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

Май

MAY

Book V

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Built November 2026.

CONTENTS

May 1. Life and Sufferings of the Holy Prophet Jeremiah 7
May 2. Passion of the Holy Martyrs Esper and Zoe 73
May 3. Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Timothy and Mavra. 116
May 4. Suffering of the Holy Martyr Virgin Pelagia. 173
May 5. Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Irene 191
May 6. Life of the Holy Righteous and Much-Suffering Job 211
May 7. Suffering of the Holy Martyr Acacius. 229
May 8. Life of Our Venerable Father Arsenius the Great 247
May 9. Life of the Holy Prophet Isaiah 274
May 10. Memory of the Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot 299
May 11. Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Mocius 315
May 12. Life of Our Holy Father Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople 378
May 13. Martyrdom of the Holy Martyr Glykeria, and with Her Laodicius, the Prison Guard 431
May 14. Passion of the Holy Martyr Isidore 466
May 15. Life of Our Venerable Father Pachomius the Great 477
May 16. Life of Our Venerable Father Theodore the Sanctified, Disciple of Pachomius 526
May 17. Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Andronicus and of Junia, His Helpmate 542
May 18. Suffering of the Holy Martyr Theodotus, together with the seven virgins: Phaina, Claudia, Matrona, Tekusa, Julia, Alexandra and Euphrasia 546
May 19. Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Patricius, together with the three presbyters Acacius, Menander and Polyaenus 576
May 20. Passion of St. Phalaleus the Martyr 587
May 21. Life of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine and of His Holy Mother Helena 602
May 22. Suffering of the Holy Martyr Basiliscus 638
May 23. Memory of Our Venerable Father Michael the Confessor 653

May 24. Our Venerable Father Simeon of the Wondrous Mountain 669
May 25. Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Ferapont, Bishop of Cyprus 703
May 26. Passion of St. George the New, Holy Martyr 708
May 27. Passion of the Holy Martyrs Theodora and Didymus 717
May 28. Passion of the Holy Martyr Elikonida. 729
May 29. Memory of the Holy Martyr Theodosia 740
May 30. Life of Our Venerable Father Isaac the Confessor 752
May 31. Passion of the Holy Martyr Hermias 759
Index of Saints and Feasts 765

THE FIRST DAY OF MAY

May 1

1 мая

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

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Prophet Jeremiah

Житие и страдание святого пророка Иеремии

The Holy Prophet Jeremiah[1] was born in Anathoth, a priestly city[2], within the territory of the tribe of Benjamin, not far from Jerusalem. The son of the priest Hilkiah, he was chosen beforehand and destined for the prophetic ministry, like Samuel (1 Kgdms. 2), even before his birth, as the Lord Himself said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:4–5).

The Holy Jeremiah, a priest by birth, and by his calling from God a teacher and prophet, was, according to the testimony of St. Ignatius the God-bearer, a virgin all his life (Jer. 16:2). He came forward in the prophetic ministry in 630 B.C., while still in tender youth, as is seen from the first chapter of his book, where it is related that, when called by the Lord to prophesy, he expressed his confusion thus:

"Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak, for I am still young—a child."

But the Lord encouraged him, and, endowing him with the understanding of a mature and perfect man, said:

"Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee."

1. Jeremiah, from the Hebrew, "Exalted by God."
2. The tribe of Levi did not receive a particular portion when the promised land was divided; it was scattered and settled among the other tribes, where cities with their suburbs were assigned to the Levites by lot. The city of Anathoth lay within the territory of the tribe of Benjamin and belonged to the descendants of Aaron (Josh. 21:18; 1 Chron. 6:60).

Having said this, the Lord stretched forth His hand and, touching the mouth of Jeremiah, said to him:

"Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have set thee this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down (the sinful, lawless life of men), and to build and to plant anew [good morals and God-pleasing life among men] in the place of what has been destroyed and uprooted" (Jer. 1:7–10).

This word of the Lord, which called Jeremiah to the prophetic ministry, came in the days of Josiah, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign[3]; the holy prophet was then in his fifteenth year from birth. At so young an age he became an instrument of the effective grace of God!

In those times the people of Judah, though outwardly they kept faith with the faith of their fathers and worshipped the true God who had once led them out of Egypt, were inwardly far from true service to Him. Entering into close relations with the surrounding peoples, the Jews were morally corrupted; submitting to foreign customs, the majority of them, especially the wealthy and powerful among them, served pagan abominations. Not only in the vicinity of Jerusalem, on the hills and in the valleys, but in Jerusalem itself, beside the temple of the Lord built by Solomon, idols were set up, to which sacrifices were offered just as to the true God. This moral rot, penetrating deeply into the life of the people, arousing the just wrath of God, was preparing ruin and destruction for the land of Judah, which was foretold to the holy Jeremiah in two visions: of the rod of a nut tree and of the boiling pot. And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah:

"What seest thou, Jeremiah?"

He answered:

"I see a rod of an almond tree."

The Lord said to him:

3. Josiah reigned from 642 to 611 B.C.

"Thou hast seen rightly: for I watch[4] over My word, that it may speedily be fulfilled."

And the word of the Lord came to him a second time:

"What seest thou?"

"I see," answered Jeremiah, "a boiling pot, blown upon by the wind, and it appears from the north."

And the Lord said to him:

"Out of the north an evil shall break forth [5] upon all the inhabitants of this land. But do thou gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak to them all that I command thee; be not dismayed before them, lest I strike thee before their eyes. For behold, I have made thee this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and a brazen wall, against all this land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of this land. They will fight against thee, but they shall not prevail over thee, for I am with thee to deliver thee" (Jer. 1:17–19).

Fulfilling the commandment of God, the holy Jeremiah began to rebuke the Jews for their falling away from the true God and their turning to pagan superstition, threatening the wrath of the Almighty that was coming upon them, and exhorting them to repent in order to be delivered from the terrible consequences of the wrath of the Lord. The prophetic ministry of Jeremiah continued from the days, as has already been said, of King Josiah, in the days of his son Jehoahaz, and of Jehoiakim, brother of Jehoahaz, and in the days of Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, and in the days of Zedekiah, son of Josiah, brother of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim[6].

The prophet of God endured many sufferings from his own kinsmen, who had lost the true faith in God and the fear of God! He proclaimed the terrible warnings of the Lord of Hosts without hesitation or confusion; he boldly and fearlessly proclaimed the word of truth in the court

4. The almond tree awakens before other trees after the winter sleep: it blooms in January, and by March it already bears fruit; therefore among the Jews it was called the "watchful" tree.

5. A boiling cauldron was among the peoples of the East a symbol of fierce war. Jeremiah threatened Judea with an invasion of the Chaldeans; Babylon was east of Judea, but the Chaldeans invaded it to avoid the Arabian desert, by a detour through Syria, that is, from the north.

6. His ministry lasted 42 years, from 627 to 585 B.C.

of the temple, at the gates of the city, in the royal palace, in the prison, and in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Many times he was brought before kings and nobles, and to all of them he spoke plainly, without guile or timid shyness, openly declaring that if they did not repent and turn away from falsehood, evil calamities would overtake them. For thus says the Lord:

"I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. And they shall be the executors of My judgments against the sinful people, the punishers of the lawless. And all this I will permit to come upon them because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to strange gods and worshipped the works of their own hands (Jer. 1:15–16). Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the servants of the house of Israel! Thus says the Lord: What unrighteousness did your fathers find in Me, that they went far from Me and walked after vanity and became vain, and did not say: Where is the Lord who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness, through a land that is desert and dry, through a land of shadow of death, through which no man passed and where no man dwelt? I brought you into a fruitful land, that you might eat its fruit and its good things; but you entered and defiled My land, and made My inheritance an abomination. I will contend with you, and with the sons of your sons will I contend. For pass over to the isles of Chittim and see, and send to Kedar and consider diligently, and see whether there has been any such thing: has any nation changed its gods, though they are not gods? But My people has changed its glory for that which does not profit. Be astonished at this, O heavens, and shudder, and be horribly afraid, O foundations of the earth: My people have done two evils, having forsaken Me, the Lord their God, the fountain of living water, and have hewn out for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. I planted My people as a noble vine, on the banks of the Jordan, the purest seed; but it turned into the wild shoot of a strange vine. Israel is My servant and My household, like a frisky she-camel, like a wild ass roaming in the wilderness, drawing in the air

in the passion of its soul, said: Do not hope, no! For I love strangers and will walk in their ways. The house of Israel has shamed itself: its men, and its kings, and its princes, and its priests, and its prophets have turned their backs to Me and not their faces, and have said: 'We are our own masters; we will no more come to Thee'; but in the time of their calamity they will say: 'Arise and save us!' O generation, hear the word of the Lord: Have I been a wilderness or a land of Israel? Does a maiden forget her ornament, or a bride her attire? Yet My people has forgotten Me, and there is no number to the days of its forgetfulness! And by your treachery you skillfully direct your ways, covering your shame with the garment of piety, that you may win love! And for this reason you even adapt your ways to crimes, so that on the hems of your garments is found the blood of poor and innocent people... (Jer. 2:4–34). And for this, because they act according to the stubbornness of their evil heart, I will bring upon them a calamity and great destruction from the north. And it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes, and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall be amazed (Jer. 43:17; 4:6–9). As a fountain pours forth its water, so Jerusalem pours forth its evil: violence and robbery are heard in it; before My face there are always wrongs and wounds. Be instructed, O Jerusalem, lest My soul depart from thee, lest I make thee a desolation, a land not inhabited" (Jer. 6:7–8).

With such and similar ecstatically fiery words the holy Jeremiah repeatedly addressed his contemporaries; they, like a hammer breaking rocks, are set forth at length in his prophetic book. And everything prophesied by him came to pass.

The political troubles and calamities for Jerusalem began in the reign of King Josiah as follows: in the thirty-first year of his reign (4 Kgdms. 22:1; 2 Chr. 34:1) the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho undertook a military campaign against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. And since his road lay through the territory of the land of Judah, Josiah, to protect his kingdom from invasion by the Egyptians, gathered his army and resolved to oppose them. Pharaoh sent messengers to him to say: "What have I to do with thee, king of Judah? I am not coming

against thee now, but to the place where I have war. And God has commanded me to hasten; do not resist God, lest He destroy thee."

But Josiah did not heed this warning of Necho and went out against him with his army to the Plain of Megiddo, which lay on the way from the seacoast of the Mediterranean to the Jordan, whence by the nearest route through Damascus Necho intended to reach the banks of the Euphrates.

A battle took place. The Jewish army, overwhelmed by the enemy's superior numbers, was utterly defeated, and Josiah himself was mortally wounded. His bodyguards hastily took their beloved, dying king and carried him to Jerusalem, where he gave up his spirit to God. Josiah was buried in the tomb of his fathers, and he was mourned by the people in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea with great sorrow, for he was the best and most worthy of kings in his goodness and God-fearing piety (2 Chron. 35:20–24; Zech. 12:11). Jeremiah also lamented King Josiah in a song of mourning (2 Chron. 35:25).

Pharaoh Necho then continued his military march into Assyria. In Jerusalem, Josiah's second son, Jehoahaz[7], was anointed king, though he reigned only three months before Necho returned from the Assyrian campaign. The Egyptian king, to whom the supremacy over the Land of Judah had passed after the victory at Megiddo, and who at that time had in view the chief and most powerful opponent, Assyria-Babylonia, paid no attention to the weak Kingdom of Judah. On his return journey he seized Jerusalem and all of Judea and subjected them to his power. When the newly chosen king Jehoahaz came to him in the military camp at Riblah, in the land of Hamath[8], to receive confirmation in his royal dignity, Necho deposed him, sent him to Egypt as a prisoner in chains, and set up as king in Judah the elder brother of Jehoahaz, Eliakim, renaming him Jehoiakim. At the same time Necho laid upon Judah a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold[9], a

7. Jehoahaz was the second son of Josiah and of his beloved wife Hamutal, and was called Shallum (4 Kgdms. 23:31; cf. 22:11).
8. Hamath lay at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon mountains.
9. A talent of gold: 125,000 rubles. The whole tribute equalled our 300,000 rubles.

burden intolerably heavy for so small a state, all the more so since it was exacted with merciless severity (4 Kgdms. 23:35).

Thus the seed of Abraham, a free people, once a glorious and mighty kingdom, lost its independence and fell into servitude. This was the inevitable consequence of the lawlessness of the Jews, by which they provoked the Most High God, failing to offer sincere repentance in response to the prophetic admonitions and failing to order their moral life according to the law of God!

At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, there came this word from the Lord to the holy Jeremiah: "Stand in the court of the house of the Lord and speak to all the Jews who come to worship in the house of the Lord all the words that I command you to speak; do not omit a word. Thus says the Lord: If you will not obey Me by walking according to My law, which I have given you, and by heeding with obedience the words of My servants the prophets, whom I send to you early in the morning and whom you have disregarded, then I will do to this house, upon which My name is called and in which you put your trust (cf. Jer. 7:14), what I did to Shiloh[10], and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth" (Jer. 26:1–6).

Hearing such terrible declarations of the prophet in the name of God, the self-styled zealots of public peace and state security, the priests and false prophets, filled with wrath, seized Jeremiah and demanded a trial against him, demanding that both the princes and the people pronounce a sentence of death upon him. Crowds of people, stirred up against Jeremiah in this way, gathered in the house of the Lord; the princes of Judah and some persons from the king's house also came there and sat at the entrance by the gate of the house of the Lord. Thus a formal trial of the prophet was constituted. The impious priests and false prophets, turning to the assembly of the people and the princes of Judah, said:

"This man deserves to die, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears."

10. Here is indicated the circumstance that when, under the high priest Eli, the Jews suffered a terrible defeat from the Philistines and the ark of the covenant was captured, then the glory departed from Israel. 1 Kgdms. 4:10–22.

But Jeremiah, in his own defense, declared:

"The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that you have heard. Therefore amend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will relent of the evil that He has pronounced against you. As for me, here I am in your hands; do with me as seems good and right in your eyes. But know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the Lord has sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears."

Then the princes of Judah who presided over the popular assembly and the courtiers of the king said to the frenzied priests and false prophets:

"This man may not be condemned to death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God."

Some of the elders of the land also rose in defense of Jeremiah and addressed the people in these words:

"Remember, Micah the Morashtite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the temple a wooded height.' Did Hezekiah the king and the people of Judah put him to death for this? Did they not fear the Lord and entreat Him? And the Lord relented of the evil He had pronounced against them; but we, we are about to do great harm to our souls (Jer. 26:11–19). Therefore let us repent, turn from evil, and not seek the death of an innocent man. For was there any benefit from the blood recently shed of Uriah, son of Shemaiah of Kiriath-jearim, who prophesied in the name of the Lord against this city and against this land in exactly the same words as Jeremiah foretells? When the king and his courtiers heard the words of this Uriah, they hated him and sought to kill him; but he, condemned to death, fled in fear to Egypt. King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt, who brought him back from there, and Uriah was slain with the sword. But what came of it? A popular outrage against the king and the princes of Judah. The same will certainly happen if you put Jeremiah to death."

After that the assembly was divided: some insisted that the holy prophet be killed, while others defended his innocence. The enemies of Jeremiah would certainly have overcome his defenders, had he not been taken under the protection of one of the influential courtiers of the royal court, named Ahikam, son of Shaphan. He delivered Jeremiah from the hands of wicked men ready to murder him (Jer. 26:20–24).

Meanwhile idolatry, which had poisoned the conscience of the people over many preceding years and had engendered extreme moral corruption, grew more and more widespread in Judah. There were even among the Jews those who, in answer to the prophetic call to amend the course of their lives and to follow the law of God, said mockingly:

"Do not hope; we will live according to our own thoughts and will each act according to the inclination of his wicked heart (Jer. 18:12). We will do everything that has come out of our mouths: we will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we, our fathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, for this gave us plenty and happiness (Jer. 44:17)."

There was no truth in them; it had been taken from their lips. From the least to the greatest, each of them was given over to gain, and from the [false] prophet to the priest, all acted deceitfully, and, committing abominations, they were not at all ashamed or put to the blush (Jer. 6:13–15). King Jehoiakim of Judah also did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord, being carried along by the general torrent of impiety (4 Kgdms. 23:37; 2 Chron. 36:5).

And so the holy Jeremiah again received a command from the Lord:

"Go and enter the house of the king of Judah and speak there this word, and say: Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter by these gates. Thus says the Lord: Execute justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who is wronged from the hand of the oppressor; do not wrong or oppress the stranger, the widow and the orphan; do not shed innocent blood in this place. For if you faithfully do this word, then there shall enter by the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, of his line, riding in chariots and on horses,

they themselves, their servants and their people. But if you do not hear these words, then I swear by Myself, says the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation, the cities shall be uninhabited, and the whole land of Judah shall be turned into a wilderness; for I will prepare destroyers with their weapons, who will strike down the unrepentant people as men cut down trees. And many nations will pass by this desolate city and say to one another: 'Why has the Lord done thus to this great city?' And they will answer: 'Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped and served other gods.'"

And concerning the king of Judah himself, Jehoiakim, the holy prophet spoke in the name of the Lord, saying that since his eyes and his heart are set on self-interest and the shedding of innocent blood, on doing oppression and violence, after his death he will not be mourned with cries of "Alas, my lord!" and "Alas, his majesty!" He shall be buried with the burial of an ass: he will be dragged out and cast far beyond the gates of Jerusalem (Jer. 22:1–19).

Such bold words of the prophet of God, spoken publicly before the people, aroused the great anger of the king and his courtiers. The holy Jeremiah would then certainly have been put to death, had not God's providence preserved him for future mysterious declarations in the name of the Lord. He was roughly seized and, with dishonor, placed in chains in a dungeon.

At this time the execution of God's judgment came upon the guilty city, defiled by heathen abominations and stained with the blood of the innocent. Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, the representative of the Assyrian monarchy, was sent by his father against the Egyptian king Necho; at Carchemish[11] he defeated the army of the Pharaoh, who had attempted to gain possession of Assyria, and immediately turned his forces against the king of Judah, Pharaoh's tributary. After a brief siege Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. King Jehoiakim of Judah was captured in the third year of his reign and, together with chosen youths of the royal and princely families (among them the prophet Daniel, still a youth, and the three youths

11. The city of Carchemish stood at the confluence of the Chaboras with the Euphrates.

Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah) (Dan. 1:1–6), was led away to Babylon. A considerable part of the citizens of Jerusalem was also taken there, and part of the vessels of the house of God were carried off.

Some time later Nebuchadnezzar, who had become king in Babylon after the death of his father, returned the captive Jehoiakim to Jerusalem, restoring him to the dignity of king of Judah, and only made him his tributary. Thus three years passed: Jehoiakim paid tribute to the king of Babylon, as before he had paid tribute to the Pharaoh of Egypt. Freed in this way from the dependence on Egypt that had weighed upon Judea, and not foreseeing the terrible danger from Babylon, a monarchy still young and then occupied with the ordering of its internal affairs, Jehoiakim and his courtiers, presumptuously resolving to cast off the Chaldean yoke, gave themselves over to debauchery and various follies.

But before Jehoiakim, king of Judah, openly renounced submission to Nebuchadnezzar and plainly proclaimed the independence of his kingdom from Babylon, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah, who was then held in prison, a word such as this:

"Take for yourself a scroll of a book and write in it all the words that I have spoken to you concerning Israel and concerning all the nations, from the day I began to speak to you, from the days of Josiah until this day; perhaps the house of Judah, the people of Judah, will hear of all the evils that I intend to bring upon them, so that each of them will turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

Jeremiah fulfilled this command of God through his disciple, the scribe Baruch, son of Neriah, who wrote down in the scroll all the words from the prophet's mouth. After that Jeremiah said to Baruch:

"I am shut up, and I am kept under guard; I cannot go out of here and go to the house of the Lord. So go yourself and read aloud, in the house of the Lord, on a day of fasting, the words of the Lord that you have written from my mouth, to the people; also read them aloud to all the Jews who have come from their cities. Read them to them, and perhaps they will offer their prayer before the face of the Lord and each

will turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and the wrath that the Lord has declared against this people."

Baruch read the words of the Lord written in the scroll before the assembled people. This was in the fifth year of Jehoiakim's reign (Jer. 36:9).

The reading of the scroll made a shattering impression on everyone; the assembly of the people was stirred. What had happened was reported to the royal palace, where all the noble counselors were then present; the latter summoned Baruch to them. The prophecy of Jeremiah, read by Baruch, struck even the carelessly dissolute nobles, corrupt in conscience. They looked at one another in horror and asked Baruch how he had written this prophecy. Baruch answered: "Jeremiah dictated these words to me with his mouth, and I wrote them down in this scroll."

The officials said: "These prophecies are so important that their content must certainly be related to the king" (Jer. 36:10–19).

Those among them who were well disposed toward Baruch advised him to hide for a time, and they arranged also to move the prophet Jeremiah to another place of confinement, so that no one would know where the proclaimers of God's decrees were.

When the king was informed about the prophetic scroll, Jehoiakim ordered that the scroll be brought to him and read aloud in the presence of all the princes. The season was then cold: it was the month of November; the king sat in his house before a brazier filled with burning coals, and the nobles stood around him. Some of the nobles listened with close attention to the words of Jeremiah,[12] but on the hardened heart of the king and his servile courtiers the reading of the prophecy made no due impression. More than that, as the reader unrolled the scroll and read three or four columns, the king cut them off with a scribe's penknife and threw them into the fire of the brazier; the scroll was read through entirely and wholly burned (Jer. 36:1–26). After that Jehoiakim gave orders to his henchmen to seize Jeremiah and

12. Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah, the royal servants, evidently hoped that this reading would affect the king and incline him, like his father Josiah, to moral improvement. (4 Kgdms. 22:10–13.)

