extreme danger, on the very brink of destruction. Seeing many of his fellow soldiers slain, he himself expected death from the weapons of the enemy; but, recalling the words and instructions of his mother, Nikon raised his eyes to heaven, guarded himself with the sign of the Cross, and, with a deep sigh from his heart, said:

"Christ, Almighty God! Show now the power of Thy Cross upon me; henceforth I will be Thy servant, and will worship Thee and the Mother who bore Thee."

After these words he felt within himself extraordinary courage, and, rushing forward with a spear in his right hand, he soon slew up to 180

brave enemy warriors, and put the rest to flight, so that no one could resist him. Thus miraculously was the power of the Cross of Christ made manifest in him!

Then Nikon glorified God, saying:

"Great is the Christian God, who conquers and drives away enemies by the sign of His Cross!"

The whole Roman army marveled at Nikon and said:

"A great miracle of God's providence! We have never seen or even heard of a warrior who fought so bravely in battle as Nikon."

When the war had ended and all were dismissed to their homes, Saint Nikon also returned to his house; glorifying God, he told his mother what the Lord Christ had accomplished with him in war by the power of His Cross.

In great joy his mother exclaimed:

"I thank Thy Most Holy Name, O Lord, for Thou desirest that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth! Now hear the prayer of Thy servant and grant my son the holy baptism bestowed upon us for the forgiveness of sins, and teach him to do Thy will, that he may please Thee and attain the promised eternal blessings."

Nikon began to ask his mother how he might become a Christian. His mother answered him:

"You must fast forty days and be instructed in the Christian faith by a Christian priest; then, having renounced Satan and all his works, and believing in Christ God, you will be granted holy baptism and will become a true Christian and servant of Christ."

"As the Lord lives!" answered Nikon, "I would rather be His servant than remain a pagan, an idolater and a warrior; I no longer wish to worship stone or any other creature, but the One God, Creator of heaven and earth, of the sea and of all that is in them."

Bowing down to the earth before his mother, Nikon said:

"Mother mine! Pray to God for me, your servant, that He may grant me an Angel, a good instructor and guardian of my soul and body, so

1. Campania is a region of central Italy. One of its notable cities, Naples, lies on the northern shore of the Gulf of Naples. In this region bells were first invented, which in the church service books, from the place of their origin, are called "campanae."

that under his guidance I may find such a servant of God as will grant me holy baptism and teach me to do the will of Christ, our true God, and that I may be numbered with the rational flock of Christ. O honorable mother mine! If your instruction had not turned me from pagan error and led me to the knowledge of the true God, I would not have escaped Gehenna and would have suffered torments in hell together with all who do not know God."

And saying, "Pray for me, mother mine!" he was about to leave the house. His mother, seizing her son by the hand, begged him to return to her after receiving holy baptism and to bury her, since she already felt the approach of death. Then, having prayed for him, she gave him money and, what was most important, sent him off with her maternal blessing and let him go to seek a Christian priest; but it was difficult in those times for one wishing to become a Christian and receive holy baptism to find such a man, on account of the persecution of Christians, since all Christian priests and teachers were hiding in deserts and mountains.

Leaving his house, Nikon came to the harbor, boarded a ship, and sailed to Constantinople.

After Nikon's departure, in the city of Naples the soldiers and commanders long sought the valiant warrior, and coming to his mother's house, they asked her: "Where is your son?" She answered: "I do not know where he has gone!"

Meanwhile Nikon, led by the grace of God, arrived at an island called Chios[2], climbed a high mountain there, and spent eight days in prayer, asking God to show him in what place he might find such a servant of the Lord as would grant him the holy baptism he had long desired and teach him the mysteries of the holy faith. And behold, in a dream-vision an Angel of God appeared to Nikon in the form of a hierarch; he handed him a staff with the image of a cross upon its top and bade him go to the seashore. Going there, in the morning he found a ship as though awaiting him; for the same Angel of God had appeared

2. Chios is one of the islands of the Aegean Sea, or Archipelago, lying off the western shores of Asia Minor.

to the sailors and commanded them to wait for Nikon, who would come down from the mountain with a staff bearing the image of a cross.

Helped by a favorable wind, Nikon together with the sailors put in two days later at a mountain called Ganos[3], where Theodosius, Bishop of Cyzicus[4], was hiding from persecution with a multitude of monks; he was their abbot and father. God had revealed Nikon to him, and he went out with his monks to meet him at the harbor. Then he led him into his cave and, after instruction, baptized him in the name of the Holy Trinity and gave him Holy Communion of the Most Pure Mysteries of Christ.

After receiving holy baptism, the blessed Nikon lived in that cave-church, studying Divine Scripture and observing the monastic life, and for his meekness he was tonsured into the monastic habit.

Some of the brethren, seeing Nikon's humility and gentleness, his fasting, abstinence, and his standing sleepless in prayer and psalmody through the night, likened him to an Angel of God; for he was patient in labors, great in love, incomparable in fasting, insatiable in learning and reading books, unwearied in nightly prayers, and in all monastic exploits diligent and zealous; he aroused wonder not only in the brethren but even in Bishop Theodosius himself.

When the blessed Nikon had spent three years on that mountain, a revelation from God came to the bishop: an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said:

"Before your death, appoint in your place as bishop Nikon, whom you baptized and clothed in the monastic rank, and entrust to him your flock; but bid him move with all of them to the southern land of the Sicilian region[5], so that the monks may not perish by the sword of the barbarians, who will soon attack this place."

After this vision, Bishop Theodosius ordained the blessed Nikon first as deacon, then as presbyter, and at last consecrated him also as

3. Ganos, or Gan, is situated on the northwestern coast of the Sea of Marmara; it was one of the fortified places in Thrace.

4. The region of Cyzicus, with the city of Cyzicus, lies in the northwestern part of Asia Minor, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara.

bishop, and, having entrusted to him 190 monks, he fell asleep in the Lord.

Having performed the burial of the bishop, Nikon sailed with all the monks on a ship and set out for the island of Lesbos[6], where, putting in at the city of Mytilene[7], he remained two days, and then sailed to the island of Naxos[8]. From there, by God's providence, after 22 days he arrived in Italy; coming to his homeland, the city of Naples, he found his blessed mother still alive, who, seeing him, fell upon his breast with tears of joy and kissed him. Bowing to the Lord to the earth, she said:

"I thank Thy Most Holy Name, O Lord, that Thou hast brought me to see my son in the Angelic image and the dignity of a bishop; and now, my Master, hear me, Thy servant, and receive my soul into Thy hands."

Having offered this prayer, the blessed woman immediately yielded up her spirit to the Lord; all who were present glorified God and honorably buried her with psalmody.

The report of Nikon's arrival spread throughout the city; some of the soldiers who had been his comrades in the regiment also learned of it; coming to him, they admired the comeliness of his face and asked him privately:

"We implore you by the power of the Most High, tell us, whence came the strength and courage you showed in war: from sorcery or from something else? Teach us also to be like you."

"Brethren!" the saint answered them, "believe me, it was neither sorcery nor anything else that made me brave in war, but only the help of the Honorable Cross of Christ. When I armed myself with it, no one could stand against me, for the power of God, working in the sign of the Cross, overcame all enemies."

---

5. The Sicilian region, or Sicily, is one of the large islands of the Mediterranean Sea, lying south of the Apennine peninsula and separated from it by the Strait of Messina. On it is the largest volcano in the world (a fire-breathing mountain), Etna.

6. Lesbos is an island of the Aegean Sea, or Archipelago, off the western shores of Asia Minor, near Media.[1*]

7. Mytilene is the largest fortified city of the island of Lesbos, situated on its eastern side.

8. Naxos is an island in the south of the Aegean Sea, or Archipelago, the largest of the Cycladic group.

Hearing such words, those soldiers fell at the feet of Saint Bishop Nikon, saying:

"Holy hierarch of God! Have mercy on us and take us with you, so that, as in war we were delivered from enemies through you, so now we too may become partakers with you of the Kingdom of Heaven."

And at once, leaving their wives, children, brothers and their homes, those soldiers followed Saint Nikon; there were nine of them.

Having embarked on the ship, the Venerable Nikon, with them and his disciples, sailed to the land of Sicily and put in at the highest mountain of Taurominium[9]. Having disembarked upon the shore and traveled a considerable distance, they came to the river Asinos, near which they found a large, dilapidated stone bath standing in a desert place called Gigia, and there they settled. The place was very beautiful and secluded, and the land proved suitable for cultivation. Having planted vineyards and fruit-bearing trees, they began to live there. Venerable Nikon baptized here those nine men, his comrades in military service, and tonsured them into the monastic habit.

Many years passed, but the persecution of Christians continued. The Sicilian hegemon Quintian was informed by the pagans that on the river Asinos there lived men who worshipped the heavenly God, having as their teacher Bishop Nikon; they do not obey our laws and do not wish to worship our gods.

Hearing this, the hegemon was filled with wrath and fury, and at once dispatched a detachment of soldiers to seize them all and bring them before him for interrogation.

Arriving at that place, the soldiers asked:

"Where is Nikon with his friends, who do not obey the imperial laws and do not worship the gods?"

Saint Nikon answered them:

"My children! You have done well, very well, in coming here, for Christ, my Master, is calling me and my friends to Himself."

Then the brethren began to pray, asking God to strengthen them with His grace for the ordeal, but, urged on by the soldiers, they were

9. The Mount of Taormina lies on the eastern shore of the island of Sicily.

compelled to interrupt their prayer and, under escort, went to the hegemon like sheep to the slaughter.

On the way, our blessed father Nikon strengthened them with such words:

"Take courage, my brethren, and do not fear the tormentor, for our struggle is ending, and the heavenly gates have opened to us. Let us stand firmly for the faith of Christ before the fierce tormentor, let us speak boldly before him, remembering the words of our good Shepherd: 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul' (Mt. 10:28)."

When the saints were brought before the hegemon for judgment, he, casting a stern glance upon them, began to speak:

"Are you all nourishing yourselves with so vain and deceptive a hope, having been beguiled by the sorcerer Nikon to such a degree that you do not honor the immortal gods and do not obey their laws?"

The saints answered with one voice:

"We are Christians, and we shall never abandon our faith; we place our hope not in the vanity of this life, but in the Lord God, who created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; but your gods are mute, deaf, and insensible idols, the work of human hands, and all who trust in them shall be like them."

Seeing the firm and unchanging faith of the saints, the hegemon said:

"If I do not quickly order them put to death, they may lead many others into their error."

Therefore he first ordered the saints stripped and stretched upon the ground, and beaten long and without mercy with ox sinews; then all of them, except Saint Nikon, were to be beheaded by the sword beside the river, at that bath where they had lived. Then they were led away to execution.

Bowing their honorable heads beneath the sword, the holy martyrs said:

– Lord! Into Thy hands we commend our souls, "for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter" (Ps. 43:23).

Thus were 199 of the venerable disciples of Saint Nikon beheaded. By the tormentor's command, their bodies were cast into the heavily heated bath where they had dwelt, to be burned.

Having bound Venerable Nikon in chains, the tormentor devised what most cruel torments to subject him to.

That night an Angel of God appeared to the saint in his prison in a dream and said:

"Take courage in God, Nikon, soldier of Christ, and rejoice, for Christ our God has accepted the sacrifice of your 199 disciples as a fragrant offering: they have entered the bridal chamber, where the Heavenly Bridegroom rests."

After these words of the Angel, Saint Nikon saw before him a maiden brighter than the rays of the sun, whose garment was of gold and sapphire[10]; in her hands she held a lion as white as snow. That maiden stood on the eastern side of the river Psimithus, and on the western side stood two men of extraordinary stature, whose heads touched the heavens; in their hands they held fiery spears, and they conversed with the appearing maiden thus:

"Why do we now stand here idle, having been sent by the Heavenly King to battle against Quintian? Behold, we are waiting for him, and yet he does not come."

The luminous maiden said to them:

"Yesterday Quintian slew 199 men, servants of Christ; besides this, he is devising the strongest torments for their teacher, Nikon, who has overcome all the wiles of the devil; he will soon come to the place against which you have been sent."

Having said this, she released from her hands the lion to them, saying: "Take him, he will help you against the tormentor."

Awakening after the vision, Bishop Nicon was greatly gladdened; offering praise to God and glorifying Him, he told of the vision to his servant, named Heromenus, who afterward described his life and sufferings.

10. Sapphire is a precious stone; it occurs in various colors, but most often in azure, sky-blue, light-blue, and cornflower shades.

Recounting the vision to his young servant, the saint foretold the terrible death of Quintian in the near future.

On the morrow the hegemon Quintian commanded that Saint Nikon be brought before him for judgment, and asked him:

"Who are you, whence, and of what faith, you who by your sorcery have caused the death of so many people; behold, because of your madness they shall no longer see either the radiance of the sun or the light of the moon."

Saint Nikon answered him:

"Impious one! I have not only already told you who I am and of what faith, but others have told you as well; you have heard this repeatedly from those many saints whom you slew yesterday in the blindness of your impiety. Now I shall tell you briefly: I am a Christian, I firmly and unwaveringly hope in God, who created heaven and earth, and He will deliver you to unbearable torments for your inhuman cruelty and great impiety."

At these words the tormentor, roaring like a lion, commanded that the saint be stripped and, stretched out, be bound by his hands and feet to four wheels, and that fire be kindled beneath him.

Saint Nikon lay upon the glowing coals as upon flowers, and thus sang to God:

"Thou, O Lord, art my strength and my refuge, who deliverest me from enemies that rage against me (Ps. 17:3)."

The servants said to the tormentor:

"Lord hegemon! We are exhausted: however much we kindle the fire and however much we scorch Nikon, nothing harms him."

Ceasing this torment, the hegemon commanded that the saint be bound to swift horses, so as to drag him over the ground and tear him apart; but the saint, bound to the horses, stretched out his right hand toward them and made the sign of the Cross over them, and the horses at once became gentle as sheep and stood as if rooted, not moving from the spot, however much the servants beat them and urged them on with reins and bridles.

Seeing this, the tormentor was enraged and commanded that the sinews of the horses' legs be cut, but by God's command they suddenly

spoke with a human voice, like the ass of Balaam of old: "Our God is in the heavens; He doeth whatsoever He will (Ps. 113:11). For the sake of Saint Nikon, we too surrender ourselves to death."

Then the hegemon commanded that the martyr be bound with iron chains and cast down from a high mountain into a deep abyss. But even after this the martyr remained unharmed. An Angel of God preserved him during the fall, and, releasing him from his fetters, led him out of the abyss. The saint again appeared for judgment before the tormentor, healthy and unhurt. Seeing him, the tormentor was terrified and afterward said to him:

"Nikon! How great is the care our gods have for you! Do you not see how they watch over you and do not wish to destroy your body? Know then their mercy: offer sacrifices to them and be their friend."

The saint answered:

"Let there be anathema upon you, and upon your gods, and upon all who trust in them."

Then the hegemon commanded that the saint be struck in the face with stones, that his tongue be drawn out with pincers and cut off; then that he be taken to the place called Gigia, where he had lived with his disciples, and there his head be cut off. Thus was the holy hieromartyr Nikon beheaded on the river Asinos, beneath a pine tree[11], in the reign of Decius[12]. His body was left unburied and cast to be devoured by beasts and birds.

On the day that the hegemon Quintian condemned Saint Nikon to beheading, he himself set out for the city of Panormus[13], to take for himself the property of Saint Agatha, whom he had tormented to death shortly before. And when he was crossing the aforementioned river Psimithus, the horses that were with him on the ferry suddenly ran wild. One, rushing at him, gnawed his face with its teeth and disfigured him; another trampled him so that it threw him into the river. And the

11. The pevg tree, or pevg, is a kind of coniferous tree, resembling our pine or spruce.
12. Decius was a Roman emperor and a cruel persecutor of Christians; he reigned from 249 to 251.
13. Panormus is the present city of Palermo, situated on the northwestern coast of the island of Sicily.

wretched man drowned, ending, according to the prophecy of Saint Nikon, his impious life in torment.

When the honorable body of the martyr lay unburied at the place of execution, a shepherd possessed by an evil spirit walked about that place, and, finding the body of the saint, at once fell face downward upon the ground, for the unclean spirit, expelled by the power of the saint, threw him to the earth and came out of him with a loud cry: "Woe is me, woe is me! Whither shall I flee from the face of Nikon?!"

The healed shepherd went and told of this miracle to the inhabitants of that land. The bishop of the city of Messina[14], learning of it, set out together with his clergy for the much-suffering body of the hieromartyr, and, finding it, took it up. He also found the bodies of the saint's disciples in the bath whole and undamaged by the fire, and with honor committed them all to burial together with their teacher Nikon in a famous place, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Nikon, Abbot of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного отца нашего Никона, игумена Печерского

When it pleased the Lord to plant in Russia a fruitful branch of the monastic life, He first led to the skilful and diligent founder of Russian monasticism, St. Antony, who laboured in the cave, the Venerable Nikon, who was his good fellow-worker in the ascetic struggle. Zealously passing through the degrees of monastic virtue, imitating his master and teacher in all things, the Venerable Nikon showed himself a worthy leader of monks and a trustworthy guide to them in the spiritual garden of the ascetic life. When persons came to Antony desiring to receive the angelic habit, he himself instructed them in the virtues, and to the Venerable Nikon he gave the command to tonsure them. In the deeds of these two ascetics one could discern a certain

14. Messina is a very considerable city on the island of Sicily, at the strait separating that island from Italy, situated in a beautiful region abounding in orange and lemon trees.

likeness to Moses and Aaron: for the Venerable Antony had brought the law from the holy Mountain of Athos[2092], as Moses brought it from Sinai, while the Venerable Nikon acted at Antony's command as Aaron, honoured with the dignity of the priesthood. All his works Nikon performed with obedience, and he experienced not only joys but with patience bore sorrows as well, giving thanks to God for all things. He was granted a great spiritual joy when he tonsured our Venerable Father Theodosius, who soon became a great teacher of the monastic life in Russia. He also rejoiced in spirit when he tonsured the distinguished boyar, the blessed Barlaam, and likewise the blessed Ephraim the eunuch, who managed all the household of the prince and was his favourite. But on account of these tonsured men he also endured no little sorrow. For when Prince Iziaslav[15] learned of their tonsure, he was greatly angered against the Venerable Fathers and commanded that the one who had performed the tonsure be brought to him at once. Servants went immediately and brought the blessed Nikon to him.

Looking upon the saint with anger, the prince asked:

"Was it you who tonsured the boyar and the eunuch without my command?"

The Venerable Nikon answered with courage:

"I tonsured them by the grace of God, at the command of the Heavenly King Jesus Christ, who called them to this struggle."

The prince was angered still more and said:

"Either persuade them to return to their homes, or I will send you and those with you into confinement, and I will command your cave to be dug up."

The blessed Nikon replied:

"My lord! Do all that pleases you! But it is not fitting for me to turn soldiers away from the Heavenly King."

After this, St. Antony and those with him went out of the cave, intending, because of the prince's anger and reproaches against the blessed Nikon, to set out for another region.

But one of the youths reported this to the princess. She, reminding the prince of the wrath of God which had come upon her fatherland, the

land of the Poles[16], because her father, Boleslaw the Brave[17], had driven out the black-robed monks who had tonsured Moses the Hungarian, said to him:

"Listen to me, my lord, and do not be angry. In your own land also such black-robed monks were expelled, and much was suffered on their account. See, my lord, that the same does not happen in your domain."

Hearing this, the prince feared the wrath of God and released the blessed Nikon, commanding him to return to the cave; at the same time he sent also to those who had withdrawn from it, begging them to return to the cave. And only after three days, heeding the prince's request, did they return to the cave, as is related in the Life of the Venerable Antony.

After such a trial our Venerable Father Nikon led a severe life in the cave; by fasting and prayer he won many victories over evil spirits, and showed himself equal in rank to the Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius; they were three lights shining in the darkness and dispelling the demonic gloom.

After the brotherhood in the cave had greatly increased, the blessed Nikon desired to withdraw into solitude and to keep silence. Having taken counsel with the Venerable Antony, and having spoken with another monk, a Bulgarian from Mount Athos[18], of the monastery of St. Mina, he set out with him. On reaching the sea they parted. The Bulgarian, setting out for Constantinople, found in the midst of the sea an island, and there he settled. Having lived there many years, enduring hunger and cold, he reposed in peace; that island is called Bulgarov to this day. The great Nikon went away to the island of Tmutarakan[19], and having found an uninhabited place near the city, he settled there, keeping silence and serving God without sloth, adding labour to labour and astonishing the people by his extraordinary life. His fame spread everywhere; many people from the city and from other places began to

15. Izyaslav Yaroslavich, son of the Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise and grandson of St. Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles, ruled in Kiev from 1054 to 1068.
16. The Land of the Lyakhs, that is, the Poles.
17. Boleslaw I the Brave, King of Poland; he reigned from 992 to 1025.
18. "Svyatogorsk," that is, from the Mount Athos.
19. This island lies on the eastern shore of the Kerch Strait.

gather to the Venerable Father; they marvelled at his life, for they had not yet been established in the faith and had heard nothing of the monastic life. But afterwards, taught by God, desiring to inherit the monastic good conduct, they besought the Venerable Nikon to tonsure them. The saint instructed them and tonsured them, and he built there a church of the Most Holy Theotokos. And so, by the grace of God, through the prayers of the Venerable Nikon, that place grew, and there arose a glorious monastery, like the Monastery of the Caves.

After the death of Rostislav Vladimirovich[20], prince of Tmutarakan, our Venerable Father Nikon was entreated by the inhabitants of that land to go to Sviatoslav Iaroslavich[21], Prince of Chernigov, and ask him to send his son Gleb to them to occupy the throne of Tmutarakan. Arriving at the city of Chernigov and successfully fulfilling the charge laid upon him, the Venerable Father went to the city of Kiev and came to the Monastery of the Caves to the blessed Hegumen Theodosius. On seeing each other, both fell together to the ground and bowed to one another, and then they embraced and wept much for joy, since they had not seen each other for a long time. After this the Venerable Theodosius besought the blessed Nikon not to leave him as long as they both lived.

Nikon promised him, saying:

"I will go and only put my own monastery in order, and afterwards, if God wills, I will return again."

So he did.

Arriving at the island of Tmutarakan with Prince Gleb Sviatoslavich[22], who had occupied the throne, the Venerable Father, in accordance with his promise, put the monastery in order and returned to Theodosius. Coming to the Monastery of the Caves, he entrusted himself entirely to the Venerable Theodosius and submitted to him with all joy. The Venerable Theodosius loved him very much and regarded him

20. Rostislav Vladimirovich, son of Vladimir Yaroslavich, was prince of Tmutorokan; he ruled in the second half of the eleventh century.

21. Svyatoslav Yaroslavich, son of Yaroslav Vladimirovich, was prince of Chernigov; he ruled from 1054 to 1076.

22. Gleb Svyatoslavich, eldest son of Svyatoslav Yaroslavich, prince of Novgorod; he ruled from 1067 to 1077.

as a father; therefore, when he himself went away from the monastery, he then entrusted the brotherhood to the blessed Nikon, as the eldest of all, to instruct and keep them. Often also the Venerable Theodosius, himself instructing the brotherhood with spiritual words, commanded the blessed Nikon, who was well read in the books, to do the same. Many times, when the blessed Nikon sewed and made books (for he was skilful in this), the Venerable Theodosius himself, sitting near him, prepared the books needed for this work. But soon the blessed hermit, the Venerable Nikon, desired to return again to his island. Among the Russian princes a quarrel had arisen, because Sviatoslav, having driven his brother Iziaslav from Kiev, had seized his throne. Nikon could not endure the disturbances caused by this event, under which it was impossible to preserve the silence of the spirit. But the Venerable Theodosius again besought him not to leave him as long as he lived; yet the blessed Nikon, having asked forgiveness (since he could not bear turmoil and was accustomed to solitude), went away with two monks and lived there for several years in his accustomed ascetic labour.

After the repose of the Venerable Theodosius, and after the blessed Stephen had assumed the abbacy, the Venerable Nikon, moved by brotherly love, came again to visit the Venerable Theodosius; he grieved that he did not find alive his beloved friend, and he resolved to spend the rest of his life in his monastery. Often he came to the tomb of the saint, shedding here tears of sorrowful joy, partly grieving at the separation from his beloved brother, partly giving thanks to God that in Russia there had shone forth by angelic life such a lamp, upon whom he, Nikon, had with his own hands placed the holy angelic monastic habit. After the abbacy of St. Stephen, the brotherhood, regarding Nikon as the eldest of all, since the Venerable Theodosius himself had received the monastic tonsure from him, by the will of God and by common consent chose him as their abbot, as one of one mind in life with the Fathers Antony and Theodosius. They obediently submitted to him in all things and honoured him as father and teacher, seeing in him alone the likeness of those two. Many times the enemy and hater of good, the devil, attempted to place obstacles, both to this Venerable Father and to the blessed Abbot Stephen, in the work of the care of the

souls of the flock entrusted to them by God, desiring to stir up the brotherhood to hatred against him; but he never succeeded in this, he remained put to shame, and his darkness did not overshadow the light of the good works of the Venerable Nikon.

The Blessed Abbot Nikon was so pleasing to God, and was for his flock a model of every virtue, that during his abbacy the holy Church of the Caves, created by God, was wondrously adorned with holy icons; for to the earthly prayers of this blessed builder were joined the heavenly prayers of his friends, the Venerable Antony and Theodosius, who sent to him iconographers from Constantinople, giving them gold as their wages. The Venerable Abbot Nikon showed those iconographers the likeness of his beloved friends, the Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius, who had reposed ten years before, and they at once recognized in them those who had appeared to them; they had hired them and sent them to him. Moreover, they related other wondrous marvels: thus, when they wished to return, the holy Church of the Caves appeared to them, and the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, from which they heard the prohibition against returning; and they miraculously sailed uphill against the current, although they themselves were striving to sail downstream with the current. The iconographers, thus miraculously arrived, through the zeal and prayers of the Venerable Nikon set diligently to the adornment of the holy Church of the Caves, and again there were no few miracles, for the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos in the sanctuary was wondrously depicted in *mousia*[23], and from her mouth a dove flew out, as is written in the extended narrative concerning the Church of the Caves[24]. All this came about through the heavenly prayers of the Venerable Fathers Antony and Theodosius and the earthly prayers of the Blessed Abbot Nikon. Then the ever-memorable abbot himself, our Venerable Father Nikon, having adorned the Caves monastery with the various labors of his angel-like life, after

23. *Mousia* (Greek μουσιου), mosaic. This is the name for the skilled work consisting of a composition of multicolored, chiefly marble, small stones in patterns, so that the desired design results. Mosaics are used, for example, to pave the floors of churches and also to decorate walls; even icons are made in this manner.
24. See the Menaion of August 16.

long toil fell asleep in the Lord in the year 6596 from the creation of the world, and from the Nativity of Christ in the year 1088, under the Grand Prince of Kiev Vsevolod Yaroslavich[25]. His body was laid in the same Caves monastery, in the cave that was his own, where even to this day, by the incorruption of his relics, he bears witness to his holiness, which after death also wondrously adorns his holy monastery; and in spirit he has passed into the heavenly dwellings, to the ineffable vision of God, together with his like-minded friends, the Venerable Antony and Theodosius, no longer in images but face to face (1 Cor. 13:12); and there, illumined by the faithful glory, they stand, like three lamps, before the throne of the Thrice-Radiant Divinity, and as fathers they pray for us, their children, that we may be found heirs of their grace and glory through a righteous life before God, to Whom be glory, honor, and worship, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Philitus and Lydia

Память святых мучеников Филита и Лидии

These holy martyrs suffered in the reign of the Emperor Hadrian[26]. Among them, the holy Philitus, a senator[27], his wife Lydia, and their sons Macedon and Theoprepius were Christians and always remained in the service of the true God. For this they were seized and brought before Hadrian. At the interrogation the emperor was unable to withstand the wise answers of the holy martyrs, and he sent them for judgment to Illyria[28], to the military commander Amphilochius. The latter at once ordered them all to be hanged upon a tree and their bodies to be scraped with knives, and afterward they were imprisoned to-

25. Vsevolod Yaroslavich, Grand Prince of Kiev, son of Yaroslav I; he ruled from 1030 to 1093; he became Grand Prince in 1077.

26. The Roman emperor Hadrian reigned from 117 to 138. He was a persecutor of Christians, but by the edict he issued, the latter were subjected to punishment only upon formal denunciations and after legal proceedings against them.

27. A *senator* (Greek *synklitikos*) was one of the important imperial counselors and dignitaries, who belonged to the *synklitos*, that is, the imperial council.

28. Illyria was situated along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. On the northwest it was bounded by the river Sava, and on the southeast by the Drava. Today Dalmatia and Bosnia with Herzegovina are located here, as well as a small part of Albania.

gether with the commentariensis[29] Cronides, who also believed in Christ. At night, while the holy martyrs were praying and singing sacred hymns, an Angel appeared to them and strengthened them for the coming struggle. On the following morning the saints were again brought before the tormentor, and he said to them:

"A multitude of torments and tortures awaits you!"

After this he commanded oil mixed with sulfur to be heated in a copper cauldron and the holy martyrs to be cast into it. But when they were cast in, the cauldron at once cooled. Struck by such a miracle, Amphilochius himself believed in Christ, and resolving to enter the cauldron, he said:

"Lord Jesus Christ, help me."

Then a voice was heard, saying to him:

"Your prayer is heard; enter here."

Learning of all this, Hadrian, breathing wrath and threats, came from Rome to Illyria and ordered the cauldron filled with oil to be heated for seven days, and then all the holy martyrs to be cast into it. But when the saints were cast into the cauldron, they remained whole and unharmed. After this the shamed emperor returned to Rome, while the holy martyrs prayed and gave thanks to God, and in the midst of their prayers they committed their souls to the Lord, receiving from Him the crowns of martyrdom.

* * *

NOTES

2092. Mount Athos (Athos), in Greek *Agios Oros*, "the Holy Mountain," is a narrow, mountainous peninsula jutting into the Archipelago (Aegean Sea); it is known as the center of monastic life for the Greek East. Monastic life appeared here in ancient times, though somewhat later than in Syria and Palestine. For the Russian Church Athos had great significance up to the seventeenth century: here the father of Russian monasticism, the Venerable Antony, received the tonsure; from here the Studite Typikon was brought by the Venerable Theodosius for his (Kiev Caves) monastery, and afterward, according to the chronicler, passed into other monasteries as well; here, in the rich monastic libraries, our monks who went to Athos received the broadest religious education

29. *Commentarisius* – the chief over the prisons and the clerk at judicial proceedings, who conducted the preliminary investigations of the accused, especially of the Christian martyrs.

available at that time (for example, the Venerable Nil of Sora). As one of the most revered holy places of the Orthodox East, Athos is visited every year by thousands of pilgrims, exclusively male (women are forbidden entry to the peninsula), from Russia, the Balkan peninsula, and the Asiatic possessions of Turkey. Nearly the whole mountain, with the exception of deep ravines and cliffs, is covered with rich vegetation: beautiful trees grow here, partly fruit-bearing—lemons, oranges, pears; whole fields are planted with many varieties of grapes, supplying the Athonite brotherhood with a satisfactory store of excellent wine; walnuts, chestnuts, and olive trees are abundantly scattered over the entire mountain. At present there are situated on Athos 20 large monasteries, several sketes, and a multitude of separate cells, numbering up to 700, Greek, Russian, Moldavian, Bulgarian, and others.



THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF MARCH

March 24

24 марта

New Calendar March 24 · Old Calendar April 6 (civil dates)

Commemoration of our Father among the Saints Artemon, Bishop of Seleucia

Память во святых отца нашего Артемона, епископа Селевкийского

The Blessed Artemon was a native of the city of Seleucia in Pisidia[1], where he was also brought up. He lived a God-pleasing life in the times of the holy Apostles, who enlightened the world with the teaching of Christ. At the time when the holy Apostle Paul came to this city, Artemon shone forth with good deeds among all its citizens, like a lamp that could not remain hidden. The holy Apostle Paul, perceiving him to be steadfast in the Christian faith and filled with Divine wisdom, appointed him as shepherd and teacher of the people, ordaining him to the rank of the first Bishop of Seleucia in Pisidia. The Blessed Artemon governed well and in a God-pleasing manner the flock entrusted to him; he was a haven of salvation for all, an outstanding protector of widows, orphans and the poor, and a wonderworking healer of both soul and body. Having passed his whole life piously and in a God-pleasing manner, he died in extreme old age.

* * *

1. *Pisidia* is a province in the south of Asia Minor, originally forming a single whole with Pamphylia and separated from it only under Constantine the Great (306–337 A.D.). Pisidia was a harsh, mountainous region, though in places fertile. The inhabitants of Pisidia were pirates and took to plunder. Now Pisidia is inhabited by the wild and brigand tribe of the Karamans. Of the cities of Pisidia, Antioch is especially notable in church history, where the Holy Apostle Paul preached the Gospel (Acts 13:14–50).

Commemoration of our Venerable Father James the Confessor

Память преподобного отца нашего Иакова Исповедника

When the impious Greek emperor Leo the Armenian[2] revived the iconoclastic heresy[3], condemned by the holy Fathers at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and tormented many for their reverent veneration of the holy icons, then also suffered this Venerable James the Confessor, of whom we have information from the Venerable Theodore the Studite[4]. The Blessed James was among his disciples. After the banishment of the Venerable Theodore for the holy icons, many of his disciples were seized for torment; the Blessed James too was taken and subjected to every kind of torture. When the impious Leo the Armenian was slain, St. James, like the other Confessors of Christ, was released from imprisonment, and, arriving barely alive at his Studite monastery in Constantinople, soon died and was buried in a fitting manner. The Blessed Hypatius, who performed the duties of abbot in place of his teacher St. Theodore, informed the latter of his death by letter; Theodore had already returned from exile and was temporarily staying at the monastery of Kriskentos.

The Venerable Theodore wrote the following in reply: "Not without grief of heart, yet not without joy of soul, my son, have we received from you the news of the repose of our beloved brother, the Confessor of Christ James. We mourn for him as for a son, and indeed for such a son as I, through my sins, am not worthy to call son. We rejoice that he has attained the eternal life prepared for him by the Lord. We rejoice not only we, for whom he serves as a holy member and an excellent ad-

2. Leo V the Armenian, Greek emperor, reigned from 813 to 820 A.D.

3. The Iconoclastic heresy, or iconoclasm, was an eighth-century heresy consisting in the non-acknowledgment, non-veneration and persecution of the holy icons. The most zealous defenders of iconoclasm were the emperors Leo the Isaurian (717–741 A.D.) and Constantine Copronymus (741–775 A.D.). This heresy was condemned at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in 787 A.D. in the city of Nicaea under Patriarch Tarasius and the Empress Irene.

4. St. Theodore the Studite was abbot of the Monastery of Studios in Constantinople. St. Theodore suffered much for the veneration of icons. After St. Theodore there remained many writings, letters, canons and church stichera. In addition, St. Theodore made significant additions to the Church typikon which, named after the Monastery of Studios, is called the "Studite" (in distinction from the "Jerusalem" typikon, compiled by St. Sabbas the Sanctified).

ornment, but the whole Church rejoices over him as well. Consider what manner of man you took him to be: was he not a confessor, a martyr, a saint? He bravely struggled against the impulses of the flesh, chastely keeping his body from lusts, and, using the simplest food, he subjected the body to the rational soul. St. James slept so little that to those who saw him it seemed astonishing that he remained in good health. For as long as time allowed, he loved to lift his thoughts to God for long periods, and in this contemplation of God he was absorbed to the point of rapture of the mind. When he came to himself, all this kindled in him Divine love. Let no one think that I speak untruth to please the hearers; I have witnesses: God and the teacher of St. James, John, who related to me things about him that I myself sometimes did not know. All this was a simple means of accustoming himself to the ascetic life; as for how long he spent in the labors of confession, and how great those labors were, this was visible to both Angels and men. O steadfast and precious heart! He accomplished his struggle without fear, like a warrior of God. The servants of the tormentors covered all his skin with wounds, also lacerated his shoulders and chest, drew blood, broke his body and left him cast upon the ground. He uttered not a single impatient sound, but to the end endured the torments pleasing to God for the sake of His Son Christ our God; for to suffer for His holy icon is to suffer for Him Himself. Let the meek hear and rejoice, let the lovers of martyrdom be glad, and let the devil be ashamed and the host of iconoclasts be scattered! For besides this holy James, they have tormented, slain, starved to death and inflicted other such torments upon many other Confessors of Christ, both ours and not ours (more of ours, since we form one body in relation to Jesus Christ, who is the head of all).

Since from these unbearable wounds St. James was weakened in all his members, his body, seized by the most grievous sicknesses, was given over to medical care. Preparing for death each day, he ended his life with thanksgiving and humility. You write that he foretold his death; this came from his suffering ascetic labors. You add also that many people, including men of very noble family, were present at his burial; all this took place by the inscrutable will of God, for to a man not fam-

ous (though famous in spirit) such a multitude of people would not have gathered, had it not been pleasing to the Lord. St. James has gone to heaven and joined his fellow sufferers; thus the number of confessors and martyrs has increased; therefore heaven rejoices and delights in the soul of James, through whose prayers we, brethren, shall be saved. He has received a gift worthy of his labors.

Happy and truly pious are those who gathered for his worthy burial; they are true lovers of martyrdom, and may their lot be the same as that of the one whom they honored. Concerning his honorable relics, if it is God's will, I shall take care, as I wrote in the rules. Kiss one another with the holy kiss; read this letter to all the brethren. The lord archbishop, Patriarch Nicephorus, the protopresbyter, the ikonom and the other brethren greet you. May the Lord be with you. Amen."

Such is the letter of St. Theodore the Studite, from which the life and suffering of this Venerable Confessor of Christ, James, are seen; may the Lord, through his prayers, grant us too to share the lot of His saints forever. Amen.

* * *

Account of a miracle that occurred in the Caves Monastery

Воспоминание о чуде, бывшем в Печерском монастыре

Two distinguished men of Kiev, John and Sergius, lived in great friendship with one another. Once they came into the Caves church made by God[5] and saw that the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos shone with light brighter than the sun. Before this holy image they entered into a brotherly covenant. Many years passed. John fell mortally ill. He summoned the Caves abbot, the Blessed Nikon, and in his presence distributed his property to the poor; the portion that he left for his five-year-old son Zacharias — a thousand grivnas[6] of silver and a hundred grivnas of gold — he entrusted to Sergius for safekeeping; to him, as a friend and faithful brother, John

5. Of course, the church meant is the one built in memory of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos by the first monks of the Kiev Caves Monastery (in Kiev).

also entrusted the care of his son Zacharias, asking him to hand over the silver and gold to this son when he grew up. Having arranged this, John soon died. When Zacharias reached fifteen years of age, he wished to take his silver and gold from Sergius. Tempted by the devil, Sergius, thinking to grow rich, devised the perdition of soul and body. He answered the youth thus:

"Your father gave all his property to God; ask God for the silver and gold; He must give it to you, if He shows mercy. As for me, I owe neither your father nor you a single coin. Your father did all this, through his folly giving his property in alms and leaving you a beggar and destitute."

Hearing this, the youth began to weep for the money of which he had been deprived. After this he made the following request to Sergius:

"If you give me half of my inheritance, you will still have the other half."

But Sergius harshly reproached his father and himself. Then Zacharias asked for a third part, then a tenth, and when he saw that he was deprived of everything, he said to Sergius:

"If you have taken nothing for yourself, then come and swear to me of it in the Caves church before the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, before which you entered into a brotherly covenant with my father."

Sergius did not refuse; he went into the church and, standing before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, swore that he had taken neither a thousand grivnas of silver nor a hundred grivnas of gold. When he wished to kiss the icon, however, he could not approach it. Then, as he came out of the doors, he suddenly cried out:

"Venerable Antony and Theodosius! Do not allow this evil Angel to destroy me, but entreat the Most Holy Theotokos to drive from me the many demons under whose power I am. Let them take from my room the silver and gold sealed in a vessel!"

---

6. The word "hryvnia" is usually derived from the Sanskrit word for "neck," because the hryvnia originally signified a gold or silver chain worn around the neck as an ornament (see Gen. 41:42; Prov. 1:9; Sir. 6:25). But subsequently this name came to be applied to gold and silver coins, which at different times had different values.

Fear seized everyone, and from then on no one was permitted to swear before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. Those sent took the sealed vessel and found in it two thousand grivnas of silver and two hundred grivnas of gold: thus the Lord, the Rewarder of the merciful, doubled the money. Zacharias gave all the money into the full disposal of the abbot John; he himself took the monastic tonsure and ended his life in the holy Caves monastery.

With this money a church was built in the name of John the Forerunner, near the main Caves church. This church was erected in memory of the nobleman John and his son Zacharias, to whom the money belonged, and to the glory of Christ God and of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, who is still more glorified in this place, from which may her wondrous grace never depart. Amen.

* * *



THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF MARCH

March 25

25 марта

New Calendar March 25 · Old Calendar April 7 (civil dates)

Sermon on the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos

Слово на Благовещение Пресвятой Богородицы

When the fullness of time had come, and the time of the deliverance of the human race drew near through the divine Incarnation, it was fitting that there should be found a pure, undefiled and holy virgin, who would be worthy to incarnate the incorporeal God and to serve the cause of our salvation. And such a Virgin was found: the Virgin purest of all purity, immeasurably more immaculate than any rational creature, holiest of all holiness, the Most Pure and Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the offspring of the holy and righteous God-parents Joachim and Anna, the fruit of her parents' prayers and fasts, the daughter of a royal and high-priestly lineage. She was found in a holy place, in the Temple of Solomon, she who was herself to be the living Church of God. Within the temple, in the sanctuary called the Holy of Holies, was found She who was to bear the most holy Word of all the saints (From the Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos). There, from the height of the glory of His Kingdom, the Lord looked upon the humility of His handmaid and chose Her, preselected from all generations, to be the Mother of His Eternal Word.

From the trustworthy accounts of the saints we learn that, even before the Archangel's Annunciation, the incarnation of God the Word from her had been mysteriously foretold to Her. Living in the temple for about twelve years, the Most Pure Virgin occupied Herself not only with unceasing God-minded prayer and daily handiwork, but also with reading the Divine Books, learning in the law of the Lord day and

night. Saint Epiphanius and Saint Ambrose write of Her that She was distinguished by an extraordinary mind, loved learning, and was diligent in reading the Divine Scripture. The church historian George Cedrenus[1] relates of Her that, while still during the lifetime of Her parents, She had thoroughly studied the Hebrew books. Often reading in the prophecy of Isaiah the words, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel" (Is. 7:14), which means: God with us[2], She was kindled with a fervent love not only for the expected Messiah who was to come, but also for that Virgin who was destined to conceive and bear Him. In this She also pondered how great is the dignity of becoming the Mother of Emmanuel[3], the Son of God, and how ineffable is this mystery, that a Virgin should be a Mother. Knowing from the prophecies that the time of the Messiah's coming had drawn near, that the sceptre had already been taken from Judah and the weeks of Daniel were coming to an end, She believed that the Virgin foretold by Isaiah must already have been born into the world, and She often sighed from the depths of Her heart and prayed within Herself that God would grant Her to see this Virgin and, if it were possible, to be her humblest servant.

Once, when according to Her custom She was standing at midnight prayer and offering such fervent desires to God, suddenly a wondrous light shone upon Her from on high and illumined Her. From the midst of this light a voice was heard, saying to Her:

"Thou shalt bear My Son!"

The joy with which the Most Holy Virgin was filled cannot be expressed in words, nor the feeling with which She bowed down to the earth, offering to God her Creator Her thanksgiving. Thus the Lord "looked upon the humility of His handmaid" (Lk. 1:48). She who, out

1. George Cedrenus was a Byzantine writer of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Of his works, the most widely known is the *Synopsis historiarum*. This work embraces the history of the Hebrew and Roman peoples and of Byzantium, but it does not possess any especially great merits, since in places it is a retelling of other historical works, above all the chronicle of John Skylitzes and of George the Synkellos.

2. This prophecy is cited by St. Matthew the Evangelist (Mt. 1:23).

3. Emmanuel is the name ascribed to Jesus Christ by the Prophet Isaiah (Is. 7:14). In translation from the Hebrew, it means "God is with us."

of love for God, desired to serve as the pure Mother of the Messiah, was granted to be Herself His Mother and the Lady of every creature. This revelation came to Her in the twelfth year of Her life, two years before Her betrothal, and this mystery She revealed to no one until the Ascension of the Lord. After this revelation it became known to Her that in Her virginal womb a mystery of conception was to take place, and She awaited the time when the event of this mystery was to be accomplished.

When, according to the testimony of Saint Evodius[4], eleven years of the Most Holy Virgin's sojourn in the Temple of Solomon had been completed and the twelfth year had begun, and according to the testimony of George Cedrenus, She had reached the age of fourteen, the high priest and the priests began to instruct Her that, according to the lawful custom, She should move from the temple into a house and, like other maidens of Her age, marry. But She answered them that She had been given by Her parents to the one God from the swaddling-clothes, and had promised Him to keep Her virginity forever; therefore it was impossible for Her to join herself with a mortal man, and nothing in the world would compel Her to enter into marriage, since She had dedicated Her virginity to Her immortal God.

The high priests were astonished at the news of this vow, for there had not yet been on earth a single maiden who had promised God to keep her virginity forever, and She appeared in the world as the first in this regard. They began to consult among themselves as to how they should act. They did not wish that She should continue to live at the temple, did not even wish to let Her any longer into the Lord's temple beyond the inner veil, yet at the same time they did not dare to betroth to a husband a virgin who had vowed herself to God, and they were perplexed as to how to arrange Her celibate, virginal life in a manner pleasing to God so as not to provoke Him. They considered both to be a great sin: to compel to marriage a virgin who had vowed to God eternal virginity, and to keep in the "Holy of Holies" a virgin who had reached full age. Saint Gregory of Nyssa says of this: "While She was still in

4. St. Euod, one of the Seventy Apostles.

her young years the priests kept Her, as Samuel was kept in the temple; but when She reached full age, they took counsel among themselves as to what they should further do with Her, so as not to provoke God." The church historian Nicephorus Callistus[5] relates the same thing as follows:

"When the holy Virgin came of age, the priests took counsel together as to how to dispose of Her, so that they should not become offenders against Her holy body, fearing that they would commit the sin of sacrilege if they gave in marriage and subjected to the law of wedlock Her who had once and for all belonged to God alone; and at the same time they said that it was not fitting for a maiden of such an age to remain in the sanctuary, that the law did not allow this, and that it was unseemly and unbefitting to holiness. And so, approaching the ark of the covenant and offering fervent prayer, they received, as Blessed Jerome relates, an answer from the Lord that they should seek a worthy husband to whom the Virgin might be entrusted under the appearance and form of marriage for the keeping of her undefiled virginity. As to how to find such a husband, the counsel of the Lord was this: from the house and tribe of David to choose celibate men and to lay their rods on the altar—whose rod should blossom, to him the holy Virgin was to be entrusted. At that very time the feast of the Dedication of the Temple, instituted by the Maccabees, was come; the feast began on the 25th of November, and its leave-taking was on the 3rd of December. And there gathered then in the temple a multitude of people from the surrounding cities; men of the house of David, kinsmen of the Virgin Mary, also came to the feast. George Cedrenus relates that the hierarch, the great Zacharias, father of the Lord's Forerunner, having gathered twelve celibate men from the tribe of David, among whom was also the holy Joseph, a righteous man and already advanced in years, took their rods and laid them overnight on the altar, saying: 'O Lord God, show forth a man worthy to be betrothed to the Virgin!' In

5. Nicephorus Callistus, a church historian of the fourteenth century, was a monk of the Monastery of St. Sophia in Constantinople. His remarkable work is the *Ecclesiastical History* (in 18 books), which extends to the death of the Byzantine Emperor Phocas (611). Callistus died in 1350.

the morning, when the priests together with those twelve men entered the temple, the rod of Joseph was found to have blossomed, and upon it, as Jerome testifies, sat a dove that had descended from on high. Then all knew the good pleasure of God, that the Virgin should be entrusted for keeping to Joseph. Some think that the Most Holy Virgin, who in every way avoided betrothal and was greatly concerned for the purity of Her virginity, lest any affront be done to Her, also had a special revelation that She should not hesitate to go to Her kinsman and betrothed, Joseph, a righteous, God-pleasing and holy man, not for carnal conjugal union, but for the preservation and keeping of Her virginity arranged by providence from on high. When the betrothal had been completed, Saint Joseph took the Most Pure Virgin from the hands of the high priest in the temple of the Lord for a chaste and undefiled cohabitation, not impairing the flower of virginity. And Saint Joseph was only Her supposed husband, but in truth the chaste guardian of Her virginity and the servant of Her virginal life, filled with great holiness."

Living in the house of Her betrothed, the Most Holy Virgin did not change the former manner of life which She had had in the Holy of Holies. In nothing else did She occupy Herself except God-minded prayer, reading of the Divine books, and the customary women's handiwork. The house of Joseph was for Her as it were a house of prayer, from which She went out nowhere, but always remained in it in solitude, fasting and silence, speaking only with Her household, that is, with the daughters of Joseph.

George Cedrenus relates of Her: "Mary, in the house of Her betrothed, remained in fasting and avoided going out among the people, spending her time with the two daughters of Joseph; with them only she sometimes conversed, when this was necessary, and that briefly."

According to the testimony of St. Evodius, after Her four-month stay in the house of Joseph there came the hour of the incarnation of God the Word, the hour longed for from ages by the whole world, in which our salvation began. God sent one of the heavenly spirits who stand nearest to His throne, the Archangel Gabriel, with the announcement of a mystery hidden from the ages and unknown even to the Angels themselves: to announce to the Most Pure Virgin the wondrous

conception of the Son of God, surpassing all understanding and human nature. Of this annunciation St. Luke writes in the Gospel: "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God" (Lk. 1:26). It was the sixth month after the conception of St. John the Forerunner, and the same Angel who had announced to Zechariah the conception of John was sent to announce to the Most Pure Virgin the conception of Christ; and he was sent in the sixth month so that the Forerunner, six months old in his Mother's womb, might leap for joy on perceiving the coming of the Mother of the Lord. "The angel Gabriel was sent to a city of Galilee named Nazareth" (Lk. 1:26). Galilee was then a pagan country, although it was partly inhabited by Israelites, and therefore Scripture speaks of it as "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Is. 9:1). Among the Israelites, however, it was counted the last region and was despised, because it was settled by sinful and unbelieving inhabitants; therefore the Jews, disparaging it, said: "Does the Christ come out of Galilee?" (Jn. 7:41); "Search and see, for no prophet arises out of Galilee" (Jn. 7:52). Thus Nazareth, a city of Galilee, was reckoned by them the most insignificant, the most wretched and the lowest of cities, so that they said: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46).

But let us consider the good pleasure of God. Where did He will to have His Most Pure Mother? Not in the land of Judea, not in the holy and great city of Jerusalem, but in Galilee, regarded as sinful, in the wretched Nazareth: on the one hand to show that He came to earth for the sake of sinners—"I came," He said, "to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Lk. 5:32)—and to create for Himself from unbelieving pagans a faithful Church; on the other hand, that it might be plainly seen that He looks with mercy on the humble, the rejected and the abased, and not on the proud and the noble. For when God the Word willed to descend from heaven to sinners, He looked down from the height of His glory to see where there were more sinners, and in Judea He saw the people of Jerusalem, who considered themselves righteous and justified themselves before men, while the Galileans were despised by all and considered more sinful than all others. Thus, passing over the falsely holy Judea, the Lord descended into the falsely sinful Galilee, passing over also Jerusalem, that great, honored and

glorious city; He descended to Nazareth, a poor and despised little town, choosing for Himself in this world the last place and humbling Himself even to the form of a servant and a sinner.

Nazareth was small, but what great grace it was granted! All the other large cities of Israel, lifted up to heaven, could not attain this. In poor Nazareth—the Virgin, higher than all the holy Angels, in whose womb Christ God, whom nothing can contain, made [it] more spacious than the heavens. Here the Archangel Gabriel is sent, here the Holy Spirit overshadows, here God the Word becomes incarnate; for where there is humility, there the glory of God shines forth. The proud cities were not pleasing to Christ, but the humble are agreeable to Him. In the inglorious city of Nazareth Christ was conceived, and in the glorious city of Jerusalem He was crucified. In little Bethlehem He is born, and in great Jerusalem He is delivered to death. The Lord reveals Himself to the humble, and the proud drive Him from themselves.

St. Andrew of Crete, speaking of the sending of the Archangel to the Most Pure Virgin, says thus: "God commands one of His foremost Angels to announce the mystery, and by a sign of His majesty speaks as it were thus: 'Gabriel! Go to Nazareth, a city of Galilee: in it lives a maiden Virgin, Mary, betrothed to a husband named Joseph.' 'Go,' says the Lord, 'to Nazareth.' For what purpose? Because the Most High takes the most desirable beauty of virginity as a fragrant rose out of a thorny land. 'Go to Nazareth,' that the prophecy might be fulfilled: 'He shall be called a Nazarene' (Mt. 2:23). Who shall be called a Nazarene? He whom Nathanael will afterward call the Son of God and King of Israel. Gabriel is sent, to whom it was also commanded before to announce the divine mysteries, as is clearly said in the book of the prophet Daniel. 'Go to Nazareth, a city of Galilee,' says God to Gabriel, 'and, having come there, announce to the Virgin the joy which Eve once lost. Take care not to trouble Her; for this your greeting is a sign of joy and not of sorrow, of consolation and not of confusion. And can there be for the human race a joy higher than this: that human nature should be united with the divine nature, and by reason of this union in the One Person should become one with God! Can anything be more wonderful than to see God humbling Himself to the point of being borne in a wo-

man's womb? O astonishing miracle! God, to Whom heaven is the throne and earth the footstool of His feet [6], God, Whom the heavens cannot contain, Who is One with the Father and shares the throne of eternity, is contained in a virgin's womb! Can anything be more marvelous than to see God in the form of man, not separated at the same time from His Divinity, and to see human nature united with the nature of its Creator, so that God might appear as a perfect and complete man?'"

"Gabriel," St. Andrew of Crete continues, "having heard the divine announcement and received the command, confirmed by the sign of God, but surpassing his strength, was between fear and joy. Not considering himself worthy to fulfill the divine command, yet not daring to disobey it, he, obeying the voice of God, flew to the Virgin, and, having reached Nazareth, stopped at the entrance of the house of Joseph. Perplexed and reflecting within himself, he reasoned as it were thus: 'How shall I approach the fulfillment of God's command? Shall I enter at once in haste? But then I might disturb the Virgin's tranquility. Shall I enter more slowly?

But then the Virgin, perceiving my presence, may wish to hide Herself. Shall I knock at the door? But that is not fitting for Angels: for to the incorporeal nothing is closed and nothing bars entrance. Shall I open the door? But I can enter even through closed doors. Shall I call the Virgin by name? But that might frighten Her. I will rather enter quietly and greet Her with gentleness, as He who sent me has commanded. But what shall I begin to say to the Virgin? Shall I first announce to Her joy, or tell Her that God Himself is to be contained in Her, that the Holy Spirit will come upon Her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow Her? I will first announce to Her joy, and then declare the wondrous mystery. I will approach Her and joyfully sing the greeting: "Rejoice! Be glad! Be comforted!" These words will be the most fitting beginning of my conversation with the Virgin. Then She will not be frightened, and thoughts will not trouble Her. Therefore I will begin my annunciation thus: first I will bring Her the tidings

6. Cf. Mt. 5:34–35.

of joy and gladness; with such words one should greet Her as the Queen: for this is an event of joy, a time of gladness, a kingdom of peace, God's counsel of salvation, the beginning of consolation.'"

Do you see with what reverence the Archangel comes to the Virgin-Maiden, with how great a trembling respect he prepares to approach the Lady of the whole world, how beforehand he meditates on the joyful words of the annunciation with which he must address Her. It is fitting here also to direct our reverent attention to the fact that he found Her not outside the house and her chamber, not on the city streets amid the crowd and worldly conversation, not busied at home with worldly cares, but occupied in silence, prayer and the reading of books, as the iconic image of the Annunciation clearly shows, depicting the Virgin Mary with an open book placed before Her, as proof of Her unceasing occupation with the reading of the divine books and with contemplation of God. At the very time when the heavenly messenger appeared to the Virgin, She, as the God-wise Fathers of the Church believe, had in mind the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb" (Is. 7:14), and was pondering in what manner and when that strange and unusual conception and birth for a virgin's nature would be. Even earlier than this time, as was said above according to George Cedrenus, She had been informed by divine revelation that not some other maiden, but She Herself, would serve the accomplishment of the mystery and bear the desired Messiah. From this revelation She burned with a Seraphic love toward God and her Creator, and implored His mercy that He would quickly fulfill the divine promise and the prophecy of Isaiah, and with fervent longing She said to Herself: "When will that longed-for time come for Me, and when will my Creator, deigning to take human flesh from Me, descend from heaven and dwell in Me? When shall I attain that blessed bliss of becoming the Mother of my God? And until I attain this, my tears shall be my food day and night. For those who await so desired a thing, even a short time seems too long."

While the Most Pure Virgin was thus meditating, and in the secret of Her heart was raising God-contemplative prayer with a fervent, burning love to the Lord, suddenly the messenger, the Archangel Gab-

riel, quietly stood before Her. The same holy teacher, Andrew of Crete, writes of this thus:

"The Archangel Gabriel entered the house, and approaching the inner chamber in which the Virgin dwelt, drew quietly near the doors; and, passing within, began to converse with Her in a gentle voice. 'Rejoice,' he said, 'O Thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with Thee! He who was before Thee is now with Thee, and shortly shall proceed from Thee; He who is before all eternity is now to be under time.' O immeasurable love for mankind (exclaims St. Andrew)! O inscrutable mercy! The Archangel not only announces joy, but the joy of the Creator's dwelling in the Virgin. For his words, 'The Lord is with Thee!', plainly show the presence of the King, who, though He took human flesh from Her, did not in any way withdraw from His proper glory! Rejoice, O thou who art made glad; the Lord is with thee! Rejoice, most honourable instrument of the world, by which the sorrowful sentence that condemned the world to curse is changed into joy! A summons to blessedness! Rejoice, truly Blessed One! Rejoice, most excellent Virgin! Rejoice, beautiful temple of heavenly glory! Rejoice, sanctified chamber of the King! Rejoice, bridal chamber in which Christ was betrothed and joined to mankind! Blessed art Thou among women, Thou whom Isaiah foresaw with prophetic eyes and named the Prophetess, the Virgin, the Book sealed up! Truly blessed art Thou, named by Ezekiel the Daystar and the closed door through which the One God passed! Truly blessed art Thou, the One whom Daniel, the man of desires, saw as a mountain, and whom the wondrous Habakkuk called the shadowy mountain; and whom Thy royal forefather David prophetically sang of as the mountain of God, the fat mountain, the anointed mountain, the mountain in which God was pleased to dwell. Blessed art Thou among women, Thou whom Zechariah, beholder of the divine mysteries, foresaw as a golden lampstand adorned with seven lamps, signifying the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Truly reverent art Thou, who containest within Thyself, as it were, paradise and the garden of Eden, Christ, who, by His ineffable almighty power, proceeding from Thy womb as a fountain of living water, has watered with four Gospel streams the whole face of the earth!"

Hearing such a greeting from the Angel, the Virgin was troubled at his words and pondered: "What manner of greeting can this be?" She was troubled, but not afraid, for such a visitation was not wholly new, unexpected, or sudden. The appearance of the Angel could not frighten Her, for it was customary for Her to have friendly fellowship with Angels even during Her stay in the Holy of Holies, where, according to the testimony of St. Germanus, She received food daily from the hands of an Angel. But She was troubled with astonishment because the Angel had never before come to Her in such great heavenly glory, with such a joyful countenance and with words so full of gladness. She was troubled at the novelty of all this, especially at the Angel's words that he came with an unusual greeting, saying, "Blessed art thou among women" (Lk. 1:28), thereby placing Her, the Virgin, among women. She was troubled as one chaste, yet was not terrified as one courageous; and, as one endowed with the spirit of prudence and wisdom, She reasoned with Herself: "What manner of greeting is this? What does the Angel wish to say to Me by this greeting? Will he lead Me again into the Temple of the Lord, or has he brought Me some new food from heaven? Or will he announce some new mystery from God? Will he teach Me, who ponder much and cannot understand how 'a virgin shall conceive and bear a son' (Is. 7:14)? What will come of this greeting?" Then the Angel said to Her:

"Fear not, Mary! Do not doubt any longer concerning the Virgin foretold by Isaiah. Thou art that very Virgin who has found such grace as to conceive Emmanuel without seed and to bear Him in an ineffable manner, as He Himself knows. Thou hast found the grace of God by Thy many virtues, and especially by three most high ones: Thou hast found grace by Thy profound humility, for God gives His grace to the humble, He who says: 'Upon whom shall I look? Upon him that is humble and quiet' (Is. 66:2). Thou hast found grace by Thy virginal purity; for God, being purest by His nature, desires to be born of a Virgin who is pure and incorrupt. Thou hast found grace with God by Thy fervent love for Him, for the Lord said: 'I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me shall find grace' (Prov. 8:17). And since Thou hast loved and sought Him with all Thy heart, therefore Thou hast also

found grace with Him, and Thou shalt bear a Son, not a mere mortal, but a divine Son, the Son of the Most High, God of God, begotten before the ages of the Father without a mother, who is to proceed from Thee, the Virgin Mother, without a father. His name shall be wondrous and ineffable: Thou shalt name Him Jesus[7], which means Savior, for He shall save the whole world and shall reign, incomparably more gloriously than the forefather David and all the kings who were before from the house of Jacob. But His kingdom shall not be temporal but eternal, without end for endless ages." "How shall this be," asked Mary of the Angel, "since I do not know a man?"

The Most Pure Virgin believed the words of the Angel, for by the grace of God with which She was filled, She knew that She would bear the One announced, of which She had received tidings during Her stay in the Temple from God Himself; but it was unknown to Her only how this would come to pass, in what manner a Virgin who had not known a man could bear a child. Therefore She asked the Angel: "How shall this be?"

Reasoning upon this, St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks on Her behalf to the Angel thus: "O Angel! Tell Me the manner of the birth itself, and thou shalt find My heart ready for the fulfilment of the divine good pleasure: for I desire such a fruit for Myself, but without violation of virginity."

St. Ambrose reasons about the same thing thus: "She rightly asked the Angel: 'How shall this be?' (Lk. 1:34). For She, although She had read before that a Virgin would conceive, did not know in what manner this would come to pass. She indeed had read the prophetic word: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive,' but how she shall conceive, this only the Angel now declares to Her at the Annunciation."

And so the Angel reveals to the Virgin also the very manner of the conception: that this conception will not be according to human nature and the usual order, but supernatural, "for where God wills, the order of nature is overcome,"[8] that this conception will be by the action of the

7. Jesus (Greek Ἰησοῦς, "healer," from ιαω, "I heal"); in Hebrew, Yehoshua, "help of Jehovah," Savior.
8. From the Dogmatikon of the seventh tone.

Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon Thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow Thee" (Lk. 1:35).

"From Him thou shalt receive in thy womb, and He shall accomplish in Thee an unknown conception. He who could create Adam from lifeless earth, shall He not much more be able to produce a living Infant from a living Virgin? If it was possible for God to create a wife from the rib of Adam, shall He not much more be able to fashion a man in the womb of a maiden? The all-working Holy Spirit will bring it about that in Thy pure womb, O Most Holy Virgin, from Thy flesh, flesh is mysteriously formed for the incorporeal Son of God. Through Thee, a door sealed by purity and kept by virginity, the Lord shall pass, as a ray of sunlight passes through glass and crystal, sanctifying and illuminating Thee with His divine glory; so that Thou shalt be the true Mother of God, who bore perfect God and perfect man, and a Virgin incorrupt both before the Nativity, remaining such in the Nativity and after it: this the power of the Most High shall accomplish in Thee by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And that this is true, let it serve thee as a sign confirming it that behold Thy kinswoman Elisabeth, who from her youth was barren and is now advanced in years, has conceived a son, for so it pleases God, who makes the possible out of the impossible. For among men it seems impossible both that an incorrupt Virgin should conceive and bear without a husband, and that a barren and aged woman should conceive and bear; but with the almighty Creator all things are possible, for 'with God no word shall be void of power' (Lk. 1:37); at His command the barren old woman conceived, and Thou, O Virgin, shalt conceive."

Having heard this glad tidings from the Angel, the Most Pure One bowed before the will of Her Lord and, with the deepest humility, answered from a heart full of love for God: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Lk. 1:38). And in that very moment, by the action of the Holy Spirit, the ineffable conception was accomplished in Her holy womb, without carnal delight, but not without spiritual rapture. Then Her virginal heart was especially strongly melted by divine desire, and Her spirit burned with the flame of Seraphic love, and all Her mind, as if standing outside itself, was im-

mersed in God, ineffably delighting in His goodness. In this delight of Her spirit by perfect love for God and of Her mind by vision of God, the Son of God was conceived, and "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14) by the Incarnation."

The Angel, having fulfilled, by the command of God, his annunciation, and having reverently honoured with trembling worship Him who was being incarnate in the virginal womb, and the Virgin who contained in Herself God incarnate, departed from Her to the throne of the Lord of Hosts, glorifying with all the heavenly powers the mystery of God's Incarnation, in ineffable joy for ever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from of old: the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims grace. Wherefore let us also cry out with him to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

To thee, the Champion Leader, we thy servants, O Theotokos, as those delivered from evils, ascribe songs of victory and thanksgiving; but as thou hast invincible power, free us from all our afflictions, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, Bride unwedded!

* * *

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF MARCH

March 26

26 марта

New Calendar March 26 · Old Calendar April 8 (civil dates)

Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel[1]

Собор святого Архангела Гавриила

On the day after the Annunciation of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, the Church from of old, by the Jerusalem Typicon and the Typicon of the great monastery of St. Sabbas, appointed a special day and hymnody for the celebration of the Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel, honoring this joyful herald. And truly, he who served the mystery of our salvation, bringing the Most Immaculate Virgin the tidings of the incarnation of God the Word in her most pure womb, is worthy of special honor. If an esteemed ambassador of an earthly king, bringing the king's gracious word to some city, is received with special honor by all the citizens of that city, then how much more ought we to honor with a special celebration the most venerable ambassador of the Heavenly King, the greatest prince of the Angels, who came to all mankind with a most merciful message proclaiming our eternal salvation. And how great is this messenger, who first revealed his dignity to the holy Zacharias: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God" (Lk. 1:19)—that is, standing nearer than the other Angels to the throne of God. Just as in an earthly kingdom an official who is closest to the king and better acquainted with the king's secrets is incomparably higher than other officials who are farther from the king, so also in the Kingdom of Heaven the holy Angels who stand nearer before God and behold the mysteries of God more clearly shine with greater honor and glory than the other Angels of the lower ranks.

1. The feast in honour of the Archangel Gabriel is called the day of the "synaxis" because on this day Christians assemble together to glorify the holy Archangel Gabriel with sacred hymns.

Holy Scripture relates that seven Angels of the highest rank, the chief princes of the Angels, ever stand before the inaccessible glory of God. The Book of Tobit relates that the companion of the young Tobias declared that he was one of the seven holy Angels who stand before God. And St. John the Theologian, in the Book of Revelation, recalls these seven chief Angels, saying: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before His throne" (Rev. 1:4). Gabriel is numbered among these seven, second in number, and first after Michael. They are all enumerated by name thus: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Selaphiel, Jegudiel, Barachiel.

If anyone should ask why God did not send to the Most Pure Virgin the first in rank among His Angels, Michael, but Gabriel, who is second after him, let him know that these seven highest Angels are all equal in dignity, and Michael is first among them only in order of number. Each has his own particular ministry. Michael is the conqueror of adversaries; Gabriel is the herald of the mysteries of God; Raphael is the healer of human infirmities; Uriel, being the radiance of the Divine fire, is the enlightener of those in darkness; Selaphiel is the intercessor, ever praying to God for mankind and stirring mankind to prayer; Jegudiel glorifies God: his ministry is to strengthen those who labor in any work for the glory of God, and to intercede that they receive reward for their struggles; Barachiel is the dispenser of God's blessings and the intercessor who entreats God's benefactions for us.

Thus Michael was not sent with the good tidings to the Most Holy Virgin because his ministry is of another kind: to keep his sword ever drawn, to make war against the enemies and drive them away. Gabriel was sent because it is proper to his ministry to announce the mysteries of God. He foretold to the holy Prophet Daniel the deliverance of God's people from the Babylonian captivity and the time of the coming of the Messiah; he also foretold to the holy Zacharias the birth of John the Forerunner from a barren mother. He also instructed the holy Prophet Moses in the wilderness as he wrote the Book of Genesis, imparting to him God's revelations concerning the earliest generations and years, beginning from the creation of the world. Pious tradition bears witness

that he announced to the holy and righteous Joachim and Anna the conception of the Most Pure Theotokos, and was the Guardian Angel of the Most Immaculate Maiden from the very moment of her conception and birth, bringing her food in the Holy of Holies; therefore he also announced to her the conception of the Son of God. Moreover, Gabriel was sent with the good tidings because the subject of that message is contained in his very name. The name Gabriel means "the strength of God," and also "Man-God." Thus, by his very name the herald signifies that the mighty God, the Lord, becomes perfect man in the Virgin's womb—that is, He appears as perfect God and perfect man, perfect not in bodily age but in strength and understanding. Other infants, conceived in their mothers' wombs, understand nothing and possess no strength; but the Infant conceived in the virginal womb of the Most Blessed Mary possessed, from the very moment of His conception, ineffable understanding and invincible strength, and therefore, even in a small body, was a perfect man. Foreseeing this, the prophet says: "And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, he shall take the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria" (Is. 8:3–4). This means that the Infant, while yet unable to speak, would already possess great power and strength to conquer His enemies. The name Gabriel itself, meaning "Man-God, Mighty God," served as a foreshadowing of this. And this God, at the very time of Gabriel's annunciation, was conceived in the incorrupt Virgin's womb through the coming of the Holy Spirit. St. Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople, reasons thus concerning this: "The very name of the Angel is wondrous in its meaning, for he who announced the good tidings to the Virgin Mary is called Gabriel. By this name he foretold and prefigured the God-Man who was to come into the world. Gabriel means 'Mighty Man,' or 'Man-God'; it comes from the word Gavir, which means 'mighty' or 'God,' and these two words together signify 'Man-God.' Jeremiah foretold this of old, saying: 'The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth: a woman shall save a man' (Jer. 31:22). Thus, this messenger of God is exceedingly exalted both in the meaning of his name and in the nature

of his ministry, and yet more so by reason of that mystery, hidden from eternity and unknown even to the Angels, which God first disclosed to him and which he brought to the Most Pure Virgin. And the more magnificent this mystery of God's becoming man, the higher it is than the other mysteries which, through Gabriel, had previously been revealed to the holy prophets, the greater the honor he received from that time forth in the assembly of the Angels themselves, who honor him as the nearest beholder of the innermost and most hidden mysteries of God."

The teachers of the Church, especially Dionysius the Areopagite[2], agree that those seven highest Angels ever stand continually before God. Other Angels are sent on various ministries, but these, as being nearest to God, ever abide at the throne of God. They too are sent to proclaim the highest mysteries of God and to manifest the greater power of God, as the holy Apostle Paul says: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister?" (Heb. 1:14). But what manifestation of God's power is greater, and what mystery is higher, than the mystery of Christ's incarnation, unknown, incomprehensible, ineffable? Therefore, it was fitting that an Angel so great be sent to proclaim so great a mystery—one who continually stands before the throne of God and is the nearest beholder of God's mysteries, as was the holy Gabriel.

It is also worthy of note to which of the nine ranks of Angels, in the three hierarchies, the holy Gabriel belongs. Some think that he belongs to the third and lowest hierarchy, and is the chief of the middle rank between the Principalities and the Angels—that is, the Archangels, appointed to announce the great works of God. They think this partly because he is called an Archangel, and partly because, as St. Dionysius says, it is not the highest Angels who stand near the throne of God that are sent on ministries, but only the lower Angels appointed to this task. More trustworthy, however, is the opinion that the holy Gabriel belongs to the highest rank itself, that of the Seraphim, and is not sent on less important works of God's will, but only to announce the greatest mys-

2. Dionysius the Areopagite: a noble Athenian, a member of the Areopagus of Athens, converted to Christianity through the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul. Among the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite, especially notable are: "Περὶ τῆς οὐρανίας ἱεραρχίας" ("On the Celestial Hierarchy") and "Περὶ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱεραρχίας..." ("On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy").

teries of God, such as the mystery of God's incarnation. He is called an Archangel because of the joyful good tidings he brought to the Most Pure Virgin, by which he filled with joy not only her but every creature, both those below (on earth) and those above (in heaven), as St. John of Damascus sings: "For one common celebration shone forth for both, when the bodiless one brought thee joy"[3]. That the holy Gabriel must be reckoned among the rank of the Seraphim we learn from the fact that no other rank ascends nearer than the Seraphim to the throne of the inaccessible glory of God, according to the true testimony of St. Dionysius. By God's special ordering, every rank of Angels has its own place: some ranks are nearer, others farther away, and the rank of the Seraphim is nearest of all to God, as Isaiah says: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and round about Him stood the Seraphim, each having six wings" (Is. 6:1–2).

And since Saint Gabriel is one of the seven nearest Angels who stand before God, he must also belong to the order of the Seraphim, second among the Seraphim. In accordance with this, Saint Andrew of Crete calls him one of the foremost Angels, saying: "God commands one of the foremost Angels to announce the mystery. And if he was of the foremost, then certainly he was of the seven spirits who always stand before God; and if of the seven spirits, then of the Seraphim. For which of the Angels is higher than the Seraphim? Who is nearer to the throne of God than they? Therefore Gabriel is a Seraph, the highest in that order."

This is revealed also from the fact that for a great work of God it was fitting to send a great Angel. And since the incarnation of the Word was the greatest of the works of God, the highest of the Angels, Saint Gabriel, was sent to announce it, as Saint Gregory the Dialogist[4] writes about this: "For the fulfilment of this great service it was fitting that the highest of the Angels should appear, for he announces what is

3. Sedalen, Tone 3. (At the first kathisma on December 15, and on the Sunday of the Paralytic.–*Editors of "The Alphabet of Faith"*)

4. St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome, lived in the 6th century. The most remarkable of his writings is the "Regula pastoralis" ("Pastoral Rule"), which treats of what a pastor should be and how he should fulfil his duties. The name "Dialogist" was given to him for his work "Dialogues on the Lives of the Italian Fathers," where the narrative is conducted as it were by two persons.

incomparably higher than all. If once, to beguile Eve, the chief prince of darkness came, it was also fitting that to the Most Pure Virgin there should come, to announce the good tidings, the supreme prince of heavenly light; to Mary, who burned with Seraphic love for God, it was fitting that a Seraph should be sent."

Let us, then, diligently honour Gabriel as the first prince in the ranks of the Angels, as one of the seven Seraphim nearest to God, as the universal Archangel who announced salvation to the whole world; let us honour him with reverent worship and prayerful hymnody, joyfully celebrating his memory and giving him thanks for such great benefactions to the human race, which he both formerly and now bestows, ceaselessly praying for us to the incarnate God. By the prayers of the holy Archangel Gabriel may we all receive the forgiveness of sins!

Concerning the seven highest Angels mentioned here, it should be noted that only the names of four of them are given in Holy Scripture. Thus, in the Book of Daniel it is written that Saint Michael helps the Jews, who were then still pious worshippers of God (Dan. 10:13); in the epistle of the Apostle Jude it is said that he, disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, said to him: "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 1:9); John the Theologian, in his Revelation, writes that he fought with the serpent (that is, the devil) (Rev. 12:7); of Saint Gabriel it is known also from the Book of Daniel that he revealed to the prophet, in the future, the most secret mysteries of God (Dan. 8:16), and in the Gospel of Saint Luke it is said that Gabriel announced to Zechariah the conception of the Forerunner (of the Lord), and to the Most Pure Virgin Mary the incarnation of God the Word (Lk. 1). Of Saint Raphael it is mentioned in the Book of Tobit, where it is said that he protected the young Tobias from unforeseen dangers on the road, drove the demon away from the maiden Sarah, and restored sight to Tobit (Tob. 12:15). Of Saint Uriel it is written in the Third Book of Esdras that he proposed to Esdras that he weigh "the weight of fire" (3 Esd. 4:5).

Of the other three Angels, although they are not named by name in Holy Scripture, yet, according to the understanding of some God-minded interpreters of the Divine Scripture, it may be thought that

Salathiel is the Angel who appeared to Hagar in the wilderness when she was praying in deep sorrow; he said to her: "God has heard the voice of the lad (Gen. 21:17) and thy humble prayer." The name Jehudiel is ascribed to the Angel whom the Lord promised to send to the Israelites in the wilderness, to lead them into the promised land, bestowing thereby a reward on those who keep the commandments of God to the glory of the Lord (Ex. 23:22–23). Of Barachiel it is thought that he was among those three Angels who appeared to Abraham at the oak of Mamre, blessed Sarah by the opening of her womb from barrenness and the giving of a son, Isaac, and prefigured the Holy Trinity: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Gen. 18).

These saints, the seven highest Angels, of whom Michael is the first and Gabriel the second, have from of old, according to the pious understanding of the holy Church, been depicted in icons and honoured by the building of churches in their name. Concerning this, church history relates the following:

The impious emperor Diocletian[5], a cruel persecutor of Christianity, while building for himself in ancient Rome stone baths[6], commanded that a multitude of Christians be taken and sent to that work under a strict and merciless guard, which tormented and wore down the saints. There one could see several thousand holy sufferers at a time, who worked bathed in sweat and blood, and many of them were slain there by the sword and by various executions for Christ. Thus, by means of this grievous labour, a building was created so vast and beautiful, like royal palaces. When, however, after many years, the Hellenic impiety perished together with its kings, and Christianity, with the accession to the throne of Christian emperors, triumphed throughout the whole world, then the believers who lived in Rome, looking upon the beautiful baths of Diocletian, remembered that this building had been constructed by the hands of Christians, and, having cleansed it of pagan defilements, converted it into a Christian church in the name of the seven

5. Diocletian, Roman emperor, reigned from 284 to 305 and governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire, while the western half was governed by his friend Maximian.
6. Thermae: public baths, which in Rome were built with particular magnificence. At the baths there were also places for gymnastic exercises.

chief heavenly spirits, the Archangels and Archistrategi of the Angelic powers: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salathiel, Jehudiel and Barachiel.

Other cities began to imitate Rome, such as Naples in Campania[7] and Palermo in Sicily[8], where stone churches were likewise built in the name of these seven presiding Angels. Their images were painted on icon panels and rendered in mosaics on the walls of the churches, and each of them was distinguished from the others by special features which mystically represented their invisible service. The images of the Angels there were as follows: Saint Michael was depicted trampling Lucifer underfoot[9] and holding in his left hand a green palm branch, and in his right a spear, at the top of which was a white banner with a red cross woven upon it[10]; Saint Gabriel was depicted holding in his right hand a lantern with a candle lit within, and in his left a mirror of green jasper, with red spots in places[11]. Saint Raphael was depicted holding in his left hand a slightly raised vessel with medicinal remedies, and with his right leading the youth Tobias, who carries a fish caught in the river Tigris[12]. Saint Uriel was depicted holding against his breast, in his right hand, a bare sword, and in his left, lowered downward, a fiery flame[13]. Saint Salathiel was depicted with face and eyes bowed downward, and with hands pressed to his breast, as is the case with a man praying in tender devotion. Saint Jehudiel was depicted holding in his right hand a golden crown, and in his left a scourge of

7. Campania: a province in southern Italy. This province is notable in that bells for church use were first cast here, for which reason they are called in the Church Typikon "campanas" (after the name of the province).
8. Sicily: one of the large islands of the Mediterranean Sea.
9. Lucifer: "light-bearer," the day-star, the morning star. In a figurative sense this name is applied to the first fallen Angel, the devil.
10. The white banner adorning the spear of St. Archangel Michael signifies his holiness and purity, and the cross signifies that the bodiless powers wage war against the kingdom of darkness and gloom in the name of the cross and the name of Christ.
11. The mirror signifies that St. Archangel Gabriel is the messenger of God's providence for the salvation of the human race; the lantern with a candle signifies that the judgments of God are hidden until the time of their fulfilment, and after their fulfilment are comprehended only by those who steadfastly look into the mirror of the word of God and of their own conscience.
12. St. Raphael, according to the belief of the Church, petitions God for help and healing for all who suffer.
13. This signifies the especially strong zeal for God of this Archangel.

three black cords with three ends[14]. Saint Barachiel was depicted bearing on his breast, on his garment, white roses[15].

Troparion, Tone 4:

Archistrategus of the heavenly hosts, we unworthy ever pray thee that by thy prayers thou wouldst cover us with the shelter of the wings of thy immaterial glory, preserving us who fall down diligently and cry out: deliver us from calamities, for thou art the Commander of the Higher Powers.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Of the Most Bright, and Honourable, and All-working, Unnumbered and Terrible Trinity, thou art the glorious servant and intercessor, O Archistrategus; now ceaselessly intercede that we be delivered from all calamities and torments, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, protection of thy servants.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Sirmium

Страдание святого священномученика Иринея, епископа Сирмийского

In the reign of the impious Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian[16], during the cruel persecution they raised against Christians, the faithful, taking upon themselves various labours, eagerly accepted the sufferings laid upon them for Christ by the tormentors, looking to the eternal recompense. At this time, in Sirmium[17], a city of Pannonia[18], the bishop was a man of young years but perfect in the Orthodox faith and in the law of the Lord. His name was Irenaeus. For love of

14. By this is signified the reward from God for pious and holy people, and the punishment of sinners.
15. St. Barachiel appears as it were a forerunner of blessedness and unending peace in the Kingdom of Heaven.
16. In 284 the Roman Empire was divided into eastern and western: the first was governed by Diocletian, and the second by his friend Maximian; they reigned from 284 to 305.
17. Sirmium: an ancient city in Lower Pannonia, on the Sava. Its considerable ruins still exist near Mitrovica.
18. Pannonia: one of the significant regions of the Roman Empire south of the Danube.

Christ, enduring many persecutions, he was granted, for his confession of Christ, to receive the deserved crown of victory.

Seized in Sirmium by soldiers, Irenaeus was brought to Pannonia before the hegemon[19] Probus. Turning to him, Probus said:

– Obeying the royal laws, offer sacrifice to our gods.

The holy bishop Irenaeus answered:

– He who offers sacrifice to false gods, and not to the One true God, shall be destroyed from among his people.

The hegemon said again:

– The most merciful emperors have commanded all: either to offer sacrifice to the gods, or to be subjected to torments.

– I have been commanded, – the saint answered, – rather to accept the most grievous torments than, having rejected the true God, to offer sacrifice to demons.

The hegemon repeated once more:

– Either offer sacrifices to the gods, or I will at once command that you be tormented.

– I shall rejoice, – the saint answered, – if you do this to me, for then I too shall be a partaker of the sufferings of my Lord.

Then the hegemon immediately commanded the soldiers to subject the saint to torments. During the cruel torments the hegemon asked him:

– What say you, Irenaeus, – will you now offer sacrifice to the gods?

The saint answered to this:

– I offer sacrifice by the good confession of my God, to Whom I have always offered it.

The parents of the saint and all his household came, and seeing that he was being mercilessly tormented, embracing his feet, they entreated him to pity his youth and obey the royal commands. On one side his father and mother wept, on the other all his kin, friends and relatives loudly lamented over him, and all cried out with one voice:

– Spare, Irenaeus, the blooming beauty of your youth.

19. Hegemon (ἡγεμών): a provincial governor, a commander.

But the saint, seized by the higher desire for God and having before his spiritual gaze His commandment, answered them all:

– The words of my Lord Jesus Christ are these: "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 10:33). Know therefore, beloved, that neither by your entreaties, nor by royal threats, nor by any other means, will you be able to turn me away from God and from His law: with my whole mind I strive toward the hope of the heavenly[20] calling.

Probus, once more summoning the Blessed Irenaeus to himself, sought to persuade him, saying:

– Be moved at least by the tears of those who grieve for you, and abandon your madness, and, sparing your youth, offer sacrifice to the gods.

To this the saint replied:

– I shall spare myself for all eternity if I do not offer such a sacrifice.

Then the governor commanded that Irenaeus be led away to prison, until he should decide how to deal with him.

Meanwhile the saint, remaining in prison for many days, was stricken by various illnesses from the burden of his confinement. But one night at midnight the provincial governor Probus ordered him brought before him again, and said to him:

– These torments which you have been made to suffer for a long time are now enough. Come forward instead and offer sacrifice to our gods.

– If you have decided what to do with me, – answered the holy Irenaeus, – then do it quickly, without delay. Know that I remain in the same confession of the name of Christ in which I have been until now; I am now and shall remain firm and unchanging to the end.

Then the governor, in anger, ordered that he be beaten with rods for a long time. And he, amid his torments, cried out:

20. Heavenly (górniy): higher, celestial (Ezek. 41:7; Col. 3:3).

– I have a God, whom from my earliest years I have learned to honor: to Him I bow down, to Him I offer sacrifice; but to handmade gods I cannot bow down.

– Be content already with the torments which you have taken upon yourself, – Probus said to him; – do not desire death.

The saint answered:

– Nor shall I die, for life belongs to me, and the sufferings which you inflict upon me for the name of my Lord Jesus Christ I do not feel. I shall tell you even much more: through them I hope to receive not death, but eternal life.

– Do you have a wife? – asked Probus.

The saint answered that he had none. Then Probus asked further:

– Do you have parents?

– I have none, – answered the saint. Probus asked again:

– Do you have sons or daughters?

The saint answered to this also that he had none.

– Who then, – asked Probus, – were those who wept and lamented for you at the trial?

The holy Irenaeus answered:

– I fulfill the commandments of my Lord Jesus Christ, who said: if anyone does not forsake his parents and renounce all his possessions, he "cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26), and "he that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt. 10:37). Therefore, whoever truly loves God and places his hope in Him alone despises earthly vanity, and acknowledges no one as his father except God.

– But I have heard, – said Probus, – that you have sons: therefore, at least for love of them, offer sacrifice to the gods, so that they not destroy in you their father.

The holy Irenaeus answered:

– My sons have God as their Father, the God whom I too have as my Father and to whom I bow down, for He can save both them and me. Therefore we truly and perfectly hope in Him, and have entrusted our souls to Him, that we might not perish. Do then what your kings have commanded you.

– Spare yourself and your parents, – Probus urged, – offer sacrifice to the gods and submit to the royal decrees, or else by various torments I shall deliver you to destruction.

– I have already told you, – said Irenaeus, – that you may do with me whatever you wish, for you know well that I will never offer sacrifice to your unclean gods. And behold how great a patience my Lord Jesus Christ has given me against your and the devil's snares, through which he has prepared torments for the holy servants of God.

– Behold, I shall pronounce a sentence of death upon you if you do not offer sacrifice to the gods, – said Probus.

The holy Irenaeus answered:

– Thereby you will do me a kindness, for a sentence of death will bring me to eternal blessedness.

Then Probus pronounced upon the saint the following sentence of death:

– Irenaeus, who does not obey the imperial decrees, I command to be cast into the river.

To this the holy Irenaeus said:

– But I expected from you manifold and most cruel torments, so that you might learn how Christians, for the sake of faith in God, are accustomed to despise death. But since you have not condemned me to them at all, I rejoice that you have at least pronounced this sentence upon me.

The governor, provoked by such boldness of the blessed man, ordered his head struck off with the sword, and afterward his body cast into the river. The saint, as though receiving another victor's crown, having heard this answer, gave thanks to God, saying:

– I thank Thee, Lord Jesus, that Thou hast granted me such invincible patience in the confession of Thy holy name, that I may be made worthy to partake of Thy eternal glory.

While he was still speaking these words, he was led onto the bridge called "Artemis," built in honor of their unclean goddess Artemis[21], from which he was to be thrown down. There, taking off his garments

21. Artemis, otherwise Diana: a goddess who personified the moon and was regarded as the patroness of forests and of the hunt.

and raising his hands to heaven, the holy Irenaeus prayed with tenderness, saying:

– Lord Jesus Christ, who didst will to suffer for the salvation of the world! Let Thy heavens be opened to receive the soul of Thy faithful servant Irenaeus, who for Thy holy name has been taken to suffering from the Orthodox Church of Sirmium. I do not refuse to accept death. But I beseech, Lord, Thy ineffable mercy, that Thou keep and preserve the people of Thy Church of Sirmium from all befalling troubles and evils, and from visible and invisible enemies, and graciously establish them in Thy holy faith.

When the prayer was ended, the saint was beheaded with the sword and cast into the river called Sava. The holy Irenaeus, Bishop of Sirmium, was martyred on 26 March, during the governorship of Probus over Pannonia, in the reign over us of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Malchus

Житие преподобного отца нашего Малха

The Venerable Malchus in his youth was a tiller of the soil in the village of Maroni, situated thirty stadia[22] from Antioch in Syria[2144]. He was the only son of his parents, and therefore they, desiring that he, as their offspring, should be the heir of their family, pressed him to marry. But to all their urgings he answered only one thing:

– I desire rather to be a monk than a layman.

However much they pressed Malchus to marry – his father by various threats, his mother by tender entreaties – he did not obey his parents and at last secretly fled, leaving for God's sake his home, his parents and marriage. He made his way to a desert region lying between Imma and Viria. There he found a monastery whose monks lived a God-pleasing life. Surrendering himself to their guidance, Malchus re-

22. Stadion: a measure of distance, varying between 73 and 88 sazhens.

mained there to live and advanced in the ascetic labors of the monastic life, mortifying the passions of the flesh by toil and fasting.

After many years the thought came to him to go to his fatherland to console his mother, who at that time had been widowed, for he had heard that his father had died; and he intended to sell his hereditary estate and distribute the money obtained for it: part to the poor, part to monasteries, and to keep a little for his own needs.

Learning of this intention of Malchus, the abbot began to reproach him, persuading him that this was a diabolical temptation and the cunning of the ancient enemy of the human race, skillfully concealed under the guise of what seemed a good deed.

– This, – he said, – will be the very thing of which Scripture speaks: "The dog turneth to his own vomit" (2 Pet. 2:22). In a similar way many monks have been beguiled, for the devil never openly wages war with anyone.

As proof, the abbot brought to Malchus various accounts from the books, beginning with Adam and Eve, who were seduced by the devil with the hope of obtaining divine dignity and for this were deprived of Paradise. When the abbot was unable to persuade him, he fell at his knees, entreating him not to abandon his spiritual brotherhood, lest he destroy himself, and lest he who has put his hand to the plough look back (Lk. 9:62). Malchus, however, did not in the least obey the abbot and left the monastery.

Taking leave of Malchus, the abbot escorted him with tears, as though seeing him off to burial.

– I see, child, – such was the abbot's last word to Malchus, – that you have fallen under the power of Satan. About the cause of your separation from us I shall ask no more, nor do I accept your justifications. A sheep that has strayed beyond the fold at once becomes food for wolves[23].

Thus they parted, and Malchus went on his way.

Not far from that desert lay a great public road from Viria to Edessa[24]; on that road travelers were often attacked by Saracens[25]. For

23. See the Lord's parable of the good shepherd: Jn. 10:1–5.
24. Edessa: a city of Mesopotamia, 10 miles from the left bank of the river Euphrates.

this reason, travelers setting out on a journey gathered together into one company, so that in case of attack they might be able to resist and escape captivity. Malchus also joined such a company of travelers, which numbered up to seventy persons, among whom were several women. As they were going together along that road, suddenly, to their dismay, there appeared a multitude of half-naked Ishmaelites, armed as if for battle. Surrounding the travelers, they seized them all, every one, together with Malchus, and led them off into captivity. Then Malchus understood the vanity of his former intention and the deception of the enemy, and he repented that he had not heeded the admonition of the abbot, that he had separated himself from the spiritual brotherhood and joined the worldly company, and that together with the others he had fallen into the hands of the foreigners. But his repentance came too late: wishing first to inherit his parents' property, he had now himself become the property of the Saracens. When the captives were divided among the barbarians, the monk Malchus fell to an Arab together with a certain woman; the Arab seated them both upon a camel and set off swiftly with them on the road. Since the camel went very fast, Malchus and the woman seated upon it held tightly to one another so as not to fall, and so they continued their journey; their food on the way was undercooked meat and camel's milk.

Having completed a long journey through the Arabian desert and crossed a great river, the Saracens returned to their own country. The master brought his captives to his wife and commanded them, according to the Saracen custom, to bow down before his wife and children. Malchus, together with the female captive, had to bow his head, and he bowed before his mistress, who set Malchus to household labor: carrying water, sweeping refuse, and performing other most burdensome tasks. Thus Malchus labored for his disobedience to his father, the abbot, having entirely changed the appearance of a monk, going naked, according to the custom of that land, and, because of the heat of the sun, covering with clothing only those parts of the body that must be covered. Afterward he was commanded to tend sheep in the desert, and

25. Saracens: the inhabitants of Arabia. Originally this name designated a nomadic predatory tribe, and afterwards Christian writers transferred the name to all Arabs and Muslims in general.

here Malchus had but one comfort and consolation in his afflictions: he rarely saw his masters and fellow laborers, and, alone with the sheep, he recalled St. James (Gen. 30:36) and Moses (Ex. 3:1), who also had once tended flocks in the desert. He fed on cheese and milk, and while tending the sheep he prayed diligently, chanting the psalms he had learned in the monastery, and in this he found consolation in his captivity, thanking God that the monastic life which he had forfeited in his homeland he had now found again in the desert. But the cunning of the devil is so subtle in every place that it cannot be imagined: for even there, in such a manner of life, Malchus was found by his malicious enemy.

The Saracen, seeing that his slave Malchus served him in all things diligently and faithfully, and that his livestock continually multiplied, pondered what reward to give him for his faithful service, and resolved to give Malchus in marriage the very captive woman who had been brought with him on the same camel. Calling Malchus, he began to speak to him about her, that he should take her to himself as his wife. But Malchus resisted and said that he was a Christian, and that by Christian law one may not enter into marriage with a wife whose husband is living, for the husband of that woman had been led away captive by another Saracen. Then the Saracen fell into a rage and, drawing his sword, wished to kill Malchus; and if Malchus had not hastened, as a sign of his consent, to embrace the neck of that woman, his master would have shed his blood on that very spot.

When night came, the monk took that woman with him into his cave. About what took place there between them, the blessed Malchus himself afterward related the following:

"Instead of joy, sorrow overcame me, and instead of consolation, anguish. We loathed one another and dared not say anything to each other. Then I fully came to know the whole burden of my captivity, and I began to grieve over my monastic life, so unexpectedly ruined. Did I come to this, wretch that I am!" I said, weeping. "Have my sins brought me to this, that in old age I should now lose my virginity and become the husband of another's wife? What profit has it been to me that I left house, parents, and marriage, all in my youth for God's sake, if I now

do what I scorned from the very beginning? Is it not for this that I now suffer all this, that, living once in the monastery, I desired to return again to my homeland? What shall we do, O my soul? Shall we perish or prevail? Shall we wait for the grace-bestowing hand of God, or shall we kill ourselves with our own sword? Return your sword within yourself, O soul! We must fear your death more than the death of the body, for even for chaste virginity there is its own martyrdom. Therefore let me rather lie here in this desert as a martyr, dead, without burial, and let me myself be my own tormentor and martyr!"