Baruch and put both to death. But by the providence of God they were hidden at that time and escaped death; and soon such a season came upon the kingdom of Judah that its enemies and the haters of the prophets had no time left to think of carrying out their vengeance.

Meanwhile, by the command of God, the prophet Jeremiah uttered a new word in rebuke of the impious king:

"Take for yourself another scroll," the Lord said to him, "and write in it all the former words that were in the first scroll, which Jehoiakim, king of Judah, burned. And say to Jehoiakim: Thus says the Lord: You have burned this scroll, because in it was written that the king of Babylon would surely come and lay waste this land and destroy from it man and beast. Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim: his offspring shall not sit upon the throne of David, and his body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the cold of the night" (Jer. 36:27–30).

This command of the Lord was fulfilled by the holy prophet: from the mouth of Jeremiah, through the hand of Baruch, another scroll was written, in which much was added to the former prophetic words.

At this time, unexpectedly for the Jews, Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, made up of light detachments of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites. The holy city, not prepared for defense, was taken by the attackers without difficulty; King Jehoiakim was seized and perished an inglorious death: his corpse was thrown outside the city walls to be devoured by wild beasts and birds. Thus the prophetic word of the holy Jeremiah was fulfilled, that the king of Judah would be buried with the burial of an ass: he would be dragged out and cast far beyond the gates of Jerusalem (Jer. 22:19), that his dead body would be cast out to the heat of the day and the cold of the night. Nevertheless, his remaining bones, gnawed by beasts, were buried by the Jews in the ancestral royal tomb (2 Chr. 36:8).

After the death of Jehoiakim his son Jehoiachin ascended the throne of Jerusalem, and he was no more pious than his father. Of him the holy Jeremiah prophesied that he, with all his house, would be given by the Lord into the hands of the king of Babylon, and would no longer see his land — and this was soon fulfilled. Jehoiachin occupied the throne

of David only a hundred days. Having become king in his father's place, in foolish blindness he indulged in the unrealizable dream of being able to withstand Nebuchadnezzar and would not voluntarily submit to him or acknowledge his authority over himself. Giving himself over to immoral, idolatrous abominations like his father, Jehoiachin thought to find safety behind the strong walls of Jerusalem, and in case of a siege of his capital he counted on help from Egypt. But, taken by surprise by the swift attack of Nebuchadnezzar, who appeared in person among his troops surrounding Jerusalem, he had to surrender himself to the will of the victor with his whole family, his entire court and eunuchs. The whole royal house, the noble nobles, all the best people of the land of Judah, the flower of the warriors and craftsmen — altogether up to ten thousand of the choicest population — were led away to Babylon; together with the captives there were carried off also the golden vessels from the temple of the Lord and the royal treasures (4 Kgdms. 24:8–16).

Thus was fulfilled the prophetic word of Jeremiah: Jehoiachin, king of Judah — this signet ring on the right hand of the Lord God, who once led the Hebrews out of Egypt — was torn from his place and, as a despised and rejected creature, as a worthless vessel, was cast with his mother and his tribe into a foreign land which they did not know, where they had not been born, and there they died, without returning to the native land which their souls desired (Jer. 44:24–29).

After Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Jerusalem and the deportation to Babylon of the most honored and best people of the kingdom of Judah, in Judea there remained almost only the poor, lowest population. To govern this remnant of Judah, in place of Jehoiachin the Chaldean conqueror appointed as king the third son of the (pious) king Josiah, Mattaniah — uncle of Jehoiachin, brother of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim — renamed Zedekiah.

Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar’s appointee, reigned eleven years, and throughout his entire reign he did almost nothing but what was bound to fill up the measure of God’s long-suffering. Moral corruption had so taken hold of him that, despite the most grievous trials that befell him, he could not overcome his ungodly inclinations and could not with sin-

cerity of heart turn to the Lord God of Israel. Such too were those about him, his intimates and the priests. In Judea the pagan abominations multiplied more and more; the very House of God, the Temple in Jerusalem, was defiled by the vileness of idol worship (Ezek. 8; cf. Jer. 23). The words of the Lord, spoken through the prophetic mouth, were not heeded; men listened rather to the flattering words of false prophets, who indulged the passionate desires of corrupted people. All this gathered the wrath of God, like a menacing cloud, over Jerusalem and over the whole land of Judah, until at last the Lord turned His face from His people and delivered the holy city Jerusalem to final ruin and desolation (Jer. 52:1–3).

This last calamity to fall upon Jerusalem, the most terrible of all that had gone before, came about as follows. Nebuchadnezzar had carried off to Babylon the Jews who were strong and hostile to him in their warlike disposition, and had set Zedekiah as king in Jerusalem over the feeble remnant of God's people. He hoped to have in the weakened Judea a base against Egypt, with which struggle still occupied him. The Chaldean ruler reckoned that his appointee, the unwarlike Zedekiah, remaining his tributary, would seek support for himself in his mighty power and would keep his submission to him. So it was for some three or four years. But afterwards, having grown strong, or rather, to speak more precisely, having only settled himself upon the royal throne, Zedekiah ceased to be content with his modest position and desired to free himself from the yoke of the king of Babylon. The courtiers about him, seized by a blinding folly, inclined him to this; and especially seductive for him were the counsels of the neighboring petty kings, of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, who likewise bore their dependence upon Chaldea with hatred. These formed a league against Nebuchadnezzar and sent an embassy to Jerusalem with a proposal that Zedekiah join their alliance, so that together they might stand against the dominion of the king of Babylon, cast off his hated yoke, and pay him no tribute.

At this time the Lord gave a command to the prophet Jeremiah: "Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, and send the same to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon through

their messengers; and charge them to say to their masters the word of the Lord" (Jer. 27:2–4).

The holy prophet did so: having placed bonds and a wooden yoke upon his neck, he came into the palace of Zedekiah, when the envoys of the said kings were there, and said:

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Thus shall ye say also to your masters: I have made the earth, the man and the beasts that are upon the face of the earth, by My great power, and have given it to whom it seemed right in My eyes. And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the time of his land comes, and his own. And if any nation or kingdom will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and will not bow its neck under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, that nation I will punish with the sword, with famine and with pestilence, until I consume it by the hand of the king of Babylon. And hearken not ye to your prophets and diviners, your dreamers, and your sorcerers, and your astrologers, who tell you that ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; for they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land, and that I should drive you out and destroy you. Hearken not unto them, but serve the king of Babylon and live; why should this city be laid waste and your lands?" (Jer. 27:5–17).

This was in the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah (Jer. 28:1).

With a yoke upon his neck the prophet of God once entered the Temple of the Lord, and there he met one of the false prophets named Hananiah, who, before the eyes of the priests and of all the people, said:

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon; within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the House of the Lord that were taken to Babylon, and Jehoiachin the king, and all the Jews, I will bring back here."

And Hananiah took the yoke that lay upon the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, and broke it. Jeremiah went out of the Temple, but soon,

having received a revelation from God, he returned to the Temple and said to Hananiah:

"Hear now, Hananiah! The Lord has not sent thee, and thou makest this people trust in a lie. Thou hast broken the wooden yoke; but make in its place a yoke of iron. For an iron yoke will God put upon the necks of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. And thou, because thou hast spoken a lie in the name of God, shalt die in this very year, and be cast off from the face of the earth, because thou hast spoken against the Lord."

And indeed, within a month, death overtook the false prophet.

Informed of this, Zedekiah was thrown into confusion and did not dare at that time to openly revolt from the king of Babylon. Later, however, when the Pharaoh of Egypt, Psammetichus II, son of Necho, came to head the allied Canaanite princelings, having been carried away after his victory over the Ethiopians by a bold plan to extend his dominion also over the regions of the Euphrates, Zedekiah openly joined the allies: he revolted from Nebuchadnezzar and declared himself his opponent, not heeding the exhortations of St. Jeremiah, who had always given him and the whole people counsel useful for the time.

Meanwhile, at this same time, the prophet Jeremiah secretly sent a letter[13] to Babylon to the Jews who had been led there into captivity. In his letter he informed his kinsmen that by the determination of God they would remain there seventy years, and in the name of God he exhorted them "to build themselves houses there and plant vineyards, to arrange marriages for their sons and daughters, so that in captivity the chosen people should not diminish but multiply; and also to care for the good order of the city where they were settled, and to pray to God for it, for in its prosperity they too would fare well, and they would live in peace and quiet." Besides this, in the name of God the holy prophet warned his kinsmen against the false prophets, the would-be patriots, who were among them and promised them a speedy release from captivity, for thus saith the Lord: When seventy years are fulfilled for you in Babylon, then I will visit you and fulfil My good word toward you, to

13. The letter of Jeremiah was delivered there by the royal envoys sent by Zedekiah with gifts for Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 29:3).

bring you back to this place; only I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jer. 29:5).

Jeremiah's letter was read with attention and heard by the Jews taken to Babylon; the would-be lovers of their unhappy fatherland, the lying prophets, also became acquainted with it, but in them it roused wrath and a desire to take revenge upon the prophet. They wrote on their own account to Jerusalem, to the priests there, that they should forbid Jeremiah to prophesy and to write letters. What is more, they demanded that Jeremiah be kept bound under strict supervision in confinement, so that he might not trouble the people either by words or by letters, frightening them with a long captivity. Yet the prophet of God, despite the prohibitions and the fetters laid upon him, did not cease to proclaim the word of the Lord and to say that the Lord would visit with His mercy those carried off into Babylon, while those remaining in Jerusalem He would, on the contrary, destroy with His righteous wrath.

"Behold, I," says the Lord concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, "I will send upon them the sword, the famine and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, which cannot be eaten for their vileness; and I will pursue them and deliver them to be an object of hostility to all the kingdoms of the earth, for a curse and an astonishment, and a hissing and a reproach among all the nations whither I shall drive them, because they have not hearkened to My words" (Jer. 29:1–32).

Near Jerusalem lay the valley of the sons of Hinnom, called Tophet, where high altars had been set up; there the ungodly Jews offered sacrifices to Moloch, slaughtering and burning their sons and daughters. That place was often resounding with the frenzied sounds of trumpets and drums, drowning out the desperate wailing and cries of the children being slain. To rebuke this shameful, inhuman lawlessness of his contemporaries, the prophet Jeremiah, by the command of God, bought from a potter a baked earthen jar and went to the valley of Tophet, taking with him elders from the people and elders of the priests. There he cried out with a loud voice:

– Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! – Thus saith the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring upon this place a calamity of which whoever hears shall have his ears tingle, because My people have forsaken Me and made this place strange, and have burned incense in it to other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers nor their kings knew before. They have filled this place with the blood of the innocent, and built high altars, and burn their sons with fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I commanded them not, nor did it come into My mind. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, saith the Lord, when this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor the Valley of Hinnom, but the Valley of Death and Slaughter; for here a multitude of the Jews shall be slain by the sword of their enemies, and I will give their corpses as food to the birds of heaven and the beasts of the earth. I will make this city Jerusalem desolate, and an object of horror and astonishment to all; everyone who passes by shall be amazed and hiss, seeing all its plagues. And they shall eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters; each shall eat the flesh of his neighbor, in the siege and distress, when their enemies who seek their lives surround and press them” (Jer. 19:3–9).

Having uttered such terrible words in the name of the angered God, the holy Jeremiah dashed to the ground the earthen pitcher that he held in his hands, broke it before the eyes of all, and said:

– Thus saith the Lord of hosts: "So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot be made whole again; and Jerusalem shall be made like Tophet; the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled like the place of Tophet" (Jer. 19:10–13).

Having uttered this dread prophecy, Jeremiah withdrew from Tophet and returned to Jerusalem. And there, standing in the court of the house of the Lord, he addressed the people with these words:

– Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all its towns all the calamity that I have pronounced against it, because they are stiff-necked and do not heed My words” (Jer. 19:14–15).

The prophetic words were exceedingly displeasing to Pashhur the priest, who was also the overseer in the house of the Lord. He struck Jeremiah the prophet and put him in the stocks that were at the upper gate of Benjamin, by the house of the Lord. But on the next day Pashhur released Jeremiah, and Jeremiah said to him: “Not Pashhur (peace be to you) is the name that suits you, but Magor-missabib (terror all around); for thus saith the Lord: ‘Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and you shall see it with your own eyes. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them to Babylon and slay them with the sword. And I will give all the wealth of this city, and all its possessions, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hands of their enemies, who shall plunder them, take them, and carry them to Babylon. And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house shall go into captivity; you shall come to Babylon and die there, and there shall you be buried, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely’” (Jer. 20:1–6).

Soon this prophecy of the holy Jeremiah was fulfilled. In the ninth year of his reign Zedekiah, king of Judah, openly revolted from the king of Babylon and broke his dependence upon him. And on the tenth day of the tenth month Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem (Jer. 52:4) with his numerous army and besieged it on every side; he raised high mounds around its walls, upon which he set siege towers. A dread hour came upon Jerusalem! In the capital of the kingdom of Judah, defended by strong walls and provided in good measure with water and all manner of supplies, yet owing to the extraordinary crowding of people who had taken refuge from the Chaldean invasion (Jer. 35:11), there soon arose great want of the most necessary things: the city lacked bread (Jer. 52:6). In this grievous time the prophet of God, by God's command, came to King Zedekiah and spoke to him and to all the people:

– Thus saith the Lord: "Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it and burn it with fire; and thou, O king, shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken and delivered into his hand, and shalt be carried to Babylon" (Jer. 34:2–3).

Nevertheless, desiring to preserve Jerusalem from final destruction and the kingdom of Judah from ruin, Jeremiah advised Zedekiah to surrender voluntarily to Nebuchadnezzar, trusting in his magnanimity. But the false prophets and the elders among the priests opposed the counsel of God's prophet in every way, and, encouraged by the absurd dreams of self-seeking and ambitious courtiers, they persuaded the king not to heed "the madman Jeremiah," as they called him (Jer. 28).

Meanwhile the foolish infatuation of Zedekiah and his counselors, who would not permit voluntary submission to the king of Babylon, seemed to find some justification, though it lasted but a short time. Pharaoh of Egypt, upon whom the king of Judah, together with the other petty allied kings mentioned before, had placed his hope, gathered his army and marched to the aid of Zedekiah, who was besieged by the Chaldeans. Learning of this, Nebuchadnezzar quickly lifted the siege of Jerusalem and hastened with all his forces against his chief rival (Jer. 37:5). Then in Jerusalem there began an extraordinary rejoicing. When the gates, which had remained closed for almost a whole year, were opened, the people of Jerusalem rushed outside the city to enjoy the feeling of freedom and to see how things stood in the surrounding villages and towns, and what had become of the fields and vineyards. The Jews thought that Nebuchadnezzar had hastily withdrawn the siege from their city, having recognized the weakness of his forces and the impossibility of overcoming the stronghold of their capital. "Behold," boasted the self-deceived champions of their dreams of their fatherland's might, "the king of Babylon could not overcome us and has fled in shame." And they scoffed, reviling Jeremiah's prophecy as unfulfilled. Yet the holy Jeremiah, even at this time, did not hold back, but proclaimed that Jerusalem would be taken by the Chaldeans.

"The Chaldeans," he said, "will come again and make war against this city, and will take it and burn it with fire. Do not deceive yourselves! Even if you were to defeat the entire army of the Chaldeans that fights against you, and only the wounded among them were left, they would rise up, each from his tent, and burn this city with fire" (Jer. 37:7–10).

After the Chaldeans withdrew from Jerusalem, Jeremiah, the prophet of God, together with other Jews who were leaving the besieged city, mounted a donkey and set out for his native town of Anathoth, in the tribe of Benjamin, where he had his property. But scarcely had he reached the gate of Benjamin, when he was stopped by the captain of the guard at that gate, named Irijah, the grandson of the false prophet Hananiah (mentioned before), whose death Jeremiah had foretold. This Irijah, out of hatred for the prophet because of his grandfather, detained him, suspecting him of treason.

– You are going over to the Chaldeans, said Irijah.

To this Jeremiah replied:

– You lie; I am not going to the Chaldeans, but to my own city, where I have my property.

But despite his assurances, the guard seized the servant of God and with rough violence led him to the princes. The princes, rejoicing at the opportunity to carry out their long-held evil design against the innocent man who had been a thorn to them, regarded him as a real spy, subjected him to beatings, and imprisoned him in an underground dungeon in the house of Jonathan the scribe, a cruel and hard-hearted man (Jer. 37:12–16), to whom they also entrusted the supervision of the prisoner. But they did not dare to lay hands on the prophet and put him to death, fearing to incur the displeasure of their king Zedekiah, who from time to time, though timidly (Jer. 37:19), showed attention to the holy Jeremiah. By Zedekiah's order the prophet of God was soon transferred from the underground dungeon to the palace prison, where he was given bread (Jer. 37:21), and from which he could still convey his admonitions to the people.

The joyful rejoicing in Jerusalem, however, did not last long. Nebuchadnezzar, who had kept the Jewish capital under siege for 390 days and had lifted that siege only to repel the Pharaoh of Egypt, who was marching to the aid of Zedekiah, soon put his opponent to flight, returned to Jerusalem, and surrounded it even more tightly than before. The Chaldean campaign against the Egyptians had lasted little more than 100 days; but the final siege of Jerusalem lasted only 40 days (Ezek. 4:5–6).

The holy prophet Jeremiah during all this time did not cease to exhort the Jews to turn to God in repentance, pointing out to them his predictions, which were now clearly being fulfilled, and that the time had already come for the punishment decreed by God for the iniquities of sinners; and he gave the useful counsel not to resist the will of God and to submit to the Chaldeans.

– Thus saith the Lord," said Jeremiah: "He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, famine, and pestilence; but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live; he shall preserve at least his chief treasure—his soul—and live. This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon" (Jer. 38:2–3).

Hearing such admonitions from the prophet, the Jewish princes and fanatical patriots, who had no understanding of true love of country, went to the king with the demand:

– Let this man be put to death, for he weakens the hands of the warriors and the hands of all the people by speaking such words to them; for this man seeks not the welfare of his people, but their ruin and shame.

King Zedekiah, in despair, answered them:

– He is in your hands; do with him as you wish, for the king can do nothing against you (Jer. 38:4–5).

After this, Saint Jeremiah was let down on ropes into a deep pit in the courtyard of the palace prison, a pit full of foul mire. In this pit the man of God suffered innocently, sunk up to his neck in the slime; and he would have died there of dampness and hunger had he not been saved by a God-fearing foreigner. At the royal court there was a eunuch named Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian; hearing that Jeremiah had been put into the pit, he was indignant at such unworthy treatment of the venerable prophet, and he went to the king and said:

– My lord the king! Evil have you done in treating Jeremiah the prophet thus, exposing him to mortal danger.

The king gave orders to Ebed-melech that he should draw Jeremiah up out of the pit. Afterwards Zedekiah summoned Jeremiah to himself and asked him privately whether all that he prophesied was true.

The prophet answered him:

– If I tell you the truth, will you not put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me.

The king swore to Jeremiah that he would not put him to death nor deliver him into the hands of those men who sought to kill him. Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah:

– Thus says the Lord God of Hosts, the God of Israel: if you (of your own accord submit and) go out to the princes of the king of Babylon, then your soul shall live and this city shall not be burned with fire, and you shall live, and your house; but if you do not go out to the commanders of the king of Babylon, then this city shall be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hands.

The king, beguiled by his false friends, did not listen to the prophet and did not follow his good counsel. But, fearing treachery from these same friends, not so much on Jeremiah's account as on his own, he told the man of God that no one must know of their secret conversation, and that if the princes should ask about it, he was to answer: "I laid my petition before the face of the king, that he would not send me back to the house of Jonathan, that I might not die there."

And the prophet remained under guard in the courtyard of the royal guard throughout the whole siege of Jerusalem, until the day when he was taken by the Chaldeans. This came to pass in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah (Jer. 38:1–28).

At last the final hour struck for the city, the glorious bulwark of Israel, Jerusalem: the number of its defenders had diminished to such a degree that they could no longer hold the city walls; there was no bread in the city, and the terror of death by hunger hung over the Judean capital; the Jerusalemites, seized with fear, were losing the last remnants of human feeling: no longer in a figurative sense did they "devour one another," but literally "fed on the flesh of their sons and daughters and of their neighbors." Thus was the prophecy of Jeremiah fulfilled (Jer. 19:9 and elsewhere)!

On the ninth day of the month Tammuz, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah (Jer. 39:2) (in June 589 B.C.), the Chaldeans made a wide breach in the city wall and

broke into Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar himself was not present at this time. He was then at Riblah in Syria. His generals, bursting into the city, pitched their tents in the middle gates, which were between Zion and the lower city (Jer. 39:1–3). The stern warriors, embittered by the length of the siege, scattered through the city and spared no one. The Jews, exhausted by hunger and terror, all who could, took to flight (4 Kgdms. 25:2). King Zedekiah, with the bodyguards surrounding him, succeeded at night in making his way through a secret passage near the royal garden, in the northeastern part of the city, and fled from the capital. He wished to hide in the wilderness of Gilead. But his flight was soon noticed by the Chaldeans, and a pursuit was sent after him and his companions. The fugitives were easily overtaken on the Jericho plain. The soldiers who were with the king either scattered or were slain. Zedekiah was taken captive and led to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, a Syrian city. There were also brought the high priest Seraiah and the temple chief Zephaniah, who had been seized in the city, as well as the eunuch, the chief commander of the army, and seven courtiers who stood before the king's face, and sixty noble representatives of the people. The victor pronounced his sentence upon the vanquished: the sons of Zedekiah and all the Jerusalemites, brought before the terrible eyes of the Eastern lord, were slain before the eyes of the unhappy Judean king; then his own eyes were put out, and afterwards he was sent in bronze fetters to Babylon and there cast into prison, where he died (Jer. 52; cf. Jer. 39:4–7).