With these words I rose from the ground, drew from its sheath the sword which gleamed in the darkness, and, turning its sharp end toward my breast, said to the woman:

"Live on, woman! And better that I be a dead martyr to you than a living husband." But she fell at my feet, crying out to me:

"By our Lord Jesus Christ and by this grievous hour I beseech and entreat you not to shed your blood for the sake of my life. If you wish to die, then first turn the sword upon me and thrust it into me, and having first killed me, then kill yourself, so that in this way we may be joined to one another; for I have already resolved in my soul that, even should my husband be returned to me, I will preserve until my death the purity which I have learned in this captivity, and I desire rather to die than to violate it. Is it not because you wish not to be united with me that you want to die? But I too would wish to die, if you wished this. So let me be for you a wife in chastity, and let there be between us a spiritual, not a bodily, communion, so that our masters will consider you my husband, while Christ will know that you are my spiritual brother. Then our masters will trust us, thinking that we remain in carnal wedlock, if they see love between us."

"I was struck with awe" (said St. Malchus) "and marveled at such chastity of this woman, and I loved her, and we made a covenant to dwell together in chastity. But I never looked upon her body, not even touched her with my hand, fearing that in our shared, harmonious life with her I would lose my virginity, which I had kept from the very beginning against the fierce battle raised against me by the flesh." (Thus far the words of the blessed Malchus.)

In such a spiritual marriage the Venerable Malchus lived with that chaste woman for a long time. They gained the goodwill of their masters, so that they had no thought of flight at all. Sometimes Malchus was away from his master's house for a whole month, as a faithful and diligent shepherd of his flock in the desert.

Once, after a long time had passed since his capture, the Venerable Malchus was alone in the desert, and seeing no one but heaven and earth, he began in his solitude to recall his former life together with the monks in the monastery, and especially his father the hegumen, by whom he had been taught the Divine Scripture and the monastic life. He began to ponder his words, by which he had been admonished not to depart from the monastery. As he remembered and reflected on this, Malchus noticed before him a multitude of ants. Moving within a small, confined space, they carried burdens heavier than themselves: some carried seeds, others carried earth from within the anthills, building for themselves a certain shelter from the rain; others, preparing food for the winter, crushed grains with their mandibles; still others carried out the corpses of their dead. And most wonderful of all: with so great a multitude of ants, as they crawled out and crawled back into the anthills, they did not hinder one another, did not block or crowd one another; on the contrary, if they saw that any one of them was carrying too great a load, others at once helped him. Seeing this, Malchus recalled the words of Solomon: "Go to the ant, O sluggard, consider her ways... she gathers her food in the harvest" (Prov. 6:6–8). Moreover, it came to his mind that his life in the monastery was like an anthill, where all work together and no one has anything of his own, but everything is held in common; and he began to grieve deeply over his captivity, with heartfelt sighs, desiring to see his monastery again and to live in his former cell. When he returned to the estate of his master and was going toward his hut, his wife met him, and seeing him with a sorrowful and troubled face, she asked:

"Why are you so sad?"

Malchus told her of his thoughts. She began to urge him to flee, and at the same time she asked that he not leave her, but take her with him and afterward give her to some women's monastery. After a long con-

sultation about this, they began to prepare for flight, whispering to one another and wavering in their thoughts between feelings of hope and fear.

In the flock that Malchus tended were two large goats. Having killed them, he made two waterskins from their hides and prepared dried meat for the journey. Then one day, late in the evening, placing their hope in God, he and his sister went out of the house and hastened on their way. When they reached a great river, nine stadia from the Saracen's dwelling, they inflated the skins, tied them tightly, sat upon them, and floated down the river, steering with their feet as with oars, until they crossed to the other side. The meat they had taken for the journey became wet in the water and sank, leaving them with only a very little, barely enough to last three days. Having quenched their thirst sufficiently with water from the river, so that they would not thirst during the flight before them, they set out, hastening on swiftly, more by night than by day, partly for fear of the Saracens, and partly because of the sun's heat, which blazed there with great intensity. Sometimes, however, they traveled by day, though scorched by the heat, and often looked back, fearing lest their master should pursue them.

On the third day, when Malchus and the woman called his wife turned to look back along their way, they saw two Saracens in the distance, hastening after them on two camels. At once they understood that their master was pursuing them along the tracks they had left in the sand. They were seized with great fear and turned pale, expecting to be killed by the Saracen. At that moment, by God's providence, they noticed a deep cave to their right, ran into it, and stood on the left near its entrance, without going farther inside, for they feared that, having escaped death, they might encounter it again; wild beasts or snakes, scorpions, and other venomous creatures commonly dwelt in such caves. And so, fearing death from either side—from their pursuing master and from the creatures hidden in the cave—they stood in terror, as though already dead. Yet they also thought: "If God helps us, poor wretches, we shall escape death; but if God does not stoop to us sinners, this cave will be our tomb."

Meanwhile, the Saracen reached the cave with his servant. Having tied the camels together, he stopped before the cave's entrance with his sword drawn, and sent his servant to bring Malchus and his companion out of the cave, for he himself wished to kill them. When the servant entered the cave to a distance of three or four cubits,[26] he passed by them, since one entering from the sunlight into the shadow could not see those standing nearby; and they saw the servant's back. The servant, however, cried out loudly, with fierce threats:

"Come out, villains, come out to be killed! Why do you delay? Come out; your master is waiting for you."

While he was crying out thus, suddenly a lioness sprang from the depths of the cave, seized him by the throat, killed him, and dragged him into her den. O most good Lord! How great is Thy providence toward Thy servants, and how swift Thy help in their utmost distress! Malchus and his wife saw this, and great joy took the place of fear, for they saw one of their enemies perish, not knowing of the other who threatened them at the cave's entrance. The Saracen, seeing that his servant lingered in the cave and hearing his voice no longer, thought that the two were resisting him alone. Unable in his rage to wait any longer, he rushed into the cave as he was, sword drawn, snarling fiercely with anger like a beast. But the lioness, hearing his voice, sprang out to meet him; and when he reached the fugitives, she leapt upon him and killed him, dragging him past them into her den.

Seeing such wondrous and unexpected help and protection from God, Venerable Malchus and that blessed woman gave thanks to God for His exceeding great mercy. Yet even after this joyful event, fear did not leave them, for they thought the lioness would kill them too; nevertheless, they would rather perish by the beast than fall into the hands of inhuman men. The lioness, taking her cub in her teeth, went out of the cave. Malchus and the woman called his wife stood for a long time in silence; but when they saw that the lioness did not return, they came out of the cave as the day was already drawing toward sunset. Seeing the camels standing nearby with provisions of food and water, they

26. *Lakot* (cubit): a measure from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. The biblical cubit varies between 10.5 and 13 vershoks.

began to eat and drink. Then, refreshed and strengthened, they mounted the camels and joyfully set out, giving thanks to God. After ten days they had passed through that wilderness and drawn near to the Greek-Roman troops. They told the commander of the regiment all that had happened to them, and he sent them to Sabinus, the voivode of Mesopotamia. The voivode bought their camels and, having sent them on their way with goodwill, dispatched them to their homeland.

When he returned to his homeland, Malchus gave that blessed woman and his spiritual sister to a women's monastery, while he himself returned to the monastery from which he had once departed. He did not find his abbot and spiritual guide alive. Then he told the brethren all that had happened to him and settled in the monastery permanently, exhorting the other monks never to disobey the abbot or leave the monastery. Having spent the rest of his life in a manner pleasing to God, Malchus reposed in the Lord, leaving behind an example of chastity, so that later generations might know that virgin purity is overcome neither by the sword, nor by the wilderness, nor by wild beasts; for one who has given himself to Christ may die in body, but cannot be conquered in spirit, being strengthened by Christ God Himself, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the 26 Gothic Martyrs[27]

Память 26 мучеников Готских

These holy Martyrs suffered under the Gothic king Ungerich, during the reigns of the Roman emperors Julian, Valentinian, and Gratian.[28] At that time, while they, being Christians, were celebrating divine services and glorifying God in their churches, Ungerich sent his servants, who, at his command, set the churches on fire and burned all who were inside them, 308 in number. After this, whenever

27. The land of the Goths extended from the lower Vistula to the Black Sea. The Goths lived chiefly along the river Danube in present-day Romania. Afterwards they spread over almost the whole of Europe.

28. Julian reigned from 361 to 363, Valentinian from 364 to 375, and Gratian from 375 to 383, so that the reign of these three emperors embraces a period of about 20 years.

they encountered a Christian carrying an offering to the church, they seized him and questioned him; and if he confessed his faith in Christ, they cast him into the fire at once. Thus, instead of offerings, the bodies of Christians were offered to Christ. The bodies of these holy Martyrs were gathered by the wife of another Gothic king, named Alla, a Goth by birth and an Orthodox Christian.[29] Having handed over the rule to her son[30] and taken priests with her, she moved from place to place until she settled with her daughter Duklida in the land of Syria.[31] After this she summoned her son, and when he came, she returned with him to Gothia, while giving the relics of the saints to her daughter. In the reign of Valentinian and Theodosius, Duklida came to Cyzicus[32] and gave a portion of the relics there for the consecration of a church. Having returned to Gothia, St. Alla was stoned to death together with Agathon, and thus met a martyr's end; Duklida reposed peacefully several years after her mother's death.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Basil the New

Житие преподобного отца нашего Василия Нового

In the tenth year of the reign of the pious Greek emperors, Leo the Wise[33] and his brother Alexander,[34] sons of the Emperor Basil the Macedonian,[35] certain magistriani[36] were returning from the land of Asia,[37] to which they had been sent by imperial command. As they passed by a desolate mountain, they saw a man walking upon it, clad in a poor ragged garment and of a most unusual, even fearsome, appear-

29. Among the Goths the Arian heresy was widely spread to a considerable degree.
30. The son of St. Alla bore the name Arimerius.
31. The land of Syria, or Syria, lay in Asia, to the north of Palestine. It is supposed that the "Syrian land" here refers to the Roman land, probably the present-day Romania.
32. Under this name a city in northern Moesia in Asia Minor is known, but the same name was also applied to a district in what is now the Crimea, where there was a Gothic principality.
33. Emperor Leo VI the Wise occupied the Byzantine throne from 886 to 911.
34. Emperor Alexander was co-ruler with Leo the Wise and reigned from 866 to 912.
35. Basil I the Macedonian was Byzantine emperor from 867 to 886.
36. Magistrianoi were court officials who held the most important posts at the imperial court. By rank they stood above the patricians.
37. The Asian land, or Asia, was the name given to the present-day Asia Minor peninsula.

ance, for he had grown up in the wilderness, far from people. Astonished at his strange appearance, the magistriani pursued and seized him. Thinking him to be a spy, though in truth he was the blessed Basil, whose life we now relate, they bound this wondrous man and took him with them to the imperial city of Constantinople.

When they appeared before the emperors, the magistriani told them of the man they had captured on the road. Then Emperor Leo, having seen the saint, ordered him to be interrogated and entrusted a certain patrician[38] named Samon, an Agarenian[39] by birth, with investigating who he was, where he came from, and what his name was.

Samon brought the man of God into his house. Then, taking his seat upon the tribunal, surrounded by counselors and with the dignity befitting his rank, he ordered the blessed Basil to be brought before him. When the saint appeared before the patrician, he showed him neither honor nor reverence. The patrician asked him:

"Who are you, where are you from, and what is your name?"

But the blessed man "gave him no answer" (Jn. 19:9)[40] and stood silently, looking gently upon his judge.

Then Samon asked him again:

"Tell us, where are you from?"

The saint replied:

"It would be better for you to tell me who you are and where you are from."

And Samon said to him:

"We are asking you, and you must answer us. You should not ask who I am. Yet if you are so eager to know who I am, I will tell you. I am Samon, patrician and chief of the cubicularii[41] of the emperors who

38. The title of patrician originally belonged only to the children of senators, who were called fathers, in Latin *patres*. Later this name came to be applied to all persons of noble Roman origin. But Emperor Constantine the Great made the title of patrician a personal dignity, bestowed upon the highest officials, which did not pass by inheritance.

39. Agarenes was the name given to the Arabian Bedouins, a predatory tribe wandering through Arabia. They were so called because, according to Hebrew tradition, they were descendants of Ishmael, son of Hagar, Abraham's bondwoman.

40. The expression is taken from the Gospel of John (Jn. 19:9), where it refers to the Lord Jesus, who gave no answer to Pilate's question: "Whence art thou?"

now reign. Now tell me: who are you, where are you from, and what do you do?"

The blessed man answered:

"I am one of the strangers and sojourners who dwell upon the earth."

"Then it is true what they say about you—that you are a spy who has come to inspect the Greek land?" Samon asked the saint.

The Venerable Father answered him nothing. Many of those present at the interrogation urged him to reply, saying:

"Who are you?"

But the saint answered them nothing either.

Then Samon commanded that iron rods, dried ox sinews, and other instruments of torture, fearsome to behold, be brought forth; and all of these were laid out before the Saint to strike terror into him, in the hope that he would be frightened by the torments and tell about himself. But the Venerable One, seeing all these dreadful instruments, did not utter a single word. Then the patrician commanded that Blessed Basil be laid upon the ground and beaten with ox sinews, while he questioned him:

"Who are you?"

Enduring the cruel blows, the Venerable One did not break his silence and patiently bore all the tortures. And his tormentors beat him until it seemed to them that he must soon die; therefore, taking the Saint, who could not move, like a log, they carried him and cast him into prison.

On the next day the patrician Samon, that untamable beast, seated himself upon the tribunal and commanded that the prisoner be brought before him again. Those sent for Blessed Basil found him entirely well and unharmed, standing outside the prison and awaiting them, although the doors of the prison remained locked. Astonished, they began to question the Saint:

"Tell us how you came out of the prison, whose doors are securely locked."

41. *Kubikularios* (cubicularius) was a chamberlain or bedchamber attendant at the imperial court, one of the important court ranks.

But the Blessed One gave no answer and went silently with them, to stand before the face of the patrician.

Then some of those sent for Saint Basil went ahead and told Samon everything that had happened: how they had found the Blessed One outside the prison, although its locks were intact. Samon and all who were with him were amazed at their account and did not believe them. Some even said of the Saint that he was a sorcerer and had worked such a miracle by the power of magic. Meanwhile the Blessed One was brought before the patrician Samon, and Samon again began to question him insistently and at length, trying in every way to compel him to say who he was and whence he came. But the Venerable One continued to keep silence and gave the patrician no answer. Samon was greatly angered with the Saint and commanded that he again be stretched upon the ground and mercilessly beaten with rods until he told about himself and his origin. And they beat the Saint for a long time, so that they broke six staves, but could not force a confession from him: the Blessed Basil bravely endured all the torments, not breaking his silence by a single word, so that all marveled at his inexpressible patience and silence. The patrician Samon then said:

"I know that this spy hopes afterward to boast and say that he overcame them by silence. But I am ready to swear by the life of our sovereigns that I will not allow him to glory in it and to mock us." Having said this, Samon commanded that the Venerable One be led back to prison and, throughout the following week, be beaten, laying on three hundred blows with whips and three hundred with rods each day. Blessed Basil patiently bore all the torments, concealing in secret his valiant ascetic labors and not wishing to tell others about his ascetic life. For from his youth he had become a monk and settled in the desert, where he wandered for many years, spending his life in harsh desert ascetic labors, nourished only by herbs and roots, walking always barefoot and clothed in poor rags. Of such a virtuous life full of labors the Saint did not wish to tell anyone, and therefore he answered all the questions of the patrician Samon about his manner of life with silence, remembering the command of the Heavenly Lord, who said: "Let not your left hand know what your right hand does" (Mt. 6:3). For whoever

displays his good deeds before men receives his reward on earth in the praise of men, and is deprived of eternal and heavenly glory; but whoever desires to attain the eternal reward must conceal his virtue from men, and if, not appreciated by men, he is subjected by them to insults and even to tortures, then in such a case too he must silently and patiently bear the malice of men; then he will truly deserve the name of martyr. All this Venerable Basil knew, and desiring to receive glory not from men but from God, he patiently bore the cruel sufferings inflicted upon him, not wishing to reveal his secret. After a week, during which the Saint was daily subjected to blows, the patrician Samon, seeing that the Blessed One remained unshaken and did not reveal his name and origin, again seated himself upon the tribunal and commanded that the Venerable One be brought before him. And when he stood before him, Samon looked at him angrily and said:

"Most impious of men, how long will you hide from us? Will you tell me who you are and whence you come?" In reply to this the Saint said:

"Those who, like you, secretly do the deeds of Sodom[42] should rightly be called most impious."

Under such a rebuke from the Venerable One, Samon was confounded, feeling great shame and disgrace before all who were there; then, inflamed with uncontrollable fury and anger against the Saint, he commanded that thongs be brought, that the Venerable One's hands be bound behind him, that his ribs be tightly bound with cords, that his right leg be drawn up to them, and that he be hung head downward from a crossbeam in an enclosed chamber. The door of that chamber he locked and sealed with his own signet ring, and he left the Venerable One hanging until he should give his name and origin. All who were there sympathized in their hearts with Blessed Basil and murmured against Samon, calling him wretched and reproaching him for the torments he inflicted upon an innocent man of God.

For three days and three nights Saint Basil hung from the crossbeam. On the fourth day the impious tormentor Samon opened the door

42. "Sodomitic deeds" were various unnatural vices. They are called Sodomitic after the well-known city of Sodom (burned and destroyed by fire from heaven), because these vices were especially widespread in that city.

of the chamber in which the martyr was, and, coming to him, saw that his face was calm and bright, as though he had experienced no torment at all. The astonished patrician asked the Blessed One:

"Why do you still not tell me who you are and whence you come? Have not the sufferings taught you?"

The Venerable One again made him no answer. Then the tormentor commanded that he be taken down and freed from the thongs and cords with which he had been bound. Once released from all his bonds, the Saint, by the grace of Christ, was instantly healed of all his wounds and injuries and became entirely whole. All who saw this glorious miracle marveled and were perplexed. And the impious Samon, also struck by what had happened, cried out in his blindness:

"Did I not say that this man is a sorcerer and a magician? For despite all the torments which he rightly suffered at our hands, he remained whole and unharmed. But nevertheless I will soon destroy his magical power: summon to me the keeper of the wild beasts." And when he came, Samon said to him:

"Choose the fiercest lion and today do not give him his usual food, so that tomorrow morning he will be hungry; then we shall see whether this sorcerer can overcome the savage beast."

On the next morning a multitude of people gathered for the appointed spectacle. And there they released an enormous and fierce lion, roaring loudly from hunger; Blessed Basil was also brought there and thrown to the lion to be devoured. But the wild beast, seeing the Saint, trembled; then, approaching him, it lay down meekly at his feet and lay like a gentle lamb, so that all marveled and cried out in terror:

"Lord, have mercy!"

The Venerable One, bending over the lion lying at his feet, stroked it with his right hand, and then, taking it by the ear, led it out, crying aloud:

"Here is your lamb, here is the lamb!"

The impious foreigner Samon, however, was not brought to his senses by this wondrous miracle and would not acknowledge that the man he was tormenting was a holy servant of God. Still persisting in his fury against the Blessed One, and having exhausted all means to

force a confession from him, Samon commanded his servants to drown him in the sea by night. They did so. In the third watch of the night they placed the martyr in a boat and, sailing from the shore, cast him into the sea, and they themselves returned. But God, who keeps His saints, did not permit the Blessed One to perish in the depths of the sea. As soon as he was cast into the sea, two dolphins[43], by God's will, took the Venerable One upon their backs and carried him to the shore called Eudus, a suburb of Constantinople, where they set him down on dry land. At this the Saint's hands and feet were freed from the bonds with which they had been tied, and he rose unhindered to his feet and walked toward the city. But since the Golden Gate of the city[44], to which the Saint came, had not yet been opened, he sat down beside it, intending to rest a little.

At this time a man named John, afflicted with fever, came to the Golden Gate; groaning and trembling from the illness, he sat down near Saint Basil. The Blessed One took pity on him, laid his hands upon him, and, praying to the Lord, healed him. Feeling himself healed, that man fell at the feet of the Venerable One and began to beg him to go with him to his house. Saint Basil gladly fulfilled his request, although the one he healed was among the poorest and most insignificant citizens of Constantinople.

John had a wife named Helen. Together with her he received the Venerable One with love into his house; and when the time for dinner came, they offered him a meal, and all ate with gladness. At the table John told his wife how the Blessed One had healed him by calling upon the name of Christ, and she rejoiced greatly over such a guest. For she was a lover of Christ and a lover of strangers and passed her life in the fear of God; therefore she rejoiced that she had been granted to receive a servant of God into her house.

John and Helen began to beseech the Saint to tell them who he was and whence he came. But the Saint answered:

43. Dolphins are marine animals of the mammal family. They usually keep in schools and often follow ships. In antiquity the dolphin was one of the most beloved animals; many poetic tales and beliefs grew up about it, and it was often represented in sculpture.
44. The Golden Gates were the main gates of the city.

"Who I am and whence I come, it is not yet fitting to speak of. Later you shall learn this; but now let me go and pray at the monastery of the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands of the Most Holy Theotokos, which appeared of itself."

Having said this, he arose and, accompanied by John, went to pray at the monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos. When the prayer was ended, yielding to John's urgent entreaties, the saint returned to his house. There John and his companion again began to implore the blessed one, importunately pressing him to tell them about himself. Then St. Basil said:

"I am he whom the patrician Samon cast into the depths of the sea. My Lord Jesus Christ, Whom I have served from my youth, drew me from the depths in a manner known to Him alone and preserved me unharmed."

Thereupon the blessed one told them that his name was Basil, and related in order all that he had suffered at the hands of the impious and cruel tormentor Samon.

As they listened to the blessed Basil's account, John and Helen marvelled, and at the same time recalled all that they had previously heard about the saint; for the report of how Samon had tormented the Venerable one and could do him no harm had spread throughout the whole city. Then they began to implore the Venerable one to remain and live in their house—a request that was pleasing to the blessed Basil. John and Helen prepared a separate cell for him for prayer, and set a lamp in it; and there the saint began to offer his customary prayers to God.

Who can tell us of the Venerable one's labours in prayer, of how many tears he shed in his supplications to the Heavenly Master? Who could count all his prostrations? Who will tell us of his All-night Vigils, since he constantly spent his nights without sleep? Who can portray his virtuous life, so full of labours? Like an unshakable pillar, the Venerable one was steadfast in virtue; he was never angered, but was meek as Moses or David, gentle and humble as James[45], and more merciful than Abraham. For Abraham gave alms from his many riches, whereas

the blessed Basil did good to the poor from his own poverty, which he endured for the sake of the Lord God; and whatever Christ-loving people brought him, he immediately distributed to the needy.

While the Venerable Basil was dwelling with the Christ-loving John mentioned above, after a little time people began to come to him: some seeking spiritual benefit, while others brought the sick to him, that he might heal them. The Venerable one laid his hands upon the sick and prayed, healing them by the grace of Christ. In time the saint's name became renowned throughout the imperial city, and many came to him, not only from among the common people, but also from the distinguished citizens and nobles. Along with the gift of working miracles, the saint also had the gift of discernment, and perceived the secret deeds of all who came to him, both good and evil. Rebuking sinners in private, he led many to repentance. The Venerable one also foresaw the future and foretold it prophetically, as will be clearly seen from what follows.

In 911 the Byzantine emperor Leo the Wise reposed, and after him, in 912, his brother, Emperor Alexander, also died. After their deaths the kingdom was inherited by Leo's son Constantine, called Porphyrogenitus[46], together with his mother Zoe. Since the new emperor was still a young boy when he ascended the throne, the guardianship and government of the kingdom were entrusted to Nicholas, Patriarch of Constantinople[47], and to the curopalates[48] John, surnamed Goridas. They were the actual rulers of the kingdom until the young emperor should come of age.

Meanwhile, barbarians invaded the Greek lands; seizing province after province, they had already drawn near to Constantinople and

45. Jacob was the patriarch of the people of Israel. His meekness appeared especially in his relations with Laban, from whom he endured every kind of injury, being often deceived by him, and partly in his dealings with his brother Esau, whom, returning from Laban, he met with reverence as his elder.

46. Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (otherwise Purple-born) occupied the Byzantine throne from 912 to 959.

47. Patriarch Nicholas I occupied the Patriarchal See of Constantinople twice: the first time from 895 to 906, and the second time from 911 to 925.

48. *Kuropalates* was the commander of the palace guard. He was a fairly prominent dignitary at the court of the Byzantine emperors.

were laying waste the lands around it. There was no one who could muster an army, engage the barbarians threatening the capital, and halt their ravaging advance. The whole Greek kingdom was thrown into great confusion, and the people began loudly to murmur against Patriarch Nicholas, accusing him of insufficient care for the welfare of the kingdom entrusted to him. Then the patriarch, after consulting all the nobles, wrote a letter to Constantine Doukas, the commander of the East, calling upon him to come to Constantinople and share the sceptre with the young emperor, so that while Constantine Porphyrogenitus was being brought up in the imperial palace as a minor, Constantine Doukas, a mighty man and brave in battle, might take up arms against the enemies of the empire. For that man was indeed a most courageous and invincible warrior, greatly feared by all the foreign peoples who fought against him. By their repeated testimony, they had often seen fire issuing from Doukas's weapons and from his horse's nostrils—fire which rushed upon them, scorched and drove them away, so that it was impossible to stand against this commander, whom God Himself aided. Constantine Doukas himself did not conceal the grace of God bestowed upon him, and related the following about himself:

"Once, in my youth," he said, "as I slept, a most radiant Woman appeared before me, clothed in royal purple. Beside her was a fiery horse, and upon the horse was fiery armour. The Woman urged me to arm myself with that fiery armour and mount the horse. At first I was afraid and did not wish to comply with her request, but afterwards I obeyed. And when I had done what she urged me to do, she said: 'May all the enemies of God feel fear and trembling before you, and may the blasphemers of my Son melt like wax before your face.' Having said this, the radiant Woman departed from me."

Thus did that man speak of himself, he to whom the patriarch had sent a letter, calling him to the throne. When the patriarch's letter reached him, he began in every way to decline the honour offered him, considering himself unworthy of so high a dignity. But another letter came to him from the patriarch and the synclite[49], calling him to the

49. The *synkletos* was the whole body of the government, consisting of civil and military ranks.

throne. Then Constantine Doukas wrote back to them: "I ought not to make myself equal to my lord and God's anointed, the emperor, although he is young in years. Moreover, I fear that there may be some treachery in your proposal, and that you may wish to destroy me."

When the patriarch and all the nobles received this letter from him, they sent him a third, in which each of them separately wrote an oath, swearing by the Wood of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord that they called him to reign with the young emperor without any flattery or deceit, but sincerely and from the heart. Then Constantine Doukas, having believed their oath, set out for Constantinople with all his household, and was received with great honour by the nobles and all the inhabitants of the city. It was early morning when the commander entered the city: the sun had just risen and shone forth, when suddenly an ill omen appeared, foretelling that Constantine Doukas would die at the hand of a murderer. Though the sun shone in all its splendour, a light rain began to fall, and the drops falling to the earth had the appearance of blood.

Meanwhile, Patriarch Nicholas and his counsellors, learning of the solemn welcome that the whole people of Constantinople had given the renowned commander Constantine Doukas, changed their original intention and shut the gates of the imperial palace against him, unwilling to admit him to the emperor and his mother. Then Constantine Doukas pitched his tent in the square before the hippodrome[50], and many nobles and citizens began to come there daily, bowing before the renowned commander as their emperor and ruler.

Meanwhile, some nobles devoted to the new emperor, who knew the blessed Basil and held him in great affection, came to him one by one and asked:

"How will this affair end?"

The saint told them with tears that before three months had passed, a bloody death would overtake both the newly chosen emperor, Constantine Doukas, and all his adherents. As he foretold this outcome, the blessed one wept bitterly and inconsolably until he was exhausted.

50. The hippodrome was a racecourse for horses; a place where contests were held in horse racing and chariot racing.

After receiving this answer from the saint, the nobles who had questioned him shut themselves away in their houses and remained there without going out, fearfully awaiting the foretold end.

Two nobles also came again to St. Basil, intending to learn the future. They were two brothers of the same mother, both holding the rank of protospatharios[51]. Coming to the blessed one, they asked him:

"What will become of us if we support the newly chosen emperor and go to him at the hippodrome?"

"Do not go there, children!" the saint answered them with tears. "If you join him, one of you will be killed, beheaded with a sword, while the other will have his nose and ears cut off, and for all his life he will remain a laughing-stock to everyone who sees him."

But the brothers disregarded the saint's prophecy: they went to the hippodrome and joined the newly summoned emperor.

After two months Constantine Doukas, seeing that he had been deceived and mocked by the patriarch and the entire senate, began to consult with his partisans as to how he might secure the imperial throne to which he had been called. At this point the virtuous voivode did not wish to resort to violence. As a brave commander, to whom the whole army and a multitude of the people were attached, he could have broken through all the gates by force and ascended the imperial throne, or he could have surrounded the city walls with his army and allowed no provisions to enter, thereby compelling the patriarch and the entire senate, against their will, to acknowledge him as emperor and grant him access to the imperial throne. But being a pious and God-fearing man, Constantine did not wish anyone to suffer the calamities of famine on his account, nor did he desire to seek the throne by a bloody path. Therefore, placing all his hope in God, and still trusting the oath of the patriarch and the nobles, he commanded his partisans, having broken open just one gate, to go peacefully and without any weapons together with him into the imperial palace. The pious voivode said at that time:

"If we are received meekly, then we are doing well in attaining our goal without bloodshed and violence. But if they fall upon us and kill

51. *Protospatharios* was an important court rank. He also served as commander of a detachment of *spatharioi*, that is, court swordsmen.

us, then they will give answer before God, since they themselves have deceived us by their urgent entreaties and their oath, although we did not seek the dignity that has been offered to me."

Having said this, Constantine Doukas made his partisans swear that not one of them would dare to draw a sword from its scabbard or fit an arrow to his bow against those who attacked them, "so that not one drop of Christian blood," he added, "shall be shed on my account." Constantine's partisans promised with an oath to obey this command of their leader, and having broken open the bronze gates of the imperial palace (for otherwise it was impossible to enter its court), they went peacefully, without any weapons, toward the imperial palace under the leadership of this pious man Constantine Doukas, who was also unarmed.

While they were walking unarmed, approaching the imperial palace, archers deliberately stationed by the patriarch suddenly attacked them and, loosing a multitude of arrows, wounded many. Among the first to suffer was the valiant voivode Constantine Doukas himself, who was walking in front: he received a grievous wound in the side below his right arm. Groaning from the wound, Doukas fell to the ground. Seeing this, the palace guards, gathered in great numbers, rushed with drawn swords upon those entering peacefully and began to cut them down like stalks of plants. Thus they killed Constantine Doukas, his son, and many others. Those who fled they seized alive and immediately executed in various ways: some they cut in two, others they hanged on trees before the city gates, and from others they cut off noses and ears and severed their sinews. Thus there perished then with Constantine Doukas as many as three thousand men who were guilty of nothing. Together with the others there also suffered the two brothers who were protospatharii and who had come for counsel to the blessed Basil, and precisely as the Venerable had foretold: one of them was beheaded with a sword, and the nose and ears of the other were cut off.

When the bloodshed was finished, the soldiers cut off the heads of the slain Doukas and his son and carried them to Patriarch Nicholas and his counselors. The patriarch richly rewarded those who had slain Constantine and commanded that the head of the slain man be carried

on a spear throughout the city, for its mockery, and that the bodies of all the others who had suffered with him be cast into the sea.

Such lawless bloodshed took place then in Constantinople. And the city was defiled by the shedding of the blood of innocent men, which, like the blood of Abel[52], cried out to God from the earth. For not by the sword of alien enemies, but by the hand of co-religionists and like-minded kinsmen, former friends and brothers, did the mighty voivode Constantine Doukas, named emperor, perish, having become a victim of treachery. This warrior, renowned for his bravery, pleasing to God and beloved of the people, was slain.

But mocked and derided by the mighty of this world, Constantine Doukas was glorified by God: his righteous soul, and likewise the souls of all who had suffered with him, were carried by Angels into the heavenly mansions and placed in the bosom of Abraham. This is clearly witnessed by the following wondrous sign: while the bodies of Constantine's companions hung on the trees, stars were seen at night descending upon them and shining brightly over their heads until the sunrise. By this sign it was made manifest that all of them had suffered innocently, and that their souls, as a reward for martyrdom, had been established in the dwellings of the saints.

All this we have recounted in order to present an example of the prophetic foresight of our Venerable Father, the blessed Basil; for everything that he foretold has come to pass. Let us relate also other events, in the accomplishment of which this gift of foresight, proper to the Venerable, was revealed.

The patrician Romanus[53] was chosen as co-ruler with the young Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and he was crowned as emperor. When the Emperor Constantine came of age, Romanus gave him in marriage his daughter Helena. Besides Constantine, Romanus had another son-in-law, a certain Saronites, a patrician by rank, a proud and power-loving man, who boasted of his wealth and the nobility of his family. He harbored in his heart the treacherous intention of destroying Emperor Constantine and seizing the imperial scepter.

52. Abel was the second son of Adam, treacherously slain by Cain.
53. Romanus I is meant, who reigned jointly with Constantine VII from 919 to 944.

Near the house of Saronites stood the house of the aforementioned lover of Christ, John, with whom the Venerable Basil was staying. Foreseeing with his discerning eyes the treacherous thought of Saronites, the Venerable said, as if speaking to himself:

"Basil! Take note of this wretched impious man, who in his heart is plotting what is against God. But see, I will go and rebuke him: perhaps he will repent and abandon his mad intention."

And so, when once Saronites rode out from his house on horseback with his customary pomp, heading for the imperial palace, the saint stood in the road and began to cry out loudly, addressing the patrician:

"Why have you conceived in your heart an evil deed against the anointed of God? You have no share in the imperial lot. Therefore do not labor in vain, lest the Lord be angered with you and take from you even the patrician dignity which you hold."

Hearing such a rebuke from the saint, Saronites flared up against him with great fury. Rushing at the blessed one, he began to strike him on the head with the whip he held in his hands, and at the same time he reviled him with every kind of abuse. Then, having inflicted many wounds on him and mocked him, he left the Venerable and continued on his way.

The blessed Basil patiently endured all the abuse and the wounds, and the next day again met Saronites as he was going to the palace, and rebuked him with the same words as the previous time. In anger Saronites commanded his servants to seize the saint, take him to his house, and detain him until he himself should return from the palace. Then, upon returning, he ordered that rods of thornbush be brought and that the Venerable Basil be presented to him.

When the blessed one was brought to him, Saronites said:

"Answer me, mad old man: what demon taught you to meet me boldly and speak to me such unseemly, reviling words? Or do you not know that I am the emperor's son-in-law and the first of all the imperial nobles? Or are you unaware that my wealth is as countless as the sand on the seashore? For I have a vast multitude of slaves, estates, villages, and herds of various cattle, as well as an innumerable quantity of gold and silver. Besides this, I have been granted great glory and honor, giv-

en to me by God and by our emperors. How, then, did you dare, being of low birth and destitute, to stand before me, in the sight of all the people, with such reproaches and rebukes? Answer me, before I put you to death."

In reply to such words the blessed one said:

"Do you really think that your treacherous and evil intention, which you hide in your heart, will remain hidden? No—God Himself has revealed to me that you have plotted to attack the emperor's life and to become a usurper of the imperial power. Abandon this impious intention and cease plotting against the anointed of the Lord. I say to you in the name of God: if you do not renounce your evil design, the Lord will be greatly angered with you and will soon wipe out the memory of you from the face of the earth."

At such words the mad Saronites flew into a great rage, so that his face changed and turned yellow. Blazing with anger, he commanded his servants to stretch the Venerable out on the ground and to beat him mercilessly with thornbush rods.

"Beat him harder," he said, "beat him until the demon of false prophecy comes out of him."

And they beat him. The saint, however, was like a mute and insensible tree: enduring the cruel blows, he not only did not groan, but did not even utter a single word, nor did he move his body, so that beyond the sounds of the blows of the rods upon his body nothing else was heard.

While the saint was being tormented, the gates of Saronites' house were open. At that time the pious Helena, the wife of John, was passing by the gates. Glancing in through the gates, she saw how the blessed Basil was being tortured. Quickly entering the house, she covered the body of the saint with her own and, with bitter tears, began to cry out loudly:

"Beat me, a sinner, but spare this lamp of God, my pastor and spiritual father; kill me in his place, and let him go."

Then Saronites, like a wild beast in the cruelty of his nature, said furiously to the servants:

"Beat her too, since she herself desires it; I think she is the dishonorable and adulterous companion of this impious man."

Carrying out the command, the servants began to beat the pious wife, and beat her until they thought she had become lifeless. Then the lawless Saronite ordered the servants to seize her by the feet and cast her into the street like a dead dog. As for blessed Basil, he ordered him bound, hung up, and given five hundred blows with ox-hide thongs. Enduring the cruel blows, blessed Basil bore them bravely, with God's help. When the servants had finished torturing him, they put him in chains.

Night came, and while Saronite slept, he had a vision in a dream, foretelling the near end of this cruel and malicious patrician. He saw in his dream a tall, branching oak, at whose crown a raven had made its nest. The bird of prey sat in its nest, covering its young with its wings. But then two men came to the oak with axes, wishing to cut it down. One of them pointed to the top of the tree and said to the other:

"Here sits a raven that, with its cries, does not let the emperor sleep peacefully." The other answered:

"Moreover, it has done much evil to the beloved servant of God, blessed Basil."

Having said this, they began to cut down the tree. When it fell to the ground, certain men came, clad in tattered rags, and began to cut off the branches and cast them into the fire. Among them Saronite saw Venerable Basil, who stood beside the felled tree and said:

"Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire" (Mt. 3:10).

Then the Venerable, turning to Saronite, said:

"Did I not tell you to renounce your evil intention, for otherwise you would fall from the height on which you stand?"

When Saronite awoke from his dream, he felt ill; and when he reflected on the vision he had seen in his sleep, great fear seized him. Terrified, he arose and immediately sent servants with orders to release St. Basil from his chains and set him free. Released from confinement, blessed Basil returned to the place where he dwelt, the house of John. When John saw the Venerable, he rejoiced; but when the pious man

saw the wounds inflicted on the saint by the cruel torture, he wept. All who loved blessed Basil likewise, hearing of his return, flocked to John's house, rejoicing at his coming and weeping when they saw the sores on his body. John's wife, blessed Helena, soon died of the wounds inflicted on her by the beating. The lawless Saronite, too, did not rise from his sickbed: after a few days he died, and so the prophecy of blessed Basil was fulfilled upon him, as was the dream Saronite himself had seen.

After some time, the pious John, who had served Venerable Basil, departed in peace to the Lord, and the Venerable remained alone in the house of the departed. Every day many people came to him, bringing or leading their sick. Blessed Basil healed them by his prayer before God. A multitude of the poor also gathered to him, for the Venerable gave them all that Christ-loving people brought him, keeping nothing for himself until the next day.

At that time a pious and God-loving citizen, Constantine, surnamed Barbarus[54], entreated the Venerable to move to his home and dwell there, and he prepared for him a secluded cell. In it he provided a bed, a table, a seat, and a lamp for the blessed one, just as the Shunammite woman[55] had once done for the Prophet Elisha (4 Kgdms. 4:10)[56]. Then he entrusted the service of the man of God to a virtuous elderly woman, Theodora, who had long been a widow and had spent many years in a God-pleasing life of chastity. The blessed elder woman lived in an upper room near the Venerable's cell, and served him diligently, as an Angel of God. If anyone came wishing to see St. Basil and speak with him, Theodora informed the Venerable, who would come from his cell to her upper room and receive the visitor there. Thus he received everyone in that room, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, and giving alms to those in need; and the Venerable's day passed in such labors. In the evening he would go to his cell and there offer his customary prayers to God.

54. "Barbarian" means foreigner.
55. The Shunammite woman was an inhabitant of the city of Shunem in the tribe of Issachar, southwest of Nazareth and Mount Tabor. Today this place is called Solam or Sulem.
56. Elisha was a prophet of the kingdom of Israel, the beloved disciple of the prophet Elijah and the successor to his prophetic gift.

The fame of blessed Basil's God-pleasing life and wondrous deeds spread ever farther, and he was revered not only by laymen but also by many of the clergy: monks, priests, and hierarchs often visited the saint and received help from him for soul and body. Princes and nobles summoned him to their homes, asking him to visit the sick and pray for them. Whenever the blessed one came to any sick person, he would at once lay his hands upon them with prayer and heal them; demons he drove away with a single word. He also labored to correct men's conduct, instructing many in virtue—not only teaching people with words sweet as honey, but at times sternly rebuking sinners; for everything was revealed to him by God, Who sees all.

Once, when summoned to the imperial palace, Venerable Basil spoke with Emperor Romanus in private, away from everyone, and rebuked him for avarice and for his sinful relations with many women. The emperor was not angered with him, but received the rebuke gently and promised to amend his life.

In the same way, the blessed one turned a most illustrious patrician woman, Anastasia, to the path of repentance, rebuking her for certain sins she had committed in secret, and foretold her end.

He also foretold to Empress Helena, wife of Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, that she would first bear a daughter and then a son, who, when he came of age, would reign—and so it came to pass. The empress ordered that gold be given him, but the Venerable would not even touch it. Then the empress adjured him by the Holy Trinity to take as much as he wished. Yielding to her persistent entreaties, the Venerable took three gold coins[57] and gave them to the elderly Theodora who served him, and who was also present there.

At this, some of those standing before the empress said to the saint:

"Give the old woman more gold coins, Father." The saint answered them:

"Children, we do not wish to have thorns in great quantity, for they prick our hands." Then the empress said to the Venerable:

57. *Zlatnitsa* was a gold coin, a chervonets.

"Truly, honorable Father, you have loved the one God with all your heart and are estranged from the vain goods of this world. But do not forget us; remember us in your God-pleasing prayers."

Having said this, she dismissed the blessed one in peace.

At that time a layman named Gregory came to Venerable Basil. He became the saint's disciple and a witness to many of his miracles, and later wrote his lengthy Life. When Gregory first came to the blessed one, he was greatly astonished and confounded by the wondrous gift of clairvoyance possessed by the Venerable: though the holy man had never seen Gregory before, as soon as he arrived he called him by name, and then told him all that he had been thinking in his heart. In general, the Venerable possessed an exceedingly abundant gift of foresight, and perceived not only the secret deeds of men, but even the most hidden thoughts of the human heart. There were many occasions in the saint's life when this gift of his was revealed to all; but we would lack both time and space to recount them all, and therefore we shall limit ourselves to a few examples.

A certain presbyter came to the saint and brought him apples as a gift. Staying to dine with him, he tried to remember how many mednitsas[58] he had spent on the apples. But the saint said to him:

"Why are you so lost in thought, brother, remembering how much you spent on the fruit? Do not trouble yourself in vain; ask me, and I will tell you: you paid ten mednitsas for the apples."

Hearing this, the presbyter was amazed, marveling at the elder's foresight and blessing God, Who had sent such a great servant to mankind.

A certain wine merchant known to the saint, whose affairs had fallen into difficulty, came to the Venerable and asked him to visit his home, so that they might pray together there and that by his prayer God's blessing might descend upon the household. When the blessed one came, the wine merchant gathered many poor people for dinner. After the meal he led the saint into the tavern, so that he might bless the vessels of wine. As he blessed them, the Venerable approached one

58. *Mednitsa* was a small copper coin.

vessel, which held about fifteen measures of wine, and said to the wine merchant:

"Behold, I have blessed all the vessels in the name of Christ, except this one; this one must be broken."

But the wine merchant began to beg the Venerable not to do this.

"Do not break it, Father," he said, "but bless this vessel too; for if you destroy it, my supplies will be diminished, and I shall become a beggar, since I owe much to various creditors."

The saint answered him:

"All this is known to me; nevertheless, I intend to destroy this vessel, so as to save you from great misfortune. This is why I came here." Then the wine merchant said to the saint:

"Better break my head, but not this vessel."

But the saint took a log that lay there and began to break the vessel. When it shattered, a great quantity of wine spilled onto the floor. Seeing this, the wine merchant was deeply grieved, and those standing with him began to resent the saint and inwardly blaspheme him.

The Venerable Father, perceiving by the Spirit their thoughts and their reproach, took a staff that lay there, put it into a broken vessel in whose bottom a little wine remained, and drew out from it a dead serpent, drunk with the wine, three cubits long.[59] Then, addressing those present, he said:

"Why do you reproach me in your hearts, children? As though I had done something wrong! Do you see this serpent? How many people might have been poisoned by its venom, and what misfortune would then have befallen the master? Is that what you wanted? Was it not good that I broke this vessel?"

Having said this, the saint cast the serpent to the ground; the wine merchant fell at the feet of the blessed one and began to beg his forgiveness. The blessed one forgave him and gave him his blessing. And by the prayers of St. Basil the wine merchant's house was blessed before the Lord, and it received abundance in all things.

A certain woman, named Theodotia, brought to the Venerable Father her four-year-old son, who was ill, and began to beg the saint to

pray for his health. All her children, scarcely reaching the age of four, had died; therefore she feared that this child, who had already fallen ill, would die as well. As she was telling the Venerable Father of her grief, the boy who had been brought began to cry and ask for bread. The Venerable Father, taking a piece of bread, gave it to the boy and, smiling kindly, said:

"What is your name? Is it not Leo?"

Then, turning to the mother, he said:

"For the sake of your piety, and especially as a reward for your love for the Most Holy Theotokos, which was shown in your frequent prayers before her icon, the Hodegetria,[60] the Lord will keep this son of yours healthy and unharmed. Having come of age, he will bring you no small joy, for he will be of good character, wise, honest, and even renowned among men. Having received a good upbringing and been instructed in the wisdom of books, he will become a monk, and then a cleric, and the Lord will keep him. But your other children, whom you will bear, will die, as the first ones did."

Then the woman, bowing to the saint, departed, and everything the saint had foretold to her came to pass.

A certain man, well known to the Venerable Father, came with a request to send him on his way with a blessing, for he was setting out for the East[61] on a commission from his master. The Venerable Father, looking attentively at his face and foreseeing what would befall him on the road, said:

"Terrible and dangerous is the river Chelidon, but nonetheless it will be calmed by the prayers of the sinful servant of God, Basil."

No one understood these words of the blessed one. The man set out on his journey. And when he was in the eastern lands, a river that he

59. The cubit, or *lokot'*, was a measure of length equal to 10.5 vershoks. Three cubits came to almost two arshins.

60. *Hodegetria* means "Guide" or "Directress." This was the name of the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Mother of God found in the Blachernae church. Later (in 1046) this icon was transferred to Russia and placed in the city of Smolensk. From this it came to be called the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God.

61. "The East," or the eastern lands, usually meant Syria, Palestine, Arabia and Persia, in contrast to the European West.

did not know barred his way, for he had never been in those lands. This river was about twenty sazhens wide, and its current was so swift that only a bird could fly as fast. The man stopped on the bank and searched with his eyes for a shallow place where, sitting on his horse, he might cross to the other shore. Suddenly a wave swept over him and, seizing him together with his horse, carried them to the middle of the river; the current bore them toward the sea, and the man was already threatened with inevitable death. In fear he cried out to the Lord:

"O Lord God! By the prayers of our Venerable Father Basil, help me, a sinner."

No sooner had he said this than he at once saw St. Basil, who, calming the violent turmoil of the waters, took the horse by the bridle, led it to the opposite shore, and became invisible.