A month after the Chaldeans' capture of Jerusalem (Jer. 52:12), there arrived Nebuzaradan, the commander of Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguards. The capital of the kingdom of Judah then presented the dwelling of the dead: all its gates stood empty, the roads to Zion were deserted, the priests groaned, the young men and maidens of Judah were trodden as in a winepress (Lam. 1:1–15). But the city, the royal city of the descendants of David, wondrous and renowned until that time, still remained, still preserved its greatness and beauty. The commanders who had subdued it had no authority to dispose of its fate. The lord of the Chaldeans himself wavered: on the one hand he desired to have in the land of Judea a base for himself against the hostile designs of the

Egyptian king, and Jerusalem with its fortress wall could be useful; but on the other hand he could not fail to suspect danger to himself, since the treacherous and rebellious Jews would always make use of this strong bulwark for their traitorous purposes. The latter consideration prevailed: Nebuchadnezzar sent Nebuzaradan with the commission to destroy Jerusalem down to its foundations. This final, complete destruction of Jerusalem was movingly depicted by Saint Jeremiah, who poured out his great sorrow in the verses of his "Lamentations." The ruin of the holy city deeply shook the hearts of Israel; beginning their sincere lament "by the rivers of Babylon" (Ps. 136), they continue it even to our days, spending the day dedicated to the memory of this event in fasting and without shoes on their feet, without boots or slippers as a sign of mourning.

The commander Nebuzaradan had a special order from his lord Nebuchadnezzar concerning the holy prophet Jeremiah, namely this: to take him and watch over him with particular care, that he should live without oppression, that nothing evil should be done to him, and that he should be allowed to act in all things as he himself wished (Jer. 39:11–12). Nebuchadnezzar knew of Jeremiah, of his predictions and of the counsels which he had given to King Zedekiah; therefore he gave Nebuzaradan this instruction concerning the prophet's fate.

Saint Jeremiah, who during the siege of Jerusalem had been kept in chains under guard in the courtyard of the royal guard, was seized by the Chaldeans as a captive together with the other Jews; but upon Nebuzaradan's arrival in Jerusalem he was immediately presented to this plenipotentiary arbiter of the fate of the city and of the whole Judean kingdom, and he heard from him such a gracious address: "The Lord your God pronounced this calamity upon this place and has done what he said... But now I release you today from the chains which are on your hands: and if it pleases you to go with me to Babylon, go; but if it does not please you to go with me, stay. The whole land is before you; where it pleases you and where it seems good to you to go, there go" (Jer. 40:1–4). Jeremiah expressed the wish to remain in his native land.

Having received his freedom, and seeing the protective favor shown to him by Nebuzaradan, Jeremiah first of all took care of the holy treasure of God, the supreme beauty and glory of all Israel's times, that is, the ark of the covenant, so that it should not be destroyed by foreigners and the glory of God should not be dishonored. The prophet then boldly asked the victor for permission to take the sanctuary of the God of Israel before the temple of the Lord was subjected to plunder and burning. And making use of this permission, he sought out the devout priests and Levites who had survived, took them with him, and, passing fearlessly and unhindered among the Chaldeans, entered the temple built by Solomon. Here the prophet of God kindled from fire the lamp he had prepared, the fire which had miraculously come down from the Lord in the days of Moses and Aaron upon the burnt offering (Lev. 9:24) and had since been kept unquenched upon the altar; and he hid that lamp in a waterless well, having firm faith and prophetically foreseeing that this fire, though it might be temporarily extinguished there (changing miraculously into another element, thick water), would at its appointed time return to its former nature and be kindled again. This was fulfilled after the return of the Israelites from the Babylonian captivity, at the restoration of the temple in the days of Nehemiah, many years after the death of the holy prophet Jeremiah, who had hidden this fire in the well and had leveled the place itself so that it became unnoticed and for a long time remained unknown to anyone (2 Macc. 1:19–32).

After concealing the sacrificial fire, the prophet of God took the ark of the covenant, carried it out of the temple, and kept it in his dwelling until the commotion in the city, caused by the order then given by Nebuzaradan concerning the plunder and burning of Jerusalem, had ended.

When the holy things of the Lord had been carried out of the temple, the Chaldean soldiers, by the command of Nebuzaradan, at once gathered all the temple treasures, of gold, silver and bronze, to carry them off to Babylon, and they subjected the temple itself to complete destruction. At the same time all the royal palaces and the finest houses that adorned the streets of Jerusalem were plundered and burned; the city walls too were dug up and leveled with the ground. A

great multitude of Jews fell then by the sword of the conquerors, and most of all in the valley of Tophet, where formerly the lawless had sacrificed their sons and daughters to Moloch, and to which the Chaldeans now drove them for slaughter. Those who were left alive and still retained their strength were afterward led away into captivity. Only the weak and the destitute of that stiff-necked people were left in Judea, and by the command of Nebuzaradan the vineyards and fields were given to them to cultivate for their sustenance (Jer. 39:10; 4 Kgdms. 25:12).

Leaving the plundered and ravaged Jerusalem, Nebuzaradan set over the devastated land of Judea as governor Gedaliah, the son of that Ahikam who once rescued Jeremiah from the hands of his murderers, and who chose for his dwelling no longer Jerusalem but Mizpah[14], near Jerusalem. There also the Prophet Jeremiah settled, to live, by the command of Nebuzaradan, under the protection and patronage of the governor (Jer. 40:5).

Taking advantage of the freedom and the peace that had come to his country, St. Jeremiah, together with the reverent priests and Levites, took the holy things of the house of God that he had kept in his possession and carried them to a mountain in the land of Moab, beyond the river Jordan, near Jericho, from which the Prophet Moses once beheld the promised land, and on which he died and was buried in a place unknown to anyone (Deut. 34). On that mountain the Prophet Jeremiah found a cave and carried into it the Ark of the Covenant; the entrance to this cave they blocked with a great stone. And Jeremiah, as it were, sealed this stone, inscribing the Name of God upon it with his finger, and the writing was like writing made with an iron point, for the hard stone under the prophet's writing finger was soft as wax, and afterward it hardened again according to the nature of its substance. And that place became firm, as though cast of iron. After this, St. Jeremiah, addressing the people who accompanied him, said: "The Lord has departed from Zion to heaven! And He will return in power, and the sign of

14. Massipha was situated not far from Jerusalem and in antiquity was a place of prayer; Samuel there offered a burnt offering before the Jews repelled the attacking Philistines (1 Kgdms. 7:1–17).

His coming will be: when all the nations of the earth bow down before the tree" (the Cross, on which the Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, was crucified).

Jeremiah further added that no one could carry that ark out of that place except Moses, the prophet who beheld God, and that the tablets of the covenant that are in the ark no one of the priests would open and read except Aaron, the servant of God; and on the day of the general resurrection it will be brought out from under the stone sealed with the Name of God and set upon Mount Zion, and all the saints will gather to it in expectation of the coming of the Lord, who will deliver them from the terrible enemy, the antichrist, who seeks their death. When St. Jeremiah was saying this to the priests and Levites, suddenly a cloud covered that sealed cave, and no one could read the Name of God inscribed on the stone by Jeremiah's finger; even the place itself became unrecognizable, so that no one could point it out. Some of those present there wished to mark this place and the way to it, but they could not do so in any way. The prophet, however, in spiritual illumination, said to them: "This place will be known to no one until the Lord gathers the assemblies of the people, and then, in His mercy, He will show this place. Then the glory of God will be made manifest openly upon it, and a cloud will overshadow it as it did in the time of Moses (Lev. 9:23–24) and of Solomon" (3 Kgdms. 8:10–11).

Thus that cave remains unknown, and that place will be unknown until the end of the world; but the glory of God mysteriously illumines the Ark of the Covenant with a bright, flaming cloud, as it covered it in the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon, for its illumination cannot cease!

After seventy years, upon the return from the Babylonian captivity, the Jews built a new temple in Jerusalem, but in it there was no longer the glory of the ancient temple of the holy things of the Lord; a new ark of gold was made then, according to the pattern of Moses, and everything that was inside it and surrounded it was arranged, also according to the former pattern, but in it there was no longer miraculous power, and the glory of God did not illumine it. Only the heavenly fire from the former temple remained in the new temple, hidden, as was

said above, in the well by the prophet Jeremiah and afterward found by the priests.

After the concealing of the Ark of the Lord, St. Jeremiah returned to Mizpah, the new capital of the Judean land, to Gedaliah, the new ruler of the ravaged fatherland, and began to live among the remaining compatriots, bewailing the unhappy homeland with inconsolable weeping. Around Gedaliah the Jews who had scattered to the surrounding countries at the invasion of the Chaldeans began to gather. Gedaliah, who enjoyed the favor of the sovereign, encouraged them, promising them his intercession before the Chaldeans and a peaceful life. The Lord Himself, having punished the impious, in the very first year after the invasion of the Babylonians consoled the grieving remnant of the sons of Israel: that year they gathered much produce of every kind from the land and wine (Jer. 40:9–12). Yet the contagion of rebellious passions and of unrestrained willfulness, not restrained by the moral law, had so deeply penetrated the hearts of the Jewish people that its power and influence showed themselves even in those hard times. A certain Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, a relative of King Zedekiah, who had been led away to Babylon, and Johanan and Jonathan, the sons of Kareah, and other commanders of the Jews, who had fled from the Chaldeans to the Moabites and Ammonites and Edomites, returned and settled with their companions in the vicinity of the ruined Jerusalem; they also entered into relations with Gedaliah, coming to him at Mizpah as though to express their submission to him. The trusting Gedaliah, suspecting no evil designs in them, received them cordially and with honor, even arranging feasts for them. Johanan, son of Kareah, among other things warned Gedaliah that Ishmael, in agreement with the Ammonites, intended to kill him, and secretly offered him his base services:

"Let me," he said, "go and kill Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, and no one will know. Why allow him to kill you, and the Jews who have gathered to you to be scattered, and the remnant of Judah to perish?"

"Do not do this," said Gedaliah to him, "you are speaking falsely about Ishmael."

Meanwhile, soon indeed Ishmael, coming to Gedaliah with ten of his companions, in the late evening during a feast struck Gedaliah with the

sword, and all the Jews who were with him, and the Chaldean men of war who were present there. Having so successfully accomplished his base bloody deed, Ishmael with his flock of predatory conspirators plundered Mizpah, took captive the daughters of the governor of the region and the people who had begun to grow accustomed to a peaceful life there, and led them into the land of the Ammonites. This bold crime of the brigand, who seemed to act for the good of the fatherland, roused general hatred against him. Johanan, son of Kareah, and the other leaders of the military detachments soon united and resolved to punish the villain; gathering their companies, they pursued Ishmael and overtook him at Gibeon. The Jews whom Ishmael had captured, and even his own companions, as soon as they saw Johanan, rejoiced and passed over to his side. Ishmael, with only eight of his close companions, fled to the Ammonites.

But Johanan and his companions were also far from a true understanding of the interests of their unfortunate fatherland, of which the Prophet Jeremiah always insistently spoke. After the victory over Ishmael, which came easily, the Jews, halting in the village of Chimham near Bethlehem, under the leadership of Johanan held a council, at which, from fear of revenge for the treacherous murder of Gedaliah, the appointee of the Babylonian king, they resolved to flee into Egypt. And they had already begun to prepare to go with the whole people into Egypt, out of which their fathers had once been brought by the mighty hand of the Almighty God and His high arm!... But before carrying out such a decision, they wished to hear the opinion about it of the holy Prophet Jeremiah. And all the military commanders, Johanan, son of Kareah, and Jezaniah, son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from small to great, came up and said to the Prophet Jeremiah:

"Let our petition fall before your face; pray for us to the Lord your God" ("your," they say, not "our," which deserves special attention) "for all this remnant, for of many we are left few, as your eyes see us, that the Lord your God may show us the way in which we should walk, and what we should do."

The prophet answered them:

"I hear, and I will pray to the Lord your God according to your words, and whatever the Lord says I will declare to you; I will hide from you not a word."

At this they declared to Jeremiah:

"May the Lord be between us a faithful and true witness that we will certainly do all that the Lord your God sends you to tell us: whether it be good or evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the Lord our God."

The prophet fulfilled his promise, and after ten days declared to Johanan and the military commanders who were with him and to all the people:

"Thus says the Lord God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your supplication before Him: If you remain in this land, then I will build you up and not destroy you; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I regret the calamity that I have brought upon you. Do not fear the king of Babylon, whom you fear; do not fear him, says the Lord, for I am with you to save you and to deliver you from his hand. And I will show you mercy, and he, the king of Babylon, will not punish you, but will permit you to remain in your own land. But if you say, 'We will not remain in this land,' and do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, saying, 'No, we will go to the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, hear no trumpet blast, and suffer no hunger; and there we shall dwell,' then hear now the word of the Lord, you remnant of Judah. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: If you resolutely set your faces to go to Egypt, and go to dwell there, then the sword that you fear shall overtake you there, in the land of Egypt, and the famine that you dread shall always follow after you; there in Egypt you shall die. And all who set their faces to go to Egypt and dwell there shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; not one of them shall remain or escape the calamity that I will bring upon them. For thus says the Lord God of Israel: As My wrath and fury were poured out upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so shall My fury be poured out upon you when you enter Egypt; and you shall be an execration, an astonishment, a reproach, and a taunt, and you shall see this place no more. The Lord has spoken

to you, remnant of Judah: Do not go to Egypt. Know with certainty that I have warned you this day! Do not sin against yourselves: you sent me to the Lord your God, saying that you would do everything He should tell you; and now I have declared to you the will of God. Know, therefore, that you shall die in the place where you wish to go and dwell in comfort and peace, by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence" (Jer. 42:2–22).

This prophetic speech had no due effect upon hearts steeped in the poison of unbridled self-will. Azariah, son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan, son of Kareah, and other insolent men said to Jeremiah: "You speak falsely; the Lord did not send you to say to us, 'Do not go to Egypt.' Rather, Baruch, son of Neriah, is inciting you against us, to deliver us into the hands of the Chaldeans, so that they may either kill us or take us captive to Babylon" (Jer. 43:1–3).

Thus the self-willed people would not heed the word of the Lord, that they might remain and dwell in the land of Judah. Johanan and his men, and all the remnant of Judah, gathered their families and possessions and went to Egypt, forcibly taking with them the Prophet Jeremiah and his faithful scribe, Baruch.

When they came to the land of Egypt, they settled in the city of Tahpanhes, where the Prophet Moses had once performed miraculous signs before Pharaoh. There, among his countrymen who had voluntarily settled there, Jeremiah lived for four years, enjoying great respect from the Egyptians for his righteous life and for the benefits he bestowed upon them, smiting asps and crocodiles by his prayers. There he also died and was buried.

The end of the holy Prophet was martyrdom.

In Tahpanhes the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah:

"Take large stones in your hands and hide them in the clay at the entrance to Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, before the eyes of the Jews, and say to them: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send for Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, My servant, and set his throne upon these stones which I have hidden; and he shall spread his splendid tent over them. He shall come and smite the land of Egypt: whoever is appointed to death shall be given over to death, who-

ever to captivity shall go into captivity, and whoever to the sword shall go to the sword (Jer. 43:8–11). And only a small number of Jews who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah; and the Jews who remain, who came to the land of Egypt to dwell here, shall know whose word shall come to pass, Mine or theirs. And this shall be a sign to you, says the Lord, that I will visit you in this place, so that you may know that My words concerning you shall surely come to pass, for your destruction. Behold, I will give Pharaoh, king of Egypt, into the hands of his enemies, as I gave Zedekiah, king of Judah" (Jer. 44:28–30).

The Jews' anger at such words of Jeremiah reached its utmost bounds, and at last they stoned the Prophet of God, who had fearlessly spoken the truth to them! In the year of the holy Prophet's death, the king of Babylon came to Egypt, smote the Egyptian army, and slew Pharaoh Hophra; at the same time, the children of Israel who had settled there were also destroyed.

Many years later, the relics of the holy Prophet Jeremiah were translated by Alexander, king of Macedonia,[15] to the city of Alexandria, which he had built, and placed in a spot called the Tetrapylon, held in great veneration by the Alexandrians. Queen Helena adorned with a building the place in Jerusalem where Jeremiah had been cast into a muddy pit.

The holy Jeremiah also prophesied concerning the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, being in himself a mystical prefiguration of Him, "a gentle lamb led to the slaughter" (Jer. 2:19; cf. Is. 53:7). According to the account recorded by St. Epiphanius, the Prophet Jeremiah foretold the fall and destruction of all the idols of Egypt when a Virgin—Mother with an Infant, born in a cave and laid in a manger—should come to Egypt. This prophecy is said to have given rise to the custom among the Egyptians of depicting a virgin resting upon a couch, with an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes lying beside her in a manger, and of offering worship to such an image. It is further related that when King Ptolemy asked the Egyptian priests why such an image was venerated,

15. Alexander the Macedonian reigned from 336 to 323 B.C. He became famous as a remarkable conqueror. Alexander the Macedonian was in Jerusalem in 332 B.C.

they replied that it was a mystery foretold by the holy Prophet to their forefathers of old, and that they awaited the fulfillment of this mystery.

Many years passed after the death of the holy Prophet Jeremiah: the Jews taken captive by the Chaldeans returned to their native land; a new temple of the Lord was built in Jerusalem, and in Judah the order of Church and civic life was restored as far as possible. But at that time the Jews no longer enjoyed political freedom, and were subject now to the Syrians, now to the Egyptians, now to the Macedonians; they suffered hardships both from the Canaanite tribes and from internal disturbances and strife.

It once happened that when the treacherous Syrian commander Nicanor, who had done much evil to the Jewish people, sought with arrogant pride, at all costs, to destroy the ardent champion of religious freedom and formidable defender of the holy ancestral faith, Judas Maccabeus, Judas armed his companions not so much with stout shields and spears as with his good words and reminders of the wonders of help from the Almighty that had occurred in former times; he also told them of a vision he had seen, and by this account gladdened and inspired them all (2 Macc. 15:1–11).

His vision was this: he saw Onias, the former high priest, an honorable and good man who from childhood had zealously embraced all that pertained to virtue; he saw him, venerable in appearance, stretching out his hands and praying for the whole Jewish people. Then another man appeared, adorned with gray hair and glory, surrounded by wondrous and extraordinary majesty. And Onias said:

"This is the lover of his brethren, who prays much for the people and for the holy city: Jeremiah, the Prophet of God."

Then Jeremiah stretched out his hand and gave Judas a golden sword, and as he handed it to him, said:

"Take this holy sword; it is a gift from God, with which you shall strike down your enemies" (2 Macc. 15:12–16).

And Judas Maccabeus' companions, comforted and encouraged by his words, boldly rushed into battle and defeated the enemy. This account by Judas of his vision clearly attests that the saints of God, after their death, pray to God for us and come to our aid, as the holy Jeremi-

ah helped Judas Maccabeus overcome his adversaries. May his holy prayers also help us to overcome our visible and invisible enemies, by the grace and love for mankind of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Having purified thy radiant heart by the Spirit, O great Prophet and Martyr, glorious Jeremiah, thou didst receive from on high the gift of prophecy, and didst cry aloud throughout the lands: "This is our God, and none other shall be compared unto Him, who, having become incarnate, appeared upon earth."

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Paphnutius of Borovsk[16]

Житие преподобного отца нашего Пафнутия Боровского

Venerable Paphnutius was the grandson of a Tatar baskak. When, for the sins of the Russian people, the Tatar Tsar Batu[17] came to our land with his numerous army, by God's permission, and laid it waste with sword and fire, took its cities captive, destroyed the churches of God and their holy things, and cut down Russian princes and rulers like trees or ears of grain, he set Tatar rulers over it, who were called baskaks.[18]

Such a baskak was the grandfather of Venerable Pafnutius. During one uprising of the Russians against the Tatars, the grandfather of Pafnutius was compelled to be baptized and was named Martin. To this new follower of Christ, who was distinguished by piety, a son was

16. Information about the Venerable Paphnutius is contained: 1) in the excellent note of his disciple Innocent about the last days of the Venerable, composed in 1477 or 1478, that is, very soon after the Saint's death; 2) in the ancient life of the Venerable Paphnutius, written by another disciple, the full brother of the Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk, Vassian Sanin, between 1500 and 1515, during Vassian's time as archimandrite of the Simonov monastery near Moscow (from 1502 to 1506) or as Archbishop of Rostov (from 1506 to 1515); 3) in the reminiscences of Dositheus Toporkov, nephew of the Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk, a monk of his monastery; 4) in the spiritual testament of the Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk and some other charters; and finally, 5) in the chronicles.

17. The invasion of Russia by the Tatar khan Batu took place in 1237–1238 and 1240.

born, John, who, upon reaching maturity, married the maiden Photinia. John and Photinia lived in their hereditary village of Kudinovo, about four versts from Borovsk[19]. From this pious and charitable couple was born, about the year 1395, Venerable Pafnutius, named Parthenius in holy baptism. As he developed and grew in body, Parthenius was at the same time perfected in soul. Making progress in the study of letters, and especially in the reading of the Divine Books, the youth was also instructed in good morals: meekness, guilelessness, chastity. Gladly imitating virtuous people, he hastened to avoid the company of frivolous men.

When Parthenius had reached the age of twenty, he left his father's house, the sweet love of his parents, his kinsfolk and friends; he renounced all worldly things and entered the Monastery of the High Protection near the city of Borovsk[20]. From Marcellus, the abbot of this monastery, Parthenius received the tonsure with the name Pafnutius, and was placed under the guidance of the aged hieromonk Nicetas, a former disciple of St. Sergius[21]. For seven years Venerable Pafnutius was in obedience to this pious elder, and from him learned the monastic virtues. He won the general love and respect of the brethren. When

18. In Russian translation this word means "oppressor." The direct duties of the baskaks were the enumeration of the people and the collection of tributes. In reality, these Tatar officials, standing above the Russian princes and commanders, were the complete masters of Russia. Sent out with the army and a multitude of various lesser Tatar officials, they also administered the internal affairs of conquered Russia: they watched the conduct of the princes, looking into their mutual relations, judging their disputes, and observing chiefly their relations to the Tatar khan. They appeared in Russia soon after the capture of Kiev in 1240.

19. Borovsk is at present the district town of Kaluga Province. A chapel now recalls the site of the village of Kudinovo.

20. The Vysokiy-Pokrovskiy Monastery stood on the River Protva, one verst from Borovsk. It was founded in 1410. In 1618 the monastery was attached to the Pafnutiev Monastery of Borovsk, and in 1764 it was abolished. It received the name "Vysokiy" ("High") from the place it occupied, the locality commanding the whole surrounding district. Today, on the site of this monastery, there is the suburban settlement of Vysotskaya.

21. The Venerable Nikita was hegumen of the Vysotskiy Monastery of Serpukhov, succeeding the Venerable Athanasius the Younger, from 1395. After nineteen years of governing the monastery, having grown old and suffering from an illness of the eyes, the Venerable Nikita lived in retirement for seven years in the Vysokiy Monastery of Borovsk. Leaving that monastery (about 1421), the Venerable Nikita went north and founded the Monastery of the Epiphany in Kostroma (about 1426), which exists to this day (since 1864 as a women's monastery). Here the ascetic died and was buried.

Abbot Marcellus died, Venerable Pafnutius was elected superior of the High monastery, after long and urgent entreaties of the brethren and of the Prince of Borovsk, Simeon Vladimirovich. He received ordination at the hands of the All-Russian Metropolitan, St. Photius[22].

The new abbot joined to the labors of a monk the cares of a good and skillful shepherd of the rational sheep of Christ and their watchful guardian. In his life he showed himself as an example to his flock. He unceasingly labored for the Lord, both by day and by night. He spent the day in performing the monastery's labors; the night he passed in prayer.

The Lord adorned His faithful servant with discernment, foresight, wondrous revelations and other gifts of the Holy Spirit. The all-knowing God gave Venerable Pafnutius the ability to recognize from a human face and gaze the hidden passions and infirmities of the soul, and some things He revealed to the saint in dreams.

Here is an account clearly confirming both. One brother, sent to a village on monastery business, fell there into the sin of the flesh. On the night of his fall the saint, having performed the customary rule, lay down to sleep a little, and saw the following dream. The venerable one dreamed of a wondrous garden with beautiful fruit trees. With a joyful and astonished gaze he looked at them, and was especially delighted by one tree, which was distinguished by striking beauty. Suddenly, before his eyes, this tree was uprooted and fell to the ground. The venerable one, forgetting the beauty of the other trees, was greatly saddened by the sudden fall of the lovely tree. He went up to it, lifted it, and planted it again in its former place. So that the tree would not wither, he banked it with manure and trampled the earth around it. It cost the saint long labor to make the uprooted tree firm.

Waking, he understood the meaning of the vision and was deeply grieved. The beautiful garden signified his monastery; the lovely fruit trees, his brethren. The tree that had been uprooted and fallen signified

22. Prince Simeon of Borovsk was the son of Vladimir Andreyevich of Serpukhov. He died of plague in 1426, as a monk with the name Sabbas, and was laid to rest in the Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery. – St. Metropolitan Photius (whose memory is celebrated on 2 July) governed the Russian Church from 1408 to 1431. It follows that the Venerable Pafnutius became hegumen not later than 1426.

the fallen brother, who required of the father-abbot particular labor to set him up and establish him in his place. When the sinner, having finished the work of his obedience, returned to the monastery and stood before his abbot, he, repenting of his sin, was confused, and his face was covered with a deep flush of shame. The venerable one asked the brother whether anything grievous had befallen him on the road. The fallen one was ashamed still more and did not dare to confess his sin to the abbot; he could not even look him in the eyes. Seeing such confusion in his disciple, the saint related to him his dream, and, as a good spiritual physician, urged him to reveal the inner wound of his soul. After long persuasion by the abbot, the sinning monk repented. The venerable one for a long time gave him the spiritual remedy suited to his soul's wound, comforted him, inclined to despair, with the hope of God's mercy, and at last brought the sinner to complete correction. Thus the venerable one cared for his brethren: as a skillful physician he healed their infirmities of soul; as a good shepherd he snatched the sheep from the wolf's jaws and took it upon his shoulders; and as a strong man he bore the infirmities of the weak.

For thirteen years Venerable Pafnutius governed the High monastery as abbot. Then he fell seriously and long ill, and during his sickness he received the schema.

After his recovery he gave up the abbacy and withdrew with one brother to a high, very beautiful place, overgrown with thick forest on the banks of two rivers, three versts from Borovsk[23]. This place belonged not to the Borovsk but to the Sukhodol region. Venerable Pafnutius's settlement in the new place took place about the year 1440. Brethren began to come to him, to set up cells with his blessing and to live under his saving guidance. The monastery grew, and the brethren multiplied. The monks petitioned their teacher for permission to build a church. And since the venerable one did not forbid it, they erected a wooden church in honor of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos. The church was consecrated by order of the Moscow Metropolitan, St. Jonah.

23. The Pafnutiev-Nativity-of-the-Theotokos Monastery stands at the confluence of the River Istrema with the River Protva.

It must be said that the saint, as a humble schemamonk, did not serve the Liturgy in his new monastery. Only once, before his death, on the day of the Bright Resurrection of Christ, when a priest could not be found even for a large sum of money, he celebrated the Liturgy with great attention and tenderness. "Now my soul has scarcely remained within me," he said to his disciples after he had finished it.

The devil, who hates good, incited certain people to cause annoyance to the venerable one and to harm his newly founded monastery. But the venerable one overcame evil with good and prevailed over everything by his patience.

The offender of Venerable Pafnutius turned out to be the then Prince of Borovsk, Basil Yaroslavich[24]. Seeing the decline and impoverishment of the High Borovsk monastery, abandoned by the saint, and the flourishing and multiplication of the new one, which lay outside his principality, Prince Basil was greatly angered at the saint and devised means to drive the venerable one out of there. But since he could not do this openly in another's principality, he began to persecute the ascetic in secret. Many times he sent his violent servants to set fire to the monastery he hated on all sides. And each time, seeing Venerable Pafnutius and his disciples at work, the servants returned to their prince empty-handed. Among the servants of the Prince of Borovsk was a newly baptized Tatar named Ermolai. When Prince Basil gave him the order to set fire to the venerable one's monastery, this barbarian hastened with joy. The venerable one, meeting the Tatar, called him kindly by name and asked why he had come. Such courtesy from the saint at once transformed Ermolai's beast-like nature. He repented of his evil intent and openly told why he had been sent. Then, having asked forgiveness and blessing, he went away, having done nothing harmful to the venerable one's monastery.

At this time, by God's permission, the impious tsar Mamotyak[25] unexpectedly invaded Russia with a multitude of Tatars. Grand Prince

24. Basil Yaroslavich, Prince of Borovsk, son of Prince Yaroslav (Athanasius) Vladimirovich, died in 1483.

Basil Vasilyevich[26] and the other Russian princes, having failed to gather a sufficient army, met the godless Tatars at Suzdal[27]. A battle took place in which the Tatars defeated the Russians and took many captive, among them the Grand Prince himself. Among the captives was also the Prince of Borovsk, Basil Yaroslavich, who had been at enmity with the venerable one. Being in captivity, the prince repented of his sinful malice against Venerable Pafnutius and prayed to God for his deliverance from captivity through the prayers of the venerable one. Meanwhile the unresentful ascetic also prayed zealously for the prince's deliverance. The prayer of the servant of God was heard: Prince Basil escaped from captivity unharmed. On returning to his homeland he at once went to the monastery of his intercessor and received from him forgiveness and blessing. From that time the prince had great faith in Venerable Pafnutius.

The venerable one was not only meek under insults, but also wondrously patient in needs, always steadfastly believing in God's help. Once the feast of Pascha was approaching, and there was no fish at all in the monastery. The brethren and the monastery servants were greatly grieved by this and even murmured against the saint.

"Do not grieve over this, brethren, and do not anger God," the venerable one said to them, "the all-merciful Lord, who created us and enlightened the whole world by His Resurrection (from the dead), will comfort us, His servants, in our sorrow, and will abundantly grant good things to those who fear Him."

Such hope in the All-good and All-wise Providence did not fail to bring forth its fair fruit. On the evening of Holy Saturday, shortly before the Bright Night, the sexton went to the small spring to draw water for the Liturgy, and saw an innumerable multitude of fish, called in the local speech "sizhki," somewhat larger in size than herrings. At that time the water had risen in flood, and they had gathered in such num-

25. Mamotyak was the son of Mahomet, Tsar of the Horde, and Tsar of Kazan. The invasion of which there is question here took place in 1445. The events are recounted in this order in the ancient Life of the Venerable Pafnutius. But this occurrence was earlier than the consecration of the church (about 1448) and the official opening of the monastery.

26. The Grand Prince Vasily II Vasilievich the Dark reigned from 1425 to 1462.

27. Suzdal is at present the district town of Vladimir Province.

bers as never before. The sexton hastened to tell the saint. The venerable one glorified God and ordered the fishermen to cast their nets. And they caught such a multitude of these fish that there was enough for the whole monastery for all of Bright Week, both for dinners and for suppers.

The fame of the great ascetic labors of Venerable Paphnutius spread far and wide, and more and more lovers of the monastic piety were drawn to his holy monastery. Among them were not a few persons of high virtue. Such were, for example, Venerable Joseph, who was tonsured to the monastic life by the hands of the Saint and who afterwards became the founder of the Volokolamsk Monastery; Elder Innocent; Isaiah, called the Black, a kinsman of the Venerable; Vassian, the writer of his Life, who afterwards became Archbishop of Rostov; and others.

The Venerable was a living model of an ascetic in spiritual struggle. He was a strict faster: on Mondays and Fridays he ate nothing; on Wednesdays he allowed himself only dry food, and in the remaining days he partook very moderately at the common table. "His food," says a disciple of the Venerable, "was to please the brethren."

For himself he chose the worst of everything, both in food and in all that pertained to comfort. His garments—a mantle, a cassock sewn of sheepskin—and his footwear were not fit for even a beggar. The whole life of Venerable Paphnutius was unceasing labor in the sweat of his brow, ascetic struggle, suffering, and prayer. No one before him appeared either at the common prayer rule or at the works. He performed the heaviest obediences with zeal: he chopped and carried firewood, dug the earth, and watered the plants in the garden. In winter he occupied himself with reading and with weaving fishing nets. A constant enemy of idleness, the ascetic was from his mother's womb a faithful and blameless friend of virginity. For the sake of chastity he would not allow anyone to touch his body; and women he not only did not admit into the monastery, but did not wish to see them even from afar; he did not permit women, even those of rank, to approach the gates of his monastery, and he strictly forbade the brethren any talk of them.

The Venerable was distinguished by his gift of teaching. He willingly conversed both with monks and with laymen. His speech was always simple and pleasant. The ascetic was free of men-pleasing: he never flattered his interlocutor; he did not shrink from the face of a prince or a boyar, he was not softened by the gifts of the rich, but always spoke the truth, according to the law of God, according to His holy commandments. He also spoke with simple folk, calling them brethren, and no one ever left him after a conversation in sorrow. To many, hidden matters of the heart were here revealed which had previously been inaccessible.

Some of the conversations of Venerable Paphnutius were recorded by Elder Dositheus Toporkov, nephew of Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk. Let us set forth their content.

The ascetic told the brethren of the great calamity of the year 1327. The wrath of the Lord then turned upon the Russian land for the sins of men, and great sorrow came upon the towns and villages. A sore would appear upon a person, and three days later death would follow. Many people died without help: there was no one left to aid the sick, for each had his own dead to bury and mourn. Fear and trembling fell upon the people. The pious, who feared God, turned to repentance, received the tonsure, and departed in peace to the Lord. But others, insensible, not fearing the wrath of God, or wishing to forget themselves in despair, gave themselves over to terrible drunkenness and drank even when they had already fallen ill; some died thus in the midst of carousing friends, and those would shove the dead man, thinking he had drunk himself senseless. Many died during this pestilence; the property of the dead lay about, and no one wished to take it: those who remained alive took only gold and silver.

The Venerable zealously instructed his hearers to practice almsgiving, that queen of the virtues. He pointed to examples of persons who loved the poor and who were rewarded beyond the grave: to the Moscow Grand Prince John Danilovich Kalita[28], who gave alms to the beggars without refusal to all; to a certain Mohammedan whom the Lord, for much almsgiving, delivered from the torments of hell. "A

single almsgiving can save a man, if he lives lawfully," said the Venerable.

A certain merciful man died, and another man had a revelation concerning his fate beyond the grave. The deceased was brought to a fiery river, and on the other side of the river was Paradise—a wondrous place, bright and fertile, a beautiful garden. But the soul of the man could in no way cross the terrible river. And behold, a multitude of beggars who had received his alms came and lay down as a bridge across the river, and the merciful man crossed by the bridge into Paradise. To this account the Venerable adds that the souls of the righteous are carried into Paradise by Angels, but that the Lord revealed the fate of the righteous soul in this form for our instruction.

When the brethren of the monastery had increased, the Saint, with their assistance, built a stone church. During the whole time of its construction he himself labored as a simple workman, carrying on his shoulders stone, water, and everything necessary for the building. Having erected the church, the Venerable adorned it with icon painting, and for this he invited the best painters, who painted it "wondrously well." The Venerable adorned the church with icons, books, and all manner of church furnishings, so that even princes, accustomed to church splendor, marveled.

Himself forming a living church, Venerable Paphnutius was adorned by God with wondrous grace, which was manifested in healings, clairvoyance, revelations, and other gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Here are some of the wonders of the ascetic.

A skilled icon painter, the layman Dionysius, invited by the Venerable to paint the church of the monastery, could not work because of an illness in his legs. The holy elder said to him: "Dionysius! May God bless you; begin the good work; the Lord and the Most Pure Mother of God will grant health to your legs."

The icon painter, firmly believing the words of the Venerable, joyfully set about the work and was healed. This same Dionysius and the

other lay icon painters the holy father commanded not to eat meat in the monastery, but to eat it in the nearby village. For some time they kept this commandment. Then they forgot it and brought to the monastery for their supper a boiled lamb's thigh stuffed with eggs. When Dionysius first tasted it, he found in the stuffing a multitude of worms and was compelled to throw the forbidden food to the dogs. Suddenly he was seized with an itch[29]. In one hour the whole body of Dionysius was as it were one continuous scab, and he could not move. Then the sick man immediately sent to the Venerable, asking him to accept his repentance and grant forgiveness. The Saint, having commanded Dionysius to do nothing forbidden henceforth, led him into the church, whither the whole brotherhood had been gathered. After the common prayer service was performed, the Venerable blessed water and commanded the sick man to wash his whole diseased body with it. As soon as Dionysius had done this, he fell briefly asleep. Then, awakening, he felt himself completely healthy, as if he had never been ill at all. His scabs fell off like scales, and he glorified God.

The monastery of Venerable Paphnutius was surrounded by a dense forest, in which many birds dwelt. In abundance there were black-feathered ravens, which built their nests near the monastery. Looking at them, the Venerable rejoiced and gave a commandment not to catch or destroy them. Meanwhile, once the son of the city voivode was riding past the monastery of St. Paphnutius and, seeing a flock of ravens, drew his bow and killed one of them. The youth rejoiced, but soon he felt that his head, turned to the side, remained immobile in such an unnatural position. Grief and horror replaced merriment and self-satisfaction in his heart. At the same time there arose in the youth's soul a consciousness of the real cause of the calamity that had befallen him, and after this, repentance. Seized by it, the voivode's son quickly went to the Venerable and, falling at his feet, asked forgiveness and his holy

28. The work of Dositheus, written not earlier than 1546, is something in the nature of a Paterikon – a series of short accounts heard from the Venerable Pafnutius, the Venerable Joseph, and other ascetics of the Volokolamsk Monastery. To Dositheus also belongs the funeral oration on the Venerable Joseph. 16 John Kalita, son of St. Prince Daniel Alexandrovich, was Grand Prince from 1328 to 1340.

29. *Sverbezh* – the same as scabies, itching.

prayers before the Lord for his healing. The ascetic ordered the signal board to be struck and went into the church. The monks, surprised by the untimely sound of the board, quickly gathered into the church and asked the Saint the reason for the unusual ringing. The Venerable said with a smile: "God has avenged the blood of the raven."

Then, having performed the prayer service and signed the suffering youth with the holy Cross, the ascetic addressed him with the words: "By the power of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross, turn forward."

And at once his head took its natural position.

Another youth set a hawk upon a raven. But the hawk, having killed the raven, itself fell dead. Thus the hunter lost his amusement.

One night thieves came to the monastery of the Venerable and, seizing three oxen belonging to the monastery that were grazing in the surrounding forest, wished to lead them to their homes. And suddenly they lost their way and wandered like blind men around the monastery. With the coming of morning the thieves wished to flee without the oxen. But the invisible power of God bound them, and they could not depart from the stolen cattle until the monastery workers who were searching for it found them and then led them to the Venerable. He, having given them instruction not to appropriate what belongs to another, commanded that the thieves be fed and released them in peace.

Two monks agreed to leave the monastery secretly and had already gathered their belongings. But God revealed this to the Venerable in a dream. After the morning singing he bowed down to take a little rest, and he saw the following dream. A black Ethiopian took burning embers from the stove of his cell and cast them upon the cells of these disciples. The Saint sternly forbade him to do this, saying that in this way he would set the monastery on fire. But the Ethiopian answered him that it was for this very purpose that he cast the embers. Awakening, the Venerable understood the meaning of the dream and at once sent for these monks. When the ascetic told them the dream he had seen, they, struck with fear and at the same time moved by the account of the Saint, showed him the gathered belongings, confessed their sin, and asked forgiveness.

One murmuring brother, who blasphemed everything that was done in the monastery and the holy man himself, had the following vision in a dream. He seemed to be standing in the midst of the church among those who were singing. Suddenly the holy father came into the church, and, looking at him with anger, said: "This one is a blasphemer; take him out of the church." At once two black Ethiopians seized him, dragged him outside, and beat him severely as they did so. Awakening, the brother felt great fear, and with tears in his eyes hastened to the Venerable Father to beg his forgiveness.

In his monastery there was a pious elder named Constantine. Falling ill, he died. At the moment of his death, which was as yet unknown to anyone, the monk Joseph approached the door of the Venerable Paphnutius's cell, where he was resting after Matins, and wished to say the Jesus Prayer according to the custom of the monastery. Suddenly the Venerable Father opened the little window and, seeing Joseph, said:

"Someone has said the prayer and declared: Elder Constantine has departed to the Lord." "And I, awakening and opening the window, saw no one except you approaching."

Joseph remarked:

"I have only just come from Constantine. He is still alive."

But the saint bade his disciple go to Constantine's cell. Arriving there, Joseph indeed found him reposed.

The Venerable Paphnutius possessed the gift of clairvoyance: he could tell from the face of a monk what passion he was struggling with, and whether or not he had fulfilled the prayer rule prescribed for the day. He even recognized the secret and long-standing sins of people whom he saw for the first time.

A novice monk who lived with the Venerable Father and had not yet overcome his passions went out of the monastery on some errand. On the road he met laymen, among them women. Looking at them, the monk was enticed by the women's lustful glances and dwelt on a sinful thought. Returning to the saint's cell, the sinner found him reading. The Venerable Father looked at his disciple, at once perceived him troubled by impure thoughts, and, turning his face away from him, made it clear that he knew of his transgression. Frightened by such

clairvoyance, the brother told his cell-companion Joseph about it. Joseph told him to confess the sin to the Venerable Father and ask forgiveness. When the monk did this, he received forgiveness and fatherly instruction.

Once, again while the saint was reading Holy Scripture, a man approached his cell, said the prayer, and, looking at the saint through the little window, asked about his disciple Joseph, whose fellow countryman the visitor was. Seeing a man he did not know at all, the holy elder said to Joseph:

"Go out! A man with an evil look has been asking for you." The disciple went out and, seeing his acquaintance, asked him why he had come. He answered:

"I want to become a monk."

Joseph reported his desire to the holy hegumen, but he said:

"Feed him and send this man away, for he is not a good man."