Delivered from drowning, the man gave thanks to God and to His saint Basil; then, arriving at a nearby village and stopping there for the night, he asked the name of that river. They told him that it was called Chelidon, that is, "swallow," because in the swiftness of its current it could rival the flight of a swallow. This river was very dangerous and had already destroyed many who did not know how to cross it. Then the man remembered the words of the Venerable Basil spoken to him when he had come for a blessing, and, turning in prayer to God, he cried out:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee! I ask of Thee one thing, my Master: vouchsafe me once more to see Thy saint and to bow before his venerable gray hairs."

Returning from his journey, he came to the Venerable Father and fell at his feet, offering him due gratitude; then he related to the blessed one how God had shown mercy to him through his holy prayers.

The aforementioned layman Gregory, on account of his virtue, was greatly pleasing to St. Basil, for he spent his life in virginity, chastity, and fasting. He often came to the Venerable Father, and, learning from his God-wise conversations, was vouchsafed to be called his disciple. He had a special love and faith toward the Protomartyr Stephen, often went to his church, and adorned it with all manner of splendor. From his departed parents he had received as an inheritance a house in Con-

stantinople and many estates. Among these estates he had a vineyard in Thrace,[62] not far from the city of Rhandistus. Intending to go there at the time of the gathering of the fruit, he came to his teacher, the Venerable Father, and received his blessing; then he entered the church of the Protomartyr Stephen, and, having prayed before his icon on his knees, he said:

"Behold, a long journey by land and sea lies before me. Therefore I beseech thee, holy Protomartyr Stephen: on this journey keep me from every evil, and as I have served thy holy church to the best of my strength, so mayest thou, by the grace given thee from God, be to me in every need a protector, helper, and provider."

Having thus prayed to the Protomartyr Stephen, Gregory set out on his journey. Stopping for the night at an inn, he found a belt worth two gold coins, which had been lost by the innkeeper's daughter. When the innkeeper and his household began to search for the belt and to ask the guests about it, Gregory, at the instigation of the devil, concealed the belt, reasoning:

"Those who lost the belt are rich people; therefore it will be better if I sell it and give the money I receive to the poor."

Setting out on his way again, Gregory lost his own belt, likewise worth two gold coins, and his traveling bag, in which there were four gold coins and a good number of pennies;[63] grieving over the loss, he fell asleep, and in a dream vision he saw the Venerable Basil, who, pointing to a broken pot, said:

"Do you see this broken pot, good for nothing?"

"I see it, my lord," Gregory answered.

"If anyone steals even this," said the blessed one, "he will be punished fourfold, and the goods of this age and of the age to come will be taken from the thief. If the thief is rich, then fourfold more than what he stole will be taken from his riches; and if he is poor, then he will receive a fourfold greater punishment in the life to come."

62. Thrace was a region of the Byzantine Empire, in the northeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. At present Thrace, under the name of Romania or Rumelia, constitutes a province of European Turkey.
63. A *penyaz'* was a silver coin.

To this Gregory said:

"Father, I have never stolen anything." The saint answered:

"You concealed for yourself the belt of the innkeeper's daughter that you had found, and yet you say you stole nothing." Gregory objected to him:

"Father, I did not steal the belt, but found it."

But the saint said:

"Know, child, that if anyone finds something lost by another and does not return it, even though the other is searching for what was lost and asking about it, that man will be judged as a thief. Thus it was your duty to return what was lost. But since you concealed what belonged to another, more than fourfold of what you concealed will be taken from you as well. Moreover, you must take care lest you suffer even more."

Awakening from his sleep, Gregory was in great sorrow, partly from repentance for his sin, partly from expectation of some new and unknown misfortune against which the Venerable Father had warned him. Sorrowful, he arrived at his estate in Thrace. Here, during the gathering of the fruit, he underwent a temptation stronger than the first, which had come upon him on the road.

One of the hired laborers working in Gregory's vineyard, named Alexander, had lawfully wed a young girl, Meletinia, who was of an evil disposition and was, moreover, an adulteress and a sorceress. She had so unrestrained a passion for adultery that soon after her marriage to Alexander she had seduced into unlawful intercourse with herself almost all the husbands of the surrounding villages. Yet no one could denounce her for her lawlessness; for if she heard that anyone was speaking ill of her, she would at once bring a grievous sickness upon him by sorcery. She acted thus, among others, toward her own husband, who at first, seeing her lawless deeds, often beat her; but by the sicknesses she brought upon him through the power of sorcery, she so wearied and weakened him that he could not even drive a fly away from himself. Therefore he could not resist her when, angered at him, she struck him with a stick or a rope and drove him out of the house; he was so enfeebled by the diseases wrought upon him by Meletinia's sorcery. Of

the mother of this sorceress they tell that by her incantations she checked the flight of birds, stopped the course of the river, and wrought many other evils that cannot be recounted by man. Meletinia was the daughter of such an evil sorceress, in all things like her mother, and even surpassing her in lawlessness, for she had given herself over to boundless adultery. Many husbands she had seduced into sinful union with herself; and if anyone spoke even a single word to denounce her, that man became paralyzed for two or three months; and if anyone struck her, he died, scarcely surviving two days after it.

Seeing Gregory, who was young and remarkable for his beauty, the lawless sorceress was enticed by him and resolved to seduce him into a shameful cohabitation with her. Each day, without any shame, she followed him wherever he went and, provocatively keeping close before him, with the assistance of demonic power she put impure thoughts toward herself into his mind; and at night she sent dreams upon him and in sleeping visions appeared before him in a shameless state, rousing in him unclean lust. Gregory was in great confusion, constantly stirred by the agitations of carnal desire, for while the harlot was visibly enticing him to sin by her lewd conduct, the devil invisibly kindled in him the fire of lust. And if the holy first martyr Stephen and the blessed Basil had not helped him by their prayers, a little more time would have passed and he would have submitted to the power of sin, and his soul would have dwelt in Hades. Thus, with the help of the holy God-pleasers who prayed for him, he struggled against his lustful thoughts day and night; at times he grew weary in this struggle, but then he was strengthened again and firmly resisted the unclean desire, not consenting to defile his virginal body, which had not known a woman from his earliest youth. Many times he was inclined to drive the shameless harlot away from himself with contempt, but the fear of becoming the victim of her magical power, by means of which she sent sicknesses, restrained him. And he then recalled the words of the Venerable Basil, spoken to him during a sleeping vision:

"Take care lest you suffer any more."

This warning was now fully fulfilled. For what can be more grievous for a chaste man than the danger of losing his virginity? Desiring to

preserve his chastity, and consenting rather to die a thousand deaths than to lose his virginity, Gregory at last resolved upon a bold deed: he rushed upon Meletinia in wrath, and with a stick and with insulting words drove the shameless harlot away from himself, crying out:

"O shameless daughter of Beelzebub![64] If you dare still to approach me, I will hew your foul body into pieces."

From then on the harlot left Gregory, and together with her the lustful thoughts ceased to trouble him as well. Yet he fell into another misfortune. The dishonorable sorceress Meletinia, avenging her humiliation on Gregory, brought upon him a grievous sickness, from which he would certainly have died had not the holy first martyr Stephen and the Venerable Basil appeared to him and healed him. Gregory himself relates the following about this:

"One Sunday, shortly after the events described," (said Gregory) "I went to a chapel in the name of the holy Great Martyr George, which stood in the midst of a vineyard. It was a hot morning, and having performed my prayer, I rested a little at the chapel. And then in a dream I see a black, stinking cloud advancing, which fell upon me and seemed to me very heavy and exceedingly cold; from the cloud a voice was heard: 'Receive what Meletinia has prepared for you.' Then the cloud entered into me. Awakening, I found that I was possessed by a fierce sickness, and I knew that it had been brought upon me by the sorceress Meletinia mentioned above, because I had resisted her unclean desire. With difficulty I rose, went home, unable to restrain my groans, and lay down upon my bed. Day by day my sickness grew heavier, and my death was already drawing near. All my inner parts were inflamed with a cruel fire, which consumed my body as dry reed is consumed. Unable to bear the heat, I rose and ran, seeking coolness under the shade of trees, and I rushed to the river, to cool the flame within me in its cold streams. Many times I thought of drowning myself, and often I cried out:

'Woe, woe! If such is the fire of Gehenna, then it would be better for a man not to have been born.'

64. Beelzebub is the same as Satan or the prince of demons (see Mt. 10:25; Mt. 12:24; Mt. 12:27; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 2:15, 18–19). This name was taken by the Jews from Beelzebub, a Phoenician deity.

I could not recognize people or converse with anyone, and the night seemed longer to me than forty years.

When I was completely exhausted by the sickness, it seemed to me that I was lying in a swamp, the middle of which was very deep, while its edges—on the east and the west—rose high. Standing on the western side of the swamp, I began gradually to descend into a bottomless abyss. In fear I remembered my prayers to the first martyr Stephen, and, heaving a heavy sigh, I said:

'O holy first martyr! Did you hear me so, when I prayed to you in your church as I left Constantinople? Behold, I am descending into the abyss, and you will no longer see me—and I can no longer serve you as I have served you until now, for I have drawn near to the gates of death.'

Then I looked at the eastern end of the morass and there I saw as it were another world, which cannot be described in human words; from there the holy first martyr Stephen came toward me in a crimson stichar and spoke to me kindly:

'What do you need, beloved, and why do you suffer? You complain of me; but I was not here, for I was visiting the churches built in my honor, scattered throughout the world; but now I have come here and will help you. Remember from now on, however, how lawless sorcerers may harm people, by God's permission.'

Then I asked the saint:

'What does the abyss lying before me signify, and its rising edges?' The saint answered:

'The western end of the abyss, on which you are standing, signifies the nearness of death; the abyss which you see before you is the realm of death, through which the dying pass with great difficulty until they reach the eastern land; arriving there, they find a path leading into another, the next world.'

Hearing this, I again asked the saint:

'So then, my lord, am I already dying?'

'What else can you expect, having been brought here?' he answered me.

Then, sighing from the depth of my heart, I said with weeping:

'No, my lord, let not that be with me, for I am not yet prepared for death.'

After these words of mine the saint took me by the hand, led me across the abyss, set me on the eastern side of the swamp, on a high place, and said:

'Behold, you have been brought up out of the abyss of death.'

At once I saw myself walking in a certain courtyard, wondrous in its beauty.

But since from my grievous illness I walked with difficulty, the holy first martyr, from whom there came a very pleasant fragrance, offered me his shoulders and said:

'Embrace me from behind with both your arms, I will support you, and we will go on together.'

As we thus crossed the courtyard, I saw large vessels of stone, white as snow, holding a hundred, two hundred, and three hundred measures; they were full and sealed. I asked the saint:

'Whose is this courtyard? To whom do these vessels belong, and what is in them?' The saint answered:

'All this belongs to the Venerable Basil, your spiritual father. In the vessels is spiritual oil, given to him by God. Anointing with it the sinners who come to him, he cleanses them of their defilements and makes them children of God, for he has taken up the apostolic labor and has delivered many souls from the power of Satan.'

And again I asked the saint:

'Where are we going, my lord?'

'To the Venerable Basil,' he answered.

While we had not yet finished our conversation, my Venerable Father Basil came out to meet us from a certain wondrous chamber. The holy first martyr addressed him with these words:

'How is it, Father Basil, that you left Gregory, your beloved child, in his most difficult time? And if I had not appeared to help him, he would have died.' The Venerable one answered:

'I saw that you, blessed first martyr, were with him, and therefore I did not go to him. Now, if it is the Lord's will, let us show him a greater mercy than that which was shown to him before.'

After such words the saints went together, and I followed after them. So we came to a very gloomy place, and there we saw a serpent, very large and terrible. And the Venerable Basil said:

'This serpent nearly destroyed my child Gregory.'

Saying this, he took a large stone, threw it at the serpent, and killed it. After that we found ourselves in Constantinople, near the church of the holy first martyr, and we heard from within the church very pleasant voices of youths glorifying the Lord. Then the first martyr Stephen said to me:

'Behold, by the grace of Christ you have become healthy; now enter the church and sing a song of thanksgiving to the Lord of all, who has shown you great mercy.'

Bowing to my protectors, the holy first martyr Stephen and the Venerable Basil, I entered the church, singing:

'"The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 26:1).'

And then the whole psalm to the end.

Then those most beautiful youths, seeing me, rejoiced and began to say to me:

'Come, our beloved, take part in our joy.'

After these words the vision ended, and I, coming to myself, felt with amazement that I was well. Having taken a little food, I refreshed myself with sleep, then rose and began to walk. After a short time, being fully recovered, I boarded a ship and set out for Constantinople, telling everyone what had happened to me, how by the prayers of the saints Stephen and Basil I had been delivered from death.

Here ends Gregory's account of himself.

Almost at the same time as the events described, the blessed Theodora, who had served Venerable Basil, received the monastic habit and reposed in the Lord. All who venerated the Venerable One, learning of this, grieved, for the blessed woman had been an intercessor before the holy elder for all who came to him. She received everyone with love, comforted all with her gentle words, and was merciful, loving Christ, chaste, and filled with spiritual wisdom. Gregory felt a strong desire to know where Theodora was after her repose, on the right hand

or on the left[65], with the righteous or with the sinners, and whether she had been deemed worthy to receive mercy from God or some consolation for her zealous service to the elder. As he pondered this, he often entreated Venerable Basil, asking him to tell him of the soul of the departed Theodora, for Gregory believed that all things concerning the departed were revealed to the holy servant of God. Pressed by his frequent entreaties, the holy elder, unwilling to grieve his spiritual son by refusing him, prayed to the Lord, asking Him to reveal to Gregory in a vision what had become of Theodora's soul after her repose.

The following night Gregory was deemed worthy, in a dream-vision, to see the blessed Theodora in the bright dwelling that God had prepared for Venerable Basil. It was in this dwelling, illumined with heavenly glory and filled with indescribable blessings, that the blessed Theodora, through the prayers of the servant of God, was settled. Thus, she who had served him zealously and diligently in this world was deemed worthy, through his holy prayers, to dwell in his abode in eternal life. When Gregory saw her, he rejoiced and delighted in a long conversation with her, as though speaking with her while awake.

Gregory asked Theodora how she had been separated from the body, how she had endured the sufferings of death, what she had seen after her death, and how she had passed by the aerial spirits[66].

And she began to tell him the following: "Child Gregory! You ask me about a terrible thing, one that is dreadful even to remember. I saw faces that I had never seen before or since; I heard words I had never heard until then. And what shall I tell you? All the cruel and sinful deeds of my life, which I had forgotten, then appeared before me; but through the prayers and help of our father, Venerable Basil, none of them was laid to my charge, nor did they prevent me from entering this dwelling. And what shall I tell you, child, of bodily sickness, of the most grievous sufferings endured by the dying? As one cast into a

65. The right hand, or right side, generally signified a position of honor. In the Gospel (Mt. 25:32–46) the place at the right hand of the eternal Judge is assigned to the righteous, and the left side to sinners. Thus, standing on the right or on the left side signifies either justification or condemnation.

66. The reference is to the unclean spirits who stand at the aerial toll-houses. About the toll-houses see below.

great flame is consumed by the fire and seems to melt away into ashes, so mortal sickness destroys a person. Death is truly cruel for sinners such as I, for I tell you the truth: I was a worker of sinful deeds, while I remember none of my righteous deeds at all."

"When I drew near the end of my life and the hour came for my soul to be separated from my body, I saw a multitude of Ethiopians[67] standing around my bed. Their faces were black as soot and pitch, their eyes burned like fiery coals, and their whole appearance was as dreadful as the sight of the fiery Gehenna. They began to make a din and cause confusion: some roared like cattle and beasts, others barked like dogs, and some howled like wolves. All of them glared at me furiously, threatening me and rushing at me with gnashing teeth, and they wanted to devour me at once. They also prepared papers[68], as though awaiting some judge who was to come there, and unrolled scrolls[69] on which all my evil deeds were written. And my wretched soul was in great fear and trembling. Then I endured not only the pangs of death, caused by the separation of the soul from the body, but also the most grievous suffering at the sight of those dreadful Ethiopians and their threatening fury; and this was for me like a second death, more painful and cruel. I tried to turn my gaze away, now in one direction, now in another, so that I might neither see the dreadful Ethiopians nor hear their voices, but I could not escape them, for everywhere there was an innumerable multitude of them, and there was no one to help me."

"Already utterly weakened by such sufferings, I suddenly beheld two radiant Angels of God, who appeared to me in the form of handsome youths whose beauty it is impossible to describe. Their faces were brighter than the sun, their eyes gazed upon me tenderly, the hair on their heads was white as snow, a golden radiance spread around their heads, and their garments shone like lightning; golden belts crossed

67. "Ethiopians" was originally the name of a people living southeast of Egypt, in the land corresponding to the present-day Abyssinia, distinguished by dark skin. Later Christian writers began to call the dark spirits of malice "Ethiopians," who were often depicted in monuments of church art as black men.

68. *Khartiya* means paper, a sheet.

69. A *svitok* (scroll) usually meant a thin roll of a long parchment sheet written on both sides; when read, it was gradually unrolled, and then rolled up again.

their breasts. Coming near my bed, they stood at my right, quietly conversing with one another. At the sight of them I rejoiced and gazed upon them with tender feeling of heart. The black Ethiopians, when they saw them, trembled and withdrew farther away. Then one of the radiant youths said to them in anger:

'O shameless, accursed, dark, and wicked enemies of the human race! Why do you always hasten prematurely to the dying and, with your shameless din, terrify and trouble every soul that is being separated from the body? But now cease your rejoicing, for here you will gain nothing. You have no share in this soul, for God's mercy is with her.'

"At these words of the radiant youth, the Ethiopians at once grew agitated and began crying out, showing the records of my evil deeds committed from my youth.

"'How can it be that we have no share in her? Whose are these sins? Was it not she who did this and that?'

So saying, they stood waiting for death.

"And then death came, roaring like a lion. Its appearance was exceedingly dreadful; it bore some likeness to a human being, but had no body at all, and was made only of bare human bones. It carried with it various instruments of torment: swords, arrows, spears, scythes, sickles, iron horns, saws, axes, adzes[70], and other instruments unknown to me. At the sight of all this, my humble soul trembled with fear; but the holy Angels said to death:

"'Why do you delay? Release this soul from the bonds of the flesh; release it quickly and quietly, for it has not many burdens of sin.'

"At once death came to me, took an axe, and first cut off my legs, then my arms, and then, with another instrument, destroyed all the remaining parts of my body and separated my limbs from their joints. I had neither hands nor feet, and my whole body was dead. Then death took and cut off my head, so that I could not turn it, and it seemed foreign to me. After all this, death prepared a mixture in a cup and, lifting it to my lips, made me drink it. The mixture was so bitter that my soul,

70. *Teslo* was a carpenter's tool, a kind of adze and plane.

unable to endure its bitterness, shuddered and came forth from the body as though forcibly torn away from it. The holy Angels at once received it into their arms. Looking back, I saw my body lying soulless, senseless, and motionless. Having divested myself of it as one divests oneself of a garment, I looked upon it with boundless wonder[71]. At that moment the demons, who had appeared in the likeness of Ethiopians, surrounded the Angels holding me and began to cry out, showing the records of my sins:

"'This soul has many sins; therefore let her give account before us.'

"Then the holy Angels began to seek out the good deeds in my life and, with the help of the Lord God, by whose grace I had done good, they found them. They brought to mind all the good I had done: when I gave alms to the poor, fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, or brought a stranger into my home and gave him rest; when I served the saints; when I visited the sick or those imprisoned and helped them; when I came eagerly to church and prayed there with tenderness and contrition of heart, listening attentively to the singing and reading of the Church's prayers and hymns; when I brought incense and candles, or some other offering, to the church, or poured olive oil into the lamps so that they might burn before the icons, and reverently kissed the most holy icons. They recalled how I spent my time temperately, and how I fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays and throughout all the holy fasts, how many prostrations I made and how many night vigils I kept. They pointed out how I groaned in contrition over my sins and sometimes wept for them whole nights long; how I confessed my sins to God and, with contrition, repented of them before my spiritual father, making satisfaction to God's Justice through my contrition and heartfelt repentance. They recalled all the good I had done for my neighbors: how I was not angry with those who were hostile toward me; how patiently I endured every affront and reproach directed at me, bore no malice, and repaid evil with good; how I humbled myself when people attacked me; how my heart ached and I grieved

71. The description of death presented here is very figurative and sensuous, and certainly must not be understood in a literal sense. Here the sensuous and coarsely figurative must be understood, as far as possible for our mind, in a mysterious and spiritual sense.

over another's misfortune; how I lent a helping hand to someone, assisted someone in a good deed, or turned someone away from evil. They recalled that I turned my eyes away from vanity, and restrained my tongue from oaths, lies, slander, and all idle words. All these things, and every other small good deed of mine, the holy Angels gathered together, preparing to place them on the scales against my evil deeds. But the Ethiopians, seeing this, gnashed their teeth at me, wishing to snatch me from the hands of the Angels and cast me down to the very depths of hell."

"At that moment our Venerable Father Basil suddenly appeared there and said to the holy Angels:

"'My lords, this soul served me greatly, ministering to me in my old age. I prayed to God that she might be granted to me, and the Lord sent me this soul.'"

Having said this, he took from beneath his garment a purse filled with something (I think it contained pure gold alone), gave it to the holy Angels, and said:

"When you pass through the aerial toll-houses[2194] and the wicked spirits begin to torment this soul, you shall ransom her by this from her debts. By the grace of God I am rich, and by my labors and sweat I have gathered many treasures; and now I give this purse to the soul that has served me."

After these words he withdrew. The wicked demons, seeing this, were perplexed, and then, filling the air with lamentation, they vanished.

Meanwhile the servant of God Basil came again, bringing with him many vessels of pure oil and of precious myrrh. Opening the vessels one after another, he poured the oil and the myrrh upon me, so that I was filled with spiritual fragrance and at the same time was changed and became a luminous being.

The Venerable Basil then said again to the holy Angels:

"My lords, when you have done all that is necessary for this soul, bring her into the dwelling prepared for me by the Lord, and let her abide there."

Having said this, the saint became invisible; and the Angels took me and carried me through the air toward the east[72].

As we rose from the earth toward the heavenly height, we were first met by the aerial spirits of the first toll-house, where judgment is passed for sins of the tongue, for every idle, abusive, unseemly, and foul word. Here we stopped, and the demons brought forth to us scrolls on which were written all the frivolous words I had spoken from my youth: everything foolish and foul that I had said, especially the blasphemous and derisive speeches which in my youth I allowed myself to utter, as is the case with many. There stood before me all the shameless worldly songs that I once sang, all my unseemly exclamations, all my frivolous talk; and the demons accused me of all of it, naming the times, places, and persons when, where, and with whom I had indulged in vain conversation and by my words had offended God, not reckoning it a sin and not confessing it to my spiritual father. Seeing all this, I stood silent, speechless, for I had nothing to say to the wicked spirits: they accused me with complete justice, and I marvelled that they had forgotten nothing; for many years had passed since all these sins were committed by me, and I had long forgotten them and never called them to mind; yet they brought forward all my words as though they had only just been spoken, recalling everything in detail and to the finest points, just as it had really happened. And while I stood in shame, at the same time trembling with fear, the holy Angels, setting over against my sins something of my good deeds done in the last years of my life, and since they could not outweigh the burden of my sins, made up the deficiency from what had been given by my Venerable Father Basil. Thus they ransomed me and bore me upward.

Here we drew near to another toll-house, called the toll-house of lies, where is tested every false word, especially perjuries, the taking of the name of God in vain, false witness, the breaking of vows made to God, incomplete confession of sins, and the like. The spirits of this toll-house are exceedingly fierce and savage; they examined me most insist-

72. In Holy Scripture the East is represented as the quarter of the world that symbolizes the kingdom of Christ, which is called the East from on high, whereas the West is the synonym of the kingdom of darkness and gloom, the kingdom of Satan.

ently, leaving out no detail. And I was convicted by them of two sins: namely, that at times, in some small matters, I had permitted myself to lie, not reckoning it a sin; and also that many times, ashamed of my sins, I had made an incomplete confession to my spiritual father. As for perjury and false witness, these sins, by the grace of Christ, were not found in me. Yet the demons exulted over the sins of lying they had found in me and already wished to snatch me from the hands of the Angels who were leading me; but the Angels, setting some of my good deeds against those sins and making up the deficiency from what had been given by Venerable Basil, ransomed me and bore me onward unhindered.

After that we reached the third toll-house, which is called the toll-house of condemnation and calumny. Detained there, I saw how grievous a sin it is to slander anyone, to dishonor, defame, or revile, and also to scoff at the faults of others while forgetting one's own. All who surrender themselves to the power of this sin are cruelly tormented by the evil spirits, as a kind of antichrists who have anticipated the power of Christ, who is to come to judge men, and who have made themselves judges of their neighbors, when they themselves are more worthy of condemnation. But in me, by the grace of Christ, they could find little of such sins, for I kept myself strictly all the days of my life, taking care neither to condemn nor to slander anyone, nor to mock anyone, nor to revile anyone; and if at times I heard someone condemning another, I paid little heed to the condemner, and if I added anything of my own to such conversation, it was only something that could not do my neighbor greater hurt; and even then I at once stopped and reproached myself for that little. Nevertheless, even such faults were set against me as sins by the tormentors. But the holy Angels ransomed me with what had been given by Saint Basil, and began to bear me upward with them.

And we came to the fourth toll-house, called the toll-house of gluttony. The evil spirits of this toll-house rushed out to meet us at once, rejoicing as though they had gained something. They were most hideous in appearance, representing all the abomination of gluttony and drunkenness; some of them held dishes and pans of food, others cups and jugs of drink, and I saw that that food and drink were like stinking

pus and unclean excrement. The demons who held them looked sated and drunken; they leaped about with various whistles and did all that drunkards and revellers usually do, mocking the souls of the sinners brought before them. Having barred our way and circled round us like dogs, they at once set before me all my past sins of gluttony: when I gave myself to excess in food and drink and ate beyond my strength and without any need; when like a swine I approached food in the morning without prayer and without the sign of the cross; or when on a fast day I sat down at table earlier than the rules of the Church statute permitted. They also displayed the cups and vessels from which I had drunk while indulging in drunkenness, and even named the number of cups I had drunk, saying:

"So many cups did she drink at such-and-such a feast and with such-and-such people; at another time and in another place she drank herself senseless with so many cups; moreover, so many times she feasted to the sound of pipes and other musical instruments, giving herself to dancing and songs, and after such feasts she was with difficulty brought home; thus she weakened herself through immoderate drunkenness."

Displaying all such and similar gluttonies, the demons exulted and rejoiced as though they already had me in their hands, and were already preparing to seize me and cast me down to the bottom of hell. I trembled, seeing myself accused by them and having nothing to answer them. But the holy Angels, taking a considerable share of what had been given by the Venerable Basil, paid a ransom for me. The demons, seeing this, were thrown into confusion and cried out:

"Woe to us, for our labor is lost, our hope is lost."

With these words they began to cast into the air the papers on which my sins were written. And I, seeing this, rejoiced and went on from there unhindered. As they bore me higher with them, the Angels spoke thus to one another:

"Truly this soul has great help from the servant of God Basil: if his labors and prayers did not aid her, she would have suffered great need in passing through the aerial toll-houses."

Then, taking courage, I said to the holy Angels:

"My lords, I think that none of those who live on earth knows what takes place here and what awaits the sinful soul after death."

The holy Angels answered me:

"Do not the Divine Scriptures, constantly read in the holy churches by the lips of the clergy, bear witness to all that takes place here? But those who are addicted to earthly vanity disregard all this, placing all the sweetness of life in daily gluttony and drunkenness: every day they eat immoderately and drink to excess, having put aside the fear of God; and having their belly in place of God, they do not think at all of the life to come and do not remember the word of God, which says: Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. 'Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep' (Lk. 6:25). They think with little faith that all that is said in the Divine Scripture is fable, and they disregard what is written, 'feasting with timbrels'[73], like the rich man in the Gospel, 'who feasted sumptuously every day' (Lk. 16:19). Yet those of them who are merciful to the poor, who do good to beggars and the needy and help those who require aid, receive from God forgiveness of their sins and pass through the toll-houses unhindered, by reason of their mercy; for Holy Scripture says: 'Almsgiving delivers from death' (Tob. 4:10). Thus those who practise almsgiving receive eternal life; but for those who do not strive to cleanse their sins by mercy, it is impossible to escape these trials, and they are seized by the gloomy tax-collectors whom you have seen; tormenting these souls cruelly, they cast them down into the lowest places of hell and hold them there in bonds until the Last Judgment of Christ. It would also be difficult for you to escape this fate, had you not received ransom from what was given you by the Venerable Basil."

While we spoke thus, we reached the fifth toll-house, called the toll-house of idleness, where every day and hour spent in idleness is examined, and those who live off the labor of others, doing nothing themselves, are tormented, as are hired workers who receive wages for work they do not properly perform. At this toll-house those who give no praise to God and are too idle on feast days and Sundays to attend Mat-

73. That is, to the sound of timpani and choral singing. The timpanum is a musical instrument struck with a stick, something like kettledrums and hand tambourines.

ins, the Divine Liturgy, and the other services of God are also tormented. Despondency and neglect of one's soul are examined there as well, and every manifestation of either is strictly called to account, so that very many people, both of worldly and spiritual rank, are cast from this toll-house into the abyss. At this toll-house I, too, was subjected to many examinations, and it would have been impossible for me to be free of its debts had my poverty not been supplied by what was given me by Venerable Basil; by this I was redeemed and set free.

After that we passed through the toll-house of theft. We were detained there also, but, having given a little, we soon passed through, for no sin of theft was found in me, except for a small offense I had committed in childhood through ignorance.

From there we came to the toll-house of love of money and avarice, but we passed through that one quickly, too. For, with the help of the Lord God, I did not strive to acquire great possessions and was not covetous, but was content with what the Lord sent me. I was not avaricious either, but gave diligently to those in need whatever I had.

As we ascended higher, we met the toll-house of usury, where every kind of usurer and robber is examined, as are all who lend their silver at interest and acquire riches by lawless means. The evil spirits of this toll-house diligently searched everything concerning me but found nothing of which I was guilty, and in their fury they gnashed their teeth at me. We went on higher, giving thanks to the Lord God.

After that we reached the toll-house of injustice, where all unrighteous judges who take bribes and acquit the guilty while condemning the innocent are tormented. There, too, the withholding of wages from hired laborers and every dishonest measure used by merchants are tormented, and every injustice is called to account. But by the grace of Christ we passed through that toll-house without great hindrance, giving the toll-collectors very little.

We also passed safely through the toll-house of envy that followed, giving nothing there, because I had envied no one. At this toll-house the sins of enmity and hatred were also examined, but by the grace of Christ I was found innocent of these sins as well. Seeing this, the

demons grew furious and gnashed their teeth at me, but I was not afraid of them and joyfully ascended higher.

In like manner I passed through the toll-house of pride, where the haughty and proud spirits call to account the sins of vainglory, self-conceit, and self-exaltation. There they diligently examine whether anyone has shown disrespect or disobedience to parents, or to elders who have received authority from God, as well as other sins of pride and self-conceit. There we laid down very little of what had been given by Venerable Basil, and I was set free.

Then we reached the toll-house of anger and rage. Although the aerial tormentors there were fierce, they received little from us, and we went on, rejoicing in the Lord God, who saves my sinful soul through the prayers of my Venerable Father, St. Basil.

After that we came to the toll-house of malice, where those who bear malice against their neighbor and repay evil for evil are mercilessly tormented and then cast down by the malicious spirits into Tartarus[74]. But the mercy of God helped me there, too; for I bore malice against no one and remembered no evil in response to the wrongs done to me, but was free of malice toward all who were hostile to me and, as far as I could, showed them love, overcoming evil with good. Thus no sin of malice was found in me at this toll-house, and the demons wept in fury, seeing that my soul was departing from them freely. We then began to ascend further, rejoicing in the Lord.

As I ascended higher and higher, I asked the holy Angels who were leading me:

"I beseech you, my lords, tell me: how do the fearsome aerial powers know of every evil deed of all the people who live in the world—for example, of my evil deeds—and not only those done openly, but even those committed in secret?"

And the holy Angels said to me:

"At holy Baptism every Christian receives from God the Guardian Angel appointed to him, who invisibly guards a person and guides him

to every good deed, day and night, throughout his life until the very hour of death, and records all the good deeds he performs throughout his life, so that in reward for them he may receive from God mercy and eternal recompense in the Heavenly Kingdom. In the same way, the prince of darkness, who desires to draw the human race into his own destruction, appoints one of the evil spirits to a person. This spirit follows him constantly, watching all his evil deeds from his youth onward, enticing him by its wiles to commit transgressions, and recording every evil thing he has done. Then, when the time comes to pass through the toll-houses, this evil spirit enters each sin in the toll-house corresponding to it; for this reason the aerial toll-collectors know all the sins people commit. And so, when the soul of any person is separated from the body and begins to depart to its Creator in the heavenly habitations, the evil spirits standing at the toll-houses bar its way, showing all its recorded sins. If more good deeds than sins are found in it, the demons will be powerless to detain it. But if more sins than good deeds are found in it, the demons detain it for a time and shut it up as though in a prison, where, by God's permission, they torment it until that soul receives release from their torments through the prayers of the Church and the alms given in its memory by its relatives. But if any soul is found to be so sinful and loathsome before God that it has no hope of salvation and eternal destruction awaits it, the demons cast such a soul at once into the abyss, where a place of eternal torment is prepared for them also; and they keep it in that abyss until the Second Coming of the Lord, after which it must suffer eternally in the Gehenna of fire[75], together with the body.

"It should also be noted that only those who are enlightened by faith and holy Baptism ascend by this way and undergo such torments. Un-

74. Tartarus is an immeasurable abyss, the infernal pit. This word is borrowed from Greek writings, in which Tartarus denotes the subterranean abyss never lit or warmed by the sun, where cold reigns fiercely. Among Christian writers this word denotes the place of unbearable cold to which the souls of sinful men will be sent.

believing pagans, Saracens[76], and all other adherents of other faiths do not go by this way. While still alive in the body, they are already dead in soul, buried in Hades; therefore, when they die, the demons immediately take their souls, which belong to them by right, without any great examination, and cast them down into the depths of Hades.

While the Angels were telling me all this, we entered the toll-house of murder, where not only robbery is examined, but every wound, every blow dealt anywhere, whether upon the shoulders or the head, as well as every slap or shove given in anger. All this is carefully examined and weighed at that toll-house; but we passed through it safely, laying down a little as ransom.

We also passed through the toll-house of sorcery, of poisoning with bewitched herbs, and of summoning demons for the purpose of witchcraft. The spirits of this toll-house were like four-footed reptiles, scorpions[77], serpents, vipers[78], and toads, and their appearance was exceedingly fearful and loathsome. But there, by the grace of Christ, no sin was found in me, and we passed through the toll-house at once, giving nothing to the evil toll-collectors. In their fury they shouted at me, saying:

"Now you will come to the toll-house of fornication. Let us see how you will escape it!"

As we ascended higher, I asked the holy Angels who were leading me:

75. Gehenna of fire is the place of eternal torments (Mt. 10:28; Jn. 8:6). This name derives from Hebrew words meaning the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, where children were burned in honor of Moloch (4 Kgdms. 16:3–4). After Josiah abolished this dreadful sacrifice (4 Kgdms. 23:10), the corpses of executed criminals, carrion and all manner of uncleanness were cast into the valley of Hinnom, and all of it was given over to fire. Hence we meet the expression gehenna of fire (see Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; Mt. 18:9; Mk. 9:47).

76. Saracens was originally the name of a nomadic robber tribe of Arabian Bedouins, and afterward Christian writers transferred this name to all Arabs and Muslims in general.

77. Scorpions are harmful, venomous animals of the arachnid family; they are found in the hot countries of Africa, India, Persia and elsewhere. The wounds inflicted by their stings cause the most dreadful torments and are often fatal.

78. A viper is a venomous snake. Its bite is very dangerous and in most cases ends in swift and inevitable death. In Holy Scripture and in other sacred books, serpents in general serve as an image of that which, by its nature, causes harm and destruction (Eccl. 10:11; Prov. 23:31–33; Mt. 7:10).

"My lords, do all Christians pass through these toll-houses, and can a person pass through them without any torment or fearful suffering?"

The holy Angels answered me:

"For the souls of the faithful there is no other way that leads up to heaven, and all travel this way; but not all undergo such torments as you did. Only sinners like you undergo them—those who made an incomplete confession of their sins before their spiritual father, being ashamed of their lawless deeds and concealing many of them. But if anyone confesses all his deeds sincerely and truthfully, concealing nothing, and repents with heartfelt contrition for all the transgressions he has committed, then, by the mercy of God, that person's sins are invisibly blotted out. And when his soul travels through the toll-houses, the aerial tormentors open their books and find no written record of his sins, and can do him no harm, so that his soul ascends without hindrance and in joy to the throne of grace. And if you had made a complete confession and repented of all your sins, you would not have endured such fearful torments at the toll-houses. But now you have been helped by the fact that long ago you ceased committing mortal sins and lived virtuously in the last years of your life; above all, you have been helped by the prayers of your Venerable Father Basil, whom you served long and diligently."

Thus conversing, we came to the toll-house of fornication, where is tried every act of fornication, every lewd thought and imagining, as well as passionate touches and lustful caresses. The prince of this toll-house sat upon his throne, clothed in a filthy and noisome garment, sprinkled with bloody foam, and a multitude of demons stood before him. Seeing me come near to them, they greatly marvelled; then, bringing forth the records of my fornicating deeds, they reproached me, pointing out with whom, when, and where I had sinned in my youth. I had nothing to answer them, and I trembled with fear, filled with shame. Then the Angels said to the demons:

"But she has not committed fornicating deeds for many years, and she has lived in chastity and abstinence, in fasting, through all the last years of her life."

The demons answered them:

"We know that she long ago turned away from the sin of fornication, but nevertheless she belongs to us, because she did not repent completely and with full sincerity before her spiritual father of the sins committed earlier, concealing much from him. Therefore either leave her to us, or ransom her with good deeds."

The Angels laid before them much of my good deeds, and still more of the gift of the Venerable Basil; and having barely escaped from the cruel calamity, I was carried away from there.

After that we reached the toll-house of adultery, in which are tried the sins of those who live in marriage and do not keep conjugal faithfulness but defile their marriage bed, as well as all manner of abductions of virgins for the purpose of their corruption, and all kinds of fornicating violence. Here also are tried the falls of those who have dedicated themselves to God and vowed to keep their life in purity and virginity, but afterward did not keep that vow. At this toll-house I too was convicted as an adulteress and had nothing to say in my own defence, so that the merciless tormentors, the foul and unclean spirits, were already about to snatch me from the hands of the Angels and cast me down to the bottom of hell. But the holy Angels entered into dispute with them and set forth all my subsequent labours and ascetic feats; and thus they redeemed me with all the good deeds that remained to me, which they laid there, every last one, leaving with them, however, a very great deal of what had been given through the Venerable Basil. All this they placed upon the scales against my iniquities, and taking me, they carried me onward.

Here we drew near to the toll-house of the sins of Sodom, in which are tried the unnatural sins of men and women, sodomy and bestiality, incest and other secret sins of which it is shameful even to remember. The prince of this toll-house had a very foul and hideous appearance and was entirely covered with fetid pus; his servants in everything were like him: their stench was exceedingly unbearable, their appearance loathsome and terrible, their fury and savagery excessive. Seeing us, they hastily came out to meet us and surrounded us, but finding in me, by the mercy of God, nothing by which they could draw me into their judgment, they ran back in shame; and we with joy went onward.

Ascending higher, the Angels said to me:

"You have seen, Theodora, the terrible and loathsome toll-houses of fornicating deeds. Know that few souls pass through these toll-houses unhindered, since the world lies in evil,[79] and people are very weak and from youth are prone to the sins of lust. Few, very few, are the people who mortify their fleshly passions, and therefore rarely does anyone pass through these toll-houses freely and unhindered; on the contrary, very many are those who, having come to this toll-house, perish there, for the tormentors of fornicating deeds snatch those who are prone to lust and cast them down into hell, subjecting them to the most cruel torments. The princes of the toll-houses of fornication even boast, saying: 'We alone, more than all the other aerial toll-collectors, fill up the number of those cast down to the bottom of hell, who thus, as it were, enter into kinship with us, sharing the same fate as we.' Therefore, Theodora, give thanks to God that, through the prayers of your Venerable Father Basil, you have passed beyond these toll-houses and shall no longer undergo any evil or know fear."

Meanwhile we approached the toll-house of heresies, where are tried perverse opinions about the faith, departures from the Orthodox confession of faith, unbelief, doubts concerning the truths of the divinely revealed teaching, blasphemies against the holy things, and similar sins. This toll-house I passed through without any trial and was already not far from the gates into the Heavenly Kingdom.

At last the malicious spirits of the final toll-house, called the toll-house of hardheartedness, met us. The tormentors of this toll-house are very cruel and fierce, but especially fierce is their prince, who has a most gloomy and sorrowful appearance, breathing fire of wrath and mercilessness. In that toll-house the souls of the merciless are tried without any mercy. And if anyone, though he has performed many feats, has constantly kept fasts and prayed diligently, and has also preserved his purity undefiled, yet proves to be unmerciful and has shut his heart against his neighbour, such a one is cast from there into hell and confined in the abyss, and thus remains himself deprived of mercy.[80]

79. The expression is borrowed from the first Catholic Epistle of the Apostle John (1 Jn. 5:19).

But by the grace of Christ we passed through this toll-house also without special hindrance, thanks to the prayers of the Venerable Basil, who gave us from his good deeds much for my redemption.

Having thus passed through all the terrible toll-houses, we drew with great joy near to the very gates of the Heavenly Kingdom. These gates were like bright crystal, and from them there issued forth an ineffable radiance; at the gates stood youths of light-like appearance, who, seeing me carried by the hands of the Angels, were filled with gladness, rejoicing that I had been delivered from the aerial toll-houses; and receiving us with love, they led us through the gates into the interior of the Heavenly Kingdom. What I saw and heard there, O child Gregory," continued the blessed Theodora, "it is impossible to recount in detail! I saw that 'eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man' (1 Cor. 2:9). At last I was brought before the throne of Divine glory, surrounded by Seraphim, Cherubim, and a multitude of heavenly hosts, who unceasingly glorify the Lord with ineffable hymns. There I fell down and worshipped the invisible and unknown God. And the heavenly powers sang a sweet-sounding hymn, glorifying the Divine mercy, which no human sins can overcome. And from the throne of Divine glory at that time there sounded a voice commanding the holy Angels who were leading me to show me all the dwellings of the saints in Paradise and all the torments of sinners, and afterward to settle me in the abode of the Venerable Basil. And the holy Angels led me everywhere, so that I saw many beautiful villages and dwellings, full of glory and grace, dwellings which had been prepared for those who love God. There I saw the dwellings of the Apostles, the Prophets, the Martyrs, the Venerable Ones, and others, each specially appointed for each order of the saints. Each dwelling was of ineffable beauty, and in breadth and length I would say it equalled Constantinople, yet it was incomparably more beautiful, having many bright mansions not made with hands. Everywhere in those dwellings there sounded a voice of joy and spiritual gladness, and there were seen the choirs of rejoicing righteous, who, seeing me, rejoiced over my salvation, received me with love and kissed

80. An allusion to the words of the Apostle James: "judgment without mercy to one who has shown no mercy" (Jas. 2:13).

me, glorifying the Lord who had delivered me from the nets of the enemies. Having completed the survey of the Paradise dwellings, I was conducted down into the nether regions[81] and saw the terrible and unbearable torments prepared in hell for sinners. Showing them to me, the holy Angels said:

"Behold, Theodora, from how cruel torments the Lord has delivered you, through the prayers of His holy servant Basil."

Passing along the abysses of hell, I heard and saw there the weeping, the wailing, and the bitter lamentation of those who abide in those torments. Some of them cried out: 'Woe to us!'; others sighed: 'Alas, how grievous it is for us!'; others cursed the day of their birth.

After all this the Angels who were leading me brought me to the dwelling of the Venerable Basil, which you see, and settled me here, saying:

"Now the Venerable Basil makes commemoration of you."

And I understood that I had come to this place of rest on the fortieth day after my separation from the body.[82]

All this the Venerable Theodora related to Gregory in a dream-vision, and showed him the beauty of the dwelling in which she was, and all its spiritual riches, gathered by many labours, and afterward the blessed father Basil.

Here the vision ended. When it ended, Gregory awoke from sleep and pondered much, marvelling at what he had seen and heard from the blessed Theodora. In the morning he went to the Venerable Basil to receive the customary blessing. The Venerable Basil asked him:

"Child Gregory, where were you this night?"

He, as though knowing nothing, answered:

"I slept, Father, upon my bed."

81. Nether means lower, low-lying, subterranean. By the nether parts of the earth are meant the abysses of Hades, which are represented as subterranean, in contrast to the heavenly abodes of Paradise.

82. On the fortieth day after the separation of the soul from the body, according to the teaching of the Church, the soul's passage through the aerial toll-houses ends, and a provisional judgment is pronounced upon it; after this it is established either in a place of joy or in a place of torment, where it remains until the time of the Second Coming of the Lord to earth and the final judgment of the Son of God over men.

The elder said to this:

"I know that bodily you were lying upon your bed, but in spirit you were in another place. Or have you forgotten what God revealed to you this night in a dream-vision? Behold, you have received what you so greatly desired: you saw Theodora, heard from her own mouth of her passage into the future life, and were in my dwelling, which by the grace of Christ is prepared for me because of my small labours. Thus you have beheld all that you wished to know."

Hearing such words, Gregory understood that his dream was not an empty fancy but a true revelation from God, obtained through the prayers of the Venerable One; then, giving thanks to God, he bowed before his spiritual father, after which he received from him instruction suited to the occasion.

The same Gregory, at another time, by the permission of God, fell into a certain doubt concerning the faith. Diligently reading the books of the Old Testament, he conceived a thought in his mind that the Jews believed rightly, and he remained in this thought for a considerable time. The prophetic elder, perceiving in spirit that Gregory had fallen into temptation, rebuked him, and after much admonition he again besought a revelation for him from God. And behold, Gregory again saw a wondrous vision, in which before his spiritual eyes there stood the image of the accomplishment of the Last Judgment of God. He saw the eternal Judge seated upon the throne, the righteous standing at the right hand of the Judge, and the sinners standing at the left and being judged according to their deeds. There were also Jews and pagans there, and Gregory saw the Jews condemned together with the pagans and cast down into Gehenna. Together with the condemnation of the sinners, Gregory beheld also the glorification of the righteous, and all this he afterwards described very extensively. This description can be found in the Great Menaion-Reader[83], where the life of our blessed father Basil and all the visions of his disciple Gregory are depicted in

83. The reference is to the Great Menaion-Chetii of the All-Russian Metropolitan Macarius (1543–1564). They are called Great because they represent a complete collection of all kinds of articles of historical and moral content, adapted to feast days and the commemorations of the saints. The Menaion-Chetii of St. Demetrius of Rostov in many places represents an abridgment of the narrative set forth in the Great Chetii-Menaia of Macarius.

detail; but it is for us to conclude our narrative, which is presented here in abridged form.

Amid the labours and ascetic struggles of a long life, filled with wonderworking and prophecy, our Venerable Father Basil drew near to the time of his departure to heaven. His end came in advanced years. For he had been brought to Constantinople when he was already no small number of years old, and in Constantinople he lived about fifty years, so that in all he lived about a hundred years, after which he passed into eternal life, and thy years shall not fail (Heb. 1:12)[84]. The Venerable Basil was granted to foresee his death and foretold it to his beloved disciple Gregory. This took place under the following circumstances.