Joseph was astonished at such an answer, yet did not dare to inquire further. Having carried out the Venerable Father's will, he returned to him in his cell. Then the saint himself said to Joseph:

"This man is a murderer. While still a youth, he stabbed a monk in the stomach with a knife and killed him. But that was long ago, and he has forgotten his sin."

Joseph was amazed at these words: he had never heard of this sin of his acquaintance.

A certain monk came to the monastery of the Venerable Father. The ascetic, seeing him, quietly said to his disciples:

"Do you see that even by taking the monastic habit he has not been cleansed of blood?"

The disciples were surprised, but were afraid to ask the Venerable Father what these words meant. Afterwards, however, the elder himself explained them:

"This monk," said the saint, "while still a layman, poisoned a prince in Novgorod whom he served. Tormented by conscience, he took the monastic vows.[30]"

30. Here is meant Prince Demetrius Georgievich Shemyaka, poisoned in 1453 in Great Novgorod. The poison was administered to the prince by his boyar and favorite, John Kotov.

A boyar's wife, the wife of Alexis Gaburin, held the saint in particular reverence and faith, and often sent her children to him with gifts, asking for his prayers and blessing. Through the working of the devil she fell ill, and often saw many demons who terrified her. Then there appeared to her a stooped and small old man with a large gray beard, in poor clothing. The old man authoritatively drove off the demons, and after that she became well. Once, while she was ill, she heard a voice saying to her: "Paphnutius, who is in Borovsk, drives the demons away from you."

This happened to the boyar's wife many times. After some time she recovered completely and desired to see the saint, to learn whether it was truly he who had appeared to her and driven off the demons. The boyar's wife came with her servants to the monastery. But since the monastery was inaccessible to women, she stopped at its gates and sent her servants to the disciples of the blessed one with a request as to how she might see the Venerable Father. The monks, showing the servants the holy elder, told them to point him out to their mistress when he came out with the brotherhood to the refectory, since the time for dinner was approaching. But the boyar's wife, before anyone pointed him out, saw the Venerable Father and at once recognized in him the old man who had appeared to her; with tears she cried out: "Truly this is the one who, by his appearance, drove the demons from me and granted me healing."

Then, giving thanks to God, to His Most Pure Mother, and to the Venerable Paphnutius, she sent alms.

One of the disciples of the Venerable Father had a sore eye. The sick man, suffering greatly, earnestly sought a physician. The saint gave him his prayer rope and ordered him to say the Jesus Prayer a thousand times. But the sick man, driven by severe pain, barely completed half the prescribed number. Having said the prayer five hundred times and noticing the healing of his eye, the monk, rejoicing, hastened to the Venerable Father to tell him of his recovery. But the far-seeing elder again bade his disciple return to his cell to complete the appointed number of prayers.

Pious laymen told the Venerable Father and the brethren sitting in his cell about the resignation of the then archimandrite of the Simonov Monastery near Moscow. At this news a conversation began about who would now become archimandrite of Simonov. One named one person, another someone else. The saint, looking at his very young, newly tonsured disciple named Vassian, the brother of the Venerable Joseph (his future biographer), pointed to him and said with a smile: "This one is the archimandrite of Simonov."

In these words of the saint his foresight of a more distant future was revealed. Many years later Vassian did indeed become archimandrite of the Simonov Monastery.[31]

Once the Venerable Father obtained from a prince permission to fish for three days in one place on the Oka, with the understanding that everything caught would go to the benefit of the monastery. Sending one of the servants on this fishing, the ascetic ordered that he be given five grivnas[32] of money to buy vessels in which to salt the fish caught in the appointed time. The servant did not take so much money, not expecting to fill even one small vessel with fish. The Venerable Father, however, looked at him angrily and ordered him to do what he had been told. Then the one sent went and in three days caught 730 large fish. The prince's fishermen did not catch so much even in the whole summer. Foreseeing the miraculous catch, the saint had ordered so many vessels to be bought.

A young man, having become a monk, was subjected to the temptations of the devil. The ancient enemy of mankind appeared to him in various forms: sometimes in the form of an unknown beast or a black dog, and sometimes, when the monk sat in his cell, he walked around the cell like a bear and struck its walls. The elder ordered the young monk to read the Psalter in his presence. As soon as the youth carried

31. Vassian (Sanin) is mentioned as Archimandrite of Simonov in 1502. In 1506 he was consecrated Bishop of Rostov. – The Simonov Monastery was founded about 1370 by the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh at the commission of the Grand Prince Demetrius Donskoi. From its original site (the settlement of Old Simonovo) the monastery was soon moved to its present place, on the high bank of the River Moscow at the southern edge of the city. The first hegumen of the monastery was the nephew of St. Sergius, Theodore (later Archbishop of Rostov, 1395).

32. By our reckoning this will amount to several dozen rubles.

out the saint's command, the demonic apparitions completely vanished, and he was freed from the terrible spectres.

There were also clairvoyants among the disciples of the Venerable Paphnutius. Such was the tearful monk Euthymius. This ascetic, who shed tears of prayerful compunction not only in his cell but also in church at every service of the rule, received from God the gift of clairvoyance, which once manifested itself in the following way. Two brothers had among themselves a love not according to God but worldly. And since the Venerable Father was greatly displeased with them for this, they contemplated secretly leaving the monastery. Standing during the Divine Liturgy with his usual tearful compunction, Euthymius looked at the holy father and those singing with him, among whom were these two brothers. And then he saw an Ethiopian jump out from behind them, wearing a pointed helmet. In his hands the demon held an iron hook. Catching the hook on the garments of the sinful monks, he dragged them beyond the choir and, drawing them toward himself, sought to seize them with his hands. But as soon as he drew them near, the iron hook sprang back. This meant that when the two sinners inclined toward the thought, sown in them by the enemy, of leaving the monastery and refusing obedience to their father, the enemy easily drew them to himself; but when they resisted this thought, the demonic instrument became powerless and sprang back. Seeing this, the seer discerned with spiritual eyes what was happening in their souls. During the reading of the Gospel and at the Cherubic Hymn the Ethiopian disappeared. When these were over, he appeared again. But when the consecration of the Holy Gifts and the sublime hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos[33] came, the Ethiopian vanished like smoke and did not appear again. The clairvoyant elder stood through the whole Divine Liturgy in trembling and ecstasy, and afterwards told the Venerable Paphnutius about his vision. The Venerable Father summoned the sinners and commanded them to struggle against sinful thoughts and to root them out of their hearts. After the saint's instruction and admonition, both monks amended their ways.

33. That is, “It is truly meet” (“Dostoyno est”).

The holy life of Venerable Paphnutius, his discernment and experience in every matter, both divine and human, brought it about that not only monks but many laymen also chose him as their spiritual father. To him, as to a skilled physician, came the noble and the common folk, rich and poor, virtuous and sinful, and all received useful counsel and fitting penances. In receiving those who came to him the saint showed no partiality. Fearing no powerful man and sparing no proud one, the ascetic was very gentle with the humble.

Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk writes of his teacher, Venerable Paphnutius, that when it was needful he was merciful and indulgent, but at times he was stern and wrathful when this was required. The venerable one's spiritual children honored and feared him. Prince George Vasilievich of Dmitrov related that when he went to confession to the Venerable, his knees gave way beneath him. Yet his spiritual children, having chosen him as their father, did not break off their communion with him even beyond the grave. Once, dozing on the threshold of the church before Matins, the Venerable saw in a dream that the gates of the monastery had opened and a multitude of people entered carrying candles and heading toward the church, and in their midst was Prince George Vasilievich. Coming to the church, the prince bowed to it, and then to his spiritual father. The Venerable asked him:

"Son and prince! Have you already departed this life?"

"Yes, honored father!"

"And how is it with you there now?" asked the Venerable.

"By your holy prayers God has granted me good. Especially because, when I went out against the godless Hagarenes at Aleksin, I confessed all my sins to you.[34]"

At that moment the bells began to ring for Matins, and the Venerable awoke.

The Venerable was very merciful and loving toward the poor. Preaching mercy in word, the ascetic also practiced this virtue in deed. In the land of Borovsk a severe famine occurred, and the Venerable

34. Here is meant the destruction of the town of Alexin (now a district town of Tula Province) by Khan Akhmat in 1472. Prince George and others were unable and did not manage to help the unhappy town.

zealously fed the hungry in his monastery, who came from the surrounding villages. Thus up to a thousand people, and even more, gathered each day, and the merciful ascetic exhausted all the monastery's stores. The following year the Lord sent an increase of the fruits of the earth.

Venerable Paphnutius lived to a great old age, to eighty-three years, of which he spent sixty-three years in monastic labors. Having renounced all the pleasures of earth and living only for God and eternity, the Venerable had only to free himself from all that is temporal and pass to that eternal good which God has prepared for those who love Him, "which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2:9).

The Lord revealed to the holy elder the day of his blessed end a full week in advance, and the ascetic prepared to meet it peacefully and without shame. During all those days his disciple Innocent was with him; Innocent left a description of the last days of his holy teacher.[35]

This took place in the spring of 1477, shortly after the feast of holy Pascha, which that year fell on April 6.

On Thursday of the third week after Pascha (April 24), after Matins, the saint went out with Innocent to the pond which he himself had dug. They noticed that water was seeping through the dam. The Venerable taught Innocent how to block the path of the water; then he returned to the monastery, since the time of the holy Liturgy had come. As the elder left, the disciple asked him to come to the work after the dinner hour. In reply the saint said: "It is impossible for me to come, because I have another, more necessary and urgent matter."

After the Liturgy the holy elder took his meal with the brethren, then sent for Innocent and commanded him to go to the pond. Innocent went to the saint's cell and, seeing his teacher sitting on his bed, reminded him of the work. "I have another need, which you do not know; the bond of being is about to be dissolved," the saint answered.

Innocent was so disturbed by the elder's words that, going out to work with three brethren, he could accomplish nothing.

35. The notes of Innocent are acknowledged as one of the best productions of Old Russian hagiographic literature. In the following account they are given with some abridgements.

Returning to the monastery, the disciple found the ascetic again sitting on his bed. The elder commanded that it be told to Prince Michael Andreevich[36] that he should not come to the monastery, because another matter had arisen. On that day the saint did not go to church either for Vespers or for the after-Vespers prayers, but told Innocent to perform them in his cell. The brethren came to the Venerable's cell to learn why he had not appeared at the services. But the ascetic allowed no one to enter and asked everyone to gather the next morning. Dismissing his disciple, the ascetic said to him: "On such a Thursday I shall be freed from my infirmity."

The whole night the saint spent in prayer.

On Friday morning, April 25, the brethren of the monastery came to the Venerable to take leave and receive his blessing. There were then ninety-five monks in the monastery, and every one of them gathered at the bedside of the sick ascetic, even the infirm and the blind. Having taken leave of the brethren, the Venerable went to the Liturgy, supported by his disciples. When one of them, no longer young, wishing to support the saint, took him by the palm, the Venerable angrily snatched away his hand and commanded that he be held only by his clothing. Such a careful guardian of dispassion was he: even in old age and sickness, even at the approach of death, he did not allow his body to be touched. The elder ate nothing that day; he only asked for *sytya*, that is, water with honey. Prince Michael Andreevich sent his deacon to learn how the Venerable was and why he had not told him to come to him. But the Venerable did not receive the messenger. He also did not accept the letter and money sent to the monastery from the lands of Tver. He was at Vespers that day as well. From weakness the sick man could barely stand, and he stood leaning his hands on his staff, bowing his head upon them. Nonetheless he sang along diligently with the brethren and remained after Vespers for the panikhida, although the

36. Prince Michael Andreyevich of Vereya, grandson of Demetrius Donskoi, was married to the daughter of the Prince of Borovsk, Helen Yaroslavna, and perhaps through her hand obtained the Principality of Borovsk. He died in 1486 and was buried in the monastery of the Venerable Pafnutius.

brethren wished to lead him to his cell. "This panikhida is necessary to me," the Venerable said to them, "I shall not hear it again."

On Saturday, the 26th, the sick elder was also at the holy Liturgy. When it was over, Innocent prepared a little food for him and asked him to take it, pointing to the Saturday and to the fact that he had not eaten since Thursday. But the saint refused the food, saying: "I know this too: according to the divine rules it is fitting on Saturday to take food in dispensation from the fast; yet a sick man should abstain from food for three days before receiving the Divine Mysteries."

Such was the long-standing custom of the holy elder: to fast before partaking of the holy Mysteries and to keep silence for a whole week.

In the evening he made his confession before the hieromonk Isaiah.

The laymen continued to trouble the sick ascetic, who was preparing for death and had directed all his thoughts toward God. Prince Michael again sent to the monastery, this time his spiritual father, the priest John, asking the saint for forgiveness and blessing for himself and for his son John. Innocent conveyed the prince's request. After being silent for a little while, the Venerable said:

"I am surprised at the prince, why he sends saying: 'Bless my son, Prince John.' But is not Prince Basil his son? God knows, he has divided himself against himself; how then can he obtain peace and blessing?[37]"

Then he added:

"He has no business with me at all, even though he is a prince."

These words were conveyed to the prince's confessor, but he still wished to see the elder, and for this purpose went to the church for Vespers. The ascetic too went, but he hastily withdrew into the sanctuary and remained there until the prince's envoy had left the monastery. The Venerable stood through the All-night Vigil as well, though supported by his disciples. Afterward he said to the brethren:

"From now on I shall no longer hear the All-night Vigil."

37. Known children of Prince Michael Andreyevich are: Basil, surnamed Udaloy (1495), John, and a daughter, Anastasia, who was married to Prince Joseph Andreyevich of Dorogobuzh, who in 1485 entered the service of the Grand Prince of Moscow.

The Venerable prepared himself for the reception of the great holy thing by prayer, and as soon as it began to dawn he commanded Venerable Joseph to read the rule for Communion.

Having received the life-giving Mysteries of Christ in the church at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday (April 27), the holy elder was led to his cell. Again the solicitous Innocent prepared a little food for him. The brethren urged him to take nourishment, and so as not to offend them the Venerable ate a little and then gave to the brethren what had been prepared for him.

On that day the Great Prince of Moscow, John Vasilievich,[38] who had somehow learned of the illness of Venerable Paphnutius, sent to him a messenger with a letter. When the disciple handed the ascetic the grand-princely epistle, he said:

"Return the letter to the one who brought it; let him give it back to the one who sent it. I am now bound by nothing to the world: I do not desire honor, and I have no fear of the mighty of this world."

Innocent remarked to his teacher:

"As for yourself, you have spoken the truth; but for God's sake do what is useful for us, do not offend the Grand Prince, do not anger him."

The elder, however, answered:

"I tell you the truth: do not anger the One, and then the wrath of man will not prevail against you at all. But if you anger the One, Christ, no one will be able to help you. A man, even if he is angry, will again be softened."

The disciple did not dare to contradict his teacher any further and returned the grand-princely letter to the messenger.

The mother of the Grand Prince, Maria Yaroslavna, who was a great admirer of the virtuous elder, also sent a messenger, as did the prince's consort, the Greek Sophia Fominichna,[39] who sent the Venerable a letter and gold. The elder took nothing and commanded that everything be returned, and to his disciple he even reproached him for allowing them all to trouble him. Many boyars and common laymen

38. John III Vasilievich was Grand Prince from 1462 to 1505.

sent to the monastery to the sick ascetic, but these things were no longer reported to him.

Seeing the holy elder in great weakness, Innocent said to him:

"Are you very unwell, Father Paphnutius?"

The elder answered:

You see for yourself: I am growing weak, but I do not feel an illness beyond my strength.

The ascetic ate no more food. He would order something to be prepared for himself, but when it was brought, he would praise it and give it all to the brethren, saying:

"Eat, and I am with you."

Night came. The ascetic sat upon his bed and prayed inwardly the Jesus Prayer. Matins were read for him in his cell.

On Monday, the 28th, the ascetic, with the help of the brethren, stood through the Divine Liturgy. After the service he took no food; he only drank a little honey-water. Innocent wondered why the elder gave no instructions about the monastery, and, overcoming his embarrassment, asked the Venerable Father:

"Father Paphnutius! Command, while you are alive, that a testament be written concerning the ordering of the monastery: how the brethren are to live after you, and who is to be hegumen."

After remaining silent for a little while, the elder said with tears:

"Brethren, of yourselves preserve the order of the Church and the arrangement of the monastery. Do not change the times of the Church's prayer. Honor the priests as I have, and do not deprive them of their pay, lest the Divine service be impoverished, for success in everything depends upon it. Do not close your table to the wayfarer; care for almsgiving, and do not send away with nothing the one who asks. Labor in handwork, but keep away from worldly conversations;

39. Maria Yaroslavna, daughter of Prince Yaroslav (Athanasius) Vladimirovich, sister of the above-mentioned Basil Yaroslavich, was married in 1433 to the Grand Prince Basil Vasilievich the Dark, and died in 1484 in the monastic state with the name Martha. – Sophia Fominichna, daughter of Thomas Palaiologos, Despot of the Morea (brother of the last Constantinopolitan emperor, Constantine XI, who fell on the walls of the Greek capital when it was taken by the Turks in 1453). She was the second wife of the Grand Prince John III, was wed to him in 1472, and died in 1503.

carefully guard your heart from evil thoughts. After the evening rule, do not gather for conversation: let each one keep silence in his own cell. Never absent yourselves from the Church's prayer, except through infirmity; fulfill the whole Typikon, the Church's rule, and all the Church's directions meekly, without strife, and in silence. In a word, act as I have acted. If you do not despise my commandment, I believe in the Almighty God and in the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, that the Lord will not deprive this place of all His blessings. But I know," the Venerable Father added prophetically, "that after my departure there will be a rebel in the Monastery of the Most Pure One; he has troubled my soul and will bring rebellion among the brethren. Yet the Most Pure Queen will quell the rebellion and the storm, will give quiet to Her monastery and to the brethren who dwell in it.[40]"

Having said this, the elder fell silent from exhaustion. His night passed in the customary prayers.

On the 29th, Tuesday, the Venerable Father kept silence, for he was preparing to receive the Mysteries of Christ at the feast of the Middle of Pentecost, which that year fell on the 30th of April. The elder sang psalms, moleben, canons and sacred verses. So it continued the whole day. Innocent and the Venerable Father's cell-attendant listened silently to this extraordinary singing, not daring to say anything, for the ascetic had charged them not to distract him in any way. The sick man spent the night without sleep in prayer, almost all the while standing on his feet, sitting down only for short moments.

Only when the day dawned (Wednesday), the Venerable Joseph read for the saint the rule for Communion. He stood through the Liturgy in the church and received the Life-giving Mysteries of Christ. Having received, as is customary, the blessing of the officiating priest, the Venerable Father was led by the brethren to his cell. Standing in the vestibule of his cell, supported on both sides by his disciples, the Venerable Father looked upon the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos,

40. From the ancient Lives of the Venerable Joseph of Volokolamsk (whose memory is celebrated on 9 September in his monastery). According to the prediction of the Venerable Pafnutius, soon after his death, dissensions and contentions arose in the monastery, and the new hegumen—the Venerable Joseph—secretly left the Borovsk monastery in 1477 or 1478.

and, turning his spiritual eye toward all the brethren, said with a sigh and tears:

"Lord Almighty! Who searchest hearts and thoughts, Thou knowest all. If anyone grieves for me, repay him, Lord, a hundredfold in this age, and in the age to come grant him eternal life. But if anyone rejoices at my death, the death of a sinful man, do not, Lord, count this to him as sin."

Those who heard this were struck with awe, and each turned to the judgment of his own conscience. When the elder was brought into his cell, however, he began, with a joyful face, to comfort the brethren, as though he wished them to forget the words just spoken. Recalling the saint's earlier words that his illness was not grave, the brethren thought he was growing better. They urged him to take some food, but the elder would not. He drank a little honey-water, then gave the rest to the brethren, saying:

"Drink this cup, children; drink it as my last blessing, for I shall no longer drink or eat from it."

He spoke to the brethren at length, with still further words of consolation, then lay down upon his bed, on which he reposed a day later. To Innocent, who attended him in his sickness, the Venerable Father bequeathed a vessel of honey; then he sent the brethren to the refectory, for it was the time of dinner. Innocent, who did not leave his sick teacher, quickly returned from the refectory and saw him lying on the bed; then, after being silent a little while, he asked the Venerable Father:

"Father Paphnutius! You are not recovering, because for a whole week you have not taken food at all. Why are you silent, my lord? To whom do you entrust your monastery: to the brethren, or to the Grand Prince? Why do you say nothing?"

The saint answered:

"To the Most Pure One."

Then, after a little silence, he said to him:

"Brother Innocent! Are you speaking the truth?"

Noticing that the elder was embarrassed, Innocent was silent.

"Brother, who commanded me concerning the monastery? The Most Pure Queen Herself was pleased to do so. She loved this place of the glorification of Her Name; She raised up Her temple, gathered the brethren and me, a beggar, and for a long time nourished and sustained me together with the brethren. And now, when I, a mortal man, look toward the grave and cannot help myself, the Queen of Heaven Herself can arrange what is useful for Her monastery, as She began it. You know yourself: this monastery was raised up not by princely power, nor by the wealth of the mighty, nor by gold and silver, but by the will of God and by the will of His Most Pure Mother. In Her I place all my hope: by Her mercy She will cover me in the toll-houses from the violence of dark and wicked spirits, and on the day of the righteous judgment She will deliver me from eternal torment and number me among the elect. If I receive grace, I shall not cease to pray to the Lord for you. Therefore be diligent yourselves: live purely, not only as you lived in my presence, but even better; work out your salvation with fear and trembling, so that through your good deeds I may rest in peace, and that those who come here after me may dwell well. May you find rest at your own death. Let each remain in the station to which he has been called. Do not exalt yourselves beyond measure; this is not profitable for you, but harmful to your soul. Do not hold yourselves above the weak brethren in thought or in deed, but bear with them long, as with your own members. Yes, children, hasten to do good!"