Gregory had the custom of shutting himself up in his house for the whole of the holy Great Lent and remaining in it without leaving, abiding in fasting and prayer, making many prostrations and passing all the nights without sleep. And so once, as the approach of Lent drew near, Gregory came to the Venerable to receive from him, as was customary, a blessing for the forthcoming ascetic struggle of fasting in seclusion. The Venerable, instructing him in a lengthy conversation about the soul and giving him his blessing, said at last:

"Go, child, in peace to your house; but me you shall no more see with your bodily eyes in this life."

And embracing Gregory, the Venerable kissed him with love.

Gregory, falling at the saint's feet, bathed them with his tears, weeping and sobbing over his separation from him; then he went to his home and, as was his custom, shut himself up for the whole fast. The Venerable Basil, however, in the middle week of the fast[85], on March 25, on the very day of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, yielded up his holy soul into the hands of God[86]; and his honourable

84. The expression is borrowed from the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews, though there these words refer to God and speak of His eternity.

85. In the Church Typikon the middle (fourth) week of Great Lent is called the Mid-Lent week (Sredopostnaya sedmitsa); this same week is also called the Week of the Veneration of the Cross.

86. St. Basil the New reposed during the reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, near the middle of the tenth century.

body was buried in the monastery of the holy martyrs Florus and Laurus.

After that, a vision was granted to a certain pious man who lived in Constantinople. He saw a great and beautiful house, whose gates were adorned with gold and precious stones, and above them there was an inscription which read: "The dwelling and eternal rest of the blessed Basil the New." Having read this inscription, the man began to marvel at the beauty of the building. Then a beautiful youth came out of it and said to the pious Constantinopolitan:

"Why do you marvel so! Behold, you shall see something still more wondrous."

With these words he opened the gates of the building, and before the eyes of the astonished man there appeared very lofty and beautiful halls, whose beauty surpasses everything that can possibly be imagined. In one of the halls he saw the Venerable Basil, sitting amid great glory upon a royal throne and surrounded by many bright men and youths. There were also beautiful gardens to be seen, filled with everything that can gladden and delight the human heart. And a voice was heard coming from within: "Such is the recompense that all who have loved God and zealously served Him receive after their repose."

That man recounted this vision to many, and all who heard it glorified God, honouring the memory of the servant of God, our Venerable Father Basil the New.

May we too be made worthy of the lot of those who love God, through the prayers of St. Basil, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

* * *

NOTES

2144. Antioch in Syria: one of the ancient and wealthiest cities of Syria, its capital, lies on the river Orontes, about 10 versts from its outflow into the Mediterranean Sea, between the mountain ranges of Lebanon and Taurus; it was founded 300 years before Christ by Seleucus Nicator and named after Antiochus, his father. For the Christian Church Antioch has especial importance, as the second great centre of Christianity after

Jerusalem and as the mother of the Churches from among the pagans. The famous Church of Antioch was first planted by the holy Apostles Paul and Barnabas, and afterwards confirmed also by the Apostle Peter. In Antioch there were numerous notable councils of the shepherds of the Church during the heretical (Arian and Nestorian) disputes. The Church of Antioch from ancient times enjoyed especial prerogatives, on a level with the Churches of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople and Rome; its bishops had the title and privilege of patriarch. At present Antioch is under Turkish rule and presents a small and poor town, in which up to 10,000 inhabitants are counted.

2194. The toll-houses (*mytarstva*) are something like barriers or customs posts which the souls of the dead encounter on their way as they ascend to the Throne of the Heavenly Judge. At them stand the spirits of malice, who exact from every soul guilty of a certain sin a kind of toll or ransom, consisting in presenting to them a good deed opposite to that sin. The names *mytarstva* and *mytari* (toll-collectors) are borrowed from Jewish history. Among the Jews, *mytari* were persons appointed by the Romans to collect taxes. They usually took the collection of these duties on lease and used every kind of measure, not shrinking even from torture, in order to extract the greatest profit for themselves. The *mytari* stood at special customs houses, or barriers, collecting duties on goods being transported. These barriers were called *mytnitsy*, *mytarstva*. Christian writers transferred this name also to the places of aerial torment, where the souls ascending to the Throne of the Heavenly Judge are detained by evil spirits, who seek to convict them of all kinds of sins and through this to bring them down to hell. The essence of the teaching about the toll-houses is set forth in the word of St. Cyril of Alexandria (†444) on the departure of the soul, usually placed in the Following Psalter. "When our soul is separated from the body," it says here, "there will appear before us, on the one hand, the hosts and powers of heaven, and on the other, the authorities of darkness, the aerial toll-collectors, the accusers of our deeds. Seeing them, the soul will shudder and tremble, and in confusion and terror will seek protection from the Angels of God; but even when received by the Angels and, under their shelter, passing through the aerial space and rising on high, it will meet various toll-houses, which will bar its way to the kingdom and will stop and hold back its striving toward it. At each of these toll-houses an account will be demanded for particular sins... Every passion, every sin will have its toll-collectors and tormentors. Moreover, the Divine powers will be present, and the host of unclean spirits; and as the former will represent the virtues of the soul, the verdict of the invisible Judge by the demons into their dark abodes. Thus the toll-houses are nothing other than a particular judgment, which the Lord Himself performs invisibly over human souls through the ministry of Angels, permitting also the accusers of our brethren (Rev. 12:10), the evil spirits, to take part in it—a judgment at which the soul is reminded of all its deeds and they are impartially evaluated, and after which a certain fate is determined for it. This judgment is called particular, in distinction from the general judgment, which will be performed over all men at the end of the world, when the Son of Man shall come again to earth in His glory. In the Life of Venerable Basil the New, all the details of this particular judgment at the toll-houses are depicted. In reading all these details, however, one must remember that, just as in the depiction of the objects of the spiritual world for us, clothed in flesh, features more or less sensuous

are unavoidable, so, in particular, they are unavoidably admitted also in the detailed teaching about the toll-houses which the human soul passes after separation from the body. Therefore one must firmly remember the instruction which an Angel gave to Venerable Macarius of Alexandria (†391) when he began to speak to him about the toll-houses: 'Take earthly things here as the weakest image of heavenly ones.' The toll-houses must be imagined not in a coarse, sensuous sense, but, as far as possible for us, in a spiritual one, and one should not cling to the particulars, which in different writers and in different accounts within the Church itself, while the basic idea of the toll-houses is one, are presented differently."



THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF MARCH

March 27

27 марта

New Calendar March 27 · Old Calendar April 9 (civil dates)

Life of our Venerable Father John the Seer, Hermit and Recluse of Egypt

Житие преподобного отца нашего Иоанна Прозорливого, пустынника и затворника Египетского

In the Egyptian city of Lycopolis[1] there lived a certain man named John, who from his youth practiced the craft of carpentry. When John reached the age of twenty-five, he resolved to renounce the world; thereafter, for fifteen years, he labored in monastic struggles in various monasteries. Then, seeking a solitary place for the ascetic struggles of a desert life, he withdrew to a mountain called Wolf Mountain, not far from Lycopolis. There he built three cells for himself beneath one roof, set close beside one another, and shut himself within them for the struggles of fasting and prayer: in one cell he prayed, in another he practiced a handicraft, and the third served him for eating and sleeping. The saint remained in such seclusion for fifty years, until the very end of his life, never leaving his cell, but taking food and conversing with those who came to him through a small window.

When thirty years of St. John's dwelling in this seclusion had passed, he was deemed worthy by the Lord to receive the gift of prophecy. The saint foretold many things to Emperor Theodosius: namely, that he would defeat the persecutor of Christians, Maximus, and take

1. Lycopolis is one of the most ancient cities of Middle Egypt. The name Lycopolis in antiquity, as now, properly belonged to Asyut. Asyut was the sacred city of the ancient Egyptians. The Egyptian deities Anubis and Wepwawet, the patrons of this city, were depicted here with jackal heads; because of this circumstance the Greeks came to call the city Lycopolis (Gr. *lykos* – wolf, jackal). In antiquity Asyut was an important political and commercial centre (the city lay on the left bank of the Nile river). Christianity penetrated here in the 3rd century. At present Asyut is one of the most bustling cities of Egypt, with a population of up to 30,000.

possession of Gaul[2]; that he would also defeat the persecutor of Christians, Eugenius; and that thereafter he would end his life and hand over the empire to his sons. Through the saint's such foresight, his fame as a holy man spread everywhere, and Emperor Theodosius himself held him as a prophet.

At the beginning of John's ascetic struggles in the desert, a certain voivode came to him and asked the saint whether he would defeat the Ethiopians who had come to the city of Syene[3]. Venerable John bade him go against the Ethiopians without fear, and said that he would defeat them and be rewarded with honors by the emperor. Everything happened as St. John had foretold. After this event, the emperor learned of the saint, and whenever he set out on a campaign against his enemies, he would ask the saint for his prayers and a prophecy concerning the success of the campaign.

St. John had great grace in foretelling the future, as the fathers who struggled alongside him reported (so remarks Palladius[4], the author of the Venerable John's Life); the holy life of these fathers, filled with virtues, assures us of the truth of their words. Here are several examples of the saint's wondrous foresight.

A certain tribune[5], coming to the saint, asked permission for his wife, who greatly wished to see him, to come to him. St. John would not consent, for he did not wish either to see women or to be seen by them, since he conversed even with men only through a small window. But when the tribune had long and persistently entreated the saint about this, the saint, seeing his wife's faith and promising to appear to her in a dream, said to the tribune:

"This very night I shall appear to her, so that she will no longer entreat me to show myself to her bodily eyes."

2. Gaul – present-day France – a country bounded by the Mediterranean Sea, the Pyrenees, the Atlantic Ocean, the river Rhine and the Alps.

3. The city of Syene was situated not far from Lycopolis and lay on the eastern bank of the Nile. This city was notable in antiquity as the location of enormous deposits of granite. At present Syene bears the name Aswan or Assuan and has 4,000 inhabitants.

4. Palladius, a contemporary of John the Seer, left us a description of the lives of many ascetics in his work "Historia Lausiaca" (Lausaic History).

5. Tribune – a military commander; properly, the commander of a *tribus* (tribe), a group or division of the Roman army.

The tribune conveyed the Venerable's words to his wife.

And indeed, the tribune's wife saw the saint in a dream that night. He came to her and said:

"What have I to do with thee, woman?" (Jn. 2:4). Why did you wish to see my face? Am I a prophet? Am I a holy man? I am a sinful man, subject to the same passions as all other people. But I entreated God that it might be according to your faith and the faith of your husband.

Having said this, the saint withdrew from the woman.

When the tribune's wife awoke, she told her husband the words the saint had spoken to her in the dream, and described the saint's face and clothing to him. Then she asked her husband to thank the saint for the mercy he had shown her. When the woman's husband came to the Venerable's cell, before he had time to say a single word to the saint, the latter said to him:

"Behold, I have fulfilled your request and appeared to your wife in a dream, so that she will no longer entreat me to show myself to her bodily eyes."

On another occasion, a certain commander, whose wife was pregnant and nearing the time of childbirth, came to St. John and asked him to pray for himself and his wife. It happened that, at the very time the commander came to the saint, his wife was in great distress from labor and near death. Venerable John said to the man:

"If you knew the mercy of God, who grants you a son, you would glorify God; but the child's mother is near death. When you leave me, you will find the child already seven days old.[6] Name him John, and when he reaches the age of seven, send him into the desert to the monks for the ascetic struggles."

St. John gave such and similar prophecies to many people who came to him from distant places. Likewise, the Venerable foretold many things that were to come to pass to his fellow citizens, the inhabitants of Lycopolis, who constantly came to him for the benefit of their souls. He revealed to them both what was to happen in the future and what

6. Evidently it was a seven days' journey from the military commander's place of residence to the monastery of Venerable John.

someone had done in secret, unknown to others. Venerable John foretold, for example, the flooding of the Nile River,[7] and years of abundant harvests; likewise, the saint foretold the punishments of God that were to come and rebuked those who, by their sins, brought down God's wrath upon the land.

Although St. John himself did not work healings in person, he gave the sick blessed oil, and when they anointed themselves with it, they were healed of their illnesses. For example, the wife of a Roman senator, who had lost her sight and had cataracts in her eyes, asked her husband to take her to the Venerable for healing. But her husband told her that no woman had ever come to St. John, and that women in general could not see St. John. The woman nevertheless entreated her husband at least to convey to the saint her request that he pray to God for her. Her husband fulfilled her request. After this, St. John sent the woman a little blessed oil, with which she anointed her eyes three times a day. On the third day thereafter, the woman regained her sight and glorified God.

In the Nitrian Desert[8] there were seven hermits: I (so relates Palladius, the author of St. John's Life), and the disciples of Evagrius, Alvianus, and Ammon. They all wished to learn more about St. John's virtuous life, and Evagrius said:

"I will go first and learn from someone about St. John's life. But even if I learn nothing about him, I will go no farther than the mountain of Lycopolis."

Hearing this, I—Palladius relates—rested for one day; and on the next, without telling anyone, putting my trust in God, I went to the Thebaid.[9] When I came to the mountain and to John's cell, his disciples told me that from Sunday until Saturday the Venerable received none of those who came to converse with him. Therefore I had to wait until Saturday. On Saturday, at the second hour of the day, I went to the saint's cell and found him sitting by the window and conversing with

7. The river Nile periodically overflowed and flooded Egypt, which was very important for the Egyptians engaged in agriculture, since the river's inundations served as the chief, if not the exclusive, source of irrigation of the soil.
8. This desert was located in Lower Egypt.
9. The Thebaid was located in Middle Egypt.

those who had come to him. After greeting me, the Venerable asked me through one of his disciples:

"Where have you come from, and why? It seems to me that you are from Evagrius's monastery."

While we were conversing, the commander of that region, named Alypius, came to the Venerable. John interrupted his conversation with me, and I moved a little away from him so as not to hinder his conversation with the commander. Because the Venerable conversed with the commander for quite some time, I took offense and began inwardly to judge the honorable elder, who, having disregarded me, showed honor to the commander. Having reached the utmost limit of impatience, I was already preparing to leave the Venerable without taking my leave. But St. John, discerning my thoughts, called one of his disciples, named Theodore, and said to him:

"Go and tell that brother not to be angry, for I shall dismiss the voivode presently and speak with him."

When these words were conveyed to me, I was greatly astonished that Venerable John had perceived my thoughts, and became convinced that he was a holy and discerning man.

When the commander left John, the saint called me and said:

"Why were you angry with me? Did you find anything in me that was offensive to you? Why did you think of me something that neither you nor I ought even to entertain in thought? Have you not read what is said in the Holy Scriptures: 'They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick' (Mt. 9:12)? I can always find you whenever I wish, and you will always find me whenever you wish; and even if I did not comfort you, other brothers and fathers would comfort you. But the commander, having given himself over to worldly cares and being under the power of the devil, has only for a little while come to know the truth. Like a slave escaping from a cruel master, he has come to me, fleeing from the devil, so that he may receive benefit for his soul from me. It would be unjust of me, without paying attention to him, to continue speaking with you, since you always care for your own salvation."

Having heard this, I—Palladius relates—became fully convinced that he was a holy man, and began to ask him to pray for me. And, conversing with me affectionately and lightly touching my left cheek with his right hand, he said to me:

Many sorrows await you ahead, and you have already endured a hard struggle, contending with your desire to leave the desert. You did not give way to that desire, although the devil put before you a plausible pretext for leaving the desert, reminding you of the love of your father and brother for you. I will bring you good news: both your father and your brother are alive, and both have renounced the world; your father will live yet seven years. And you, arming yourself with courage, continue to labor in the desert, and do not think of returning from here to your homeland, for it is written: "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62).

Hearing the words of the saint and strengthened by them for the ascetic labors, I (says Palladius) gave thanks to God, who through this holy man had disclosed to me the snares of the devil and helped me to overcome them. On another occasion the Venerable Father, conversing with me kindly, asked me:

"Would you like to be a bishop?"

I answered him:

"No, for I am already a bishop."

The saint then asked me:

"In what city are you bishop?"

I answered him:

"I oversee[10] the kitchen, the refectory, the tents, the vats. I taste, for example, the wine, and if it is sour I pass it by, but if it is sweet I drink it. I also look into the pots of food, and if somewhere salt or other seasonings are lacking, I add these seasonings to the food, and then I eat the food, which has become delicious from the seasoning. I do the same in other cases as well, always choosing for myself the best. This is my episcopate, to which self-indulgence has appointed me."

The Venerable Father, smiling, said to me:

10. "I oversee" – in Greek *episkopein*, and hence the word "bishop" (*episkopos*), that is, overseer, guardian.

"Stop jesting, for you will indeed be a bishop and will have to bear many labors and sorrows. If you wish to avoid these labors and sorrows, do not leave the desert, for here in the desert no one can make you a bishop."

Having left the Venerable Father, I (Palladius relates) went to my desert, to the place of my permanent residence, and told all the brethren about the honorable and holy man, the Venerable John. But I, a sinner, afterwards forgot the words the holy John had spoken concerning me. Three years after this I fell ill with a stomach ailment and went, on the advice of the brethren, to Alexandria[11] to the physicians. But since my illness did not pass and grew ever worse, the Alexandrian physicians advised me to go to Palestine, since the climate there is warm and healthful. Having gone to Palestine, I stayed there a short time, and, having somewhat recovered from my illness, I went from there to Bithynia[12], and there, I no longer remember how—whether by human will or by the will of God, God knows how—I was deemed worthy of the episcopal rank. After this I fell into sorrow, for this rank was beyond my strength. Then I remembered the prophecy of the Venerable John concerning me, but by this time the Venerable Father had already died. I then recalled what the Venerable Father had said to me when he exhorted me to remain in the desert:

"For forty years I have dwelt in this cell, and in all that time I have not seen the face of a woman, nor any coin, nor anyone eating or drinking; likewise no one has seen me eating or drinking."

After that conversation with the holy John, when I had returned (Palladius relates) to my usual place, and when I had told the brethren and fathers all that I had seen and heard from the saint, all of us, seven in number, went to the Venerable Father two months later.

When we came to the monastery of the Venerable John, he received us kindly, greeting each of us individually with a smile upon his face.

11. Alexandria – the most famous Egyptian city in antiquity in commercial and educational respects, situated on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. In the history of the Christian Church Alexandria is known as a place of religious disputes and the birthplace of many heretics. At present Alexandria bears the Turkish name “Iskanderi” and is a fairly large commercial and administrative centre.

12. Bithynia – a region of Asia Minor.

As soon as we arrived, we began to entreat the saint to pray for us, as is the custom of the Egyptian ascetics. But he asked us:

"Is there not a cleric among you?"

We all said to him:

"There is no one."

Looking attentively at each of us, the saint recognized among us one cleric who was concealing himself, for one of us was a deacon, and none of us knew that he was a deacon except one brother. But that cleric, concealing his rank out of humility, had forbidden the brother who knew his rank to speak of it, that he was a deacon, because, striving to imitate the holy ascetics, he considered himself unworthy even to bear the name of Christian. The Venerable John, pointing with his hand at this brother, said:

"This is the deacon."

But when this brother denied that he had the rank of deacon, the holy John, stretching out his hand through the little window through which he conversed with us, took the deacon brother by the right hand, kissed it, and said to him:

"Do not reject the grace of God. Do not lie, brother, by concealing God's gift, for lying must be alien to Christians; it cannot be praised in you, whether it be great or small, for, as the Savior says, a lie is from the devil: the devil is a liar and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44)."

The deacon, rebuked by the Venerable Father, was silent, listening attentively to the holy man's instruction.

When we had all offered prayer (Palladius relates), one of the brethren, who was suffering from a fever, asked the Venerable John to heal him. The Venerable Father told the brother that this illness was beneficial for his soul, but nevertheless he commanded that the brother be anointed with consecrated oil, desiring to cure not so much his illness as his little faith. Soon after this the brother became completely well.

We were also deemed worthy to see the Venerable John (Palladius relates) when he had reached ninety years of age; his body was so wasted by the labors of fasting that his beard did not even grow. He ate nothing except the fruits of trees, and that only after sunset. Having

accustomed himself to asceticism from his tender years, in his old age he never ate bread or any other food prepared over fire.

When he invited us to sit, we gave thanks to God, who had deemed us worthy to see the Venerable Father and to converse with him. He, receiving us as his beloved children, said to us, with a smile on his face:

"Whence have you come, children? From what country have you come to me, a sinful and humble man?"

We, naming the place of our homeland and pointing out our permanent dwelling in the Nitrian desert, said that we had come from Jerusalem precisely in order to see, for the good of our souls, the saint about whom we had heard much from others.

The Blessed John then said to us:

"Beloved children! What marvel did you hope to see when you undertook so difficult a journey? What benefit will it be to you to see a sinful, humble man who has nothing worthy of wonder? There are holy prophets and apostles worthy of wonder and praise, whose writings are read in the churches; it is they whom one should marvel at and imitate, not me. I was greatly astonished to see your zeal, which moved you to come to us from afar for the good of your souls, disregarding the dangers of so difficult a road. We, through our own sloth, do not even go out of our cells. Yet remember that even if your undertaking were worthy of praise and approval, you yourselves must not consider yourselves people who have done anything good and laudable; imitate, to the measure of your strength, the virtuous life of the fathers, and if you fulfil everything (which, however, rarely happens), do not trust in yourselves and do not boast of yourselves. There are many people who, having attained perfection in virtue and grown proud, have fallen from the heights into the abyss. Watch carefully: whether your prayers are fervent, whether the purity of your heart is unviolated, whether your mind is occupied with alien thoughts during prayer; observe whether you have renounced the world with your whole soul; do not go about observing the virtues of others while at the same time taking pride in your own virtues; and take care to set a good example before other people. Take heed that you do not imagine yourselves righteous, and do not grow proud of any good deed of yours; take care that during prayer

thoughts of worldly things do not come into your heads, for nothing is more senseless than to converse with God with the lips while the mind is far from Him. This often happens with those who do not so much renounce the world as take care to please the world. A man who thinks of many things gives himself over to cares about the worldly and corruptible; but, given over to care for worldly things, a man can no longer see God with his spiritual eyes. A man who always thinks of God must have no thoughts of all that is worldly and vain, according to what is written in Holy Scripture: 'Be still, and know that I am God' (Ps. 45:11). To that man who has attained some knowledge of God (no one can attain full knowledge of God), the mysteries of God are revealed, and he sees the future as the present, and, like the saints, works miracles and receives by his prayer all that he asks of God."

This and much else the Venerable John said to the brethren who came to him, consoling and instructing them as a father instructs his children. Then he related to them several stories about men who had grown proud and had imagined great things of themselves; among other things he related to them the following tale:

– Some monk labored in the outer desert[13], living in a cave, supporting himself by the labor of his hands, unceasingly praying to God and advancing in the virtues. Aware that he lived a pure and virtuous life, this monk grew proud; he began to regard himself as a righteous and holy man, and thought of himself that he would never again fall into sin. By God's permission, one late evening a demon came to this monk, having taken the appearance of a beautiful woman, as though she had lost her way in the desert. The supposed woman, finding the door of the cave open, entered, and falling at the monk's feet, begged him to let her into the cave, pointing out that night had already come. The monk, taking pity on the woman, admitted her into his cave, not fearing temptation, for he greatly trusted in his own strength. The monk asked the newcomer whence she came and how she had lost her way in the desert. The demon, having taken the form of a woman, conversed with the monk at length, enticing him to sin. The monk, listening attent-

13. The desert of the Egyptian hermits was divided into two parts: the inner and the outer. The first was situated farther inland, while the latter lay nearer to the river Nile.

ively, already began to incline toward sin; after many lewd conversations and mutual laughter, the monk was more and more troubled in his thoughts; the flame of lust kindled within him more and more, and he was already about to commit iniquity, when suddenly that woman, crying out loudly, vanished from his hands like a shadow and became invisible. Immediately afterward, a voice of many demons was heard in the air, mocking the monk and reproaching him with such words:

– "He who exalts himself shall be cast down; you have exalted yourself to heaven, and therefore you are now cast down to hell."

Seeing himself mocked, the monk fell into despair and, leaving his cell and the desert, returned to the world: such a fall was brought about by his high opinion of himself.

Teaching repentance, and reasoning that just as the demons lead us to despair and perdition, so we too can overcome them, so that they will no longer be able to prevail over us, the Venerable John offered the following account:

– In a certain city there lived a young man who had committed many very grievous sins, but afterward this young man, under the influence of the fear of God, repented. In order to lament his former sinful life, he went to the cemetery, and here he fell to the ground, not daring to call upon God or to pray because of the multitude of his sins. Then the young man entered a grave and shut himself up there, weeping and grieving over his sins. When the young man had spent seven days in the grave, the demons who had previously drawn him into sin came to him and cried out loudly:

– Woe to you, foul and impious one, glutted with fornication, who have so unexpectedly become a virtuous man and our enemy! What good do you expect for yourself, after you have filled yourself with our filth? Why do you not rise from the grave and go with us to your usual affairs? Fornicators and drunkards are impatiently waiting for you! Why do you not go to satisfy your lust, since you now have nothing left to hope for in salvation? Now you are ours, because you have done every sinful deed, and in vain do you wish to escape from us: you will not now be freed from our hands!

The young man made no answer to the demons, not wishing even to listen to them, but all the while he wept over his sins. For a long time the demons spoke these and similar words to the young man, trying to draw him into sin; but when they saw that he did not fear them and did not think of fleeing from the cemetery, they began to beat him severely and were about to put him to death altogether, had this not been forbidden them by God. Then the demons departed from the young man, leaving him barely alive. He, having lain on the ground for a long time as one dead, as soon as he came to himself, again began to weep and sob over his sins. When his relatives, who had sought him in all places, found him in the cemetery, they implored him to return home; but he would not even listen to them, saying that he was resolved rather to die than to return to his former life.

On the following night the demons again approached the young man, saying the same things as the first time, and again tormenting him; then the demons departed from the young man. And on the third night the demons made an attempt to overcome the invincible one, but, despairing of success, they fled from him, pursued by his patience; and in their flight the demons cried out:

– You have conquered, you have conquered, you have conquered us!

Thus repentance joined with humility, and patience joined with courage, brought the demons to despair, and they could no longer do the young man any harm.

The young man spent the rest of his life in the ascetic labors of virtue, and became for many sinners who despaired of their salvation a model of true repentance.

Discoursing on high-mindedness, which casts a man into the abyss of perdition and deprives him of the grace of God, and on humble-wisdom, which raises a man to God, the Venerable John offered the following account:

– There was a monk who lived in the inner desert, who had spent many years of his life in virtue, but in his old age was subjected to temptation, through the cunning of the demons, and was nearly destroyed because of his high-mindedness. This monk labored in great silence, spending all his days and nights in prayers, in singing psalms and

in contemplation of God. For his virtuous life he was even granted divine visions, some of which he had while awake and others in sleep (though his sleep was very brief and light, so that it can scarcely be called sleep). This monk so zealously strove for a bodiless life that he took no thought whatever for food for the body; he neither tilled the earth nor cultivated garden trees; trusting wholly in God, since he had settled in the desert he never had any care as to how or with what to nourish his body. Having left all earthly attachments, he burned with desire to draw near to God, awaiting with impatience his departure from this corruptible world.

Constantly dwelling in thought upon invisible and heavenly things, this monk spent a long time in virtuous life; his body never grew weary from his ascetic life, and his soul was never troubled by the difficulty of his labors. His life was set, as it were, in a certain convenient middle ground between fleshly and bodiless existence; this monk was, as it were, neither wholly bodiless nor wholly fleshly.

For his virtuous life this monk was rewarded by God in that bread was brought to him by an invisible hand: on entering his cave he found on his table pure bread in an amount sufficient for two or three days. When this monk felt the need to sustain himself with food, after praying to God he partook of that bread, and then satisfied his soul with hymn-singing, constantly abiding in prayer and contemplation of God, improving day by day and surrendering himself wholly to the hope of future blessings. And already he began to think of his recompense and reward from God for his virtuous life, imagining this recompense as though it were already in his hands; but this very thing was the cause of his fall.

It came into his mind that he was more worthy before God than others and had more right than all other men to receive from God grace and heavenly blessings; at the same time he thought within himself that in no case could he now fall into sin and abandon so lofty a virtuous life.

As the monk thus reasoned about himself, there soon arose in him at first a slight dejection; then sloth began to develop, and soon dejection and sloth fully took hold of him: he began to rise from sleep and to

sing psalms later and later each day, and his prayers grew shorter each day. His thought told him that he must rest a little, and he yielded to his thought and was troubled in heart; making an effort, he overcame his sloth and the disturbance of his thoughts, but afterward he again gave himself over to his former disturbance and sloth.

After the customary prayers, entering his cave one day, he again found on the table the bread invisibly sent to him from God, but no longer as pure as before. Having strengthened his body with the bread, this monk did not cast off impure thoughts, did not recognize that by them he was harming his soul, and did not seek a remedy for this first wound, considering it a trifle to keep sinful thoughts and to take delight in them.

On the next day, after the customary prayers and psalmody, in the evening, coming into his cave in order to refresh himself with food, he again found the bread, but now dirty and unclean, at which he greatly marveled and over which he grieved greatly; nevertheless, taking the bread, he ate it and strengthened his powers with it.

When the third night came, he added another evil to the evil already present: impure thoughts troubled him more and more, and he was so disturbed by the lust of fornication that he imagined himself lying beside a woman.

When the night was over, in the morning this monk performed his customary prayer rule, already greatly troubled by impure thoughts. In the evening he entered the cell in order to eat bread, but found it not only unclean but as though gnawed by mice and dogs, for only scraps of the bread lay scattered on the floor. Then the monk sighed and shed tears, but he was not so contrite in heart as was needed to overcome impure thoughts and the lust of fornication. Picking up the crumbs of bread lying on the floor, he ate a small part of them; not satisfied with them, he lay down to sleep. Immediately his head was filled with a multitude of impure and vain thoughts, drawing him from the desert into worldly life; at the same time fleshly lust blazed up strongly within him, and he could no longer struggle with himself.

By the permission of God (who allowed this for a time, to turn the monk from his high-mindedness), that monk rose from his bed and in

the night set out into the desert, hoping to meet with some secular settlement somewhere.

When day came and the sun began to beat down unbearably, the old man grew weary from the road, since he was no longer young, and the way he had chosen was still far from its end. He therefore looked about him to see whether there was a monastery anywhere where he might rest. It happened, by the providence of God, that a certain monastery met him on his way. When the old man entered it, the brethren of that monastery received him very kindly and with honor, as though he were some great ascetic: they washed his face and bathed his feet, and after a prayer they offered him, out of love, to partake of something from what was set before them. When the old man had somewhat refreshed himself, the brethren begged him to give them a word of instruction on how they might be delivered from the snares of the devil and how one may overcome impure thoughts.

The old man began to teach them, instructing them as a father instructs his children, and exhorting them to be steadfast and courageous in their labors, since before long they would be given rest from their toils in the dwellings of Christ. He spoke much else to the monks, teaching them to be steadfast in the labors of asceticism.

When the old man had finished his discourse and lay down to rest for a while in a secluded place, he began to reflect on why he taught others while taking no care at all for himself; he offered others a conversation for the benefit of their souls, yet tempted himself; he guided others on the path of salvation, while he himself withdrew ever further from salvation and was drawn toward perdition.

Reflecting thus, the old man recognized that he had been overcome by impure thoughts, and afterward he returned again to the desert, no longer walking quietly, but as though running back to his former dwelling place, weeping over his fall and saying: "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul would soon have dwelt in hell" (Ps. 93:17). And there was fulfilled in that monk what the Wise Man had said: "A brother helped by a brother is like a strong and high city, and a kingdom is established as on a foundation" (Prov. 18:20).

From that time the monk was wholly amended and cleansed of his sin; shutting himself up in his cave, he fell to the earth, sprinkling his head with earth, weeping and sobbing for many days, and that old man did not rise until he was informed by an Angel that God had accepted his repentance. But although his repentance was accepted, he no longer received the bread that God had previously sent him, and he had to feed himself by the labor of his hands. Thus does high-mindedness humble a man!

When the Venerable John had finished this story, he said to the brethren who had come to him:

"Be always humble, children, in great things as in small, for this is the first commandment of the Savior, who says: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Mt. 5:3). To be 'poor in spirit' means to be humble. Do not be beguiled by the demons, who lead you into sin by thoughts and apparitions. Whoever comes to you, whether brother or friend, woman or man, teacher, mother or sister, first raise your hands in prayer; if it was an apparition from the demons, it will vanish from your eyes. If anyone, demon or man, praises you, do not listen to him, and do not exalt yourselves in your mind, for the devils have often tempted me too at night, giving me no peace in prayer nor allowing me to sleep, presenting to my eyes various kinds of apparitions throughout the whole night. But with the coming of morning the devils would bow down to the earth before me with abuse, saying:

"'Forgive us, abba,[14] for troubling you all night!'

But I said to them:

"'Depart from me, workers of iniquity! Do not tempt the servant of God!'

Therefore, children, love silence, always abiding in meditation on God and always praying to God that He may grant you a pure mind, free from sinful thoughts. Worthy of praise, of course, is also that ascetic who, living in the world, practices virtue, showing hospitality or giving alms, or helping others in their labors, or remaining always free

14. *Abba* – teacher, mentor.

from anger; such a man is worthy of praise, because he abides in virtue and fulfills the commandments of the Lord without neglecting earthly affairs. But better than this, and worthy of still greater praise, is the one who, abiding always in meditation on God, rises from the material to the immaterial, leaving material cares to the attention and concern of others, while himself striving toward the heavenly, always standing before God, detached from all worldly things and no longer attached again to the world through cares for earthly things. Such a man is near to God, whom he glorifies unceasingly in his prayers and psalmody. I know a man who labored in the desert and for ten years did not partake of any earthly food at all, but an Angel of God brought him heavenly food every third day, and this was to him both food and drink" (the Venerable John, it seems, was speaking of some other ascetic, but it was himself). "I also know," he said, "that the devils once presented to that man, in an apparition, ranks of Angels, a fiery chariot, and many attendants as of some king, who said to him:

"'O man! You have lived your life righteously and virtuously; now bow down to me, and I will exalt you as Elijah.'

But that monk said to himself:

"'All the days of my life I have worshipped my King, Jesus Christ. If it were He, He would not demand worship from me.'

Then the monk said to the devil:

"'I have my Lord and King, God, whom I always worship; you are not my king.'

Immediately after this the devils disappeared.

By such and similar exhortations and stories the Venerable John instructed everyone, showing all an example of an angelic life by his own example. Therefore John greatly contributed to the salvation of the souls of many people.

Having pleased God by his holy life, the Venerable John drew near to his end. In the ninetieth year of his life he commanded his disciples not to come to him for three days. When the brethren came to the venerable one after the three days had passed, they found him kneeling, as though standing in prayer, his soul having departed to the Lord[15] so as

to stand with the other saints before the throne of God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity glorified, to whom glory is offered forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Matrona of Thessalonica

Память святой мученицы Матроны Солунской

Saint Matrona was the slave of a certain Jewess named Pautila, wife of the voivode of Thessalonica.[16] From her youth she had been enlightened in the Christian faith. Her mistress compelled her to apostasy and to turn to her pagan false faith, and since she did not obey, her mistress tormented her severely. The saint often received many wounds from her, but she patiently endured everything for Christ, and secretly from her mistress she went to church.

Once Pautila, learning that Matrona had been in a Christian church, said to her:

"Why did you not go to our synagogue, but went to the Christian church?"

The blessed Matrona answered boldly:

"Because in the Christian Church God is present, but from the Jewish synagogue He has withdrawn. Therefore I go not to the synagogue but to the church."

Then Pautila grew still more angry, beat the holy Matrona without mercy, and, binding her, shut her up in a dark little room. But the next morning the saint was found, by the power of God, loosed from her bonds and glorifying Christ. Again her mistress beat her with rough sinews almost to death; then she bound her still more tightly, again shut her in that little room, and sealed the doors so that no one could enter to her and bring her any relief.

15. The repose of Venerable John took place at the end of the 4th century.

16. Thessalonica (otherwise Thessaloniki) – the capital of one of the regions of Macedonia. At present it is called Thessaloniki and is located in European Turkey on the northern shore of the Thermaic Gulf. In Thessalonica the holy Apostle Paul preached the Gospel; for the inhabitants of that region and city the same holy Apostle wrote two epistles.

In such confinement the saint, strengthened by God, remained without food or drink for four days. After this Pautila, breaking the seals and opening the doors, found Matrona again loosed from her bonds and standing in prayer. Then, falling into terrible rage, she mercilessly began to beat Matrona with thick sticks, and when the saint was barely breathing, she shut her in the same room where the saint died, giving up her spirit to God. The body of the holy Matrona was thrown down by the hard-hearted woman; her dwelling was high.

Christians, lifting up the much-suffering body of the holy martyr Matrona, buried it with honor. Afterward Alexander, Bishop of Thessalonica, built a church in the name of the saint, where he laid her honorable relics.[17] As for the tormentor Pautila, the just judgment of God soon overtook her. In the very place where she had thrown the body of the holy Matrona down from the high wall, she herself later, slipping by chance, fell, and, being dashed to pieces, miserably expelled her wretched soul from her body.[18]

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Manuel and Theodosius

Память святых мучеников Мануила и Феодосия

The holy martyrs Manuel and Theodosius were natives of the eastern lands. Seeing how the pagans daily put Christians to death, they agreed together and resolved to die for Christ, that they might inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Having made this decision, they set out for the ruler of their country, and on the way they asked many people why he was putting Christians to death. When they stood before the ruler, they boldly confessed Christ, declaring themselves Christians. By such courage and fortitude they astonished not only those who were present with the ruler, but the ruler himself. The ruler ordered them seized and cast into prison, and the prison guard was commanded to

17. The relics of St. Matrona were known in the 6th and 7th centuries under the Emperor Maurice, and miracles took place through them.
18. St. Matrona suffered in the 3rd or 4th century.

keep them under strict watch. After several days the ruler commanded that the saints be brought to him from the prison, and he began to urge them to renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to the idols; but they would not even listen to him, and on the contrary, they themselves sought to turn him from the worship of idols. Then he ordered them first to be hanged upon a tree and their ribs scraped, then commanded that they be taken down from the tree and laid upon sharpened tridents, and finally, after all these tortures, gave orders that their heads be cut off. Thus the holy martyrs departed, commending their righteous souls into the hands of the Lord.



THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF MARCH

March 28

28 марта

New Calendar March 28 · Old Calendar April 10 (civil dates)

Life and Sufferings of Our Venerable Father Eustratius of the Kiev Caves

Житие и страдание преподобного отца нашего Евстратия Печерского

St. Eustratius showed himself a valiant warrior of Christ, who fought under the banner of the Cross both by his name and by his life. He became an imitator of his most chosen Leader, Jesus Christ, and, bearing the same sufferings, from the same people and at the same time, he might truly boast, saying: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17).

This valiant warrior of Christ, Eustratius, was a native of Kiev. He desired to "put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:11), which belongs to the monastic manner of life. Knowing that "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4), he distributed his property to the poor, leaving a portion to his relatives so that they might distribute it after his death. Thus, having become poor after being rich, he became a monk of the Kiev Caves Monastery. He began to labour in a God-pleasing way under the banner of the Leader who for our sake accepted humiliation, Christ, conquering with the spiritual sword, that is, by the power of prayer and the hunger of great abstinence, not only his own flesh but also the invisible enemies, subduing them and bringing them into bondage by his meekness and obedience. St. Eustratius pondered how the Establisher of his ascetic struggle, Jesus Christ Himself, prayed diligently, fasted forty days, and humbled Himself in obedience; therefore he armed himself with the same virtues. But knowing above all that man had been overcome by the first sin

through intemperance, the saint advanced in abstinence and great fasting, and for this reason he was called an ascetic of fasting.

When, by the permission of God, the wicked Boniak[1] fell upon the Russian land with a multitude of Polovtsy and took it captive, then also the blessed Eustratius, during the invasion of the pagans into the Kiev Caves Monastery, where many were cut down by their swords, was seized together with others and taken captive and sold into the Greek land, to the city of Korsun,[2] to a Jew, together with other Christians: thirty monastery workers and twenty Kievans.

The God-opposing Jew began to compel his captives to renounce Christ, and threatened to starve to death in chains those who resisted. But the courageous monk Eustratius, praying, strengthened and instructed all of them and exhorted them with such words:

"Brethren! Whoever among you has been baptized and has believed in Christ, let him not betray the vow given at baptism. Christ has regenerated us by water and the Spirit, redeemed us from the curse of the Law by His blood, and made us heirs of His Kingdom. If we live, let us live for the Lord; if we die, let us die in the Lord and through temporal death obtain eternal life. Let us imitate him who said: 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (Phil. 1:21)."

Strengthened by the words of the Venerable one, the captives preferred to die from lack of temporal food and drink rather than deny Christ, who is the food and drink of eternal life.

Thus, after some time, exhausted by hunger and thirst, all fifty men died: some after three days, others after four, some after seven, and the stronger ones after ten. Only Eustratius remained alive; tormented by hunger for already fourteen days, he nevertheless remained alive and unharmed, for from youth he had been accustomed to fasting. The impious Jew, seeing that the black-robed monk was the cause of the loss of his money paid for the captives, whom he hoped to draw into his false faith, resolved to take revenge upon him.

1. Boniak was a Polovtsian khan (or prince) who lived at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century, called by our chroniclers the "predator" for his frequent attacks upon Kievan Rus'. The Polovtsians were a predatory tribe living south of Kiev and making their living by plunder and brigandage.
2. Korsun is the present-day Tauric Chersonesus.

The day of the Resurrection of Christ was then drawing near. The Jew began to celebrate his Passover and mocked St. Eustratius just as his fathers had mocked our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And as in antiquity the Jews crucified Christ, so this righteous man was nailed to the cross by the wretched Jew and his friends.

Eustratius, being crucified, gave thanks to God that He had granted him to live without food or drink already for the fifteenth day.

The Jew and his other friends reviled the crucified man and said to him:

"Madman! Taste now our lawful Passover, so that you may remain alive and escape the curse. For Moses handed down to us the Law which he received from God, and said in his books: 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree' (Deut. 21:23)."

The Venerable one answered this:

"The Lord has now vouchsafed me a great grace. He has granted me the mercy to suffer for His name on the cross in the likeness of His sufferings. I hope that He will say to me, as once to the thief: 'Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise' (Lk. 23:43). I have no need of your Passover, I do not fear the curse, for 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us' (1 Cor. 5:7), who abolished the curse laid upon us for the transgression of the Law and granted us eternal life by the Cross-tree on which He was nailed, being the life of all, as Moses also prophesied: 'And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee' (Deut. 28:66). Concerning the feast of Pascha David says: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it' (Ps. 117:24). But you, having crucified me, and all your other like-minded companions, shall weep and wail, for vengeance will overtake you for my blood and the blood of the other Christians bought by you. The Lord hateth your sabbaths and will turn your feasts into mourning, and the time of the slaying of the leader of your iniquity has already drawn near."

Hearing this, the Jew was inflamed with anger, seized a spear and pierced the crucified man.[3] And then a fiery chariot and fiery horses were seen, which bore to heaven the soul of the rejoicing martyr, and a

3. The repose of the holy martyr followed in 1097.

voice was heard saying: "Behold the valiant citizen of the heavenly city!"

The Jew took the body of the holy martyr down from the cross and cast it into the sea, where many miracles occurred afterward. The faithful diligently sought the holy relics there but did not find them. By the providence of God they were discovered in a cave, where they rest incorrupt to this day.

The prophecy of the holy sufferer, that his blood would be avenged, was fulfilled immediately after his suffering. For on that day a command came from the Greek emperor to expel all the Jews from his realm, taking away their property, and to slay their elders for the torment of the Christians. Among the first to be killed, according to the prophecy of the blessed Eustratius, was the eparch,[4] who had incited the Jews against the Christians. And it happened in this way: a wealthy and prominent Jew was baptized, and therefore the emperor, wishing to honour him, a few days later made him eparch; but having received this dignity, he secretly became an apostate from Christ and His faith, and gave permission to the Jews throughout the whole Greek realm to buy Christians and make them slaves. When this impious eparch was exposed in his evil cunning, the emperor commanded that he be put to death, together with all the Jews living in the Greek land. And at the time when the Jews living in the Greek city of Korsun were being slain, that impious Jew by whom the Venerable Eustratius had been killed was hanged on a tree, and thus "his mischief returned upon his own head" (Ps. 7:17), and he shared the fate of Judas.

The other Jews, seeing the terrible miracles after the Venerable one's death, believed in Christ and received Baptism. And the good warrior of Christ, St. Eustratius, who had brought them into bondage to Christ, was even after his death a conqueror; he was vouchsafed to sing the victory hymn with the immortal heavenly host and to reign with Christ Himself, the Conqueror of death, whom he had served as a warrior, glorifying Him and giving thanks together with His Unbeginning Father and the Life-giving Spirit, unto endless ages. Amen.

4. An eparch is the head of a province.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Jonah and Barachisius

Память святых мучеников Ионы и Варахисия

These holy martyrs were natives of Persia and lived in the reign of the Persian king Sapor[5] in a village called Yasy. Once, leaving their dwelling place, they set out for the city of Varavokh, and there, finding the holy martyrs Zapifan, Lazarus, Maruphan, Narsin, Elijah, Marinus, Avivus, Sivenphin and Sabbas, who had been cast into prison, they began to strengthen them, exhorting them to remain steadfast in the Christian faith and its confession, and not to forsake it even if they should have to die for it. For this they were seized and brought before three princes: Masdrafus, Sirophus and Marmisius, and they endured from them many torments and afflictions for refusing to worship the sun, fire and water.[6]

First the holy Jonah was subjected to torments. They bound him in that particular manner which was customary among the Persians. Ordinarily, when they wished to torture someone, the Persians laid him on the ground and tied his hands and feet to a single piece of wood. Thus the man bound was motionless as a stone, and they could beat him on either side, for, being firmly fastened to the wood, he could not avoid the blows. Having bound St. Jonah in this way, the torturers beat him for a long time on both sides with thick rods. Then, tying a rope to his body, they dragged him over the ice of the frozen lake, making him suffer from the cold, and at last left him bound at the place of torture for the whole night. After this they cut off the fingers of his hands and feet, flayed the skin from his head, cut out his tongue, and cast him into a cauldron filled with boiling pitch. But since the holy Martyr came out of the cauldron unharmed, they squeezed him in a press, crushing his bones. After all this they sawed him in two and cast him into a deep pit,

5. The Persian king Sapor II, known as "the Great," reigned from 310 to 331 and was a cruel persecutor of Christians.

6. Honoring the sun as the image of their supreme god Mithra, the Persians also revered fire and water as pure elements that bring good to all living things.

where he died. By order of the princes, they put red-hot shackles under the arms of Barachisius, and then began to pour molten tin onto his eyelids, into his nostrils, ears, and mouth; finally, tying a rope to his feet, they hanged him in the prison. After such tortures, they stripped St. Barachisius of his clothing, bound him, and dragged him over thorny plants; then they pierced him with sharpened rods, placed him in a revolving wheel, and tore his whole body apart. At last they poured boiling pitch into his mouth, and the holy Martyr gave up his spirit to God. The bodies of Sts. Jonah and Barachisius, together with those of the holy Martyrs mentioned above, were buried by a devout man named Avdisoth. The holy Martyrs Jonah and Barachisius died on the 28th, and the others on the 27th day of March[7].

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Hilarion the New[8]

Память преподобного отца нашего Илариона Нового

From his youth, the Venerable Hilarion took upon himself the yoke of monastic life. Following Christ crucified, he bore his cross, overcoming the passions of the flesh through abstinence. Having withdrawn into seclusion and spent many years in stillness, he was illumined by dispassion and surpassed all monks in virtuous living. For this he was deemed worthy of the rank of presbyter, and later became abbot of the monastery called Pelikite, situated in Asia, near the Hellespont[9]. The Venerable Hilarion performed many wondrous miracles. By his word he drove away from fields and vineyards the animals that harmed the crops; by his prayer he stopped a great hailstorm and brought rain down upon the earth during a drought. Like the Prophet Elisha, he divided a river, healed a man with a withered hand, gave sight to a blind man, delivered the lame from their infirmity, cast out

7. The blessed repose of the holy martyrs Jonah and Barachisius falls in the period between 327 and 331.

8. The confessor of Christ Hilarion commemorated today is called "the New," in distinction from Hilarion of Dalmatia, also a confessor, who suffered under the Byzantine emperor Leo V the Armenian (812–820). The memory of this latter Hilarion is celebrated on June 6.

9. The Hellespont is the ancient name of the Dardanelles strait connecting the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Sea.

demons, and filled the nets of fishermen with a great quantity of fish after an unsuccessful catch.

In the troparion of the 8th ode of the canon he composed in honor of the saint, the Venerable Joseph the Hymnographer relates that St. Hilarion endured persecution and insults from his torturers for honoring the precious icon of the Savior, and for this reason calls him a Martyr. According to some accounts, the Venerable Hilarion lived during the reign of Leo the Armenian, who mocked the holy icons; others place his lifetime during the reign of Leo the Isaurian and his son Copronymus[10], who lived long before Leo the Armenian—a view which seems more just. He suffered for the holy icons at the time when, on Great and Holy Thursday, Copronymus's voivode Lachondrakon suddenly attacked the monastery of Pelikite with his soldiers. During the Divine Service he boldly entered the church and then the sanctuary, ordered the singing to cease, and cast the Holy and Life-giving Mysteries of Christ to the ground. Then, seizing forty-two chosen monks, he bound them in iron chains. Of the rest of the brotherhood, he wounded some, tearing their bodies; others he scorched, first smearing pitch over their beards and faces; and from others he cut off their noses. Finally, he set fire to the monastery and its church. He sent the chosen fathers, forty-two holy men, into exile on the outskirts of the province of Ephesus, where he shut them in an old bathhouse and put them to death by violence. It is believed that the Venerable Hilarion also suffered at this time, as the senior in rank of abbot among the fathers mentioned[11].

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Stephen the Confessor

Память преподобного отца нашего Стефана исповедника

The Venerable Stephen, Confessor of Christ, lived under Emperor Leo the Armenian[12]. From childhood he loved the ascetic life, and,

10. Leo III the Isaurian reigned from 717 to 741, and his son Constantine V Copronymus from 741 to 775.
11. The repose of St. Hilarion followed about 754.
12. Leo V the Armenian was Byzantine emperor, reigning from 813 to 820.

adorning himself with a virtuous life, he later became abbot of the Triglia Monastery[13], having accepted the rank of abbot at the urgent entreaty of the brotherhood. By his teaching he exhorted many to live in a God-pleasing manner and in purity. But then the impious Emperor Leo the Armenian raised a fierce persecution against Christians, destroying the holy icons. He summoned the Venerable Stephen and began to compel him to change his Orthodox faith, renounce the veneration of the holy icons, and sign with his own hand his repudiation of Orthodoxy.

The Venerable Stephen not only refused to do this, but reproached the emperor for his impiety. For his steadfastness in Orthodoxy, the Venerable Stephen endured many tortures and bonds in prison. Then he was sent into exile, where, brought to the utmost exhaustion by sufferings and illnesses, the Venerable Stephen departed unto Christ God[14], for Whose sake he had endured many torments and accepted death.

* * *

Account of Taxiotus the Soldier

Повесть о Таксиоте воине

In Carthage[15] there lived a man named Taxiotus, a soldier who led his life in great sins. Once a pestilence came upon the city of Carthage, and many people were dying from it. Taxiotus was seized with fear, turned to God, and repented of his sins. Leaving the city, he withdrew with his wife to a village, where he remained, occupying himself with the contemplation of God.

Some time later, through the devil's action, he fell into the sin of adultery with the wife of a farmer who lived nearby. But a few days after committing that sin, he was bitten by a serpent and died.

13. The Triglia monastery was situated in the vicinity of Constantinople.
14. The repose of St. Stephen followed after 815 (in that year he was sent into confinement).
15. Carthage was a colony of the Phoenicians, famous in antiquity, situated in North Africa. Ancient Carthage reached its highest flowering in the second century B.C., but on the ruins of ancient Carthage, under the first Roman emperors, there arose a new Carthage, which existed for a considerable time.

A monastery stood one stadion[16] away from that place. Taxiotus's wife went to the monastery and persuaded the monks to come and take the dead man's body and bury it in the church. They buried him at the third hour of the day. At the ninth hour, a loud cry came from the grave: "Have mercy, have mercy on me!" The monks approached the grave and, hearing the cry of the buried man, immediately opened it and found Taxiotus alive. In their terror they marveled and questioned him, wishing to learn what had happened to him and how he had come back to life. But from his great weeping and sobbing he could tell them nothing; he only asked them to take him to Bishop Tarasius, and they brought him to him.

For three days the bishop urged him to tell what he had seen there, but it was only on the fourth day that the man who had been buried began to speak.

With many tears, he told the following:

— As I was dying, I saw some Ethiopians standing before me. Their appearance was exceedingly terrible, and my soul was troubled. Then I saw two very beautiful youths; my soul hastened toward them, and at once, as though rising from the earth, we began to ascend toward heaven. On the way we encountered the tollhouses[17], which detain the soul of every person and examine it, each one for a particular sin: one for lying, another for envy, a third for pride. Thus every sin has its own examiners in the air. And I saw in a chest, borne by Angels, all my good deeds, which the Angels weighed against my evil deeds. So we passed through those tollhouses. But when, as we drew near the gates of heaven, we came to the tollhouse of fornication, the guards detained me there and began to show me all the fornications and bodily sins I had committed from childhood until my death. The Angels leading me said to me: "All the bodily sins you committed while you were in the city God forgave you, because you repented of them." But the opposing spirits said to me: "Yet when you left the city, you committed fornication in the field with the wife of your farmer." Hearing this, the Angels found no good deed that could be set against that sin, and they left me

16. A *poprishche* (stadion) was a measure of length equal to 1000 paces.
17. On the tollhouses, see above in the Life of St. Basil the New, March 26.

and departed. Then the evil spirits seized me, began to beat me, and led me down. The earth opened, and, being led through narrow entrances and constricted, foul-smelling passages, I descended to the very depths of the prisons of Hades, where the souls of sinners are confined in eternal darkness, where there is no life for men, but only everlasting torment, inconsolable weeping, and indescribable gnashing of teeth. There is always heard the despairing cry: "Woe, woe to us! Alas, alas!" It is impossible to tell of all the sufferings there, or to recount all the torments and pains that I saw. They groan from the depths of their souls, and no one has mercy on them; they weep, and there is no one to comfort them; they plead, and there is no one to heed or deliver them. I was shut up in those dark places, filled with dreadful sorrow, and I wept and bitterly lamented from the third hour until the ninth. Then I saw a small light, and two Angels came there. I earnestly began to beseech them to bring me out of that grievous place, so that I might repent before God.

The Angels said to me:

— You pray in vain: no one leaves this place until the time of the universal resurrection.

But as I continued earnestly to entreat and beseech them, and promised to repent of my sins, one Angel said to the other:

— Will you answer for him, that he will repent, and that he will do so with all his heart, as he promises?

The other said:

— I will answer for him!

Then he gave him his hand. They brought me out from there to the earth and led me to the tomb where my body lay, and said to me:

— Enter into that from which you were parted.

And I saw that my soul shone like a pearl, while the dead body was black as mire and gave forth a stench, and therefore I did not wish to enter into it. The Angels said to me:

"It is impossible for you to repent without the body with which you committed sins."

But I entreated them that I might not enter into the body.

"Enter," said the Angels, "or else we shall take you back again to the place whence we brought you."

Then I entered, came to life, and began to cry out: "Have mercy upon me!"

Then St. Tarasius said to him:

"Eat some food."

But he would not eat; going from church to church, he fell prostrate, and with tears and deep sighing confessed his sins, and said to all:

"Woe to sinners: eternal torment awaits them! Woe to those who do not bring repentance while they have time! Woe to those who defile their bodies!"

After his resurrection, Taxiotus lived forty days and cleansed himself by repentance; three days before his end he foresaw his death, and departed to the Merciful and Man-loving God, who brings down to hell and grants salvation to all, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

* * *



THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF MARCH

March 29

29 марта

New Calendar March 29 · Old Calendar April 11 (civil dates)

Suffering of Our Venerable Father Mark, Bishop of Arethusa

Страдание преподобного отца нашего Марка, епископа Арефусийского

Concerning the suffering of Venerable Mark, Bishop of Arethusa[1], St. Gregory of Nyssa, in his first discourse against the godless apostate Julian[2], writes as follows:

"Who does not know what befell the wondrous Mark of Arethusa? And who, having heard the narrative devoted to his memory, would not remember him? In the reign of Constantine the Great, making use of the rights then granted to Christians, he destroyed a certain pagan shrine, and he set many people on the right path of salvation, drawing them out of pagan error both by edifying discourse and by the example of a blameless life. The pagan Arethusians had long hated him; and when Christian power fell and pagan impiety began to grow and blaze up, he did not escape the hands of the tormentors in that difficult time. Thus the popular crowd, though it restrains its anger and its desires for a time, just as fire lies hidden in a furnace or a river is held back by a dam, will nevertheless at a certain time reveal its untamable fury, as is proper to it, just as fire kindles and a river rushes through its dam.

St. Mark, seeing that the people had risen against him and were plotting something evil, resolved at once to flee, not so much from fear as from obedience to the commandment of the Lord, by which we are bidden to flee from city to city, yielding place to persecutors. Christi-

1. Arethusa, or Arethusium, is a city in Syria.
2. Emperor Julian the Apostate ruled the Roman Empire from 361 to 363.

ans, even if they are courageous and steadfast in patience, must not only care for their own salvation but also pity the persecutors, lest they increase their own perdition by the hostile malice with which they are filled. But when the virtuous Mark saw that because of him the wicked tormentors were seizing many, subjecting them to torments and various tortures, and that others, seeing this, were grieved in soul, he could not bear that others should suffer because of his flight and self-preservation; having taken a good and wise resolution, he returned from his flight, surrendered himself voluntarily to the people, and armed himself for battle against the fury of the tormentors. What cruelty was there! What tortures were not devised! While each of the tormentors strove to add to the multitude of various torments his own specially invented kind of torment, nothing so provoked them as the courageous patience of the saint; they were especially embittered, considering his return less a manifestation of courage in suffering than contempt and dishonor toward them.

The hierarch-elder, who had undertaken the voluntary ascetic labor of martyrdom, was led through the city, where he enjoyed particular respect from all except the persecutors and tormentors, on account of his venerable years and, above all, his virtuous life. He was accompanied by many, without distinction of age or rank; all alike subjected him to insults: there were men and women, young and old, there were also the civil authorities and men of distinction; all had one aim: to surpass one another in fury and cruelty; all without exception considered it something great to subject him to the greatest possible torments and to overcome the unshaken elder-ascetic who stood against the whole city.

The saint, dragged along the roads, was set down in a swamp; and there, besides torments, he endured shameful outrages: children in turn tore at his hair and other parts of his body; then he was hanged in a place of disgrace, and the swaying body of the valiant sufferer was cut with knives and pierced with sharp reeds, and at this sight, worthy of tears, they laughed loudly and made sport. With certain special instruments his shins were crushed to the bone; with very fine and exceedingly strong linen threads they cut through his ears. Then, having smeared him with honey and fat, they put him in a basket and raised

him at noon, in the terrible heat of the sun, to a height where bees and wasps stung him. And the more the fat and honey melted from the sun's heat upon the blessed (I cannot call it suffering) body of the saint, the more he suffered from the stings of the wasps and bees.

St. Mark, though advanced in years, showed himself full of strength in his martyric labor; he did not change the brightness of his countenance, but even took some delight in those torments and reproved the tormentors.

There is also recounted of him the following, worthy of remembrance: seeing himself raised on high and the tormentors standing below him, St. Mark at that time felt himself so far from the tormentors that he did not notice the pain, as though someone else, and not he, were enduring the sufferings, which he considered a glory for himself and not a dishonor. Would not such a sight have moved to tenderness anyone in whom there was even a drop of mercy and love for mankind?! But this was impossible because of the threat of torments and the wrath of the emperor, who regarded the infliction of torments upon Christians as an obligation of the cities and governors; yet many, not knowing the malice concealed in the emperor and his guile, thought of him otherwise.

St. Mark endured all these torments for having destroyed a pagan shrine, for which he did not give the tormentors a single gold coin; it is clear that he suffered for the sake of his piety. When the Arethusians demanded that he either pay in full the rather considerable sum they had set for the ruined shrine, or build it again, St. Mark resisted more out of piety than because he had no means to satisfy the pagans. Overcoming them by his patience and gradually lowering the sum they had set, he brought them to the point of demanding of him a small amount of money, which could easily have been paid. Thus there was a dispute on both sides: the tormentors strove to compel the saint, and he remained unyielding; that is, they wanted the saint to pay at least some money, and he would not give them a single penny[3] (although there were many people, some of whom, out of compassion, and others,

3. A peniaz was a small copper coin.

moved by his firm and invincible patience, were ready to pay large sums for him); from this it is clear that he accepted the martyric labor not for the sake of covetousness, but for the sake of the true faith. St. Mark was among those who concealed the Emperor Julian when he was still a youth, at the time when the immoral and impious race of that emperor was being exterminated. And it is thought that justly, for this deed, St. Mark endured such cruel sufferings; he was worthy of even greater torments, because, though out of ignorance, he saved from death so great an evil for the whole world.

It is also recounted that the eparch[4] of Arethusa, although he was an impious pagan, could not bear the sight of St. Mark's various sufferings and boldly said to the emperor:

"O Emperor! Are we not ashamed before all Christians that we could not overcome even a single elder? Even if the victory over him would not be glorious or honorable, for us to withdraw from him defeated is truly a great disgrace!"

Thus the courage of the Christians put to shame the vainglorious eparchs and emperors.

And the torment of the Arethusians was such that the cruelty of Echetus[5] and Phalaris[6] would have been small if compared with theirs; in their malice they surpassed even the very inventor of malice and their instigator, the devil."

Such is the narrative of St. Gregory of Nyssa concerning St. Mark.

Theodoret[7] relates that the Arethusians, seeing the invincible firmness of the wondrous elder, St. Mark, became gentle, marveling at his great patience; they set him free. Then, having heard his teachings, they turned to the holy faith, and all became Christians.

Concerning St. Cyril the deacon, the same Theodoret relates as follows:

4. An eparch was the governor of a province.
5. Echetus was an ancient king of Epirus, noted for his particular malice; he blinded his only daughter, Metope.
6. Phalaris was the tyrant of Agrigentum, a Dorian colony situated in the south of the island of Sicily, who lived in the 6th century B.C. He was distinguished by extraordinary cruelty and treated his subjects with extreme harshness.
7. Blessed Theodoret was a Church teacher who lived in the 5th century.

"Who can without tears recall the malice committed in Phoenicia by the pagans? For in the city of Heliopolis, adjoining Lebanon, those godless idolaters, recalling the deacon Cyril, who in the reign of Constantine, kindled with zeal, destroyed many idols venerated in the city, not only killed him but, having cut open his belly, began in fury to bite his entrails with their teeth. But this was not hidden from the all-knowing God, and they received a worthy punishment for their malice. Those who dared to do what has been said above first lost their teeth: all of them fell out; then they lost their tongues: they festered, rotted, and fell out of their mouths. Finally they went blind; by such punishments the power of true piety was confirmed before all eyes.

In Ascalon and Gaza, cities of Palestine, first on men clothed in holy orders, then on wives and virgins dedicated to God, the tormentors, having cut open their bellies, poured in barley and threw them to be eaten by swine; thus cruelly did the tormentors mock. For this, the holy martyrs were prepared victorious crowns in the Kingdom of Christ, and the tormentors eternal torment in Hades, which awaits them as the just recompense from the True God, our Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.[8]"

* * *

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father John the Hermit

Память преподобного отца нашего Иоанна пустынника

There once lived a rich, exceedingly beautiful and God-fearing woman named Juliana.[9] In her youth she lost her husband and was left a widow with two young children, John and Themistia. After the decree was issued that Christians should be put to death,[10] she took with her John, who had already reached adolescence, and hid with him in an uninhabited building, bringing him up in the instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), and continually teaching him to read books and to

8. The holy Mark and Cyril reposed in the middle of the 4th century.
9. Juliana lived in Africa, probably in Egypt.
10. Since the Venerable John lived in the 4th century, one must suppose that this decree was issued by Diocletian, who in 303 began a persecution of Christians throughout the Empire.

pray. The boy would sometimes leave his mother and go to a nearby monastic community, where he prayed secretly alone, then return again; for at that time all the Christians, fearing the pagans, were in hiding. Once, when he had come to the monastery as usual, a certain devout man met him there and advised him that it would be better to go to desolate places for his ascetic labors of prayer than to perform them in the monastery, where he was always in danger of falling into the hands of his torturers. Having accepted this counsel, the boy said to his mother:

"My lady mother, a devout man has invited me to come to him, and I think that this has come about chiefly through your prayers."

Juliana let her son go, thinking that he would soon return. But John, having taken leave of his mother and sister, went into the desert to a certain Egyptian hermit named Parmuthius. Having received from him a prayerful blessing, he then set out into the depths of the desert. There he found an empty well filled with snakes, scorpions, and reptiles, and, having prayed, he leaped into it. The well was twenty cubits deep,[11] but the Angel of the Lord upheld John, and he remained unharmed. Standing at the bottom of the well with his hands stretched out in the form of a cross, he spent forty days in prayer, without sleep, food, or drink, and all the reptiles came out of the well. After this, the Angel who always brought food to Parmuthius brought bread for John also, and said to the Venerable Father:

"Behold, the Lord has sent you this bread, that you may take it to Abba[12] John at the well."

The Angel himself did not wish to carry bread to him, lest, being young, he should become proud because of it. Parmuthius went to John and gave him the bread. The Venerable Father received it, gave thanks to God, and began to eat. From that time onward, for a long while, he received food daily from Parmuthius and glorified the Lord for it. Meanwhile, the devil, unable to endure the God-pleasing ascetic labors

11. A cubit equaled 10.5 vershoks. (A vershok equaled approximately 4.45 cm. The length of a cubit was measured from the tip of the outstretched middle finger to the bend of the elbow and could vary up to 46 cm. – *Azbuka very Editorial Board.*)
12. Abba means "father."

of the Venerable John, once took the form of one of his former servants and, coming to Parmuthius, deceived him, so that he led him to the well where the Venerable Father was pursuing his ascetic life. But when the demon said something improper to John, John brought Parmuthius out of his delusion, put the demon to shame, and drove him away from himself. After this the devil gathered a multitude of demons and commanded them to assume the forms of John's mother and sister, his relatives and neighbors, his male and female servants, and his acquaintances. They all came to the well, tearfully imploring him to show himself to them, since, they said, they wished to see him; but the Venerable Father, performing his customary prayer at the bottom of the well at that time, said to them, "Depart from me," and all the demons became invisible.

Having lived in the well for ten years, performed every monastic labor, and nobly pleased the Lord, the Venerable John departed to the eternal dwellings. At the Angel's instruction, a certain monk named Chrysichius, who had pursued the ascetic life in the desert for thirty years, came to bury him. For three days he implored the Venerable Father to come out of the well, adjuring him by the power of God to conceal nothing of his life, but to recount everything in order, for this was pleasing to God. And a wondrous miracle came to pass, astonishing all who heard and saw it: the earth at the bottom of the well rose of itself twenty cubits, and the Venerable Fathers came together. Bound by the adjuration of the monk Chrysichius, John concealed nothing, but told Chrysichius everything about himself, and the latter thanked him with a brotherly kiss. After this, the Venerable John himself prepared for burial and again departed to the Lord. Then Chrysichius covered his body with his own mantle, so that its ends lay across the edges of the well, and, having sung the customary psalms, planted a palm tree at the place of burial. Immediately the palm took root, grew as tall as a great oak, blossomed, and was covered with many fruits. Seeing this, the monk Chrysichius gave thanks to God, saying within himself:

"Glory to Thee, O Master, for Thou Thyself makest known those who love Thee and makest them heirs of Thy Kingdom."

And while he was praying and reflecting on this, the Angel immediately caught him up and carried him to the place where he had been dwelling. After this, Chrysichius summoned a devout man and asked him to write down all that he had seen and heard.[13]

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Eustathius the Confessor, Bishop of Bithynia[^14]

Память преподобного отца нашего Евстафия исповедника, епископа Вифинийского

Our holy father and Confessor Eustathius renounced the goods of this world as a heavy burden and, diligently fulfilling the commandments of God, gave himself to the monastic life. In time, bearing this yoke of Christ upon his shoulders and caring for the salvation of his soul, he became a priest. In this rank he experienced many spiritual joys, for which he gave thanks to the Lord without ceasing. Having great faith in God and sincere love for all, he was a humble, meek, and merciful instructor, and a zealous doer of good works. Then, chosen by the judgment of God as Bishop of Bithynia, he governed the church for many years in accordance with the teaching and tradition of the Divine Apostles. When turmoil arose in all the churches of God on account of the heresy of iconoclasm, he, having instructed himself in Divine Scripture, struck down with the sword of his word all who threatened the churches of God. Therefore certain defenders of the heresy denounced him to the impious emperor then reigning. And how can one describe all that the Venerable Father endured for the veneration and worship of the holy and most honorable icons? He was subjected to threats, spitting, beatings, imprisonment, distress, tumult, and cudgeling. At last, after he had been pierced with pointed stakes, they deprived him of his see and sent him into exile. Having lived many years in exile, the Venerable Eustathius, amid insults, bitterness, and

13. The Venerable John lived and pursued the ascetic life in the 4th century.

14. Bithynia was a Roman province in the northwestern part of Asia Minor. The Venerable Eustathius occupied the episcopal see in the city of Cius (now Tsomplek), situated deep within one of the gulfs of the Sea of Marmara.

privations, in hunger, thirst, and nakedness, gave thanks to God and departed to the eternal dwellings.

* * *



THE THIRTIETH DAY OF MARCH

March 30

30 марта

New Calendar March 30 · Old Calendar April 12 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father John Climacus[1]

Житие преподобного отца нашего Иоанна Лествичника

Venerable John Climacus labored in ascetic struggle on Mount Sinai, so famous from the accounts of the Old Testament (Ex. 19:20, 24, 34; Lev. 7; Num. 10:33; Ps. 67:8). The holy mountain of Sinai served as a refuge for Christian ascetics from the middle of the 3rd century, when they fled there from persecution; others were led captive there by the Saracens. In the 4th century, when the persecutions of Christians ended, monastic life there was firmly established. The hermits were drawn there both by the sacred memories of the great Old Testament events revealed in that place and by the wilderness of Sinai. Travelers say that they have never encountered a place more desolate than the Sinai Peninsula. Even wild beasts do not remain there long, but, having strayed there by chance from the Arabian desert, hasten to withdraw to places made lively by the presence of animals. In the region of Mount Sinai were especially desolate places, most suitable for solitary ascetic struggle, and in one of them, Phola, John labored for many years. Before Justinian I ascended the throne, the ascetics of Sinai had no monastery: they had only a strong tower and, near it, a small church built by Equal-to-the-Apostles Helen. In

1. The Life of Venerable John Climacus was written, not long after his death, by his contemporary and friend, Daniel, a monk of the monastery of Raithu. The monastery of Raithu stood on the shore of the Gulf of Suez, two days' journey from Sinai. Daniel's account is supplemented by another monk, whose name is unknown, who had been a disciple of John Climacus himself and who left some fragmentary information from the life of his spiritual teacher.

557, under the Emperor Justinian, a monastery was erected there at the monks' request.

St. John came to Sinai at the age of 16, drawn there by the renown of the monastic life of the Sinai hermits. Even his contemporaries, the writers of his life[2260], did not know where John came from. The monk Daniel says plainly: "I cannot say with certainty and accuracy what city and country gave birth to and reared this valiant ascetic before his ascetic life." And he continues: "But what city now has this most wondrous man as its inhabitant and nourishes him with incorruptible food is not wholly unknown to me. For he now dwells in that city of which the sweet-voiced singer, the holy Apostle Paul, says: 'Our citizenship is in heaven' (Phil. 3:20). There he abides, filled with the immaterial perception of inexhaustible blessings, having received a worthy recompense for his struggles and a reward for his labors, and having inherited the Kingdom of Heaven with those whose feet already stand on the straight path (Ps. 25:12). How John labored in a body subject to struggle for the sake of this immaterial blessedness, I shall relate," Daniel continues, "with all clarity."

"When this blessed John had completed 16 years of bodily life—though in perfection of mind he even then resembled one a thousand years old—he offered himself to God, the Great High Priest, as a spotless and voluntary sacrifice. He raised his body to Mount Sinai and his soul to the heavenly mountain; visibly ascending the mountain, he drew near to the heavenly heights, contemplating the invisible God with his mind. Having withdrawn from the world, from the very beginning he loved meekness adorned with humility, as the leader of the 'daughters of the mind'[2] and the teacher of the virtues. He cut off self-will and pride, and, having taken upon himself the comely humility of wisdom, at the very beginning of his monastic life, through watchful discernment, drove from himself that deceiver—self-pleasing and self-confidence. Bending his neck, he entrusted himself to an experienced spiritual guide[3], desiring, under his direction, to pass safely through the perilous

2. That is, of good inclinations, according to the interpretation of Elijah of Crete.
3. That is, to Abba Martyrius, as is seen from the account of the unknown Sinaite monk that follows this.

abyss of the passions. Having forsaken the life of the world, John conducted himself among the monks like a young child, a boy unable to speak, as though his soul possessed neither reason nor will of its own, but were wholly deprived of its natural properties. And what is most astonishing: despite his extensive learning, John remained a humble monk, loving heavenly simplicity and not exalting himself on account of his wisdom, but humbling himself for God.

The guide and instructor of Venerable John, as Synchron[4] relates, was Abba Martyrius. When Martyrius tonsured John into the monastic habit in the 20th year of his life, Abba Stratigius[5] foretold on that day that he would become a great light to the universe—and this was later fulfilled.

One day Abba Martyrius came, together with his disciple John, to the great Anastasius of Sinai. Seeing them, Anastasius said to Abba Martyrius:

"Tell me, Martyrius, where did you get this disciple, and who tonsured him into monastic life?"

"He is your servant, Father, and I tonsured him," Martyrius replied.

And Anastasius said in astonishment:

"O Abba Martyrius! You have tonsured the abbot of Mount Sinai."

On another occasion, his guide Abba Martyrius took this same John with him and went to the great elder John the Sabbaite, who then lived in the Guddi desert. As soon as the elder saw them, he arose, poured water, washed John's feet, and kissed his hand; but he did not wash Abba Martyrius's feet. After this, Stephen, a disciple of the elder Sabbaite, asked him:

"Why did you do this, Father? You washed the disciple's feet, not the teacher's, and kissed his hand?"

The elder answered:

"Believe me, child, I did not know who this young monk was; but I received the abbot of Sinai, and I washed the abbot's feet."

4. Synchronos, a monk of the Sinai monastery, a contemporary of John Climacus, who left behind the *Tales of the Holy Men of Sinai*.
5. Present at the rite of tonsure.

Such were the prophecies of the holy fathers of Sinai concerning Venerable John when he was still a young monk, and they were fulfilled in their time.

For 19 years Venerable John pursued the struggle for his salvation in obedience to his spiritual father, after which he was compelled to leave this saving path, for his spiritual father departed to the life beyond the grave. Having sent him on ahead as it were, to be his intercessor and advocate before the King of Heaven, as the monk Daniel writes, John entered upon the path of hesychia, armed with his guide's prayers as a mighty weapon for the destruction of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4). For his solitary ascetic struggle John chose a very desolate place called Phola, which lay eight versts from the church. He left his solitude only on feast days, when he went to the church for divine services. In his wilderness the Venerable spent forty years[6] in labors, burning with divine love and continually kindled by its fire. But who can convey in words or describe in detail the struggles that Venerable John secretly underwent there? Yet just as great things are discerned from small ones, so from some beginnings of his deeds we may learn of the rich and virtuous life of this Venerable one.

He partook of everything not forbidden by the monastic vow, but partook of it in extremely small measure. By tasting everything, he wisely humbled conceit, for he ate all things lest his mind be exalted by fasting; and by the smallness of what he ate he humbled the mistress and mother of the voluptuous passions—that is, gluttony—calling to her by the very scantiness of his table: "Be silent, be still" (Mk. 4:39). By dwelling in the wilderness and withdrawing from life with other people, the Venerable quenched the flame of bodily appetite, until at last it was covered with ashes and utterly extinguished. This valiant ascetic courageously avoided covetousness, which the holy Apostle Paul calls idolatry (Eph. 5:5), giving alms and denying himself even what was necessary. Idleness and sloth, which weaken and kill the soul, he roused to vigilance and labor as with a goad, by remembrance of death. He loosed the nets and bonds of every attachment and every sensual desire

6. From the beginning of his monastic life.

by binding himself with immaterial bonds of sorrow and tears; and irritability had already been put to death in him by obedience. By rarely visiting anyone, and speaking even more rarely, he thereby killed vainglory, that leech like a spider's web. What shall I say," the monk Daniel continues, "of his victory over pride? What shall I say of the great purity of heart, the beginning of which this new Bezalel[7] laid through obedience, and which the Lord, the King of the heavenly Jerusalem, brought to perfection by visiting him with His presence? For without His presence the devil and his host cannot be cast down. But where shall I place in this wreath," Daniel continues, "which we weave for Venerable John from words of praise, the source of his tears, such as we see in few? To this day the hidden place where these tears flowed is known: it is a very narrow cave in a solitary place beneath a mountain, so far from John's cell and the other cells that he could not be heard by people, and the way to vainglory was barred. This cell, to which John often came, was made near to heaven by his cries, sobs, and invocations of God, such as one might hear only from those being cut with knives, burned with red-hot iron, or deprived of their eyes[8]. He slept only enough to keep excessive wakefulness from destroying his mind. Before sleep he prayed for a long time and wrote books—as, for example, he composed the book called the Ladder, after which he himself was later surnamed Climacus. Writing books served John as a means of driving away despondency. Indeed, his whole life was continual prayer and an incomparable love for God; for, contemplating Him day and night as in a mirror, in purity and blamelessness, he did not wish—or, more truly, could not—be sated with this contemplation."

A certain monk named Moses, zealous for the virtuous life of the Venerable John, begged to be received as his disciple, so that he might

7. Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe and lineage of Judah, an artist in the days of Moses, filled with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and every kind of craftsmanship (Ex. 31:1–5; Ex. 30:30–35). Together with Oholiab, of the tribe of Dan, he was charged by God's command with the construction of the tabernacle with all its appurtenances (Ex. 31:2; Ex. 35:30). Thus, as the Old Testament Bezalel skillfully constructed the tabernacle, so "this new Bezalel," that is, Venerable John Climacus, skillfully constructed his own inner tabernacle.

learn from him true wisdom. To strengthen his petition, Moses asked some honorable elders to intercede for him as well; and they entreated the Venerable John to accept Moses as a disciple. One day the Venerable John bade Moses carry earth from a certain place to fertilize the beds for vegetables. Moses, arriving at the appointed spot, diligently carried out the command. But at noon, when the heat became intense, Moses, wearied, lay down to rest beneath one huge stone and fell asleep. But the Lord, Who does not wish His servants to suffer any sorrow, in His compassion preserved Moses from sudden death and spared the holy John from grief. At that time the Venerable John was in his cell, and a light drowsiness fell upon him; in a dream he saw a certain comely man, who reproached John, saying:

"There you are, John, sleeping peacefully here, while Moses is in danger."

The Venerable One at once rose and began to pray fervently for his disciple. When evening came and the disciple returned from his work, John asked him:

"Did anything unfavorable or unexpected befall you?"

He answered:

"When I was sleeping at noon beneath a large stone, it suddenly fell and would have crushed me, had I not hastily run away from that place, for at that very moment it seemed to me that you, Father, were calling me."

The meek-minded John glorified the good God for this wondrous deliverance of his disciple from death, but said nothing to Moses of his vision.

The Venerable John was a model of virtue for all and a physician of invisible ailments. Once a certain brother, named Isaac, was sorely oppressed by a demon of lust. Plunged in deep sorrow, the brother hastened to take refuge with this great John, and with bitter weeping and sobbing told him of his struggle.

To this John said to Isaac:

8. These holy tears produced wondrous effects in John's soul, as is seen from his own words; in one place in his *Ladder* he says: "As fire burns and consumes brushwood, so a pure tear washes away all impurities, outward and inward."

"Let us both stand to pray, friend!"

They had not yet finished their prayer, and the suffering brother still lay prostrate with his face to the ground, when God, at the desire of His servant, had already acted: the demon of lust fled from Isaac, driven off as with a whip by the prayers of the holy John. Thus were fulfilled the words of the Psalm of David: "He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him, and He will hear their prayer" (Ps. 144:19). And the sick man, seeing himself healed and wholly freed from the passion, was greatly amazed, and he gave thanks to God, who glorified His servant John, glorifying the Lord by his wonders.

Some of John's ill-wishers, moved by envy, called John a babbler and a liar. He, however, bringing them to their senses, proved to all by deed that he "can do all things (using not only word but also silence) in Christ Jesus, Who strengthens all" (Phil. 4:13). He kept silence for a whole year, not speaking a single word to them, so that his detractors became supplicants: for they recognized that one should not block the ever-flowing spring of benefit, and, coming to him, they begged him to open his God-speaking lips once more. John, not loving to contradict, yielded to them and again began to keep his former rule.

Afterward, all, marveling at his progress in everything, as at a newly appeared Moses, forcibly raised John to the office of head of the monastery, thus placing this lamp upon the candlestick of authority. Having accepted the abbacy of Mount Sinai, although against his will, John drew near in spirit to the mountain of God, received the incomprehensible things of God, drew near to God through the ascent of the mind, and obtained the God-inscribed law; he opened his mouth to receive the word of God; he drew breath (Ps. 118:131), and from the good treasure of his heart (Mt. 12:35) he poured forth good words of salvation.

Thus, after forty years of monastic labors, John, being seventy-five years of age, was elected abbot of Mount Sinai. "And the good judges were not deceived, placing this lamp upon the candlestick of authority," remarks the monk Daniel. It pleased the Lord that this election should be so, and this was revealed by a special miraculous event. One of his biographers, unnamed, relates that shortly after John's appointment as

abbot, about 600 wayfarers came to their monastery. When all the wayfarers with the Sinai brethren had sat down at the table, an unknown steward appeared, dressed in a white tunic like a Jewish one, and imperiously gave orders to the servers at the table. When the guests had dispersed and the servers had sat down to their meal, the wondrous steward could no longer be seen. To the perplexed monks the Venerable John said:

"Cease seeking: it was the holy prophet and lawgiver Moses who served here, in the place that belongs to him."

In one summer there was no rain in the Palestinian lands and a great drought. The neighboring inhabitants came to the Venerable John, asking him to pray to God for rain to be sent down. As soon as the Venerable John prayed, abundant rain at once fell, and, watering the parched earth, made it fruitful.

When the time of the holy John's death drew near, he piously instructed the whole brotherhood of the Sinai monastery, these his spiritual Israelites. In only one thing did John not become like Moses, for the Venerable John entered in soul into the heavenly Jerusalem, whereas Moses did not attain in body to the earthly Jerusalem.[9]

When this new Moses, the most venerable abbot John, was departing to the Lord, his brother, Abba George,[10] stood before him, shedding tears and saying:

"Behold, you are leaving me and departing. And I prayed that you might go before me, for without you, my lord, I shall not have the strength to shepherd your holy company; and see, on the contrary, I am sending you before me."

To this the holy Abba John said:

"Do not grieve or sorrow: if I obtain boldness before the Lord, I will not allow you to finish even a year after me."

This came to pass. For in the tenth month after the blessed John's repose, Abba George his brother also departed to the Lord, to stand be-

9. That is, the Lord did not grant Moses to enter the "promised land"; before his death he only looked upon it from Mount Nebo (Deut. 34:4–5).

10. Whom he appointed abbot of the Sinai monastery while still alive, himself having come to love stillness.

fore Him together with his brother, the Venerable John, in the glory of the saints, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.[11]

The Venerable John governed the holy monastery of Sinai not long, no more than four years. But his brief governance of Sinai was marked by a very important circumstance: to this very time belongs his writing of the so well-known and so remarkable work called *The Ladder*,[12] from which John himself received the name John Climacus.

The occasion for writing *The Ladder* was the following.[13] At a distance of two days' journey from Sinai lay the monastery of Raithu, situated in a very picturesque bay of the Red Sea. At the time when the Sinai monastery was governed by the Venerable John Climacus, the abbot of the Raithu monastery was also a holy John.[14] Having heard much of the spiritual gifts of the abbot of Sinai, of his deep wisdom in the management of souls entrusted to him for salvation, the abbot of Raithu wrote to John Climacus an epistle,[15] in which, in his own name and in the name of all the monks of his monastery, he asked him to write for them a guide to the spiritual and moral ascetic life. "Knowing your obedience, unquestioning in all things in the Lord and adorned with all the virtues," wrote the holy John of Raithu to John Climacus, "we, the weak, turning to you as to the common father of all, as to the one who is first before all both in asceticism and in the power of mind, and as to an excellent teacher, entreat by this our epistle the height of your virtues... do not refuse, zealously in the Lord, for our salvation, to set forth clearly what is needful and fitting for the monastic life, as a truly great leader of all who have chosen the angelic life, not taking

11. Venerable John reposed at the age of eighty, at the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century.

12. The word *Lestvitsa* means “ladder” in Russian.

13. The purpose of writing the *Ladder* was to teach that the attainment of salvation requires on the part of man labor, self-denial, and intensified ascetic feats. The Ladder contains thirty steps or feats: first, the cleansing of sinful impurity and the eradication of vices and passions in the old man; second, the restoration in man of the image of God. To these there are added several further steps of preparatory or initial feats.

14. Saint John, abbot of Raithu, a contemporary of John Climacus, is commemorated by the Church on Cheesefare Saturday.

15. It is appended to the edition of the *Ladder*.

what we say for any flattery or fawning. For you well know, truly holy head, that flattery is alien to us, and that we only repeat what is affirmed by all. Therefore we assure ourselves in the Lord that we shall soon receive and embrace the desired, most honorable inscriptions on the tablets, as a true guide for those who follow unswervingly, and which stands as a ladder upon the earth (Gen. 28:12), leading those who desire it, whole and unharmed, up to the gates of heaven, so that they pass unhindered by the spirits of wickedness, the world-rulers of darkness, and the princes of the air. For if Jacob, the shepherd of dumb sheep, saw such a strange vision of a ladder (Gen. 28:12), how much more will the shepherd of rational sheep show all not only a vision, but in very deed and truth an infallible ascent to God! Be strengthened in the Lord, most honorable father!"

The Venerable John held so modest an opinion of himself that this epistle of the abbot of Raithu embarrassed him. The Venerable One replied to him also by an epistle.[16]

"I have received," wrote Climacus, "your honored letter, sent to me, poor and destitute of virtues; or rather, an instruction and command exceeding my strength. And I say that, were it not for the fear and great danger of casting off the yoke of obedience—the mother of all virtues—I would not have dared, unwisely, to undertake a work beyond my strength. You, wondrous father, ought to have asked about this and learned it from those who know the matter well; but I am still among the learners. Yet since our God-bearing fathers, the initiates of true knowledge, teach that obedience consists in submitting without hesitation to those who command us in matters beyond our strength, I humbly resolve to undertake what is above me; with fear and zeal I approach the fulfilment of your holy command. To you, the leader and chief of teachers, I leave the task of adorning and clarifying its outline and, as one who completes the tablets of the spiritual law, making good what is lacking. For your sake I undertake this work, beseeching all readers that, if anyone finds anything useful in my labor, they should gratefully credit its fruit to our excellent superior, and ask God to re-

16. It is also appended to the edition of the *Ladder*.

ward me for the mere performance of the labor, for God rewards not for the multitude of gifts and labors, but for great zeal."

It was on this occasion that the work of Venerable John, called "The Ladder," came into being.

The composition of Venerable John is called "The Ladder" because St. John of Raithu desired precisely such a guide to the spiritual life as would present, as it were, a ladder of steps, which would lead those who desire to the gates of heaven whole and unharmed, and also in accordance with the intention of its author himself. "According to the meagre knowledge given to me," writes St. John, "I have constructed a ladder of ascent. After this let each one look for himself at which step he has arrived."[17] In the preface to "The Ladder" the meaning of this name is explained thus: "To those striving that their names be written in the book of life, this present book shows the best path for their course. For walking by this way, we shall find that this book, without error, as it were by the hand, leads those who follow it, and undoubtedly presents a firm ladder from the earthly to the holy, and shows upon its summit God, who is established... Indeed, he who arranged for us this ascent judged most excellently, making it equal in number to the Lord's age according to the flesh; for in the image of thirty years of the Lord's maturity, he meaningfully constructed a ladder of 30 steps, by which, having attained the Lord's age,[18] we shall be found righteous and safe from falling." Thus the work of Venerable John is called "The Ladder" because its purpose is to present the path of gradual ascent to moral perfection, and it is a true and reliable guide in the spiritual life for those zealous for piety and the salvation of their souls.

"The Ladder," although written strictly for monks, and therefore has always been the table-book of monks living in common, and the fathers of monastic life, among them Theodore the Studite, Joseph of Volokolamsk and others, referred in their instructions to "The Ladder" as the best book; nevertheless a Christian living in the world may also

17. *Ladder*, 27, 30.

18. That is, Saint John Climacus sets down thirty steps of self-perfection, corresponding to the thirty years of the Savior's life before He came forth to public ministry.

find in it saving guidance. The first step of the ladder is set as the renunciation of earthly attachments, and at its very summit is indicated the union of three virtues: faith, hope and love.

To become acquainted with the instructions of John Climacus, let us hear his instruction about vainglory.[19]

"Vainglory shows itself in every virtue. When, for example, I keep a fast, I glory; and when, concealing my fast from others, I allow myself food, again I glory, in discretion. Dressed in bright clothing, I am moved by love of honor; and dressed in poor clothing, I glory. Shall I speak? I fall into the power of vainglory. Shall I wish to be silent? Again I surrender to it. Wherever one turns this thorn, it will all stand with its points upward. The vainglorious man is a Christian idolater. In appearance he honors God, but in deed he takes more pains to please men than God... 'Those who call us blessed deceive us,' says the prophet (Is. 3:12). Men of lofty spirit bear insult cheerfully and willingly; but to hear praises and feel no pleasure in them only the saints and the spotless can do... When you hear that your neighbor or friend reproaches you behind your back, or even to your face, then show love by praising him... It is not he who reproaches himself who shows humility (for how can one be insufferable to oneself?), but he who, dishonored by another, does not lessen his love for him... He who prides himself on natural gifts—a subtle mind, high education, his reading, a pleasant way of speaking and other such qualities which are easily acquired—will never attain supernatural goods. For he who is unfaithful in a little will be unfaithful and vainglorious in much (Lk. 16:10). It often happens that God Himself humbles the vainglorious, sending unexpected dishonor... If prayer does not destroy the thought of vainglory, let us bring to mind the departure of the soul from this life. If this does not help, let us frighten him with the shame of the Last Judgment. 'He who exalts himself shall be humbled' (Lk. 14:11), even here, before the age to come. When our praisers, or rather our deceivers, begin to praise us, let us immediately call to mind the multitude of our iniquities, and we

19. *Ladder*, 22.

shall find that we are unworthy of what is said about us, or of what is done for us."[2279]

In general, the "Ladder" of St. John is distinguished by deep spiritual experience, combined with a profound knowledge of Holy Scripture. John Climacus rarely expresses a thought without illuminating it by direct or indirect reference to the Holy Scripture. John's work is written in a simple language, yet pure and living; he expresses much in few words, and therefore it is full of power.[20] It is for this reason that the "Ladder" of St. John has always been the table-book of monks living in common.[21]

Troparion, Tone 8:

By the streams of thy tears thou didst till the barren wilderness, and from the depths, by sighs, thou didst bring forth fruit a hundredfold of labors; and thou wast a lamp to the universe, shining with wonders. O John, our father, pray to Christ God that our souls be saved.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Iddo

Память святого пророка Иоада

The Holy Prophet Iddo came from Samaria. After he rebuked Jeroboam[22] for establishing in the kingdom of Israel the calves, to which he himself had offered sacrifices, he was torn to pieces by a lion, and thus he died. It happened this way. The Lord commanded Iddo to go to Jeroboam and rebuke him, not eating bread there nor drinking wine, and to return back at once. The prophet found Jeroboam offering sacrifice to idols, and, turning to him, said:

20. This last quality of the *Ladder*, as well as the experiential depth of its thoughts, was the cause of commentaries on the *Ladder* being written by John, abbot of Raithu, by Elijah of Crete, a metropolitan of the eighth century, and by others.
21. As an appendix to the *Ladder*, Venerable John wrote another short work, *To the Shepherd*; in it he portrays the ideal of the abbot of a monastery, who, in John's depiction, must be a shepherd, a helmsman, a physician, a teacher, and a model for those under him.
22. Jeroboam was the first king of Israel after the division of the Hebrew kingdom. He introduced idolatry into his kingdom and compelled his subjects to it.

"Thus says the Lord: Behold, a son shall be born in the house of Judah, whose name is Josiah, and he shall slaughter upon the altar of these priests of the high places."[23]

Jeroboam stretched out his hand, that the prophet might be seized, but his hand became withered. Then the king entreated the prophet to make his hand whole again, as before. After this, as Iddo was returning, he was deceived by a false prophet named Emve, and ate with him. For this disobedience the Lord permitted a lion to slay him, but not to eat his body. The slain Iddo was buried near the dwelling of the prophet who had deceived him.[24]

* * *

Tale of the Monk Who Judged No One

Повесть об иноке, никого не осудившем

On the same day there reposed in the Lord a monk who judged no one. Venerable Anastasius the Sinaite relates the following about him.

A certain monk, living in a monastery, spent his days carelessly, not concerned for his salvation, but giving himself up all his life to idleness. Having reached advanced years, he was already approaching death. When he fell sick with a grievous ailment and was at his last breath, he was in no way afraid of death, but prepared to part from the body with gladness, praising and glorifying God. The brethren surrounding him and the abbot of that monastery said to him:

"We have seen, brother, that you spent your life in idleness. Why then at this dreadful hour of death are you so carefree and joyful? Strengthened by the power of God, rise and explain this to us, so that we too may glorify God."

The brother, raising himself a little from the bed, said to them:

"It is true, honorable fathers, that I spent my life carelessly. Just now the Angels of God brought to me and read before me a record on which all my evil deeds were noted. When they had read the record,

23. Among the Eastern peoples, altars for the offering of sacrifices to idols were usually erected on elevated places.

24. The account of the prophet Iddo is given in 3 Kgdms. 13:1–34.

the Angels asked me: 'Do you know this?' I answered: 'Yes, I know it.' But since I had renounced the world, had received tonsure into the monastic order, had never judged anyone, and had never been angry with anyone, I pray God that the words of Christ, who said: 'Judge not, that you be not judged; if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you' (Mt. 7:1; 6:14), be fulfilled in me. And as soon as I said this, at once the holy Angels tore up the record of my sins. Therefore I depart to God with joy and gladness."

Having said this, the brother gave up his soul to the Lord in peace.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, commemoration of our Venerable Father Zosimas, Bishop of Syracuse.