Having said this, the saint fell silent from exhaustion.

Some time later there came to the monastery a messenger from the Moscow Metropolitan Gerontius,[41] and new envoys came from the Grand Prince and the Grand Princesses. They insistently sought a meeting with the Venerable Father and a conversation with him. For a long time Innocent refused and put off speaking to the sick elder about them, but at last he reported the envoys. The elder took offense at his disciple and told him that for all sixty years of his monastic life he had constantly dealt with princes, boyars and other laymen.

"Now I have understood that there is no profit in this, only a trial for the soul. In His mercy, not willing the death of a sinner without re-

pentance, the Lord gave me six days for repentance; but you give me no peace, you bring laymen upon me. Now I may not even leave my cell, lest they trouble me."

Innocent was deeply grieved, both that he had troubled the elder and that he had not obtained permission for the envoys. Going out of the cell, he gave them the Venerable Father's answer and asked them to leave the monastery. But, having left the monastery, the envoys spent the night in a nearby village, so as to see the ascetic in the morning. The following night, the last night of the saint's life, the elder passed without sleep, in unceasing prayer: now singing psalms, now reciting the Jesus Prayer.

Thursday, the 1st of May, the day of the repose of the Venerable Paphnutius, came. The ascetic commanded that the Liturgy be served earlier than usual. He himself intended to go to it, and he made haste, saying to himself: "Behold, the day has come."

The brethren looked at one another in bewilderment, not understanding what the elder was saying. Innocent asked him what day he was speaking of.

"Of the day about which I told you earlier," answered the saint.

The disciple began to name the days: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday?

The Venerable Father said:

"This day is Thursday, of which I spoke to you before as well."

The brethren were in bewilderment. They led the elder toward the church, but they had not yet left the cell when the Venerable Joseph came and announced that the laymen sent by persons of rank were waiting for him, that, besides those who had come the day before, new ones had arrived; all of them had gathered and stood in the ascetic's path to the church. Then the Venerable Father was offended that they had barred his way to the House of God, and he did not go out of the cell. Sending the brethren to the church, he sat in the vestibule and said: "All this is done by Innocent; he arranged it."

Innocent did not dare even to make excuses.

He too went to the church; the elder remained in the cell with one disciple and locked the doors, so that none of the envoys could come to

him. At the end of the Liturgy the laymen understood that the saint could not be seen, and they returned. But when the disciples came to him again and, in silence, surrounded his bed, he spoke as though of someone else:

"The day has come for him, and he will die."

"Of whom are you speaking, Father, that he will die?" asked Innocent.

"Of the one of whom you speak: he is ill; having repented, he wishes to die," he said.

The hour of dinner came, and the brethren went to the refectory. Innocent alone remained with the sick man.

The saint commanded the disciple to move him to the other side of the cell, because it was quieter there; he commanded that no one be admitted.

"I am weary," he said, "and wish to rest until the evening singing; in the evening all the brethren will come to me."

Then the disciple understood that the time of his repose had drawn near.

Innocent asked the saint:

"Father, when you depart, shall I summon the archpriest and other priests from the town for your burial?"

The Saint commanded that no one be summoned, and that they be content with the monastery's priests, so that the people would not gather at the monastery and carry the news of his death throughout the town and villages. The disciple asked:

"Where do you command them to dig your grave?"

He commanded that it be dug on the south side of the church, near the church doors.

"And do not buy me an oaken coffin," said the Saint. "With those six coins, buy rolls and distribute them to the poor."

The disciple fell silent, and the elder prayed for the salvation of his soul, placing his hope in the Most Holy Theotokos. To her he also entrusted his monastery. Innocent woke the Venerable's cell-attendant

41. Metropolitan Gerontius governed the Russian Church from 1473 to 1489.

and made him sit beside the sick elder, while he himself went out to sleep, as he was unwell. No sooner had he begun to doze than he heard the voices of many singers in the Venerable's cell. Astonished by this, Innocent entered the cell and asked the cell-attendant:

"Which of the brethren was here?"

"No one," answered the other. "After you left, he began to sing, 'The assembly of saints found the source of life,' chanting the funeral verses. When he had finished the psalm, he sang the verses that follow:"

"'Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord' (Ps. 118:1), and the rest."

"The elder is passing over to God," said Innocent to the cell-attendant.

The disciples fell at the Saint's feet and kissed them, then fell upon his breast, asking his forgiveness and blessing. But the elder no longer heeded their words, and only prayed to the Lord: "O Heavenly King, Almighty! I pray to Thee, my Master, Jesus Christ, be merciful to my soul, that it may not be held back by the wicked, but that Thine Angels may meet it and lead it through the cunning of the dark toll-houses, guiding it to the light of Thy mercy. I know, O Master, that without Thy intercession no one can escape the snares of the evil spirits."

The rest of the dying man's speech was indistinct, and the disciples could not make it out. Suddenly he began to turn from left to right. Many times the disciples turned him onto his left side, but he again turned to the right, murmuring indistinct words. From this they concluded that the dying ascetic was seeing something extraordinary. The brethren several times approached the Venerable's cell, but the two disciples who were with him said that the elder had fallen asleep. At the time when Vespers was being served in the monastery, the Venerable prepared himself for death: he folded his hands crosswise upon his breast, and with three breaths he gave up his holy soul into the hands of the Lord.

The Venerable Paphnutius died on Thursday, 1 May 1477, an hour before sunset, that is, about 7 o'clock in the evening.[42] The brethren

came out of the church and, learning of the Venerable's death, mourned him bitterly. It was already late to bury the ascetic, and so, to fulfil his command to be buried without laymen, the brethren buried their teacher the next day, on Friday, 2 May, at five in the morning. The grief of the brethren was so great that all wept and shed tears; no one could sing or serve as canonarch. The burial was performed by the Venerable's faithful disciple, Innocent, who from his tears could scarcely pronounce the rite of burial. "And at that time no one of the laity was present, nor touched his bier; no one saw how they laid him in the coffin," so relates Innocent.[43]

As soon as the burial was accomplished, news of the ascetic's death reached Borovsk, and the whole town was stirred. Not only monks and priests, but also the governors of the town and the people went to the Venerable's monastery. And although it was soon learned in the town that the Saint's body was already in the earth, the people continuously came to the monastery throughout the whole day, and with great love all bowed down to the grave of the departed.

The local celebration of the Venerable Paphnutius began in 1531. Metropolitan Daniel of Moscow[44] with a council of bishops blessed the singing of the canon and the reading of the life of the Venerable Paphnutius at the services, that is, established a local celebration in his honour. The council of 1547, however, decreed that the memory of the Venerable Paphnutius be celebrated throughout the whole Church.

The holy relics of the Venerable rest in the principal monastery church, in honour of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, in the side-chapel dedicated to his name.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thou didst illumine thy homeland by the brightness of thy life, and wast filled with the gifts of the Divine Spirit through prayers and

42. So Innocent relates. The chronicle states that the Venerable died at the fifteenth hour of the day (after sunrise). Taking into account that on 1 May the sun rises at Borovsk at approximately 4 o'clock, the ascetic's death would fall, by this reckoning too, at the seventh hour of the evening.
43. Moreover, the chronicle and the Life of the Venerable Pafnutius note that at the burial of the ascetic a secular priest, Nikita, the spiritual father of Prince Andrew Vasilievich, was present.
44. Metropolitan Daniel governed the Russian Church from 1522 to 1539.

fasting; and having ardently struggled in this temporal life, thou didst open the mercy of thy compassion to all who sorrow, and wast a protector of the poor. Wherefore we beseech thee, Father Paphnutius: pray to Christ God that He save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Illumined by the light of God, O Father, having attained the ascetic manner of life, O Venerable, most gracious teacher of monks and excellent adornment of ascetics: wherefore the Lord, seeing thy labours, hath enriched thee with the gift of miracles, for thou pourest forth healings. And we, rejoicing, cry to thee: Rejoice, Father Paphnutius.

On the same day is celebrated the memory of the Hieromartyr Macarius, Metropolitan of Kiev, slain by the Tatars in 1497 in the village of Strigolov, Minsk Province.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Vata

Страдание святого мученика Ваты

The Holy Martyr Vata was from Persia. His ancestors were Christians, and he himself was brought up in the Christian faith. Having reached the age of thirty, he left his father, mother, wife and children, distributed his property to the poor, and, departing from his parental home, took up the monastic life. Zealously struggling in the monastic life, he desired to end his life by a martyr's death. At that time a persecution had been raised against the Christians,[45] and when all the monks of the monastery where the Saint was struggling had fled, he alone remained in it. Soon he was seized and brought before the governor of the city of Nisibis.[46] The latter began to compel him to renounce Christ and to worship the sun and fire,[47] but the Saint did not

45. Here is meant the persecution of Christians raised in Persia by King Shapur II, who reigned from 310 to 381.

46. Nisibis is a very ancient city situated in ancient Mesopotamia, in its northern part, near the borders of Armenia.

47. The Persians worshipped the sun under the image of the supreme deity Mithra, and also paid reverence to fire.

obey him and boldly confessed Christ as the true God. For this his hands were bound so tightly that, through the strain, they were dislocated at the shoulder joints. After this they dragged the Saint along the ground and beat him over his whole body. The holy martyr, after all these tortures, died for the faith in Christ, being beheaded by the sword.[48]

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is celebrated the memory of the Hieromartyr Macarius, Metropolitan of Kiev, slain by the Tatars in 1497 in the village of Strigolov, Minsk Province.

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48. The death of the holy martyr followed about 364.

THE SECOND DAY OF MAY

May 2

2 мая

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

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Esper and Zoe

Страдание святых мучеников Еспера и Зои

The holy martyrs Esper, his wife Zoe, and their two sons, Cyriacus and Theodulus, were strangers on the earth, like Abraham, the father of the chosen, and directed their course toward the heavenly fatherland. They were bought as slaves[1] by Catullus, a noble Roman, and his wife Tertia. This Catullus had moved from Rome to Pamphylia[2], to the city of Attalia[3]; buying slaves for himself, as was the custom among the pagan Romans, he acquired in Phrygia[4] these holy martyrs, who came from a Christian family and were therefore filled with faith and hope in the Lord.

Catullus's pagan household, given over to idolatry, offered sacrifices to idols according to the custom of their faith and called them their gods. The faithful slaves of Christ, seeing the vain impiety of their masters, grieved bitterly over it, and as Christians they could not eat the food their pagan masters provided, fearing defilement, all the more so since idols stood even in their masters' house.

Once, the holy Zoe, having received food from her masters, went up to the gate and said to the doorkeeper:

1. Slavery was very widespread in antiquity among the Romans, as among other peoples contemporary with them. Every Roman of more or less means had slaves. Among very rich Romans their number ran to many dozens and even hundreds.
2. Pamphylia: a region of Asia Minor.
3. Attalia: a city of Pamphylia, situated on the southern coast of Asia Minor. It was so called after the name of the Pergamene king Attalus II (from 159 to 138 B.C.), who founded it. Under the name of Adalia this city has survived to the present day; it has 15,000 inhabitants and belongs to Turkey.
4. Phrygia: a region of Asia Minor.

"Sleep and rest a little; and if you are needed, I will wake you. You are already quite weary, for you have kept watch all night, admitting and letting out to our master the vain people who visit his house to worship the imagined goddess Fortune[5]."

The doorkeeper, following her advice, withdrew from the gate and fell asleep in the courtyard. Zoe, fearing that the dogs tied nearby might wake him with their barking, gave them some of the bread, and the rest of her meal she distributed to the beggars and strangers who came to the gate, urging them to embrace the Christian faith.

Zoe's duty in Catullus's house was to feed the domestic animals her masters kept; her husband and sons performed all the other labors for their masters.

All day they worked, and at sunset they ate a little of the food which they certainly knew had not been defiled by pagan rites. This food was sent to them by the providence of God; eating it, they remembered the words the Lord spoke in His holy Gospel: "Behold the birds of the air, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them" (Mt. 6:26).

Once, when the blessed Esper had been sent by his masters to some work, his sons Cyriacus and Theodulus said to their mother:

"We no longer wish to live with the impious. Did you not yourself teach us, according to the divine Scripture, to keep the apostolic commandment: 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers' (2 Cor. 6:14)? If we, obeying the divine Scripture, wished to keep the commandments of the Lord but did not depart from the pagans, we would receive from the Lord the same recompense as they, and perish as they do."

The mother answered her sons:

"My beloved children! How can we depart from them? For they are our masters; they have power even over our bodies."

The sons answered her:

"Christ gave Himself for us into the hands of the unbelieving Jews; He was crucified, buried, and on the third day rose again. If we also

5. Fortuna was regarded by the Romans as the goddess of happiness and the protectress of the domestic hearth.

give over our bodies to the power of the impious Catullus to suffer for the name of Christ, then even if after torments he kills us, our souls will live forever. Therefore, present us, rejoicing and exulting, to our master; and whatever the Lord puts into our mouths, that we will speak to our master."

And the two good youths prepared themselves, as valiant soldiers of Christ, for the struggle of suffering for Christ, awaiting a fitting occasion to stand before their master and confess before him the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They said to one another:

"If it is pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ that we die for His holy name, then as a reward for this we shall be counted worthy to see Him and abide with Him forever."

But their mother, fearing lest her children, being frightened by the tortures, following the example of others, might yield to serving idols, delayed fulfilling their request (until that time the masters did not know that they were Christians). Then her sons said to her:

"Why do you delay? What are you afraid of? Do you not know what Scripture says: 'I will speak of Thy testimonies before kings, and I shall not be ashamed' (Ps. 118:46)?"

Once, Catullus was returning home from somewhere at the dinner hour. Both brothers, Cyriacus and Theodulus, went out to meet him and said:

"Good hour to you, master of our visible bodies; but the Master of our invisible souls is the Lord Jesus Christ, who dwells in heaven, the true God."

Catullus was greatly astonished at their words and said:

"These youths have lost their reason: they utter a strange name unknown to me, the name of Jesus Christ, calling Him God and Lord."

Then, turning to the servants, he said:

"Summon to me the father and mother of these youths." The servants went at once and, not finding the father, brought only the mother of the youths. Catullus asked her:

"Where is your husband?"

She answered him:

"Did you not send him on some work to the village of Tritonia?"

"Even if you had been with him now in Tritonia," said Catullus, "you would not confuse me with your talk about the God whom you confess, of whom neither I nor others have ever heard anything. Yet now I do not wish to test you; but when Tertia is delivered of her burden and I offer a thanksgiving sacrifice on this occasion to our great goddess Fortune, then I will test you."

And at once he ordered the holy Zoe and her children to be sent to her husband in Tritonia.

Mother and children, having moved there, rejoiced and were glad, recalling in song and conversation the words of Holy Scripture: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" (Ps. 22:1–2). And again: "Thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell" (Ps. 85:13), and "Thou hast delivered my soul from death" (Ps. 114:7). (The saints in their souls regarded their master's house as hell, Catullus as death, and the idols as the fire of hell.)

But a son was born to Catullus. All the townsfolk rejoiced and celebrated with Catullus the birth of his son, offering thanksgiving sacrifices to their goddess Fortune. At this time the holy Zoe prayed to God, asking Him to give her husband and children strength to bear their struggle manfully. Meanwhile Catullus, at the end of the feast, said to his wife Tertia:

"Let all the members of our household and our slaves also make merry at our festival."

She answered him:

"Good, let all rejoice."

At once they sent to their slaves, among whom was the family of Esper, a vessel of wine from the idol-offering feast and a dish of meat. The holy Zoe, seeing from afar the servants carrying their master's gifts, sighed and said:

"O Lord, ineffable God, who knowest the secret thoughts of men! Abide with us, poor strangers: besides Thee, our Lord, we know no other god. Help us to confess firmly Thy holy name."

With these words she went up to the gifts brought to them, and taking the meat, she threw it to the dogs, and poured the wine out upon the ground. A servant at once went and told this to his master.

This news greatly angered Catullus, and he commanded that Esper with his family be brought at once to his house. On the way to the master, Zoe, encouraging her husband and children, said:

"Let us not fear the wrath of the impious Catullus or the torments prepared for us by him, but let us bear them manfully, so that, having finished our struggle, we may enter the heavenly kingdom of Christ and of His saints."

When the saints had been brought into their master's house, Catullus asked them:

"On whose protection did you rely in offering me such an insult? How did you dare to throw our gifts to the dogs? Yet I guard not so much my own honor as the honor of our great goddess Fortune."

The holy Zoe answered him:

"Our hope and trust is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God; the gods you honor are demons."

Catullus said in reply:

"Now I will hand your sons over to torments; then we shall see whether Christ, whom you call God, is able to deliver them from suffering."

Then the executioners, stripping both youths, hanged them on a tree and began to tear them with iron instruments. The holy Zoe, looking upon the sufferings of her children, strengthened them with such words:

"Bear your sufferings manfully, my children! Endure, do not be frightened by the tortures inflicted upon you by the impious Catullus."

The children answered her:

"These torments are far too light for us. Tell the impious master to devise greater ones, that by our sufferings we may merit the crowns of martyrdom in the life to come."

The holy Zoe said to Catullus:

"You torment my children with too weak tortures; they feel no particular suffering. Try to increase their sufferings."

Then the impious Catullus commanded that, after cruelly punishing the holy Zoe, the blessed Esper and their children, all of them be cast into a furnace heated to great heat, and he set guards to watch the furnace.

The holy martyrs in the heated furnace sang and glorified the Lord. Catullus, hearing the singing and seeing the saints unharmed, marveled greatly how such an elemental force of fire had not killed them nor turned their bodies to ash. Supposing that the Christians were taming the element by some sorcery, he began to think of some other, more cruel way to destroy them. But to the holy martyrs the Holy Spirit said:

"Be of good courage! Catullus is devising still greater torments to destroy you."

Hearing this, the martyrs prayed, saying:

"O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, receive our souls in peace."

And soon the saints committed their holy souls into the hands of God.

This took place in the reign of Hadrian[6], on the second day of the month of May.

On the following day the impious Catullus and his accomplices came to the furnace and found the bodies of the martyrs unharmed by the fire. The bodies lay facing east, and their holy souls were joined to the choir of the honorable martyrs, the Angels and Archangels. And a voice was heard from heaven:

"Enter, ye righteous, into the paradise of your Lord. But thou, impious Katullus, shalt go into Gehenna and there shalt be tormented forever in the unquenchable fire."

Thus the impious Katullus received endless torments, while heaven was opened to the holy martyrs of Christ. By their suffering they gained everlasting joy, dwelling with Jesus Christ, our Lord, to Whom belongs eternal glory. Amen.

* * *

6. The Emperor Hadrian ruled the Roman Empire from 117 to 138 A.D. The year of the death of the holy martyrs is not known with certainty.

Passion and Miracles of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb, Princes of Rus'[7]

Страдание и чудеса святых мучеников Бориса и Глеба, князей русских

"The generation of the righteous shall be in blessing forever" (Ps. 111:2).

St. Vladimir, son of Svyatoslav, grandson of Igor, who enlightened the whole land of Rus' with holy Baptism, had twelve sons, not by one wife but by several.

The eldest son was Vysheslav[8], the second was Izyaslav, and the third was Svyatopolk, who devised the wicked murder of his brothers. Svyatopolk's mother, a Greek woman, had formerly been a nun. Yaropolk, brother of Vladimir, enticed by her beauty, unfrocked her and married her. Vladimir, still a pagan at that time, killed Yaropolk and took his wife to himself in marriage. It was from her that the wretched Svyatopolk was born. And Vladimir did not love him.

Vladimir had other sons as well: by Rogneda, four: Izyaslav, Mstislav, Yaroslav and Vsevolod; by a Czech woman, Vysheslav; by another wife, Svyatoslav and Mstislav; and by a Bulgarian woman, Boris and Gleb. The father set them to rule in different lands: Svyatopolk in Pinsk, Yaroslav in Novgorod, Boris in Rostov, and Gleb in Murom[2903].

When 28 years had already passed since holy Baptism, a grievous sickness befell Vladimir. At this time Boris came to his father from Rostov. The Pechenegs[9] were marching in force against Rus', and Vladimir was in great sorrow, because he had no strength to go out

7. This Life is a translation of the work of James the Monk, called "Narration of the Passions and Praise of the Murder of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb," written a few years after their martyric deaths, either at the end of the reign of Yaroslav or at the beginning of the reign of Izyaslav, in any case before 1072, together with a translation of the continuations of this Life that accompany it in the ancient copies. The translation has been supplemented from the "Reading on the Life and on the Destruction of the Blessed Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb," composed by the Venerable Nestor the Chronicler after James the Monk, before 1091, and from the "Narration on the Murder of the Holy Passion-bearers, Russian Princes Boris and Gleb," composed by St. Demetrius of Rostov (under 2 May in the Chet'i-Minei).

8. Vysheslav died during his father's lifetime, in 1010.

9. The Pechenegs were a nomadic people of Turkic origin who began to raid Rus' in the second half of the tenth century. St. Vladimir built towns along the rivers Desna, Ostr, Trubezh, Sula and Stugna as a line of defensive outposts against the Pechenegs. Later they were driven out of the southern Russian steppes by the Turks and the Polovtsy, likewise Turkic peoples.

against the godless. Troubled by this, he summoned Boris, who in holy Baptism had been named Roman[10]. The father gave Boris, who was blessed and quick to obey, many warriors and sent him against the godless Pechenegs. Boris went with joy, saying to his father: "Behold, I stand before thee, ready to do whatever the will of thy heart requires."

Of such it is said in the Proverbs: "a son was obedient to his father and beloved of his mother" (Prov. 4:3).

But Boris did not find his adversaries. On his return journey a messenger came to him and said that his father Vladimir, named Basil in holy Baptism, had died[11], and that Svyatopolk had concealed the death of his father: at night he took apart the floor of the palace in the village of Berestovo, wrapped the body of the deceased in a carpet, lowered it on ropes, carried it away in a sledge[12] to the church of the Holy Mother of God[13], and placed it there. All this was done in secret.

On hearing this, Boris grew weak in body, his whole face was bathed in tears, and he could not speak. But in his heart he lamented for his father: "Woe is me, light of my eyes, radiance and dawn of my face, nurturer of my youth, correction of my folly! Woe is me, my father and my lord! To whom shall I now flee, on whom shall I look, where shall I be filled with the good teaching and correction of thy wisdom? Woe is me, woe is me! My sun has set, and I was not there; I could not myself clothe thy honorable body and lay it in the tomb with my own hands. I did not bear thy beautiful and manly body; I was not made worthy to kiss thy gray hairs! O my blessed one, remember me in the place of thy repose. My heart burns, my mind is troubled; I know not to whom to turn and tell my bitter grief. If I go to my brother, whom I would have in place of a father, he seems to be thinking of worldly vanity and of my murder. If he resolves upon my murder, then I shall be a martyr to my Lord. But I will not resist, for it is written: 'God resisteth

10. In the name of St. Romanos the Melodist
11. 15 July 1015
12. In ancient Rus' it was the custom to carry and convey the dead on sledges to the church for the funeral service.
13. The reference is to the Tithe Church in Kiev, dedicated to the glory of the Mother of God, which St. Vladimir built and adorned. In the ancient Prologues the consecration of this church is given under 11 May.

the proud, but giveth grace to the humble' (Jas. 4:6). The Apostle says: 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar' (1 Jn. 4:20). And again: 'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear' (1 Jn. 4:18). But what shall I say, and what shall I do? I will go to my brother and say: Be thou a father to me, be thou my elder brother; what dost thou bid me, my lord?"

Thinking thus within himself, Boris went to his brother, and said in his soul: "There I shall see the face of my younger brother Gleb, as Joseph saw Benjamin. Thy will be done, O my Lord" (Gen. 43:29).

And Boris thought: "If I go into the house of my father, many will turn my heart to the thought of driving out my brother, as my father did before holy Baptism, for the sake of the glory of worldly rule[14]. But all this is fleeting, corruptible, and more insubstantial than a cobweb. And if I resolve upon this, where shall I go, what will become of me, what answer shall I then give, and where shall I hide the multitude of my sin? What have the brothers of my father and my father himself gained; where are their life and the glory of this world, the purple and feasts, silver and gold, wines, honey and dainties, swift high horses, great possessions, tributes and honor without number, and pride in their boyars? All this is now as though it had never existed; everything has vanished together with them. And there is no help for them from anyone: not from possessions, not from numerous slaves, not from the glory of this world. Solomon too tested everything, saw everything, acquired everything, and having considered it all, said: 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity' (Eccl. 1:2). Help comes only from good deeds, from right belief, and from unfeigned love."

As he went on his way, Boris thought of the beauty and strength of his body and wept bitterly; he wished to restrain his tears but could not, and all who saw him in tears wept for his noble beauty and good understanding, and each grieved in his soul: his sorrow had troubled everyone. And who could fail to weep, foreseeing Boris's death, seeing his dejected face and his grief! For the blessed prince was truthful, generous and gentle, meek and humble, merciful to all and helpful to all.

14. Thus Vladimir dealt with his brother Yaropolk.

But holy Boris was strengthened by the thought that if his brother, at the instigation of evil men, should kill him, he would be a martyr, and the Lord would receive his spirit. He forgot the sorrow of death, comforting his heart with the words of God: "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall save it" (Mk. 8:35), and would preserve it unto life everlasting.

And Boris went on with a joyful heart, saying: "Despise me not, most merciful Lord, who trust in Thee, but save my soul."

Svyatopolk, meanwhile, sat down on his father's princely throne in Kiev, summoned the Kievans, gave them many gifts, and dismissed them. Then he sent to Boris with these words:

"Brother, I wish to live with thee in love, and I will increase thy portion of our father's inheritance."

There was flattery in these words, not truth.

Svyatopolk secretly arrived by night at Vyshgorod, summoned Putsha and the men of Vyshgorod, and said to them:

"Tell me in truth, do you have affection for me?"

Putsha said:

"We are all ready to lay down our heads for thee."

The ancient enemy of good men, the devil, seeing that holy Boris had placed all his hope in God, began to work more strongly upon Svyatopolk, who, like Cain, burned with the fire of fratricide, having resolved to slay all his father's heirs and to take the power alone.

The wretched, accursed Svyatopolk, counselor of every evil and leader of every unrighteousness, again summoned the men of Vyshgorod, opened his loathsome lips, uttered his evil voice, and said to Putsha's men:

"If you promise to lay down your heads for me, go secretly, my brothers, find my brother Boris, and, seizing the moment, kill him."

And they promised Svyatopolk to do so. Of such men the Prophet said: "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their ways are ways of iniquity, for with wickedness they encompass their soul" (Prov. 1:16; Is. 59:6–7; Rom. 3:15).

On his return journey the blessed Boris halted with his tents on the river Alta[15]. And his retinue said to him:

"Go and sit upon the princely throne of thy father, for all the warriors are with thee[16]."

But he answered them:

"I will not raise my hand against my brother, who is also older than I and whom I ought to regard as a father."

Hearing this, the warriors left Boris, and he remained only with his servants[17].

It was then the Sabbath day.

Grieving in sorrow, he entered his tent and, with tears, cried out mournfully:

"Do not despise my tears, O Master. I trust in Thee that I shall receive my lot with Thy servants, with all Thy saints. For Thou art a merciful God, and to Thee we send up glory forever. Amen."

Saying this, he thought of the torment and suffering of St. Nikita and St. Vyacheslav, supposing that he would be killed as that prince had been, and of how St. Barbara was slain by her own father. The word of the wise Solomon came to his mind: "But the righteous live for evermore; their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High" (Wis. 5:15). With this word alone he was comforted and rejoiced.

Evening came, and holy Boris ordered Vespers to be served; he himself entered the tent and began to pray and celebrate Vespers with bitter tears, frequent sighs, and many groans. Then he lay down and slept. And his sleep was full of many thoughts and of a deep and terrible sorrow about how he should give himself up to suffering, finish his course, and keep the faith, so as to receive from the hand of the Almighty the crown prepared for him.

Waking early, he saw that it was already time for Matins. It was then the holy Sunday. And he said to his priest:

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15. Near southern Pereyaslavl.

16. According to the account of Nestor, Boris had a retinue of about 8,000 men.

17. According to the account of Nestor, St. Boris at one point sent a youth to Svyatopolk with a plea. But the latter kept the youth with himself.

"Arise and begin Matins."

He himself put on his shoes, washed his face, and began to pray to the Lord God.

The men sent by Svyatopolk came to the Alta by night, drew near, and heard the voice of the blessed passion-bearer singing the psalms appointed for Matins. The news of his impending murder had already reached the saint, and he sang:

"Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me!" (Ps. 3:2) and the other psalms.

Then he began to sing:

"Dogs have compassed me; many bulls have beset me round." Then: "O Lord my God, in Thee have I put my trust; save me" (Ps. 21:17; 13:1–7; 7:2).

After this he sang the canon. Having finished Matins, St. Boris began to pray before the icon of the Lord, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou didst appear on earth in this image, didst willingly consent to ascend the Cross and didst bear sufferings for our sins. Vouchsafe that I too may suffer."

And hearing a loud tramping about the tent, St. Boris trembled, burst into tears and said: "Glory to Thee, O Lord, that in this life Thou hast vouchsafed me to receive a bitter death through envy and to suffer for love of Thee and for Thy word. For I did not seek the princedom for myself. In nothing did I act of my own will, according to the word of the Apostle: 'Love suffereth long, is kind, believeth all things, seeketh not her own' (1 Cor. 13:4–7). And again: 'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear' (1 Jn. 4:18). Into Thy hands, O Master, I commend my soul; I have not forgotten Thy commandment. Let that be done which is pleasing to the Lord."

The priest and the youth, the servant of St. Boris, seeing their master weakened and possessed by sorrow, wept bitterly and said:

"Our dear and gracious master, what grace hast thou been vouchsafed, for thou didst not wish to resist thy brother for the love of Christ, though thou hadst many warriors with thee."

Thus they spoke with tenderness.

Then they saw men running to the tent, the glint of their weapons and their drawn swords. Without mercy the honorable body of the holy, blessed passion-bearer of Christ, Boris, was pierced. Putsha and Talets and Elovich Lyashko thrust him through with their spears.

Seeing this, the youth of St. Boris threw himself upon his body and said:

"I will not leave thee, my dear master; where the beauty of thy body has withered, there let me too be vouchsafed to end my life with thee."

He was by birth a Hungarian, and his name was George. St. Boris had placed a golden torque upon him, and the prince loved him beyond measure. Then they pierced the youth too.

The wounded St. Boris, in terror, ran out of the tent. And those who surrounded him said:

"Why do you stand and look? Let us carry out what we were commanded."

Hearing this, the blessed one began to entreat and beseech them, saying:

"My dear and beloved brethren! Wait a little, let me pray to my God."

And looking up to heaven with tears, he sighed deeply and began to pray:

"O Lord, merciful God, glory to Thee, for Thou hast delivered me from the allurements of this life. Glory to Thee, most bountiful giver of life, who hast vouchsafed me the sufferings of Thy holy martyrs. Glory to Thee, O Master, lover of mankind, who hast fulfilled the desire of my heart. Glory, O Christ, to Thy mercy, for Thou hast directed my feet onto the right and peaceful path, that I might come to Thee without stumbling. Look down from the height of Thy holiness; behold the sorrow of my heart which I have received from my kinsman. For today they are putting me to death for Thy sake. They devour me like a lamb. Thou knowest, Lord, Thou knowest that I do not resist, I do not contend. Having in my hands all the warriors of my father and all his favorites, I did not think to do any evil to my brother. But he has risen up against me with all his strength. If an enemy had insulted me, I would have endured it; if one who hated me had humiliated me, I would have

hidden myself. But Thou, Lord, look on and judge between me and my brother. Do not lay this sin to his charge, but receive my soul in peace. Amen."

Then, turning his wearied face toward the murderers and looking upon them with tender eyes, weeping, he said to them:

"Brethren, come forward and complete what you have been commanded, and may there be peace to my brother and to you, brethren."

All who heard the words of the saint could not speak for fear, bitter sorrow and many tears. With bitter sighs all wept piteously, and each thought:

"Woe is me, my dear, beloved, blessed prince, guide of the blind, raiment of the naked, staff of old age, teacher of the untaught! Who will set this right? How wonderful that thou didst not desire the glory and greatness of this world, did not desire to be among the honored nobles! Who will not marvel at his great humility, who will not be humbled, seeing and hearing his humility!"

Those sent by Svyatopolk slew many of the youths also. But from George they could not take the torque, so they cut off his head and cast it aside, so that afterwards they could not recognize his body. They wrapped the blessed Boris in a tent and, placing him on a cart, drove off with him.

When they had come to a forest, St. Boris began to bow his head. Learning of this, Svyatopolk sent two Varangians, and they pierced the martyr's heart with a sword. And at once the saint died,[18] commending his soul into the hands of the living God, on the 24th day of the month of July. His body was secretly carried to Vyshgorod,[19] laid by the church of St. Basil and buried in the earth.

Thus St. Boris, having received the crown from Christ God, was numbered with the righteous and took his place with the prophets and apostles and the choirs of martyrs, resting in the bosom of Abraham, beholding unspeakable joy, singing with the Angels, rejoicing in the choir of saints.

The wretched murderers came to Svyatopolk, and, lawless as they were, they considered themselves worthy of praise. Such are the ser-

vants of devils. For devils are sent for evil, and Angels for good. An Angel does no evil to man, but always thinks of his good. He helps Christians and defends them from the adversary, the devil. Devils, however, always lay snares for evil, always envying man, for they see that he is beloved of God. Envying man, the devils strive to do him harm. The Lord said: "Who shall persuade Ahab?" and the devil answered: "I will go out" (3 Kgdms. 22:20–21). An evil man who strives toward evil does not yield in wickedness to the devil. Devils fear man, but the evil man does not fear God and is not ashamed before men. Devils fear the Cross of the Lord, but the evil man does not even fear the Cross. Of such the prophet David said: "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? Yea, in heart ye work iniquity; ye weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth. The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from the birth, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent" (Ps. 57:1–4).

The wretched Svyatopolk did not stop at this murder, but in his frenzy began to strive for more. Seeing the fulfillment of the desire of his heart, he did not pause over so wicked a murder and over his own transgression, and felt no repentance whatever. Satan entered into his heart and began to incite him to a greater and worse crime and to further murder. And the wretch thought: "What shall I do? If I stop at this murder, a double evil awaits me. My brothers will hear of what has been done, and will soon repay me worse than what I have done. And if they do not do this, they will drive me out. I shall be cut off from the throne of my father, and regret for my land will consume me. My enemies will revile me, another will receive my princedom, and there will be no one living in my houses. For I have persecuted the one beloved of the Lord, and I have increased the sickness with a wound. Therefore I will add lawlessness to lawlessness. The sin of my mother will not be cleansed, and I shall not be written among the righteous in any case. So let me be blotted out from the book of life."

18. According to the account of Nestor, one of the murderers struck St. Boris in the heart.
19. Vyshgorod is situated fifteen *poprishches* from Kiev.

Having conceived this in his mind, this wicked friend of the devil sent word to the blessed Gleb:[20] "Come quickly, our father is very ill and calls for you."

Gleb at once mounted his horse and hastened at the summons with a small retinue. When he came to the Volga, at the mouth of the Tma, in the field his horse stumbled into a ditch and injured its leg. Then he arrived at Smolensk, and having left Smolensk, he stopped not far off on the river Smyadyna in a boat.

At this time word came from Predslava to Yaroslav of their father's death. Yaroslav sent to Gleb with the words: "Do not go, brother; your father has died, and your brother has been killed by Svyatopolk."

Hearing this, the blessed one grieved, wept bitterly and said:

"Woe is me, my lord! I weep with two weepings and lament with two laments. Woe is me, woe is me! I weep for my father, and I weep the more, in despair, for you, my brother and lord Boris. How they have pierced you, how without mercy you were given over to death, and received your destruction not from an enemy but from your own brother! Woe is me! It would be better for me to die with you than to live alone in this life, orphaned by you. I hoped to see your Angelic face, and now such sorrow has come upon me. I would far rather have died with you, my lord. And now what shall I do, afflicted and grieving over your beauty and over the deep wisdom of my father? O my dear brother and lord, if you have received boldness before God, pray for me, the sorrowful, that I too may be vouchsafed to receive the same death and live with you, and not in this world, full of allurements."

While St. Gleb was lamenting thus, moistening the earth with tears and often calling upon God with sighs, suddenly there came the evil servants sent by Sviatopolk, pitiless bloodsuckers, fierce haters of their brothers, with savage souls. The saint was sailing in a boat, and they met him at the mouth of the Smiadyna. Seeing them, he rejoiced in his soul, but they were darkened and began to row toward him. The saint,

20. According to the account of the Venerable Nestor, St. Vladimir, having sent Boris to reign, kept Gleb with himself. After the death of his father, St. Gleb, fearing violence on the part of Svyatopolk, resolved to flee northward to his brother. Having prayed in the church of the Holy Theotokos, he got into a boat and fled. This was before the slaying of St. Boris.

however, expected to receive a kiss from them.[21] When the boats drew alongside, the villains seized the prince's boat by the rowlocks, drew it to them and leaped into it, holding drawn swords that flashed like water. At once the oars fell from the rowers' hands, and all of them went pale with fear. The blessed one, seeing that they meant to kill him, looked upon the villains with tender eyes, and with a contrite heart, humble mind and frequent sighing, weeping and growing weak in body, began to beseech them piteously:

"Do not touch me, my dear and beloved brethren, do not touch me; I have done you no harm. Do not touch me, dear brethren and my lords, do not keep watch over me. What wrong have I done to my brother or to you, brethren and my lords? If there is any offense, then lead me to your prince, to my brother and lord. Spare my youth, have mercy, my lords; be my lords, and I will be your servant. Do not reap me while I am not yet ripe; do not cut down an ear of grain that has not yet ripened, but is still full of the milk of guilelessness. Do not cut down a vine that has not yet grown, but already bears fruit. I beg and entreat you. Fear Him who said through the lips of the Apostles: 'Be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children' (1 Cor. 14:20). This is not killing, but cutting down the unripe. Prove to me that I have done evil. And I will not begrudge it if you wish to sate yourselves with my blood; I am already in your hands, brethren, and in the hands of my brother, your prince."

But not one word shamed the murderers, and they did not change their purpose. Like savage beasts they fell upon the saint and seized him thus. Seeing that they did not heed his words, he began to say:

"Be saved, my dear father and lord Basil; be saved, mother, my lady; be saved, brother Boris, elder of my youth; brother Yaroslav, my helper; be saved also you, brother and enemy Sviatopolk, and all of you,

21. According to the Venerable Nestor, the murderers pursued St. Gleb for a long time in a boat. When they drew near, St. Gleb, suspecting their evil purpose, begged his companions not to take up arms or resist, saying that if they submitted they would simply be taken to his brother, but if they resisted all would be cut down. At the saint's request his companions landed on the bank, looking back with pity upon the blessed one, who remained in the middle of the river with the youths.

brethren and retinue. I shall no longer see you in this life, for I am being forcibly parted from you."

And he said, with tears:

"Basil, Basil, my father, incline your ear and hear my voice. Look what has befallen your son, how they are slaughtering me without fault. Woe is me, woe is me! Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth (cf. Deut. 32:1). And you, brother Boris, hear my voice. I called upon my father Basil, but he did not heed me; will you too not wish to hear me? Look upon the sorrow of my heart and the wound of my soul, upon my tears flowing like a river. No one heeds me. But remember me and pray for me to the common Lord of all, since you have boldness and stand before His throne."

Bending his knees, he prayed thus:

"Most bountiful, most merciful Lord, do not despise my tears, but look with pity upon the contrition of my heart. Behold, I am being slaughtered, but for what and for what offense I do not know. Thou knowest, O Lord, my Lord. For I know that Thou didst say to Thine apostles: 'For My Name's sake they shall lay their hands on you, and ye shall be delivered up by your kin; and brother shall deliver up brother to death, and they shall put you to death for My Name's sake' (cf. Mt. 10:17, 21). And again: 'In your patience save ye your souls' (Lk. 21:19). Look, O Lord, and judge. Behold, my soul is ready before Thee, O Lord, and to Thee we send up glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Then, glancing at the murderers, he said to them in a quiet voice:

"Come on, now, and finish what you were sent for."

Then the wicked Gorysher ordered him to be slaughtered at once. Gleb's chief cook, named Torchin, drew his knife, knelt, took St. Gleb by the head and cut the throat of the blessed one, like a guileless lamb. This was on the 5th of September, on a Monday. And a pure, holy and fragrant sacrifice was offered to the Lord, and it ascended into the heavenly mansions to God. And the saint beheld his longed-for brother, and both received the heavenly crowns for which they had so yearned. And they rejoiced with an unspeakable joy, which they attained

through their brotherly love. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps. 132:1).

Those wicked murderers returned to him who had sent them, as the prophet David said: "Let the wicked be turned into hell, all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:18). And again: "The wicked have drawn out the sword and bent their bow, to pierce those who walk the straight way. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. But the wicked shall perish, they shall vanish, in smoke shall they vanish" (Ps. 36:14–15, 19, 20).

And they said to Sviatopolk:

"We have done what you commanded."

Hearing this, he lifted up his heart, and there came to pass what the psalmist David had spoken: "Why dost thou boast of wickedness, thou mighty man? Thy tongue deviseth mischief. Thou lovest evil more than good, and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou lovest all devouring words, a deceitful tongue. Therefore God shall destroy thee for ever, He shall take thee away and pluck thee out of thy dwelling, and thy root out of the land of the living" (Ps. 51:3–7). As Solomon also said: "I will laugh at your destruction, I will rejoice when terror comes upon you; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their ways, and be filled with their own devices" (Prov. 1:26, 31).

When St. Gleb was slain, his body was cast into a desolate place, between two logs. But the Lord never forsakes His servants, as David said: “He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken” (Ps. 33:21). And so, when the body of the saint had lain for a long time in the waste place, the Lord did not leave it to remain unknown and neglected, but revealed the place sometimes by a burning candle; at other times passing merchants, hunters and shepherds heard angelic singing. But neither those who heard nor those who saw these signs thought to search for the body of the saint, until Yaroslav, indignant at this murder, went to war against the fratricide, the wicked Sviatopolk, whom, after enduring much hardship in battle, he defeated with God’s help and through the aid of the holy martyr princes. Thus was the impious one shamed and vanquished.