On the same day, commemoration of St. Eubula, mother of St. Panteleimon, who lived in the 3rd century and reposed before the sufferings of her son (before 305).

NOTES

2260. It is held by some that John Climacus was the son of Xenophon and Mary, whose memory the Holy Church celebrates on January 26. The Chet'i-Minei (January 26) relates that the wealthy and noble Constantinopolitan nobles Xenophon and Mary had two sons, John and Arcadius. The parents wished to give them an education. At that time the school in the Syrian city of Berytus (present-day Beirut) enjoyed great renown, and thither they sent their children. Once the parents summoned their sons to them on account of their father's dangerous illness. When they set out to return to the school, their route being across the Mediterranean Sea, a violent storm suddenly arose on the sea and shattered the ship on which they were. But both brothers did not perish: they were saved from drowning on planks from the ship, and the sea waves cast them up on the shore of Palestine. It so happened, however, that each of them came ashore at different places, so that they knew nothing of each other's fate. After their miraculous deliverance, both brothers, seeing in the disaster that had befallen them a call from above to the monastic life, entered different monasteries in Palestine, and Arcadius changed his name to George. After a fairly considerable time the two brothers met one another, and that in the presence of their father and mother, after which they too took the monastic habit. One of the sons of Xenophon and Mary, John, is identified as one and the same person as John Climacus. In favor of this opinion speak, first, the circumstance that, according to the testimony of one of his biographers, John Climacus did indeed have a

brother called George; second, the high education of the venerable man, which presupposes in him a noble origin; and above all his *Ladder*, which reveals in John a profound knowledge of Holy Scripture, of the works of the holy Fathers, and even of heretical writings.

2279. According to the depiction of the *Ladder*, Christian perfection begins with the renunciation of the "world" and the struggle with the passions. From dispersing pleasures and sensual delights the "spirit" turns to repentance in sorrow, abiding in constant remembrance of death. Saving sorrow softens the heart of the ascetic by the power of tears, frees him from self-love, and removes from him the growths of sin. By this path the one who repents attains the state of "silence," when he finds words only for prayer, hymns, and the expression of "love." The spirit and soul are freed from the bonds of coarse sensuality, become refined, and receive a genuine capacity for communion with the spiritual, heavenly, and Divine world. Blessed "humility" leads along the paths of following Christ and opens the door into the Heavenly Kingdom. He who has conquered the "passions" receives the higher capacity of "discernment," which helps a person to notice and recognize in himself and others evil and good movements, to suppress the former and to cultivate the latter. In the higher state of God-like dispassion and tranquility the ascetic already on earth enters into a glorified state and contemplates, as in a mirror, the blessings of Paradise.



THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF MARCH

March 31

31 марта

New Calendar March 31 · Old Calendar April 13 (civil dates)

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Hypatius the Wonderworker, Bishop of Gangra

Память святого священномученика Ипатия чудотворца, епископа Гангрского

The holy great servant of God, Hypatius, Bishop of the city of Gangra in Paphlagonia[1], was one of the three hundred and eighteen holy fathers who took part in the First Ecumenical Council, convened during the reign of Constantine the Great. There, together with the other holy fathers, filled with the Holy Spirit and animated by zeal for Orthodoxy, he exposed Arius's heresy and anathematized him.

St. Hypatius had from God the great gift of wonderworking; he healed various infirmities and cast out demons. In one village he turned a spring of bitter water flowing down from the mountains into sweet water; and in another place, through his prayer, a spring of warm water with healing properties flowed from the earth. Once, on a dark night, he was walking beside a river, when lights appeared from the water, showing him the way so that he would not stray from it and fall into the river. He also slew a fearsome serpent. In the reign of Constantius[2], who came to the throne after the death of his brother Constantine[3], a very large serpent crawled from an unknown place to the imperial palace. It coiled around the imperial treasury, where much gold and other wealth lay, placed its head at the entrance to the chamber, and allowed no one to enter. The Emperor Constantius was terrified by this and sent word to St. Hypatius, the hierarch of God, asking

1. Paphlagonia – a region of Asia Minor.
2. Emperor Constantius reigned from 337 to 361.
3. Constantine II, eldest son of Constantine the Great, reigned from 337 to 340.

him to come to Constantinople, for the saint's name was renowned on account of the miracles he wrought by the grace of Christ. The emperor received the saint with honor, bowed down to him to the ground, and asked him by his prayer to drive the serpent away from the imperial treasury. No human power could expel it: many clerics had tried to drive it away, armed with prayer, but without success; some of them had even suffered harm. The saint said to the emperor:

"O emperor! Even if our prayer should prove powerless, your faith before God will not be in vain."

Then, falling to the ground, he prayed for a long while. Afterward, rising, Hypatius said to the emperor:

"Have a furnace set up in the middle of the hippodrome[4], where the statue of your father stands, and heated as hot as possible, while I make my way there."

At once the furnace was prepared and kindled. Then St. Hypatius, taking his hierarchal staff, approached the imperial palace, opened the treasury gates, and beat the serpent with his staff for a long time. The people and the emperor, overcome with fear and trembling, watched from afar; and when they saw that the serpent did not crawl away (and the day was already drawing toward evening), they all thought that the serpent had killed the saint, as had earlier happened to some priests. But the hierarch Hypatius lifted his eyes to heaven and called upon the Lord for help, then placed his staff in the serpent's mouth, saying:

"In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, follow me."

The serpent seized the staff in its teeth and followed the saint, like a captive bound fast. And indeed, the great wonderworker had bound it by the power of God.

Then St. Hypatius left the imperial treasury and walked all around the hippodrome and the marketplace, leading the serpent. The people, seeing the serpent clinging to the end of the staff and being led by the saint, were terrified and amazed. The serpent was exceedingly fearsome, measuring sixty cubits in length[5]. As he approached the fiery furnace, burning with a great flame, the saint said to the serpent:

4. A place for horse-racing contests.
5. The cubit is a measure of length; it equaled 10–12 of our vershoks.

"In the Name of Christ, Whom I, unworthy though I am, preach, I command you to enter into the midst of that fire!"

Then the fearsome serpent bent itself and darted swiftly into the fiery furnace, where it burned to ashes. All who watched this in terror glorified God, for in their lifetime He had shown the world such a luminary and wonderworker as St. Hypatius.

Then the emperor gave great thanks to God and to His servant, St. Hypatius, whom he revered as his father. He ordered an image of the saint's face to be made on a board and placed it in his imperial treasury to drive away demons; and, having rewarded the saint with gifts and affectionately kissed him, he sent him home.

As the saint was returning to his episcopal throne, evil men, followers of the teaching of Novatian[6], consumed with great envy of the hierarch of God, laid an ambush for him on the road, in a narrow passage beside a mountain precipice and on the edge of a swamp, armed with swords and stakes. As soon as he came to that place, they rushed upon him suddenly, like wild beasts, and, wounding him severely, cast him down from the high bank into the mire of the swamp. The saint, left barely alive, stretched out his hands a little upward and lifted his eyes to heaven; like St. Stephen the Protomartyr of old, he prayed for his murderers, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). While he was praying thus, an evil woman who clung to the Arian heresy picked up a heavy stone and struck the saint hard on the head, killing him. The holy soul of Hypatius, released at once from the body, departed to the Lord[7]. The murderers took the saint's body, concealed it in a cave near that place, and went away.

But God's punishment for the shedding of innocent blood was not long in coming upon them. First, an unclean spirit attacked that woman

6. Novatus – a presbyter of the Carthaginian Church, who lived in the 3rd century and is known as the founder of a church schism. The essence of this schism is as follows: when St. Cyprian was elected Bishop of Carthage in 248, five presbyters, of whom Novatus was especially prominent, dissatisfied with this election, separated from Cyprian; and Novatus, without the knowledge and will of the bishop, ordained as deacon Felicissimus, a wealthy and influential man. That schism is known in Church History under the name "the schism of Novatus and Felicissimus." The schismatics who separated from the Church were condemned at the Council of Carthage in 251.

7. The death of the holy martyr occurred around 326.

in that very place and tormented her. She continually beat herself on the breast with that same stone; afterward all those who had tortured the saint became possessed by demons and suffered grievously.

After this, a certain farmer to whom the cave belonged (where he kept straw), knowing nothing of the unjust murder that had been committed, came to take straw from it for his livestock. Hearing the voices of singing Angels, he wondered and was filled with terror. As he began to take the straw, he found a dead body covered all over with wounds, and was even more terrified; recognizing in the dead man his holy bishop Hypatius, he ran to his fellow villagers, and they soon told everything in the city. The inhabitants of Gangra immediately gathered and came with great lamentation to the place. Taking up the venerable body of their holy father and shepherd, they buried him with great honor. The murderous woman followed the saint's body as it was borne to burial, beating herself on the way with the very stone with which she had killed the hierarch of God, and confessing her sin aloud.

When the saint's body had been buried, the woman was healed of her demonic possession; so too were all the others, who had previously been possessed and had shared in the murder of the saint. This happened at the saint's tomb, where even after death he did good to his enemies, in his guilelessness. Many other miracles and healings also took place there among those who came in faith to the tomb of St. Hypatius, through his prayers to God.

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Hypatius, in Rufinae[8]

Память преподобного отца нашего Ипатия, в Руфинах

This venerable man was born in Phrygia[9]. At the age of eighteen he was once beaten by his father, and, fleeing from him, he came to Thrace[10]. Entering one of the existing monasteries, he devoted

8. The monastery of Rufinus in the suburb of Chalcedon, which was in the Roman province of Asia Minor, on the shore of the Bosphorus.
9. Phrygia – a Roman province in Asia Minor.
10. Thrace – a region on the Balkan Peninsula, now Rumelia.

himself to the ascetic labors of the monastic life and soon became known for his virtues. He never drank wine, and once, when he had entered into struggle with carnal passion, he spent fifty days in fasting, touching neither food nor drink at all. When the abbot of the monastery learned of this, then at supper, in the presence of the brethren, he himself, with his own hand, offered Hypatius a cup of wine and bread with it, whereupon he was at once freed from the passion that had tormented him, and he gave thanks to the Lord and to his instructor. Some time later, on the counsel of his spiritual father, he went to Constantinople to help a man who had been subjected to the temptation of the flesh; he also helped his own father, who had come there. Then, having sent his father back to his homeland, Hypatius went with two monks to Chalcedon and settled in the monastery of Rufinus, which at that time had a strange and unsightly appearance: it was completely deserted and inspired fear in all. This Rufinus, being a layman[11], had once built a splendid monastery and settled in it Egyptian monks, who labored there, glorifying God. But when Rufinus died, the monks living in his monastery dispersed each to his own country, and the monastery then became uninhabited. It was overgrown with thorny plants, which intertwined into impassable thickets and made it hideous, and then unclean spirits entered and settled in it, so that it became a house inspiring fear in all, and no one wished to pass by it. Finding the monastery in such a state, the Venerable Hypatius drove out the demons from it, and, cleansing it of the thickets that disfigured it, restored it to its former comely appearance; after this he settled in it together with the two monks who had come with him. He himself began to make hair shirts[12], while the monks with him, one occupied himself with sowing, and the other with the making of a garden. Some years after this, Hypatius went to Thrace and settled in the monastery where he had labored earlier, but the monks of the monastery of Rufinus soon came to that monastery and asked him to be their abbot. The venerable man consented, and from that time he began to perform great labors. Many

11. It is believed that Rufinus was one of the nobles at the court of Constantine the Great.
12. A hair shirt – a garment of coarse hair from some animal, the customary dress of Eastern monks, who wore it directly on the body.

of the monks, imitating him, attained high perfection in God-pleasing life. For his labors the Divine Hypatius was granted by God the gift of working miracles, and he performed a multitude of wondrous healings. Thus he healed the demoniacs, the blind, the withered, those suffering from dropsy, and women with issues of blood. A considerable number of barren women he made able to bear children, and to other women, whose breasts were dry and unable to nurse, he restored milk. Many times by prayer he multiplied water, bread and other food, increasing them at the needed time, and he drove away all manner of illnesses from people and domestic cattle. The venerable man's food was boiled grain, vegetables and a small amount of bread, and even this meager food he took only late in the evening, and for the sustaining of his aged strength he drank a little wine. The venerable man lived eighty years, so that the hair of his head and beard became white as snow, and in such deep old age, both in appearance and in his deeds, he remained as honorable as before. For forty years he held the rank of superior of the monks, he glorified the priesthood, and, having sent eighty of his disciples before him to the Lord, soon after them he himself peacefully departed, glorifying the Lord[13].

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Apollonius

Память преподобного Аполлония

Our holy father Apollonius, at the age of fifteen, renounced the world and, devoting himself to the monastic life, settled in the inner desert[14], where he lived on a mountain for forty years. Having acquired from childhood a habit of virtuous life, he performed great labors, and for this he was granted such grace that once he heard the voice of God saying to him:

"Apollonius, go now to inhabited places, for it is necessary for you to bring forth for Me chosen people."

13. Venerable Hypatius reposed around the year 446.

14. By the inner desert is meant the Thebaid desert, situated in Africa, in Lower Egypt, on the eastern bank of the river Nile.

Immediately after this he went to a nearby desert, and, finding there in the lower part of a mountain a small cave, he settled in it. Here he spent whole days kneeling and praying to God. He ate the food that God sent him and that he received from an Angel who came to him in the desert. This desert was situated near inhabited places, and, visiting these places by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the venerable man gathered about himself a large community of monks, numbering about five hundred persons, and instructed them in the various labors of the monastic life. Thus, together with them, he took food only on Sundays, and on all other days he ate nothing: neither bread, nor pulse[15], nor anything else that is prepared on the fire, but nourished himself only on wild-growing grains. The Venerable Apollonius introduced into his monastery the rule that the monks who labored with him did not partake of food before first communing of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. This was ordinarily done every day at the ninth hour of the morning, and afterward the monks sat down to the table, during which meal they listened every day to instructions. All the rest of the day they spent in profitable occupations, and thereby drove from their thoughts the malicious suggestions of the devil. Having instructed many monks in such a life, and having lived to deep old age, Saint Apollonius passed over to God for eternal life.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Abdas and Benjamin

Память святых мучеников Авды и Вениамина

The holy Hieromartyr Abdas lived in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger[16] and was a bishop in Persia. He destroyed a temple of fire-worshippers[17], and for this he was seized and brought before the king[18]. The king at first mildly commanded him

15. Sochivo – boiled grains of wheat, rice and other grains.

16. Theodosius II the Younger reigned in the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 408 to 450.

17. The Persians revered Mithra, or the sun, as the supreme god. They also worshipped fire and built temples to their deities, in which they worshipped fire and the sun.

18. The king mentioned here was Yazdegerd I, who reigned from 401 to 420. The persecution he began was at its strongest under his successor Vahram V (420–438).

to restore the destroyed temple, but when he answered that he could not do this, he sent soldiers to destroy all the Christian churches. After this the persecutors pursued the Christians and, without regard to age, by various means put them to death. The first of them, after diverse tortures, was the Hieromartyr Abdas, who was beheaded with the sword; and thirty days afterward other holy martyrs were put to death, among them the holy deacon Benjamin[19]. The tormentors first thrust sharpened spikes beneath the nails of the fingers on his hands and feet, and then impaled him on a stake, from which he yielded up his spirit into the hands of the Lord[20].

* * *

Repose of Our Holy Father Jonah, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia

Преставление святого отца нашего Ионы, митрополита Киевского и всея России

Saint Jonah was a native of the city of Galich, which lies near the land of Kazan[21]. He was born to a pious father named Theodore, and at the age of twelve, in one of the monasteries of the land of Galich, he received the monastic habit; then he came to the city of Moscow, to Simonov Monastery[22], where he labored for a long time in monastic obediences.

At that time the metropolitan in Moscow was Photius[23]. Once coming to the Simonov monastery, Photius served a moleben there in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, and, having given a blessing to the archimandrite with the brethren, he desired also to see the monastery

19. According to the Menologion of Basil, Hieromartyr Benjamin suffered martyrdom not three months, but three years after St. Abdas.

20. Holy Martyr Abdas reposed in 418 or 421, and St. Benjamin three years later, consequently in 421 or 424, both in the city of Susa, the most ancient Persian city, which was the capital of Susiana and the residence first of the Elamite and then of the Persian kings.

21. Saint Jonah was born in the ancient region of Galich, near the city of Soligalich of the present Kostroma province.

22. The Monastery of Simonov, on the left bank of the river Moscow, was founded in 1370 in the days of Grand Prince Dmitry Donskoy by Theodore, disciple and nephew of Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, with the blessing of Metropolitan Alexis. The monastery received its name from the place, which was called Simonovo after the name of its owner.

23. He was Metropolitan from 1408 to 1431.

novices and to bless them. He entered the bakehouse and saw there the blessed Jonah, who had fallen asleep after strenuous labors; his right hand was bent as if he were blessing with it. Photius did not command that he be awakened, but, blessing the sleeping man, he foretold to those with him that this monk would be a hierarch in the lands of Russia and would lead many onto the path of salvation.

The prophecy of the hierarch of God was afterward fulfilled. A few years later, by God's good pleasure, by the election of the Holy Council and the desire of the tsar, the blessed Jonah was made bishop of the city of Ryazan and Murom, where he converted to God and baptized many unbelievers[24].

When the blessed Metropolitan Photius departed to the Lord, the Grand Prince Basil Vasilievich[25] gathered the archbishops and bishops of the Russian land and the whole Holy Council, and commanded them to elect a worthy man to the great throne of the Russian metropolis; by the consent and desire of all, Jonah, Bishop of Ryazan, was then chosen[26]: all knew him as a virtuous and holy man.

He set out with the grand prince's message for Constantinople, to Emperor John Palaiologos[2311] and to the Most Holy Patriarch Joseph[27], to receive ordination to the metropolitanate. But before he arrived at Constantinople, the wicked Isidore, a native of Thessalonica[2313], had already received consecration to the Russian metropolitanate and had been sent from Constantinople to Russia.

After his departure, the holy Jonah also arrived at Constantinople and handed the emperor and the patriarch the messages of the grand prince. Having read them, they greatly regretted that they had

24. Within the vast diocese of St. Jonah, which embraced some parts of the present dioceses of Tambov and Voronezh, there were whole villages of the Don tribes – the Mordvins, Meshchera, and Muroma – who adhered to idolatry; from among these unbelievers St. Jonah brought many to the true God.

25. From 1425 to 1434.

26. St. Jonah was elected, probably not later than the end of 1432; one charter of Jonah, "elect to the most holy Russian metropolis," dated March 11, 1433, is known.

27. Joseph II, formerly Metropolitan of Ephesus, was elected Patriarch of Constantinople in 1416. Together with the emperor he strove for the union of the Churches, was present at the Council of Florence (see the preceding note), and died in Italy in 1439.

hastened to ordain Isidore, whom they had already sent off to Russia, and they said to the holy Jonah:

"What can we now do for you? You have come to us too late; we have already appointed Isidore to the Russian metropolitanate, and we cannot change this: Isidore is already now the Metropolitan of Russia. Return to your see and await what God will arrange concerning Isidore. When he dies, or for some other reason he is to be replaced, then, by blessing from the Patriarchal Throne of Constantinople, you shall be ordained Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia."

And so they sent Saint Jonah home.

Isidore, however, first arrived in Kiev; afterwards he went to Moscow in the spring, and having spent there the whole working season until autumn, he set off to the west, to the Council of Florence, as if to confirm the Orthodox faith. Having remained there three years, he returned to Kiev an apostate from the Eastern Church, but he was not received there; then he went to Moscow in order to spread his apostate teaching.

Grand Prince Basil Vasilievich, learning of his apostasy, gathered the hierarchs and the whole spiritual estate of the Russian Metropolia to examine the matter. Assembling and examining the holy canons, they saw that Isidore had brought back from the Council of Florence a teaching alien to and opposed to Orthodoxy, and they did not wish to have him as their metropolitan. The Grand Prince commanded him to live in one monastery until he should report this to the Most Holy Patriarch in Constantinople.

Isidore, seeing that his defection had been exposed, was ashamed and, without waiting for anything, secretly fled to Rome, where he was received and honored by the Pope.

And to the Russian Metropolia was again elected St. Jonah[28]. By the blessing of the Most Holy Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory Mé-

28. The enthronement of St. Jonah on the see of the Russian metropolis was decreed by a great council of bishops, archimandrites, abbots, and the whole clergy. The enthronement itself was accomplished on 15 December 1448, of which the Second Sophia Chronicle says: "the offering of the Divine Service is made, the honorable omophorion is laid upon his shoulder, and the great metropolitan staff is given into his hands, and thus with reverent fear he performs the service and blesses the people."

lissenos[29], he was consecrated in Moscow in the cathedral church by his fellow hierarchs. Thus he was the first metropolitan consecrated by Russian hierarchs by the blessing from the apostolic See of Constantinople.

Having ascended the throne of the Russian Metropolia, St. Jonah increased his struggles still further, adding labor to labor, and above all concerning himself with establishing piety everywhere; animated by this aim, he unceasingly instructed his flock, sending epistles; as a true shepherd he confirmed the Orthodox faith, which is particularly clearly seen from his epistles[30]; in general he took great care to preserve intact the flock entrusted to him by God.

St. Jonah was granted by God the gift of working miracles: to heal infirmities and to foretell the future.

Thus, by his prayer, he raised from the sickbed the Grand Prince's daughter, who was at the point of death. Seeing this miracle, an unbeliever, at the instigation of the devil, began to say to the saint that the Grand Princess had been healed of her illness not by his prayer, but that the sickness had passed of its own accord. Then the blessed Jonah, summoning that man, instructed him not to blaspheme the grace of the Holy Spirit, and said to him:

"My son! Doubt nothing, for 'the things which are impossible with men are possible with God' (Lk. 18:27); God has granted the maiden life through the faith, and above all through the hope, of her sovereign parents."

But that man did not believe the saint and began to utter even more blasphemous words.

Then St. Jonah said to him:

"Let your tongue be bound, let your blaspheming lips be stopped; instead of that maiden who was at the point of death, you shall die!"

And immediately the blasphemer fell to the ground speechless: his tongue was paralyzed, he only rolled his eyes, and after some time he

29. He occupied the patriarchal see in Constantinople from 1445 to 1450.

30. Up to the present time the following instructive letters of St. Jonah are known: two to Vyatka, two to Novgorod, and one to Pskov.

gave up his spirit, because he had dared to blaspheme the gift of the Holy Spirit which dwelt in that great hierarch.

The holy metropolitan had one monk, by name Pimen, who was in charge of the cellar, and to whom was entrusted the giving of drink to the infirm poor who came.

Once a poor widow came to him and asked him to give her a little honey, on account of her illness. But that monk said to her with malice:

"Go away; it is still not time to give drink."

The widow went away in sorrow.

Learning of it, the hierarch of God summoned Pimen and said to him:

"Brother! You do not know what widow you have offended; she is a God-pleaser; for this God is punishing you with death. Go, repent of your sins, for the time has come for you to die."

And St. Jonah commanded his spiritual father to tonsure Pimen into the schema, and on the very day of the tonsure he died, according to the word of the hierarch of God.

On another occasion the saint gave one of his novices a large sum of money to distribute to the poor; but that one distributed part of the money and kept part of it for himself.

It happened that once a poor widow came to the saint with a complaint against the novice, and said:

"Hierarch of God! Your novice gave me nothing of the money you bequeathed."

The hierarch, summoning the novice, asked him:

"Why did you wrong this widow and give her nothing?"

He answered:

"I gave her much, but she shamelessly asks for more."

But the widow denied this and insistently affirmed that she had received nothing from him.

The novice cried out in anger:

"Go away! You will die, because you lie!"

Then the saint said to him:

"It shall not be so: this widow speaks the truth, while you steal and lie; she will live, and you will die."

Immediately the novice fell ill with a fever and died.

A boyar named Basil, surnamed Kutuz, did not have faith in the wonderworking power of St. Jonah, never came to him, and did not wish to receive a blessing from him. Once he fell ill with a severe toothache, from which he suffered greatly and could not be cured in any way. It happened that this boyar, whose teeth ached, was in the cathedral church when the hierarch of God Jonah was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in it; at the conclusion of the liturgy the saint, calling that boyar to himself, blessed him, gave him a prosphora, and, having imparted to him instruction from Holy Scripture, suddenly struck him on the cheek with his hand, so that the sound of the blow was heard by many.

Basil cried out loudly:

"Oh, it hurts! You have knocked out my last teeth!"

And immediately the sufferer felt relief, and his toothache passed. He went home rejoicing, giving thanks to God and praising His saint, the hierarch Jonah.

In 1451, on account of the sins of our forefathers, by God's permission, there came an invasion of the godless Agarenes upon the Russian land. A certain Horde prince with a multitude of Tatars suddenly approached Moscow, burned its environs, and began to press the city itself from all sides. The blessed Metropolitan Jonah, with all his clergy, went in procession with the cross and with the singing of supplicatory hymns along the city walls, offering with many tears a fervent prayer to God for the city and its people.

Seeing an elderly monk of the Chudov Monastery, by name Antony, who was distinguished by a virtuous life and whom he knew, St. Jonah addressed him with these words:

"Son and brother mine Antony! Pray to the merciful God and to the Most Pure Theotokos for the deliverance of the city and all Orthodox Christians from the godless Agarenes."

Antony said to him:

"Great hierarch! We thank God and His Most Pure Mother, our strong and swift helper: She has heard your prayers and has besought her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that this city and all Orthodox Christi-

ans be saved for your sake. The enemy Agarenes will soon be defeated and driven off by an invisible power; only I am destined by the Lord to be killed to death by the enemies."

Scarcely had the elder said this, when suddenly an arrow shot by the Tatars pierced him, and he soon died; after this he was honorably buried by Metropolitan Jonah with all the clergy.

When the feast of the Laying-Up of the Robe of the Most Holy Theotokos came, on July 2, confusion arose among the Tatars: suddenly fear and terror fell upon them, and they fled, being chased away from the city by an invisible power.

The holy Metropolitan Jonah commanded that a church of the Laying-Up of the Robe of the Most Holy Theotokos be built as quickly as possible in his courtyard, in memory of the deliverance from the Agarenes through Her prayers, for on that day they lifted the siege of the city.

Later, after many years, having attained deep old age, St. Jonah, before his honored death, was granted the following revelation about it from God.

The church sexton of the cathedral church, by name Maxim, walking one night around the church in the course of his duty, found it open and saw that candles were burning in it and priests were singing. He was very frightened and ran to tell the church keeper, the priest James.

The latter hastened there, but found the church locked, as it had been, though light was visible from within. He unlocked the doors, entered the church, and found no one there, yet the candles were burning. He was dismayed and heard a voice from the sanctuary saying:

"James! Go, tell My servant, Metropolitan Jonah, that since he asks Me for the sake of his soul's salvation for a bodily infirmity, I have heard his request: I shall send upon his leg a sore, from which he will die; let him not delay, in view of his imminent repose, in finishing the affairs laid upon him by the duty of chief shepherd." Hearing that voice, James was filled with fear and horror, was perplexed, and told his vision to no one, not even to the hierarch Jonah himself.

In the morning, at daybreak, St. Jonah, summoning James to himself, asked him:

"Where were you during the night, James? What did you see and hear? Why did you not report to me what was revealed to you about me?"

James was afraid, fell at the saint's feet, and said:

"Vladyka, forgive me! I did not dare to tell you of this, but I see that the Holy Spirit has revealed it to you."

The hierarch said:

"May God forgive you, my son; but I will tell you that God will take from you your wife. Go now and take care quickly for her soul, that she may depart in repentance."

Up to this time the church keeper's wife had been entirely well. But when he returned home he found her already ill, and three days later she died, having fulfilled, as is fitting, her Christian duty by repentance and by receiving the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

The great hierarch Jonah himself lived not long after that. Filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit and with good works, and "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1), he was granted a blessed end in his advanced years. The hierarch fell ill with a sore on his leg, and, weakened in body, he did not weaken in spirit, continuing even in his sickness to visit the Church of God.

Preparing to commend his holy soul into the hands of God, he blessed the Grand Prince, his posterity and the whole people, and, with prayer on his lips, went to the Lord in the year 1464, on the 31st day of March[31]; he had shepherded the Church of God for twelve and a half years.

A few years after the death of St. Jonah, Grand Prince Basil Vasilievich also died; he was succeeded by his son, Grand Prince John Vasilievich, Autocrat of the Russian Land[32]. By the will of God and with the blessing of the Most Reverend Metropolitan Gerontius[33], he desired

31. The First Sophia Chronicle speaks as follows of the repose of St. Jonah: "In the year 6969, on the 31st day of March, the most reverend Jonah, Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, reposed; and his face was seen then not as is the custom with the dead, but he appeared as one sleeping, on account of his great and glorious life, as we have heard of him from his youth, like the ancient holy fathers."

32. From 1462 to 1505.

33. From 1473 to 1489.

to build a new cathedral church (which exists to this day) in place of the former dilapidated one.

The honorable relics of the holy hierarch and wonderworker Metropolitan Peter were taken up and transferred for a time to another church.

And so, when the old church had been dismantled[34] and trenches were being dug for laying the foundation of the new great church, the relics of the other metropolitans were found: Theognostus[35], Cyprian, Photius, and also those of the holy wonderworker Jonah.

While these honorable relics were being uncovered and cathedral panikhidas were being served, a seven-year-old boy named Simeon was brought there, paralyzed from the day of his birth. He was the son of the priest Peter, who served at the church of St. John Climacus, which is in the bell tower. The cathedral presbyter Alexis lifted the paralyzed boy in his arms and set him at the feet of the reliquary of St. Jonah, and, holding him, bade him pray.

The boy, supported by that priest, while praying, cried out loudly:

"It is raining!"

The day was clear, and not a single cloud could be seen in the sky; at once that boy became healthy and, without any outside help, went home on his own.

All marveled at this miracle and glorified God and His saint, St. Jonah.

When the construction of the cathedral church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos was completed in the year 1479, it was solemnly consecrated, and the honorable relics of the holy metropolitans were transferred into it: first of all those of the holy wonderworker Peter, then Theognostus, Cyprian, Photius, and this servant of Christ, Jonah. And since his relics were found to be whole and incorrupt, they were placed in a reliquary and set openly in the cathedral church, where they rest to this day and grant the grace asked for to many faithful who come to them with prayer[36].

A certain man named John, who was mute and unable to speak at all, once came to the saint's reliquary, kissed the honorable relics, and

kissed his holy hand. By God's providence, it seemed to him, unknown how, that the hierarch stretched out his hand, seized his tongue, and held it firmly. He began to cry out loudly. The priests and people who were then in the church hurried to his cry and wondered why the mute man was shouting. Seeing that the saint had let go of the tongue, John stopped crying out and at once began to speak clearly and to tell everyone how his tongue had miraculously been freed from muteness. All who were there were struck with awe at that wondrous miracle and, glorifying the works of God, extolled also the great wonderworker, the hierarch Jonah.

Many other miracles have occurred, and occur now also, through the honorable relics of the holy Metropolitan of Moscow Jonah, for all who come to them in faith, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Life of the Holy Righteous Joseph the Beautiful

Житие святого праведного Иосифа Прекрасного

Joseph the Beautiful, blessed both in soul and body[37], was a son of the Old Testament Patriarch Jacob, a grandson of Isaac and a great-grandson of Abraham. He was born of Jacob's second wife, Rachel, who had been barren until God heard her and opened her womb for the bearing of children. Rachel first bore the youth Joseph, who was Jacob's eleventh son. The second son of Rachel was Benjamin, the twelfth son of Israel. After the birth of Benjamin, Rachel died and was buried[2324] in Ephrath, that is, in Bethlehem[2325]. The sons of Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin, were very dear to Jacob, because God had sent

36. After the uncovering of the relics, Grand Prince Ivan Vasilyevich and Metropolitan Philip commissioned the well-known author of canons and lives, Pachomius the Serb, to write a canon for the uncovering of the relics, and established a local celebration of it in the cathedral. The solemn celebration of the memory of St. Jonah throughout the whole Church was established under Metropolitan Macarius in 1547.

34. This was in 1472.

35. From 1328 to 1353.

37. Joseph: from the Hebrew, "to increase, to add."

them to him in the evening of his days, and moreover they reminded him of his beloved wife Rachel, whose death had grieved him greatly. Jacob loved her so much that for her sake he labored for fourteen years for his father-in-law Laban. Besides, both sons of Rachel were of good morals, chaste, and worthy of love, especially the blessed Joseph, in whom the grace of the Holy Spirit had dwelt from his early years. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he began to tend his father's flocks together with his brothers born of other mothers. Seeing the sinful deeds of his brothers, Joseph shrank from taking part in them. On the contrary, loving his brothers and desiring to save their souls, Joseph reported some of their lawless deeds to his father Jacob, so that he might chastise them as a father and thus turn the wrath of God away from his house. Jacob, seeing in Joseph such understanding joined with chastity and the fear of God, loved him still more and made him a garment of many colors. But the brothers greatly hated Joseph: some because he did not take part in their sinful deeds and informed the father of them; others because the father loved him more than them. They could not converse with Joseph in a friendly way; they brought evil accusations against him and slandered him to the father. Yet Jacob, knowing well Joseph's innocence, did not believe them.

At that time the Holy Spirit, who dwelt in Joseph, began in dreams to reveal to him, as to a prophet, everything that concerned his future life. Concealing nothing, Joseph told of this to his father and brothers:

"Hear," he said once, "the dream that I saw. I dreamed that in the middle of a field we were binding sheaves; my sheaf stood upright, and your sheaves, standing round about, bowed down to my sheaf."

To this the brothers said to him:

"Will you indeed reign over us and rule over us?"

And they hated him still more for such a dream. Then Joseph saw another dream and also related it to his father and brothers:

"I saw," he said, "how the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowed down to me."

Hearing this, the father rebuked Joseph, saying:

"What does this dream mean? Shall I and your mother (the stepmother Leah) and your brothers indeed come and bow down to you to the earth?"

The father rebuked him for appearance's sake. By this he wished to save his son from the even greater wrath of his brothers. In reality, however, this dream sank deeply into Jacob's soul. He thought to himself: "What can this be? It seems to me that the Lord wishes to astonish everyone through His mercy upon this virtuous youth."

And in his soul he rejoiced at this. But the brothers hated Joseph still more and plotted to do him harm.

Once, when the brothers were pasturing sheep at Shechem[2326], Joseph was with his father in the valley of Hebron. The father, who loved his children and was concerned for the sons who were at Shechem, said to his beloved son Joseph:

"Go, child, to your brothers, see whether they are well and whether the flocks are safe, and return to me quickly."

Fulfilling the command, Joseph set out to his brothers to convey their father's greeting; and Benjamin, being still a little lad, remained with the father. Joseph wandered through the wilderness of Shechem and could not find his brothers anywhere. He had already begun to worry about their fate when a certain man met him and asked:

"What are you seeking, youth?"

He answered:

"I am seeking my brothers; tell me, if you know, where they are pasturing the flocks?"

Then this man said to him:

"They have gone away from here, for I heard them say: 'Let us go to Dothan!'"[38]

And he showed Joseph the way. Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. When he saw them from afar, he rejoiced greatly, for he loved them. They too saw him from afar, and before he

38. Dothan is a city near Mount Tabor and the valley of Jezreel; here ran the road from Gilead to Egypt, along which caravans with various goods made their way (Gen. 37:25). Today the name is retained by a green hill on the southeastern side of the great plain, with a spring at the foot of the mountain, to the north of Samaria.

had come near them, they flared up against him like wild beasts and began to take counsel how they might kill him. They said to one another:

"Here comes that dreamer. Let us now kill him and cast him into a pit. Afterwards we shall say that a wild beast devoured him. Then let us see how his dreams will come true."

The eldest brother Reuben heard this and, wishing to save Joseph from his brothers' murderous hands, said to them:

"Do not kill him, do not shed the blood of your brother: rather cast him into that pit which is in the wilderness. Let him die there alone, but do not lay your hands upon him!"

By this Reuben intended to save the innocent youth from death. He meant to draw him secretly out of the pit and send him back to his father.

Meek as a lamb, Joseph knew nothing of his brothers' malice. He approached them and kissed them in friendship, greeting them on his father's behalf. But the brothers fell upon him like beasts and tore off the many-colored garment that he wore. They gnashed their teeth at him, as if desiring to devour him alive. They struck Joseph with their fists and did him every kind of injury. In this malice the brothers seemed to him fierce and merciless. Joseph no longer hoped that anyone would take his part. Therefore he raised his voice and, with tears and sobs, began to beg his brothers for mercy:

"Why are you angry? I beg you to release me a little and hear my request. Brothers! You yourselves know that our father weeps every day over the death of my mother. Will you really resolve to inflict a new wound upon him, when the old one has not yet healed? I entreat you, do not separate me from my father, or in his grief he will go down into the grave. I adjure you by the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Mk. 12:26), by the God who commanded Abraham to depart from the land and the house of his father and to settle in the Promised Land (Gen. 12:1–3), by the God who promised to make the descendants of Abraham as countless as the stars of heaven (Gen. 15:5) or the sand on the seashore (Gen. 28:14). I adjure you by the Most High God, who granted Abraham strength of will in the sacrifice of his son Isaac and

sent a lamb to be slain in his son's place (Gen. 23:1–19). I adjure you by the Holy God, who blessed our father Jacob through the lips of Isaac (Gen. 27:27–29), his father, and who did not forsake Jacob in Haran, in Mesopotamia (Gen. 28:10–19)[2328], whence Abraham had come: here God delivered Jacob from misfortune! By all these things I adjure you and beg you not to separate me from Jacob, as death separated him from Rachel. Otherwise Jacob will weep for me as he weeps for Rachel, and his eyes will close before my return. Have pity on me and let me go to my father!"

Thus Joseph begged his brothers by the God of his fathers. But the cruel brothers were in no way moved to pity by him, and, not fearing God, they dragged Joseph into the pit. He clutched at their feet, wept, and said:

"Brothers! Forgive me!"

But they cast him into the pit. This pit had once been a deep and dark well, which had afterwards dried up. Sitting in this pit, Joseph wept bitter tears and called upon his father:

"Look, father, at what has befallen your son! I have been cast into the pit as though I were dead. You await my return, and I, like a robber, lie now in the pit. You yourself said to me, father: 'Go, see your brothers and the flocks, and return to me quickly.' But my brothers treated me as savage wolves and in their wrath separated me from you. Good father! You can no longer see me or hear my voice, and I cannot be a comfort to your old age. I shall no longer see your grey hairs, for I have been buried, and worse than a dead man. Weep, father, for your child, as your child weeps for you, his father! For I have been torn from you at so young an age! Who would give me a dove, able to speak human speech, that she might fly and tell you of my sorrow? I have no tears left, and from my groans I have already lost my voice. Nothing remains that could help my grief! O earth, earth, that cried out to the Holy God for the righteous Abel, unjustly slain, as is related from the beginning by our forefathers, that the earth also cried out for the blood of the righteous (Gen. 4:10)! Now then, intercede for me with my father Jacob, and tell him all that my brothers have done to me!"

Thus Joseph wept in the pit until he was exhausted, and there was no one to comfort him.

But the cruel brothers, having cast Joseph into the pit, joyfully began to eat and drink. They reclined so merrily and solemnly, as though they had defeated an enemy or taken a city. In the midst of this revelry they noticed Ishmaelite merchants[39] approaching them, travelling from Gilead to Egypt. Camels accompanied the merchants, bearing incense, frankincense and other spices. Then Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, said to his brothers:

"What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? It is better to sell him to these Ishmaelites; let them take him far away. Joseph will die in a foreign land, and we shall not be the murderers of our own brother of the same blood."

The remaining brothers agreed with Judah. They went and drew Joseph up out of the pit. The Ishmaelites who passed by gave thirty gold pieces for Joseph. During this sale Reuben was not present: he had gone away somewhere. On his return Reuben went to the pit but did not find Joseph there. Then he tore his garments, returned to his brothers and said:

"There is no lad in the pit! Where shall I turn? How shall I endure our father's weeping for him?"

Reuben pitied Joseph.

The merchants who had taken Joseph came in their journey to the place in Ephrath where the tomb of Rachel was: here she had died when Jacob was returning from Mesopotamia. As soon as Joseph saw the tomb of his mother Rachel, he immediately ran up and threw himself upon it. Then, loudly and with bitter tears, he cried out:

"Rachel, my mother! Rise from the earth and look upon Joseph, whom you loved! See what has become of me: behold, foreigners are leading me away into Egypt. My brothers sold me into slavery to them, and sold me naked, as a criminal. Jacob does not know that I have been sold. Open your tomb to me, mother, and receive me to yourself! Let your tomb be one death-bed for us both! O Rachel! Take your son, that

39. Ishmaelites – descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar (Gen. 16:2).

in a foreign land he may no longer await death. Rachel, take me to yourself! My parting from Jacob was as unexpected as my parting from you, mother. Let my cries and the torment of my heart reach your ears, that you may take me into your tomb. I can weep no more: there are no tears left, and my soul is exhausted from weeping and sobbing. O Rachel, Rachel! Will you not hear the plea of your son Joseph? Your son is being taken from you by force, and you do not wish to keep him. I called upon Jacob, and he did not hear my voice. Now I call upon you, and you do not wish to hear me. Let me die here over your tomb, but I will not go, like a criminal, into a foreign land!"

When the Ishmaelites who had bought Joseph saw how he had thrown himself upon the tomb, they said to one another:

"This youth by sorcery wishes to escape from us. Let us bind him fast, that he may not cause us some trouble!"

Coming up to him, they spoke to him spitefully:

"Rise, enough of sorcery, or we shall kill you on this tomb. We do not wish to lose the money paid for you!"

When Joseph rose, the Ishmaelites saw that his whole face was swollen from bitter tears. And each of them began to question him with sympathy:

"Why did you weep so bitterly when you saw this tomb? Do not be afraid, and tell us who you are and why you were sold! The shepherds who sold you said to us: 'Keep watch over him, that on the road he may not run away from you; if he does run away, it is not our fault: we warned you.' Tell us the truth now: whose slave are you? Those shepherds', or someone else's? And explain why you threw yourself with such love upon this tomb. We are your masters, because we have bought you. As a slave, tell us everything. If you conceal anything from us, to whom else can you confide your sorrow? Are you not our slave? Those shepherds told us that you might run away from us, and this troubles us. Calm yourself, then, and speak openly: who are you? You seem to us a master, and we wish to see in you not a slave but our beloved brother. Your fine appearance and your quality of mind show us that you are worthy to stand before the king and to enjoy honour alongside other nobles. All your excellences declare that you will attain

great power. Be then a friend to us, also in the place to which we shall bring you. Who could fail to love so wise, noble and beautiful a youth?!"

Sighing, Joseph answered them:

"Although I have been sold to you, I was neither a slave, nor a thief, nor a sorcerer, and in general I have committed no crime. I am the beloved son of my father, and I was the beloved son of my mother while she was still alive. Those shepherds are my brothers. Our father sent me to them to inquire after their health. They did not return from the mountains for a long time, so my affectionate father, growing anxious, sent me to look after them. But they seized me and sold me to you into slavery. My brothers could not look without envy upon my father's love for me, and this was the cause of their separating me from him. The tomb that is here is the tomb of my mother. When my father Jacob was removing from Haran to the place where he had lived before, my mother died here and was buried in this tomb."

Hearing this, the Ishmaelites said with sympathy:

"Do not be afraid, youth! Great honour awaits you in Egypt. Your appearance is proof of your nobility. Do not grieve; rather, be glad that you are now far from your envious brothers, who hated you without cause."

Joseph's brothers, when they had sold him, took a he-goat, slaughtered it, and smeared Joseph's garment with its blood, and they sent it to their father Jacob with these words:

"We found this garment lying in the mountains and recognized in it the garment of our brother Joseph, which grieved us all. We did not find Joseph himself, and we send you his many-coloured garment. See whether it is your son's or not. We have all recognized that it is Joseph's garment."

Recognizing his son's garment, Jacob said with weeping and bitter sobbing:

"This is the garment of my son; a beast of prey has devoured him!"

And Jacob tore his garments. Putting on sackcloth, he said with sobs:

"Why was I not eaten in your place, my son?! Why did that beast not meet me, to be satisfied with me, and leave you unharmed? Why did

that beast not tear me to pieces? O, why was I not his food? Woe is me, woe! My heart grieves deeply for Joseph! Woe is me, woe is me! Where has my son been slain, that I might go and tear my gray hairs over his beauty? I do not wish to live any longer without Joseph! Child! I am the cause of your death! I have killed you by sending you into the wilderness to visit your brothers and the flocks! O child! I will weep and mourn until I go down into Hades! Instead of your dead body, I lay before me, with tears, your garment. But it fills me with dejection for yet another reason. It is whole all over, and I think that it was not a beast that devoured your body, but human hands that seized and killed you. If a beast had truly eaten you, as your brothers said, then your garment would have been torn into pieces, for a beast would not first strip off the clothing and only afterward devour the body. But if it had first stripped off the garment and only then eaten you, the garment would not have been stained with blood. There are no marks on this garment either from claws or from teeth, so whence then the blood upon it? If there were only beasts in the wilderness and no robbers, I would grieve that beasts had eaten you, and I could not suppose that robbers had killed you. I despair over Joseph, and his garment brings me into yet another despair, no less than the first. Thus I have two sorrows: with weeping I shall ponder how his garment was taken off, and how his body was killed or devoured. I shall die, Joseph, my light and my support, and let your garment go down into Hades together with me. Without you, Joseph, I do not wish to see this light!"

And for many days Jacob mourned Joseph. All the sons and daughters of Jacob gathered together to console him, but he would not be consoled, and said:

"With sorrow I shall go down into Hades to my son!"

Meanwhile the Ishmaelites hastily led Joseph into Egypt[40], hoping to receive much gold for his beauty from some nobleman. As they

walked through an Egyptian city, they were met by Pentephres, a courtier of Pharaoh[41]. He saw Joseph and addressed the Ishmaelites with these words:

"Merchants, tell me, where did you get this youth? He is in no way like you, for among you Ishmaelites one could not find so handsome a youth."

They answered him:

"This lad is very clever and belongs to a noble family."

Pentephres willingly bought Joseph from them, and paid as much as they wished. The courtier brought him into his house and sought in every way to learn of his former life. The descendant of the righteous Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in Pentephres' house in virtue and great meekness, and the Lord was with him. Joseph led an honest and blameless life. From his countenance and his words it was evident that he was chaste and feared God: he never forgot the All-seeing God of his fathers, who had delivered him from death in the pit and from his hateful brothers. Joseph grieved only for his father Jacob. Living with Pentephres, Joseph won his favor and pleased him. Pentephres, seeing that the Lord was with Joseph, Who successfully arranged everything in his hands, set him over the whole household and gave into his hands all the property: estates, villages, slaves and the domestic economy. Pentephres himself, with regard to Joseph, knew nothing except the food he ate at his own table: he clearly saw that Joseph was honest, and that the property in his hands grew more and more. For Joseph's sake God blessed the Egyptian's house. All the male and female slaves were very content with Joseph, because under him they lived well and quite without want, in all abundance.

Joseph had a fine appearance and a beautiful face. The wife of Pentephres was struck by his beauty, and her heart was set aflame with

40. Egypt – one of the earliest states of the earth in point of time, which, already in remote antiquity, attained a comparatively high degree of culture and civic organization. It occupies a narrow strip of the African coast on both sides of the river Nile; formerly Egypt was directly joined to the north-western corner of the Arabian peninsula, so that the inhabitants of Asia and Africa were in the most lively contact with one another. The geographical proximity of Egypt to Syria and Palestine, and its outstanding fertility, explain its important significance in the history of the ancient East.

satanic love for him. She sought in every way to seduce the innocent Joseph, and greatly desired to be with him. To entice Joseph, Pentephres' wife resorted to many stratagems: every hour she changed her garments, washed and anointed her face, and hung necklaces about her neck. Besides this, she sought to beguile the righteous soul of Joseph with various bodily gestures, with a loathsome laughter and with adulterous words. But by all these stratagems she was ruining only herself. Joseph did not look at her adornments, and did not think of sinning with her. The thought of God and the fear of Him guarded him against every temptation. When the wife of Pentephres saw that all her adornments had no effect, she burned even more with the fire of adultery and did not know by what other means she could act upon the chaste youth. Afterward she once more resolved to lead him into sin by her shameless words; the serpent's venom within her opened her lips, and she said to Joseph:

"Stay with me and fear nothing; rather, be bolder with me, that I may take my pleasure in your beauty, and you in my kindness. Fear no one, for all the servants are under us, and you rule the whole house; no one will come in to us and learn of our talk or of our relations. If you refuse my proposals because you fear your husband, then I can poison him."

But the innocent youth continued to keep himself from vice. His body and soul were invincible. Joseph did not perish in this storm. Fearing God, he rejected all the proposals of his mistress. Remaining chaste, he answered her thus:

"My mistress, I cannot sin with you, for I fear God. My master has entrusted to me all the management of both the household and the agricultural affairs, and there is nothing over which my authority does not extend, except only you, my mistress. It would be a sin for me to reject such love from my master and to engage in such unworthy deeds in his house; by this I would anger God, to Whom all human secrets are known."

With such words and others like them Joseph admonished his mistress. But this serpent would not listen to anything and was still more

inflamed with sensuality. Desiring to compel Joseph to sin, she sought only a convenient hour and occasion for it. Joseph, seeing how his mistress wished to entice him, often turned in prayer to the God of his fathers, saying:

"God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, deliver me from this misfortune! Thou Thyself seest, O Lord, how this mad woman secretly seeks to destroy me by her wickedness. Thou, O Master, didst deliver me from the murderous hands of my brothers. Now deliver me from this ravenous beast, or else I shall be estranged from my fathers, who loved Thee so greatly, O Lord."

In his prayer Joseph also addressed Jacob:

"My father Jacob, pray fervently to God for me! Pray for me, for the enemy wishes to separate me from God. A sinful death at the hands of a woman is even more terrible than death at the hands of my brothers. That death sought to destroy my body; this one seeks to separate my soul from God. Father! By your prayers to God I was delivered from death in the pit. Now pray again before the Most High for my deliverance from the sinful pit into which this woman, who has neither shame nor fear of God, is pushing me. When I came to my brothers, they treated me savagely, and like fierce wolves separated me from you. Here too a still fiercer beast has met me. Pray then, venerable one, for me, your son Joseph, that I may not die in soul before our God."

Joseph remained invincible, and his mistress continued to seek a convenient occasion to draw him to herself. It happened one day that Joseph entered the house on some business. There was no one of the household in it. Suddenly his mistress seized Joseph and dragged him to the bed. Stripping herself naked, she began to force him to adultery. The chaste and holy youth, seeing her shamelessness, turned away from her nakedness and, tearing himself free by force, ran outside. His outer garment remained in the hands of his mistress. Thus Joseph broke all the nets of the devil. When an eagle sees the hunter, it soars even higher.

So did Joseph act. He fled from the woman, for he did not wish her snares to draw him into sin. But the wife of Pentephres, seeing that

Joseph had escaped her hands, was greatly frightened; a great fear came over her. Moreover, she was ashamed. She began to devise how she might best slander the youth, so that her husband would be angered against him and, out of jealousy, kill him. She thought:

"It would be better if Joseph died. His death would ease me. I cannot see such beauty without taking my pleasure in it. He only despises me."

After that she loudly called the male and female slaves and said to them:

"Look what this Hebrew slave has done to me! My husband gave him power over the whole house, and he, in the most shameless way, wished to violate me. Not content with ruling the house, he desired to take me from my husband too. He came to me and said, 'Lie with me'; to this, as you yourselves heard, I cried out loudly. Joseph was frightened by this cry and ran outside, leaving his garment with me."

All who heard were astonished at what had happened, for none of them had expected Joseph to be so bold. When Pentephres came from the royal palace, his wife took Joseph's garment and showed it to him. Then, as a chaste woman, she began to complain of Joseph and said:

"You brought this Hebrew into the house so that he might outrage us. Did you teach him to insult and wrong me in this way? He found me alone in the house and wanted to ravish me. If I had not cried out, and my household had not come running at my cry, he would have committed violence, for I, being weak, could not have torn myself from the hands of one so much stronger than I. When he heard that I had cried out and that the servants were running to my call, he fled from the house, leaving his garment behind with me."

Pentephres at once believed these false words and was greatly angered against Joseph. He ordered Joseph to be bound in fetters and sent to prison. Pentephres forgot the good order in his household and in the management of his estate, which God had given for Joseph's sake. Without examining the words of his wife, Pentephres condemned the innocent Joseph. But the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who

41. "Pharaoh" is the common name of the ancient kings of Egypt, and in translation from the Egyptian means "king."

searches the hearts of men, did not forsake Joseph nor leave him without His mercy: Joseph found favor with the keeper of the prison and lived as though at liberty. The Lord God does not forsake those who fear Him. And Joseph lived with the keeper of the prison just as he had with Pentephres. Seeing that Joseph was faithful to him in all things, the keeper made him overseer over the whole prison.

Some time after this, two courtiers of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the chief butler and the chief baker, offended their lord. Pharaoh was angry and put them into the same prison where Joseph had been placed.

Several days passed while they lived in the prison. Joseph helped them in all things, for they were honest men. Then one morning each of them had a dream on the same night, a dream that foreshadowed the near future. Joseph, as was his custom, came to them in the morning and found them troubled and sorrowful. He asked them:

"Why are your faces sad today?"

They said to him:

"On this night each of us has seen a dream, and we are sad because there is no one to interpret them."

Then Joseph said to them:

"God alone, as the All-knowing, can, if He wills, reveal the meaning of dreams to those who fear Him. Tell me each your dream. Through me God will reveal their meaning to you."

The chief butler told him this dream:

"I saw before me a vineyard, and in it a vine. On the vine three young branches grew and bore ripe grapes. I had Pharaoh's cup in my hands. I took it and gave it into Pharaoh's hand."

To this Joseph answered him:

"This is what your dream means: the three branches are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will remember you, will show you mercy, and, releasing you from here, will restore you to your former office. Then, as before, you shall give Pharaoh his cup. But remember me, my lord, when it goes well with you, and show me kindness. I ask you to mention me to Pharaoh and to free me from here. For I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews. And in your country too I committed no crime, and if they have put me into prison, it was only out of malice."

When the chief baker saw that Joseph had interpreted his companion's dream so well, he said to Joseph:

"I too saw a dream: it seemed to me that on my head there were three baskets of all kinds of food. Birds came and pecked the food from my head."

Joseph answered him:

"This is what your dream means: the three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will take off your head and hang you on a tree, and the birds will peck at your body."

On the third day, his birthday, Pharaoh made a feast for all his nobles and servants. At this feast he remembered the chief butler and the chief baker and ordered both of them brought. Having examined their case, Pharaoh commanded that the chief baker be hanged and that the chief butler be restored to his former honorable office. But this butler completely forgot Joseph and did not mention him to Pharaoh.

Two years later Pharaoh had a wondrous dream. He saw himself standing by a river, and out of the river came seven sleek cows, fair to look upon and fat of flesh. These cows began to graze on the river bank. After them, out of the river came seven other cows, lean to look upon and thin of flesh. They went to graze beside the first. Suddenly these seven lean cows devoured the seven fat ones. Yet even so they were not satisfied, and remained as lean as they had been. At this Pharaoh awoke. Falling asleep again, he saw another dream: on a single stalk seven full and good ears of grain sprang up; after them seven other ears grew, thin and scorched by the wind. These thin ears devoured the seven full ones.

The dream terribly troubled the awakened Pharaoh. He summoned all the magicians and wise men of Egypt and told them the dream. None of them could interpret it: how could those who serve demons understand the incomprehensible mysteries of the Heavenly God? Pharaoh was greatly grieved by this. Then the chief butler remembered Joseph, who had interpreted his dream in the prison, and said to Pharaoh:

"Only now, my lord, do I recall my fault. When you were angry with us, your servants, and put me and the chief baker into prison, each of

us saw a dream on one night, a dream concerning his future life. A young Hebrew, a slave of Pentephres, lived with us there too. To him we told our dreams, and he interpreted them. As he said, so it came to pass: you, O king, pardoned me and restored me to my former office, but him you commanded to be put to death."

Hearing this, Pharaoh rejoiced and ordered Joseph brought hastily out of the prison. He was shaved and his clothing was changed, for as a prisoner he had grown very unkempt and was dressed in rags. Joseph stood before Pharaoh and his nobles. Pharaoh said to him:

"I have heard that you are very wise and clever and can interpret dreams. I have seen a dream that no one can explain to me. Explain it, then."

Joseph answered:

"The Most High God can, if He wills, reveal incomprehensible mysteries to men. Without God it is impossible to learn of any good omen."

Then Pharaoh, in the presence of all his nobles, began to tell Joseph his dream of the fat and lean cows, of the full and thin ears, and of how the lean had devoured the fat and the thin the full, as has been said above. Joseph, filled with the prophetic spirit, began to interpret the dream and to foretell the future: that for seven years there would be wealth and abundance of fruits throughout the land of Egypt, as the seven sleek cows and the seven full ears of grain signify.

After these years had passed there would be a severe famine, as signified by the lean cows that devoured the fat ones and by the seven thin ears that devoured the full ones and were not satisfied. The former abundance would be forgotten everywhere, and famine would waste the whole land. The fruitfulness of the earth would not even be remembered because of the famine that would come after seven years, and this famine would be very grievous. And that this will certainly come to pass is clear from the fact that God revealed the same thing to you, O king, in two dreams: of the cows and of the ears of grain. Now accept the counsel of your humble servant: choose a wise and prudent man and set him over the whole land of Egypt. During these coming seven years of plenty, a fifth part of all the produce of the land of Egypt should be gathered. Wheat and all grain should be stored in the royal

granaries. Likewise, in all the cities let grain be gathered and kept, so as to lay up food for the seven years of famine, lest all Egypt perish from it."

Pharaoh and his nobles marveled at Joseph's prophetic words and his wise counsel. And Pharaoh said to his nobles:

"Can we find another man like him, in whom the Spirit of God is?"

Then Pharaoh addressed Joseph:

"Since God has revealed all this to you, there is no man more discerning and wise than you. In my palace and throughout my kingdom you shall be first after me. All the land of Egypt shall obey your commands. Only by the throne shall I be above you."

Pharaoh took the signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand. Then he clothed Joseph in crimson robes and hung a gold chain about his neck. At the same time he said:

"Today I appoint you second king of all Egypt. Without you I will not lift my hand, and no one in all the land of Egypt shall dare to do anything without your command."

Pharaoh gave Joseph the Egyptian name Zaphenath-paneah, that is, "Savior of the world." By Pharaoh's command Joseph was placed in the second of the royal chariots and driven through the city, while heralds cried that a second king had been set over Egypt. All the royal nobles walked about the chariot and paid the second king the same honors as they paid to Pharaoh himself.

O marvelous change, wrought in one hour in the righteous youth by the protection of God, Who knows how to exalt and glorify, so as to seat him with kings and nobles! O righteous judgment of Thine, O God! Thus, O Lord, Thou didst cleanse the innocent Joseph from slander. Thus Thou didst comfort this wronged righteous man and, even in this world, didst reward him with so glorious a recompense for his purity and his patience! How much more wilt Thou reward Thy holy saints in the life to come!

When the nobleman Pentephres, the very one who had put Joseph into prison, learned of the wondrous event, how Joseph in great glory sat in Pharaoh's chariot, he was terribly frightened. In fear and trembling he came home and said to his wife:

"O wife, you do not know what incredible event has taken place in Egypt! For us it is very frightening! Our slave Joseph has now become master not only over us but over the whole land of Egypt. Glorified by all, he now rides in Pharaoh's chariot. In my fear and trembling I could not show myself before him, and I quietly withdrew from the nobles."

Hearing this, Pentephres' wife said to her husband:

"Fear nothing. Now I will confess my sin to you. I was madly in love with Joseph. All the time I adorned myself and enticed him, so that I might be able to be with him and enjoy his beauty. But I could not attain this. Since he would not agree to my proposals, I forced him by violence to lie with me. But the chaste Joseph fled from me and left his garment behind, which I have shown you. I slandered him, saying that he wanted to violate me. Thus it turns out that through me he attained royal power and such great glory. For if I had not loved Joseph, and he had not lived in prison but in our house, his virtue and wisdom would have remained hidden under a bushel and would not have been glorified. He ought to be content with me, for I have been the cause of such glory and honor for him. Let us then not fear this righteous and venerable Joseph. He has told no one of what happened between us, and most likely, in his guilelessness, he will forgive us. Let us go and bow down to him together with the other nobles."

They went and, in confusion, bowed down to Joseph. He was in no way embittered against them and told no one what had passed between them.

Pharaoh gave Joseph in marriage to Asenath, the daughter of Pentephres, but not of that Pentephres with whom Joseph had served; it was another. The former was a courtier, while this one was a priest in the city of Heliopolis,[42] that is, the City of the Sun. Joseph was thirty years old when he began to reign in Egypt. In accordance with his prophecy, the land for seven years indeed yielded an abundant harvest. During this time Joseph traversed all of Egypt, gathered wheat

42. Heliopolis – one of the most ancient and famous cities in the south of Lower Egypt. Here there existed a priestly school; here originated one of the most important sacred writings of the Egyptians, the "Book of the Dead," and other sacred texts. The temple of the sun located here was the object of the concern of all the pharaohs. The ruins of Heliopolis are located near the village of Matariyeh (north of Cairo).

and all the fruits of the earth, and stored them in the cities. He amassed wheat as abundantly as the sand of the sea, so that later he could not even measure it, for it was beyond number. Even before the seven years of famine arrived, Joseph had two sons by Asenath: the first named Manasseh, the second Ephraim. But then the seven years of plenty passed, and the seven years of famine set in. Day by day the famine grew stronger throughout the whole land. In all the land of Egypt there was no bread anywhere except in the royal granaries. All Egypt felt the hunger. The people began to ask Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh sent them to Joseph. The latter opened the royal granaries and began to sell bread to all the Egyptians. And from all lands people came to Egypt to buy bread from Joseph, for the famine had seized the whole earth.

The great famine also reached the land of Canaan, where Jacob lived. The old man and his sons began to grow weak from hunger. Having learned that there was much bread in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons:

"Why do you not take thought? Behold, I have heard that much wheat is being sold in Egypt. Go there and buy some bread, so that you do not die of hunger."

Joseph's ten brothers set out for Egypt. The youngest brother, Benjamin, remained with his father, for Jacob did not let him go on the journey with his brothers. Jacob said:

"Some misfortune like that which befell his brother Joseph might happen to him on the way!"

The sons of Israel came to Egypt. Together with them came many other strangers with the same purpose: to buy wheat, which Joseph, the prince of the land of Egypt, was selling to all. The brothers approached Joseph and bowed down to the ground before him. When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them at once. He asked them sternly, as if in anger:

"Where have you come from?"

They answered:

"We have come from the land of Canaan[43] to buy bread."

Joseph recalled his dreams and saw that they were beginning to come true. Therefore he glorified God in his heart. Then, as if angry, he again said to them:

"You are spies, scouts. You have come to spy out the land?"

They said:

"No, my lord. We, your servants, are honest men and have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man, and by no means spies or scouts."

To this Joseph said in an angry voice:

"No, you have come to spy out the land." The brothers were greatly frightened, and in proof of their innocence they began to speak of their home and of their father.

"In the land of Canaan we have a righteous father. Earlier there were twelve of us brothers, and now there are eleven. Here there are ten of us. One of our brothers, eaten by beasts, died in the wilderness. Our father weeps for him until now, for he loved him very much. Another brother, the youngest, remained at home to comfort our father."

Joseph said to them:

"Indeed I told you the truth that you are spies and scouts, for you yourselves betray it. By the life of Pharaoh I swear that you will not leave here until your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you to bring your brother, while the rest of you will be detained. Then it will be revealed whether you speak the truth or not. If you do not bring your youngest brother here, then you are indeed spies and scouts."

So Joseph spoke to them and placed them under guard for three days. On the third day he brought them before him and said:

"Only out of fear of God do I not resort to cruel torture. If you are indeed honest men and not spies and scouts, and wish to remain alive, you must do this. Let one of you remain here in prison. The rest of you go home and carry the wheat you have bought to your father; but bring your youngest brother, of whom you speak, to me from there. Then

43. By the land of Canaan are meant the extensive lands lying in the west of Asia along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea – in particular, the land beyond the Jordan, that is, Phoenicia and the land of the Philistines; the Transjordanian country is distinguished from the land of Canaan. In more recent usage, the land of Canaan is commonly understood as the whole Promised Land – all the lands occupied by the Israelites on both sides of the Jordan.

your words will be justified. If you do not agree to this, you will be put to death."

They agreed to this and said to one another in Hebrew:

"We have deserved this calamity. We are being punished for our sin against our brother, because we disregarded the anguish of his soul when he entreated us. We did not listen to him. For that this sorrow has overtaken us."

The eldest brother, Reuben, said to them:

"Did I not tell you then: do not wrong the youth? You did not listen to me. Now his blood is required of us."

Speaking among themselves, the brothers did not know that Joseph understood their speech. Joseph withdrew from them and wept. Then, coming back to them, he ordered Simeon to be taken from among them and bound before them. This Simeon had hated Joseph more than all the others and had shown the most malice when Joseph was cast into the pit and sold to the Ishmaelites. Joseph ordered the bound Simeon to be placed in prison. As for the other brothers, he gave instructions to fill their sacks with bread, secretly to return the silver to each man's sack, and to give them provisions for the road.

After this Joseph dismissed his brothers. They loaded the bread on their asses and set out on the way to the land of Canaan. Once they stopped to rest. One of the brothers, wishing to give fodder to his ass, opened his sack and in its opening saw his silver. He said to the brothers:

"My silver has been returned; it was found in my sack." The brothers were troubled by this and said to one another:

"What is this that God has done to us?!"

On coming to their father, they told him everything that had happened to them in Egypt. As each brother poured out the wheat from his sack, he found his silver in it as well. This frightened them even more.

Having heard his sons, the father said sorrowfully to them:

"You have bereaved me of my children. Joseph is gone, Simeon is gone; do you now want to take away my head as well?"

Reuben said to his father:

"Slay my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my hands."

Jacob answered:

"My son shall not go with you, for his brother is dead, and he alone is left to me. I fear that on the way, when he leaves me, the same misfortune will befall him as befell his brother Joseph. Then you will bring my old age down to the grave in sorrow."

The famine in the land of Canaan continued to rage. When all the bread bought in Egypt had been eaten, Jacob said to his sons:

"Go again to Egypt and buy some bread there, so that we do not die of hunger."

To this Judah said to him:

"The lord of that land plainly declared to us: 'Do not show yourselves before me unless your youngest brother is with you.' If you send Benjamin with us, we will go to Egypt and buy bread for you. But if you do not send him, we will not go. That lord said to us: 'You shall not see me unless your youngest brother comes with you.'"

Jacob said:

"Why did you do me this wrong, telling the Egyptian lord that you had yet another brother?"

The sons answered him:

"That lord asked us about our family: 'Is your father still alive? Do you have a brother?' We answered all his questions. How could we have known that he would say: 'Bring your brother!'"

Then Judah again addressed his father:

"Send the youth with me, let him go with us. Then you, and we, and our whole family will not die, but will remain alive. I take the youth under my care, and you shall require him at my hands. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before your face, I shall remain guilty before you forever. If we had not delayed because of Benjamin, we could already have brought bread twice from Egypt."

Jacob said to his sons:

"If it is so, then do as you wish. Take with you the fruits of our land, such as balm, honey, incense, frankincense, pistachios and other nuts, and carry them as a gift to the Egyptian lord. Besides this, take double

the amount of silver, to return what you found in your sacks. Take Benjamin with you and set out on your way. May Almighty God grant you to win that man's favor, so that he will let Simeon and Benjamin go with you. As for me, until you return I shall consider myself childless."

The sons of Jacob took with them the gifts, double the amount of silver, and Benjamin, and went to Egypt. They presented themselves before Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house:

"Bring these men into the house. Then slaughter something from the herd and prepare a meal. At noon I will dine with them."

The steward did as Joseph had commanded and brought his brothers into Joseph's house. When they were brought into Joseph's house, they said to one another:

"We have been brought here because of the silver that was returned to us in our sacks, so that they may falsely accuse us and seize us as slaves."

And they said to the steward of the house:

"Sir, hear us, we beg you. We came here once before to buy grain. It happened that when we came to the lodging place and opened our sacks, each man's silver was found in his sack. We do not know who put it there. Now we have brought double the amount of silver: one portion to return what was found in the sack, and another to pay for the grain."

The steward of the house said to them:

"Be at peace, do not be afraid. This treasure has been given you by your God and the God of your father."

Then the steward brought Simeon out to them and gave them water to wash their feet; he also gave fodder to their donkeys. The brothers prepared their gifts and waited for Joseph's coming, for they had heard that a meal had been prepared for them there. When Joseph came into the house, the brothers bowed down to him to the ground and presented the gifts they had brought from home. Joseph asked them:

"Are you well, and is your aged father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"

They answered:

"Your servant our father is well, he is still alive."

To this Joseph said:

"That man is blessed of God."

The brothers bowed down to him again. Lifting up his eyes, Joseph saw his full brother Benjamin and asked:

"Is this your brother, of whom you spoke to me?"

They answered:

"Yes, sir."

Joseph said to Benjamin:

"May God's mercy be upon you, my son!"

At this he was deeply moved; he was ready to weep. So he went into an inner room and wept there; remembering his father Jacob, Joseph said:

"Good father, blessed are those who live with you always! All my kingdom is not worthy of you, beloved of God! I wished to ask Benjamin whether you remember me and love me as I love you. Therefore I commanded my brothers to bring Benjamin with them as well. I did not believe their words that my father was well and my brother alive. I thought that out of envy they had destroyed this son of yours, your beloved Benjamin, as well. Since he is my full brother, the brothers hated him just as they hated me. I know, father, that you grieve greatly for us. I have increased your sorrow. I understand this sorrow: none of us remains with you. O father! Is it not enough for you to have one grief, the one that spoke of me? Now another has been added to it. I am the cause of all your sufferings, because I ordered Benjamin to be brought here. This act of mine is heartless. It was the report of you that compelled me to do it. I wished to learn whether you, my good father, were truly alive. Oh, if only someone would grant me the chance to see your angelic image once more!"

Thus Joseph wept quietly in his room. Then he washed his face so that it would not be seen that he had wept, and, restraining his tears, he went out to his brothers. He commanded that the meal be served to him, to the Hebrews and to the Egyptians each separately, for the Egyptians could not eat together with the Hebrews: every shepherd of sheep aroused in the Egyptians a feeling of loathing. Just before the

meal, Joseph commanded the brothers to be seated according to their seniority, in order of birth. In doing so he began calling them by name, as though divining with the silver cup that he held in his hands. He took the cup in his left hand and, striking it with the finger of his right hand, drew out a sound. Striking it the first time, he said loudly to those standing before him:

"The eldest brother is named Reuben; let him sit first!"

Striking it a second time, Joseph said:

"After him was born Simeon."

And he also commanded him to sit. Striking again, he ordered the third to sit, and, naming each one further by name, he directed him to sit according to his age. By this wonder Joseph struck such fear into all of them that they all thought: "This man truly knows all things."

Wishing to lessen their fear, Joseph hastened to send them dishes from his own table, sending Benjamin five times as much as the others. They all ate, drank, and were fully satisfied.

Joseph commanded the steward of his house to fill each brother's sack with grain without payment, and to secretly put into Benjamin's sack the cup by which Joseph had divined, and after all this to send them away.

In the morning the brothers went out of the city joyfully. They were not yet far off when the steward of Joseph's house overtook them. He sternly began to rebuke them, calling them thieves and unworthy of the honor shown them, men who had repaid good with evil and stolen the cup of the Egyptian lord, from which he drinks and by means of which he divines. The brothers said:

"If we brought back the silver found in our sacks a second time, could we have stolen your lord's cup? If the cup is found with any of your servants, let him die, and we will be slaves to our lord."

The steward consented:

"Let it be as you say. Set your sacks down on the ground; I will search."

They hastily took their sacks down from the donkeys. The steward searched for the cup, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest, and unexpectedly, to everyone's surprise, the cup was found

in Benjamin's sack. Seeing this, the brothers tore their garments. Each of them reproached Benjamin and Rachel with threats:

"Joseph wished to reign over us, and was devoured by beasts as he deserved. On the other hand, you planned to steal the royal cup and carried it out. Are you not sons of Rachel, who stole her father's idols and did not confess it, saying: 'I have stolen nothing'?"

Benjamin wept and, in tears, said:

"The very God of my father, who took Rachel from the living as it pleased Him, and who knew the cause of my brother's death, God, who comforts Jacob grieving for Rachel and her children, and who now sees all of us and knows our hearts, He Himself knows that I did not steal the cup as you say, and did not even think of it. I swear that I shall not see Jacob's gray hairs nor hear his voice; I swear by all this that I did not steal the cup! Woe is me! Woe is me, Rachel! What has become of your children! Joseph, as they say, was devoured by beasts, and I have proved to be a thief in a foreign land, and they will leave me here in slavery; Joseph found no help in the wilderness when the beasts devoured him; so I, my mother, call in vain upon my brothers, and no one believes me, your son!"

Not knowing what to answer the steward, the brothers took Benjamin and returned to the city. They came to Joseph and fell before him to the ground.

Joseph sternly said to them:

"Is this how you repay my kindness? Did I honor you only so that you would steal my cup, by which I divine? Did I not say truly that you are not honest men, but spies and scouts?"

Judah answered:

"We do not know what to answer our lord, what to say, how to justify ourselves. God has uncovered our sins and is punishing us for them. Therefore all of us, our lord, will be your slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup was found."

Joseph answered:

"No, I will not do as you say, for I fear God. The young man in whose possession the cup was found shall remain a slave, but you may go in peace to your father."

Judah, however, came up to Joseph, fell at his feet, and began to beg:

"Lord, do not be angry with me if I speak. Lord, you asked your servants: 'Have you a father or a brother?' We answered: 'Our father had two sons whom he loved more than us. One of them was torn to pieces by a beast in the mountains, and our father weeps for him to this day; the other son our father keeps constantly with himself, and this son is a comfort to him in his old age.' At your command, lord, we brought our youngest brother to you. Now we have unexpectedly offended you. I beg you, master, to keep me as a slave in place of the lad, so that only he may return to his father. For I took him upon my surety. Therefore I cannot return home. I do not wish to see the bitter death of our father, who will die at once from immeasurable grief as soon as he does not see his youngest son among us."

Joseph heard these pitiful words and saw that all were standing before him in confusion and fear. He also saw how Benjamin, in torn clothing and weeping, fell at the feet of the brothers standing there, begging them to plead with Joseph to let him go with them. Seeing all this, Joseph was moved and could no longer restrain himself. He commanded all the Egyptians to withdraw. When all had gone out and only the brothers remained, Joseph wept and said to them in the Hebrew language:

"I am Joseph, your brother. Is my father still alive?"

But the brothers could not answer Joseph's words, for they were frightened of him. Joseph said to them:

"I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. I was not devoured by beasts, as you told our father, but was sold by you to the Ishmaelites. I then clung to all of you by the feet and begged you, but no one showed me mercy. Now, my brothers, do not grieve, do not be afraid, and do not be sorrowful; on the contrary, you ought to rejoice that I am reigning. Just as you once told our father that I had been devoured in the mountains, now go and tell him with joy: 'Your son Joseph is alive. He sits on the royal throne and holds in his hands the scepter of the Egyptian kingdom.'"

While Joseph was saying this, the brothers stood before him from fear and trembling, like dead men, and thought of how much evil they had done to him. Joseph again said to them:

"Now do not be afraid that you sold me. God sent me here before you to preserve your lives, that I might feed you during the famine. Now it is the second year of famine on the earth. There remain five more years in which there will be neither plowing, nor sowing, nor reaping. It was not you who sent me here, but God, who has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord over all his house, and prince of all the land of Egypt. Go quickly, then, to my father and tell him everything about me. Tell him also of my glory, and quickly bring him here with all his house. Here you will all be fed."

After these words Joseph fell upon Benjamin's neck and wept for joy. Benjamin too wept, embracing Joseph's neck. Then Joseph went up to his brothers and kissed them also. He was not angry with them, but, being without malice, continued to love them as before. Word reached Pharaoh and his servants that Joseph's brothers had come. Pharaoh commanded Joseph to bring all his family to Egypt, promising to give them the very best land. Joseph gave his brothers rich gifts of gold, silver, and fine garments; he gave them chariots, horses, and asses, on which they could travel to Egypt with all their household, and he also furnished them with provisions for the journey. In addition, Joseph sent costly gifts to his father and joyfully sent his brothers to him, saying:

"Do not quarrel on the way, but go peacefully and quickly to my father and tell him: 'Your son Joseph asked us to tell you this: God has made me lord over this land of Egypt; therefore rejoice, father, and come here, that I may see your angelic face.'"

They went quickly, reached the land of Canaan, told their father about Joseph and relayed his words to him. On hearing the name of Joseph, Jacob sighed, wept, and said with sorrow:

"Why do you trouble my soul? Is it that I might remember again the beauty of my dear son Joseph? Why do you wish to kindle again the quenched sorrow of my soul?"

Jacob did not believe their words. Then Benjamin came up to him, kissed his knees, and said:

"These words are the true truth."

And he showed his father the gifts and the letters sent by Joseph. Jacob believed it and was amazed; his spirit revived. He said:

"I am glad; my son Joseph is still alive, and before I die I will go and see him."

Jacob went joyfully and hastily to Egypt to his son Joseph. When Joseph heard of Jacob's approach, he harnessed his royal chariot and went out to meet his father. Jacob saw Joseph riding, and despite his old age he got down from the chariot and went on foot to meet him. Joseph too got down from the chariot and went on foot, as did all his nobles. When Joseph came near his father, he set down on the ground the royal scepter that was in his hand, as though not wishing to hold it. Then, pretending to bow before this scepter, he bowed in this manner to his father Jacob and handed him the scepter. He did this so that the Egyptians would not be offended that, while wearing the royal purple, he bowed to Israel. Jacob first approached Joseph, embraced his neck and wept long upon it. Joseph also wept, embracing and kissing his father's gray hairs. And Jacob said to Joseph:

"Now I can die, since I have seen you, my child." With every honor Joseph led Jacob into the royal Egyptian city and presented him to Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and Pharaoh asked him:

"How old are you?"

Jacob answered:

“I am a hundred and thirty years old. These years of mine have been few and unhappy, and have not reached the number of years lived by my fathers.”

Pharaoh commanded Joseph to settle his father and brethren in the best land. Having lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years, Jacob died and was gathered to his fathers. Joseph fell upon his father's face, wept bitterly over him and kissed him.

At his death Jacob charged Joseph not to bury him in Egypt, but to carry his remains into the land of Canaan and lay them in the sepulchre of his fathers. Therefore Joseph said to Pharaoh's nobles:

"If you are favorable to me, go and tell Pharaoh that my father made me swear to bury him in the tomb which he dug for himself in the land of Canaan. Now I wish to go and bury my father and return."

Pharaoh permitted this. Joseph set out on the journey. With him went all Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his house, all the elders of the land of Egypt, all Joseph's household, his brothers, and all his father's household, so that there was a very great multitude. They came to the place of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan. There they wept bitterly for Jacob for seven days and buried him in the double cave which Abraham had purchased for the making of tombs. After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone with him.

After the burial of their father, the brethren said to one another:

"What if Joseph remembers the evil we did to him and repays us for all the wrong we did him?"

They came to Joseph and said:

"Before he died your father commanded you: 'Forgive the offense and the sin of your brethren, forgive them that they treated you wickedly.' Now we ask you to forgive us the evil we did to you."

Joseph wept when they said this to him. And the brethren said to him again:

"We are your servants, lord."

Joseph answered them:

"Do not fear, brethren, for I too fear God. You planned evil against me, but God turned it into good. So do not be afraid. I will nourish you and your households."

These words of Joseph were very pleasing to the hearts of his brethren, and they were comforted. Thus Joseph, his brethren and all his father's house settled in Egypt. Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. He saw children not only of Ephraim but also of Machir, son of Manasseh. Before his death Joseph said to his brethren:

"I am dying. But when God visits you and brings you up out of this land into the land which He promised to our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then carry my bones up with you from here."

Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. They placed him in a coffin in Egypt.

In conclusion of all things we glorify our Lord Jesus Christ, prefigured by Joseph,[2334] glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

NOTES

2311. John VI Palaeologus reigned from 1425 to 1448. At the very beginning of his reign he acknowledged himself a vassal of Sultan Murad II and surrendered to the Turks several cities along the shore of the Black Sea; this, however, did not prevent the Turks from attempting (in 1433) to seize Constantinople, an attempt which ended in failure. Hoping to find protection from the Turks in the West, John VI took a decisive step toward rapprochement with it; to this end he agreed to travel to Italy, where Pope Eugene IV had resolved to convene a council on the question of the union of the Churches. First at Ferrara and then at Florence the conditions of the union were worked out (1439), and it was accepted by the Greeks present at the council, with the exception of some bishops. The Greeks acknowledged as correct the teaching of the Catholic Church on the procession of the Holy Spirit also from the Son (*filioque*), on the primacy of the Pope, and on the celebration of the Eucharist with unleavened bread. But the displeasure of the inhabitants of Constantinople brought to nothing the union concluded in Italy.

2313. Isidore was the last Metropolitan of Russia of Greek origin; he came from Thessalonica. After being consecrated Metropolitan of Kiev by the Patriarch of Constantinople (see the preceding note concerning him), Isidore arrived in Moscow in the spring of 1437. Here he persuaded Grand Prince Basil Vasilyevich the Dark to release him to go to Italy for the Council of Ferrara-Florence (see note 7). On 8 September 1437 Isidore left Moscow accompanied by Abraham, Bishop of Suzdal, and about a hundred clergy and laymen. In 1438 Isidore arrived in Italy at Ferrara, where the council was in session, soon transferred to Florence. At the council Isidore declared himself a zealous supporter of the union, for which the Pope made him a cardinal with the title of apostolic legate for all the northern lands. On his way to Russia, already from Hungary, he sent out letters to the Lithuanian, Russian and Livonian dioceses, announcing the union of the Churches. In Volhynia Isidore installed Bishop Daniel, who agreed to the union; in Kiev Prince Alexander gave Isidore, as "our father the Metropolitan," a charter covering his entire patrimony, although the Kievan Chronicle asserts that Isidore was expelled from Kiev. In the spring of 1441 Isidore arrived in Moscow, bringing with him a friendly letter from the Pope to Grand Prince Basil. At the very first liturgy in the Dormition Cathedral, Isidore, in place of the Patriarch of Constantinople, commemorated Pope Eugene, and at the conclusion of the service the deacon read from the ambo the decree of the Council of Florence. Grand Prince Basil immediately, there

in the church, began to denounce Isidore; then he placed him under guard in the Miracle Monastery and convened a council, which declared the decrees of the Council of Florence contrary to the ancient Orthodox teaching. In the autumn of that same year, 1441, Isidore fled to Tver, but the Grand Prince of Tver placed him under guard. From Tver Isidore escaped to Lithuanian Novgorod, and from there to Rome. During the siege of Constantinople by the Turks, Isidore was within the city walls, offering Emperor Constantine the help of the Pope if the Greek clergy would accept the decrees of the Council of Florence. After the capture of Constantinople Isidore fell into the hands of the Turks, but escaped from captivity to Rome; he died there in 1462, bearing the title of Patriarch of Constantinople.

2324. Jacob buried Rachel on the road to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem, and set up a monument over her grave (Gen. 35:19). Rachel's tomb was well known even many centuries later (1 Kgdms. 10:2). Local Jews and Muslims to this day regard the tomb of Rachel with great reverence. Arabs gather here for solemn prayers during a drought. Married women take pieces of stone from here and carry them during pregnancy. The memory of Rachel herself was preserved among her descendants in later times. The elders and inhabitants of Bethlehem, blessing the marriage of Boaz with Ruth, wished him the same happiness from God that Rachel had brought to Israel (Ruth 4:11). The prophet Jeremiah, depicting the calamities of the Jewish captivity, presents Rachel as the foremother of the Israelites, orphaned and inconsolably weeping for her sons, because they are no more (Jer. 31:15). The Evangelist Matthew, in this mournful event described by the prophet, sees a reference to another, no less mournful event, the slaughter of the Bethlehem infants by Herod: the Bethlehem children belonged to the posterity of Rachel, and she, as their mother, weeps inconsolably because they are no more (Mt. 2:18).

2325. Bethlehem is a city of Palestine: in the Old Testament it is known as the birthplace of the greatest Jewish king, David, and in the New as the birthplace of Jesus Christ. It lies two hours' journey south of Jerusalem and stands on two hills, whose slopes abound in vineyards, while at their foot stretch well-cultivated grainfields. From this fertility, probably, the very name "Bethlehem" derives (from the Hebrew, "house of bread"). In antiquity it was called Ephrath (Mic. 5:2) (from the Hebrew, "to bear fruit"). From the time of the birth of Christ the Savior, Bethlehem became a holy place for all Christians. Until the occupation of Palestine by the Ottomans (15th century), Bethlehem was more than once utterly destroyed, and by that time it had fallen into complete decline, from which it recovered only at the beginning of the 19th century. Now it is a small town with a population of up to 6,000 inhabitants, half Orthodox and half Catholic, Arabs, bearing the name Beit Lahm ("house of meat"). On the site of the grotto or cave where the Lord Jesus Christ was born there stands a church; the cave lies beneath its sanctuary; its walls and floor are faced with marble. The place of the birth is considered to be a recess in the cave, lit by five silver lamps. In the floor is set a silver star with a Latin inscription: *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Ghristus natus est*: "Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born." Some three paces from this place is a hollow considered to be the site of the manger in which Christ was laid. To the northwest of the

cave stretches a narrow subterranean passage with Holy Tables and chapels, and also the cave where the blessed Jerome was buried (420).

2326. Sichem is an ancient city of the promised land; it lies in Samaria, on Mount Ephraim, eighteen hours from Jerusalem and sixteen from Nazareth, in the valley between Gerizim and Ebal, which abounded in apricots, peaches, pomegranates, plums, roses, and myrtles. When Abraham first came here, there was only the Oak of Moreh (Gen. 12:6); but when Jacob returned from Mesopotamia, the place was already called the city of Shechem (Gen. 33:18–19). From Hamor, the father of Shechem, Jacob bought a portion of the field, pitched his tent here, set up an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord God of Israel (Gen. 33:19–20). This was Jacob's only possession in the land of promise. Nearby, probably, was also Jacob's well, mentioned in the New Testament (Jn. 4:5–6). Here Jacob sent Joseph to his brethren, and near these places Joseph was sold by them to the Ishmaelites. Jacob, before his death, gave the portion near Shechem to Joseph, who was buried here (Josh. 24:32). At the present time Shechem, or Nablus, serves as the dwelling place of the Samaritans.

2328. Mesopotamia – that is, the Land between the Rivers, the ancient Shinar (Gen. 10:10), the place of Abraham's birth and dwelling before his departure to the land of Haran (Gen. 11:28; Acts 7:2). The name designates the territory lying between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, bounded on the south by the Persian Gulf and on the north by the mountains of Armenia. In a narrower sense, Mesopotamia denotes the northern part of this region, known as El-Jezireh, while the southern part is known as Babylonia, the present-day Iraq-Arabi, that is, ancient Babylonia. In the Roman era the country was divided into two parts: Osroene in the west, which passed to Rome in 217 A.D., with its chief city Edessa, and Migdonia in the east, with its chief city Nisibis, which was conquered by the Roman emperor Trajan in 115 A.D. Christianity in Mesopotamia was begun by Judas, or Thaddeus, a companion of the Apostle Thomas, who by tradition was one of the seventy disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the vicinity of Nisibis was born St. Ephraim the Syrian (3rd–4th centuries). Thomas Varsuma, bishop of Nisibis, was a zealous champion of the Nestorian heresy, which taught that the Word of God, eternally begotten of the Father, merely dwelt in the man Jesus, remaining with Him in a special, moral union. In the 11th century, during the attack of the Seljuks, Mesopotamia declined, and today it belongs to Turkey. Its inhabitants are Arabs, Kurds, Armenians and Syrians.

2334. Certain features of the life of the Righteous Joseph have, according to the teaching of the Church and the Holy Fathers, a prefigurative significance, that is, they foreshadow certain moments in the life of Jesus Christ, both in His humiliation and in His glorification. As Joseph, the firstborn of Rachel, was loved by Jacob more than all the sons (Gen. 37:3), so the Lord Jesus Christ is the firstborn of the Virgin Mary (Mt. 1:25) and the beloved Son of God. As the Lord, says St. Ephraim the Syrian, was sent to us to save us all, so the youth Joseph was sent from his father Jacob's bosom to his brothers; and as the cruel brothers of Joseph, when they saw Joseph approaching, began to plot evil against him, although he brought them peace from their father, so the hard-hearted Jews, seeing the Savior, said: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and

the inheritance shall be ours" (Mk. 12:7). Joseph, through the envy of his brothers, is sold to foreigners, and Christ is sold by Judas for thirty pieces of silver (Mt. 28:15), and then, out of envy (Mt. 27:18), is delivered to the Gentiles (Mt. 20:19). After his victory over the sinful proposals of Potiphar's wife, Joseph is cast into prison, and the Lord, taking upon Himself the sin of the whole world, is laid in the tomb. In prison Joseph announces to the prisoners – to one pardon, and to the other condemnation; and the Lord, hanging on the cross, announced salvation to one of the two thieves crucified with Him, and afterwards, descending, preached to the spirits in prison (1 Pet. 3:19). After his release from prison, Joseph is appointed over all the kingdom of Egypt, receives a new name and great honors, and saves from famine not only Egypt but the surrounding lands; and to the Lord Jesus Christ, after His resurrection from the grave, was given all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18), and at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10–11). Therefore, honoring the Righteous Joseph as "the true likeness of Christ" (Service on Palm Sunday, Small Vespers), the Holy Church has established that he be commemorated at the beginning of Holy Week – on Holy Monday.



INDEX OF SAINTS AND FEASTS

2

Commemoration of the 26 Gothic Martyrs, 493

A

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Abdas and Benjamin, 609

Account of a miracle that occurred in the Caves Monastery, 455

Account of a Recluse to Whom God Revealed the Lot of Those Who Receive Alms, 171

Account of Taxiotus the Soldier, 574

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Agapius, Publius, Timolaus, Romulus, Alexander, Alexander, Dionysius, and Dionysius, 315

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Alexander, 289

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Alexander, Priest, 317

Commemoration of our Father among the Saints Artemon, Bishop of Seleucia, 452

Memory of the Venerable Apollonius, 608

Memory of Venerable Arcadius, 161

Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel, 472

Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Aristobulus, 321

C

Commemoration of St. Caesarius, 196

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria, 378

Memory of the Holy Martyr Conon, Surnamed the Gardener, 130

Memory of Our Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, 361

Memory of Our Holy Father Cyril, Bishop of Catania, 415

D

Commemoration of the Venerable Domnina, 43

Memory of the Holy Martyr Drosis, 429

E

Commemoration of Venerable Emilian, 169

Memory of St. Eulogius the Martyr, 134

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Euphalia, 52

Commemoration of St. Euschemon the Confessor, 313

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Eustathius the Confessor, Bishop of Bithynia[^, 585

Memory of our holy father Euthymius, Archbishop of Novgorod, 251

H

Memory of the Venerable Hesychius the Faster, 130

Memory of our Venerable Father Hilarion the New, 572

Translation of the Honorable Relics of Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, 286

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Hypatius the Wonderworker, Bishop of Gangra, 603

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Hypatius, in Rufinae, 606

I

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Iddo, 599

J

Commemoration of our Venerable Father James the Confessor, 453

Memory of Our Venerable Father James, Bishop and Confessor, 415

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father John the Hermit, 582

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Jonah and Barachisius, 571

Repose of Our Holy Father Jonah, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia, 610

L

Life and Passion of Saint Nikon, Hieromartyr, 433

Life and Passion of the Holy Martyr Conon of Isauria, 119

Life and Sufferings of Our Venerable Father Eustratius of the Kiev Caves, 567

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Venerable Martyr Eudocia, 7

Life of Our Father among the Saints Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome, 274

Life of Our Holy Father Arsenius, Bishop of Tver, 52

Life of Our Holy Father Theophanes the Confessor, 258

Life of Our Venerable Father Anin the Wonderworker, 366

Life of Our Venerable Father Basil the New, 494

Life of Our Venerable Father Benedict, 291

Life of Our Venerable Father Gerasimus, Who Lived on the Jordan, 80

Life of Our Venerable Father James the Ascetic, 105

Life of Our Venerable Father John Climacus, 587

Life of our Venerable Father John the Seer, Hermit and Recluse of Egypt, 547

Life of Our Venerable Father Macarius of Kalyazin, 340

Life of Our Venerable Father Malchus, 485

Life of our Venerable Father Nikon, Abbot of the Kiev Caves, 443

Life of the Holy Righteous Joseph the Beautiful, 619

Life of Venerable Alexis, Man of God, 329

M

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Manuel and Theodosius, 565

Passion of the Holy Martyr Marinus, 339

Memory of the Venerable Mark the Faster, 133

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Matrona of Thessalonica, 564

Memory of our Venerable Mother Anastasia, who was renamed Anastasius the eunuch, 222

N

Memory of the Holy Martyr Nicander, 316

Memory of St. Nicetas the Confessor, 414

P

Memory of the Holy Martyr Panchar, 395

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Papas, 327

Commemoration of Venerable Paul the Confessor, 170

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Philitus and Lydia, 449

Memory of the Righteous Phinehas, 282

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Pionius, Presbyter of Smyrna, and of those with him, 238

Q

Passion of the Holy Martyr Quadratus and Those with Him, 198

Passion of the Holy Martyr Quadratus of Nicomedia, and with him the Holy Martyrs Satorinus and Rufinus, and others, 205

S

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Savinus, 322

Sermon on the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, 458

Commemoration of our Holy Father Sophronius the Wise, Patriarch of Jerusalem, 228

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Stephen the Confessor, 573

Suffering of Our Venerable Father Mark, Bishop of Arethusa, 578

Suffering of the Forty-Two Holy Martyrs, 144

Suffering of the Holy Forty Martyrs, in Sebaste of Armenia, 182

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Basil, Presbyter of Ancyra, 419

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Sirmium, 480

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Antonina, 42

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Photina, 406

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Alexandra and Claudia, 413

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus, 67

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Paul and His Sister Juliana, and Others with Them, 86

Suffering of the Holy Venerable Martyr Conon and of His Son Conon, Who Suffered at Iconium, 136

Sufferings of Our Venerable Fathers John, Sergius and Patricius, 399

Sufferings of the Holy Hieromartyrs Ephraim, Basil, Eugene, Elpidius, Agathodorus, Eferius and Capito, who at various times were bishops in Cherson, 163

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Nestor and Tribimius, 41

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Trophimus and Phal, 323

T

Tale of the Monk Who Judged No One, 600

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Theodoret, Presbyter of Antioch, 173

Passion of St. Theodotus, Hieromartyr, Bishop of Kyrenia, 45

Memory of the Venerable Theophylact the Confessor, Bishop of Nicomedia, 178

Memory of Our Holy Father Thomas, Patriarch of Constantinople, 416

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Trophimus and Eucarpus, 374

U

Passion of the Holy Martyr Urpasian, 194