Having slain his brothers, Sviatopolk began to reign in Kiev. Yaroslav, however, did not yet know of his father's death. Yaroslav had many Varangians, who did violence to the men of Novgorod and their wives. The people of Novgorod rose up and slew the Varangians in the courtyard of Paramon. Then Yaroslav was angered, and saying, "I cannot raise the slain to life again!" he sent from the princely court in the courtyard for the notable men of Novgorod, who had slain the Varangians, and, deceiving them, he slew them.

That same night there came to him a message from Kiev from his sister Predslava: "Your father is dead. Sviatopolk reigns in Kiev; he has slain Boris, and has sent murderers after Gleb. Beware of him."

Hearing this, Yaroslav grieved for his father, his brother and his retinue. On the next day he gathered the remaining men of Novgorod and said:

"My dear retinue! Yesterday I slew them, and today they would have been useful to me."

He wiped away his tears and said to the men of Novgorod at the veche:

"My father has died, and Sviatopolk sits in Kiev, slaying his brothers."

And the men of Novgorod said to him:

"Though you have slain our kinsmen, yet we can fight for you."

Gathering a thousand Varangians and forty thousand other warriors, Yaroslav called upon God for help and marched against Sviatopolk, saying: "It was not I who began to slay the brothers, but he. Let him answer for the blood of the brothers, for without fault he shed the righteous blood of Boris and Gleb; he could do the same to me. But may God judge by truth, that the malice of the sinner may cease."

And he marched against Sviatopolk. The latter, hearing of Yaroslav's campaign, gathered an innumerable army of Rus and Pechenegs and advanced to Liubech.

This was in the year 6524 (A.D. 1016).

The two armies met at the Dnieper and stood opposite one another on either side of the river, and neither had the courage to begin the battle. So they stood facing one another for about 3 months. And Svi-

atopolk's voivode, riding along the bank, began to reproach the men of Novgorod:

"Why have you come with a cripple? You are carpenters; we shall make you build us houses."

Hearing this, the men of Novgorod were offended, and they said to Yaroslav:

"Tomorrow let us cross the river. And if anyone will not go with us, we shall kill him ourselves."

At that time there were already night frosts. Sviatopolk stood between two lakes. Having landed on the shore, he drank wine with his retinue all night. At dawn Yaroslav with his army crossed the river, landed, and pushed the boats off from the shore.

And the armies advanced against one another and came together. The battle was fierce; the Pechenegs stood beyond the lake and could not help Sviatopolk. Yaroslav's warriors pressed Sviatopolk's host against the lake and drove them onto the ice, which broke beneath them. And Yaroslav began to prevail.

Seeing this, Sviatopolk fled to the Poles. Yaroslav sat upon his father's principality in Kiev, having stayed in Novgorod for 28 years.

Two years later Sviatopolk went against Yaroslav with King Boleslaw and the Poles. Yaroslav gathered an army from Rus, the Varangians and the Slovenes, and marched into Volhynia. The armies met at the river Bug and stood on opposite banks. Yaroslav had a guardian, the voivode Budy, and he began to reproach Boleslaw:

"We shall pierce your belly with a spear."

Boleslaw was huge and heavy and could scarcely sit his horse. And Boleslaw said to his retinue:

"If you are not offended by this reproach, I alone shall perish."

And he plunged on horseback into the river, and his warriors followed him. Yaroslav had not had time to prepare for battle, and Boleslaw defeated Yaroslav. Boleslaw entered Kiev with Sviatopolk, and Yaroslav fled with 4 men to Novgorod. From there he was already about to flee overseas, but the posadnik Constantine, son of Dobrynya, and the men of Novgorod cut through Yaroslav's boats, saying: "We can still fight against Boleslaw and Sviatopolk."

And they began to collect money: from each man 4 kuny, from the elders 9 grivnas, and from the boyars 80 grivnas. Then they summoned the Varangians and paid them with the money collected. So Yaroslav gathered a great army. But the frenzied Sviatopolk said: "Slay the Poles in the cities."

And so they did. Then Boleslaw fled from Kiev, taking with him his property and the boyars. Yaroslav set upon Sviatopolk and defeated him. Sviatopolk fled to the Pechenegs.

In the year 6527 (A.D. 1019) he returned with a multitude of Pechenegs. Yaroslav gathered an army and advanced against him at the Alta. Standing in the place where St. Boris had been slain, he raised his hands to heaven and said:

"Behold, the blood of my brother cries out to Thee, O Lord, as the blood of Abel. Avenge him upon Sviatopolk, as upon the fratricide Cain, upon whom Thou didst lay the groaning and the trembling (Gen. 4:12). I beg Thee, O Lord, let Sviatopolk receive the same."

Then, having prayed, Yaroslav said:

"O my brethren, if you have died in body, yet you live in grace and stand before the Lord. Help me by your prayers."

Having said this, he went out against Sviatopolk, and the field by the river Alta was covered with a multitude of warriors. The armies met at sunrise, and there was a fierce battle; they charged back and forth three times and fought the whole day, and only toward evening did Yaroslav prevail.

That accursed Sviatopolk fled. A demon fell upon him, and his bones were so weakened that he could not sit his horse, and he was carried on a litter. Thus he was brought to Berestye. And he kept saying: "Flee! Behold, they are pursuing us!"

They sent men against the pursuers, but they found no one. Lying in his weakness, Sviatopolk kept leaping up and saying: "Let us flee, they are pursuing us again. Woe is me!"

So he could not remain in one place. He fled through the land of the Poles, pursued by the wrath of God, and reached the wilderness between the land of the Lyakhs and the Czechs. There he lost his life and received recompense from the Lord, for the sickness sent upon him

bore witness to the eternal torment after death. Thus he was deprived of both lives: here he lost not only his princedom but his life, and there not only the Kingdom of Heaven and dwelling with the Angels, but he was delivered to torment and fire. His grave remains. From it there rises an evil stench, as a testimony to people that whoever hears of this and does likewise shall receive something even more bitter. For Cain, not knowing of the recompense, received one punishment, but Lamech, who already knew of Cain, was avenged seventy-fold more strongly (Gen. 4:24). Such is the recompense received by those who do evil. As Julian the emperor, who shed much blood of the holy martyrs, underwent a bitter and inhuman death, pierced through the heart with a spear by an unknown hand [22], so this one perished in flight, not knowing from whom came his cruel death. From that time strife ceased in the Russian land, and Yaroslav received dominion over Rus.

And he began to inquire about the holy bodies, how and where they had been laid. They told him that St. Boris was buried in Vyshgorod, but about St. Gleb not everyone knew that he had been killed in Smolensk. Then Yaroslav's close men told him that they had heard from those who came from there that they had seen a radiance and candles in a deserted place there [23]. Hearing this, Yaroslav sent priests to search in Smolensk and said to them: "This is my brother."

They went and found his body where the visions had appeared [24]. With reverence, with many candles and censers, they carried him into boats and brought him to Vyshgorod, where the body of the most blessed Boris lay; there they dug a grave and laid him down, amazed at his beautiful and flourishing appearance. It is wondrous and marvelous and worthy of memory that the body of the saint remained uncorrupted for so many years, untouched by carnivorous beasts, and not only did it not blacken as corpses do, but it was bright, beautiful, whole and fragrant. Thus God preserved the remains of His sufferer.

22. The Roman Emperor Flavius Claudius Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363. He renounced Christianity and sought to restore paganism. He was killed in battle with the Persians and died with the words: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean."

23. According to the account of Nestor, the elder of the town at the place where the body lay saw St. Gleb himself, shining like lightning.

24. According to the account of Nestor, the body of St. Gleb was found with the help of hunters.

Many did not know that the bodies of the holy passion-bearers lay there. But as the holy evangelist said: "A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it gives light to all" (Mt. 5:14–15), so the Lord set these saints to shine upon the world and to glow with many miracles in the Russian land, where many who suffered received salvation. The blind began to see, the lame received the swiftness of the hart, the bent were made straight. But who can tell and relate all the miracles that took place there? Truly the whole world cannot contain the wondrous miracles performed, they are more numerous than the sand of the sea; the saints worked them not only here but in all lands and territories, healing sicknesses and every infirmity, visiting those imprisoned in dungeons and chains. In the places where they received the crowns of martyrdom, churches were built in their name. And they worked many miracles there.

There is no skill or strength to glorify you, holy brethren! If we call you Angels, who at once come to the aid of the sorrowing, yet you lived in flesh among men. If we call you men, you surpass the human mind with your multitude of miracles. Shall we call you emperors and princes? You acquired a humility greater than that of simple and humble men, and through it you were established in the heavenly dwellings. Truly you are kings over kings and princes over princes, for by your help and protection our princes sovereignly defeat their adversaries and are glorified by your aid. You are their weapon and ours, you are the bulwark and the foundation of the Russian land, you are the two-edged swords by which we overthrow the insolence of enemies and trample the devil's pride into the earth. Truly and without doubt it must be said: you are heavenly men and earthly Angels, the pillars and foundation of our land. Help, then, your fatherland, as the great Demetrius said: "If I was with them in joy, I will die with them when they perish."

But that great Demetrius spoke this of one city, whereas you have care for and offer prayer not for one city, nor for two, but for all—for the whole Russian land. O blessed vessel that received your honorable bodies as a most precious treasure, blessed church in which your holy

shrines stand, where your blessed bodies are laid! O friends of Christ! Blessed indeed and exalted is the city of Vyshgorod, having such a treasure that the whole world is not equal to it. Truly it is called Vyshgorod, being higher than other cities. It has appeared as a second Thessalonica in the Russian land, possessing a remedy without payment. And salvation was given by God not only to our tribe but to the whole land. From all countries people come there and receive healing without payment, as in the holy Gospel the Lord said to the holy Apostles: "Freely you have received, freely give" (Mt. 10:8).

Of this the Lord Himself said: "He who believes in Me, the works that I do he shall do also, and greater works than these he shall do" (Jn. 14:12).

But, O blessed passion-bearers of Christ, do not forget the fatherland where you lived in the flesh; do not abandon it by your visitation, and in your prayers always pray for us, that evil may not befall us and that sickness may not touch the bodies of your servants. For to you is given the grace to pray for us; the Lord has made you intercessors who pray for us. To you we flee, we beseech you, falling before you with tears; we pray to you that the foot of pride may not tread upon us, that the hand of the sinner may not destroy us, and that every ruin may not overtake us. Drive from us hunger and misfortune, deliver us from the sword and from civil strife, do not let us fall into sin; we trust in you, offer our prayer fervently to Christ God, for we have sinned and committed immeasurable lawlessness. But, hoping in your prayer, let us cry out to the Savior: "O Master, Thou alone art without sin, look down from Thy holy heaven upon us poor ones. We have sinned—cleanse us; we have committed iniquity—spare us; we have stumbled—wait for us; cleanse us as the harlot and forgive us as the publican. Let Thy mercy come, let Thy loving-kindness be poured out upon us, do not forsake us in our sins, do not deliver us to bitter death, but redeem us from the evil of this age, give us time for repentance, for great is our lawlessness before Thee, O Lord. Deal with us mercifully, O Lord, for we name Thee. Have mercy upon us, show compassion, shield us by the prayers of Thy most honorable passion-bearers, do not deliver us to reproach, but pour out Thy mercy upon the sheep of Thy pasture, for Thou art

our God, and to Thee we send up glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

This right-believing Boris was a descendant of a good family, obedient to his father, submissive to all, beautiful in body, tall, broad in the shoulders, slender in the waist; his face was round and cheerful, his eyes kind, his beard and mustache small, for he was still young. He shone with royal splendor, adorned like a flower blooming in his youth. In battle he was brave, in counsel wise and prudent; the grace of God flourished in him.

"Man cannot tell it all; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing" (Eccl. 1:8), said the Preacher. So neither can our mind grasp, nor our tongue express, nor our word declare the wonders of the holy martyrs, what recompense they received from the Lord for their labor as children and partakers of the kingdom of God. As John the Theologian said: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (Jn. 1:12). And David: "To the saints that are in the earth, in them is all my delight" (Ps. 15:3). And again: "O God, terrible art thou in thy sanctuary, thou that alone doest wonders" (Ps. 67:36, 71:18). The Venerable John of Damascus wrote that such men, even after death, are alive and stand before God. Christ the Lord, the Source of our salvation, will grant us their help, for a fragrant myrrh flows from the bodies of the martyrs. And again: whoever believes in God and in the hope of the resurrection will not call them dead. For how could a dead body work miracles, how could devils be driven out by them, diseases pass away, infirmities be healed, the blind receive sight, lepers be cleansed, sorrows and misfortunes cease, and every good gift proceed from the Father of lights through them, and how could they be entreated with faith and without doubt! How much labor you must expend to find an intercessor before a mortal king who answers for you; yet these are intercessors for the whole race, who offer prayers to God on our behalf. How could we not honor those who lead everyone to the Church and to God! Honoring their memory, we joyfully keep the feast of the saints whom the Lord has glorified with abundant grace and miracles: these wonderworkers, the intercessors of all the lands of our Russian land.

Many did not know that the holy martyrs and passion-bearers of Christ, Roman and David, rested in Vyshgorod, but the Lord would not suffer such a treasure to lie hidden in the earth, and revealed it to all. At the place where they lay, sometimes a pillar of fire was seen, and sometimes Angelic singing was heard. Hearing and seeing this, the people glorified God and came with fear to worship at that place. Many came also from other lands. Some believed the reports, others did not believe, considering it a lie, as the Apostle said of the Cross: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). And the Lord said in the holy Gospel: "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken" (Mt. 21:44), but he who believes in Him shall not be put to shame. Once Varangians came to the place where the saints lay buried beneath the earth, and one of them stepped onto it; at once fire came out of the grave and scorched the Varangian's feet. He leapt up, began to tell of it, and showed his comrades his scorched feet. From then on they did not dare to approach closely, but worshipped with fear. Soon after, the church of St. Basil, where the saints had been laid, caught fire. The sexton of that church, after the end of Matins, was overcome by sleep from the all-cunning Satan, and without properly looking over the church he went home, forgetting to extinguish a candle burning in a high place. Some time later the church caught fire. People rushed to it; the church burned from the top; everything was carried out from there, icons and vessels, so that nothing burned except the building itself. All this happened by God's permission. The church was of wood and had grown old. The Lord showed by this His will that another church be built on that spot in the name of the holy blessed passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, and that their bodies be lovingly taken out from the depths of the earth, which also came to pass. Of all this they told Yaroslav. The prince summoned Metropolitan John, told him of his brothers, the holy martyrs, and he was as if in terror, doubt, joy and confidence toward God. Leaving the prince, the metropolitan gathered the choristers and all the priests and bade them go in procession with the cross to Vyshgorod. They went to the place where the saints lay, and with them Prince Yaroslav. On the spot where the burned church had stood, they

set up a small chapel. The archbishop, coming with the crosses, celebrated an all-night service in it. Early in the morning the archbishop went with the crosses to the place where the most honorable bodies of the saints lay, offered prayer, and bade them dig up the earth above the saints' grave. Having dug, they took the coffin out of the earth. Metropolitan John and the presbyters approached with fear and love and opened the coffin of the saints, and they saw a most glorious miracle. The bodies of the saints had no damage whatever, but were entirely whole and white as snow, their faces bright as those of Angels, and a fragrance came from them. The archbishop and all the people were greatly amazed. They carried the bodies into that chapel which had been set up on the site of the burned church, and laid them above the ground on the right side.

In Vyshgorod there was a man named Mironeg, a gardener. He had a son whose leg had dried up and become crooked. He could not walk and felt nothing in it. He walked by making himself a wooden leg. He came to the saints, fell before their grave, and prayed to God and the saints, asking healing from them. So he prayed day and night with tears. One night the holy passion-bearers of Christ, Roman and David, appeared to him and said: "Why do you cry out to us?"

He showed the leg in need of healing. They took the dry leg and made the sign of the cross over it three times. Waking from sleep, he saw himself healthy and leapt up, glorifying God and the saints. Then he told everyone how the saints had healed him, and said that he had also seen George, the young servant of St. Boris, who went before the saints carrying a candle. Seeing such a miracle, the people glorified God.

A certain blind man came, fell before the grave of the saints, kissed it with love, pressing his eyes to it and asking for healing. At once he received sight. And all glorified God.

Then Mironeg told the prince of both miracles. Prince Yaroslav glorified God and the holy martyrs, and, summoning Metropolitan John, joyfully told him what he had heard. The archbishop also gave praise to God and gave the prince a God-pleasing counsel to build a beautiful church. The prince was pleased with his counsel and ordered

carpenters to prepare timber for the construction of the church. It was already winter. The carpenters prepared the timber, and at the coming of summer built a great church with five domes. The prince adorned it with all manner of painting and had icons of the saints written, so that the faithful might see in the church, as it were, the saints themselves, and worship them and kiss them with faith and love. In a procession, Metropolitan John, Prince Yaroslav, all the priests and the whole people carried the relics of the saints into the church and consecrated it. And they appointed the celebration of the month of July on the 24th day, when the most blessed Boris was killed. On this same day the translation of the holy relics and the consecration of the church took place.

When the prince and the metropolitan were present at the Divine Liturgy, a lame man happened to be in the church. With great difficulty he crawled into the church, praying to God and the saints. And at once his legs became strong, by the grace of God and the prayers of the saints. Rising, he walked before everyone. Seeing this miracle, the Right-believing Prince Yaroslav, the metropolitan and all the people gave praise to God and the saints.

After the Liturgy the prince invited everyone to the feast: both the metropolitan and the presbyters, and they kept the feast as was fitting. And the prince gave away much property to the poor, the orphans and the widows.

And Yaroslav died (in 1054), having lived honorably for 38 years after the death of his father, and leaving as heirs his sons Izyaslav, Svyatoslav and Vsevolod, dividing the inheritance among them as was fitting: he set Izyaslav, the eldest, to reign in Kiev, Svyatoslav in Chernigov, Vsevolod in Pereyaslavl, and the rest in other domains. Prince Izyaslav, who inherited the grand principality, placed the body of his father in a marble coffin, which he set in the vestibule of the church of St. Sophia, which had been built by his father.[25]

Two years passed and the church had already grown old. Once, coming into it, Izyaslav Yaroslavich saw its decay, summoned the chief

25. This Kiev church was founded in 1037.

of the carpenters and bade him build a new, one-domed church in the name of the holy passion-bearers, and he also indicated a place for it near the first, decayed church. The prince also begged Metropolitan George to pray at that place and give the money needed for building the church. The chief of the carpenters gathered all his workmen and soon built the church on the designated spot. Hearing of this, the prince sent to the elder of the city with the words: "I give from the princely tribute for the adornment of the church."

When the church had been completely finished, the God-loving Izyaslav entreated Archbishop George to appoint the translation of the relics of the saints into the new church. The brothers Izyaslav and Vsevolod assembled, with Metropolitan George of Kiev and others: Neophytus, Bishop of Chernigov; Peter of Pereyaslavl; Nikita of Belozersk; Michael of Yuryev; the abbot of the Kiev Caves Monastery, Theodosius; Sophronius of St. Michael's; Herman of the Holy Savior's; and all the other abbots, and they celebrated a bright festival. First the princes took the body of St. Boris on their shoulders in a wooden coffin and bore it, preceded by the Venerable black-robed monks with candles. Behind the monks came the deacons and presbyters, then the metropolitan and the bishops. Having brought it in, they set the coffin in the church and opened it, and the church was filled with a wondrous fragrance. All who saw it glorified God. The metropolitan, however, was seized with dread, for he had not firmly believed in the saints; he fell prostrate and asked forgiveness. Having kissed the relics, they laid them in a stone coffin. Then they took the stone coffin with the body of St. Gleb, set it on a sled, and, taking hold of the ropes, drew it. When they were already at the doors, the coffin stopped and would not move forward. Then they ordered the people to cry out, "Lord, have mercy!" And they prayed to the Lord and the saints. And at once they moved the coffin. Afterward they kissed the head of St. Boris. Metropolitan George took the hand of St. Gleb and blessed the princes Izyaslav, Svyatoslav and Vsevolod. And again Svyatoslav, taking the metropolitan's hand, which was holding the saint's hand, applied it to the sore that he had on his neck, to his eyes and to his crown. Then he laid the hand in the coffin,

and they began to sing the Divine Liturgy. Then Svyatoslav said to Bern: "Something is pricking my head."

Bern lifted his hood and, seeing on the head a fingernail of St. Gleb, removed it and gave it to Sviatoslav. He in turn glorified God for the good gift of the saints. After the Divine Liturgy all the brothers went and dined together. They celebrated the feast brightly and did much almsgiving to the poor. Then they kissed one another and departed peacefully each to his own home. And from that time[26] this feast was established on the 2nd day of the month of May, in honor and glory of the holy martyrs, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A certain man was mute and lame; his leg had been amputated at the knee. Having made a wooden leg, he walked on it. He remained at the church of the saints with other poor people, receiving from Christians alms, clothing, or whatever anyone wished to give. In Vyshgorod there was a chief of the gardeners whose worldly name was Zhdan and whose name in holy baptism was Nicholas. He celebrated the feast of St. Nicholas every year. On one of the days of his feast the poor went out, and that lame man among them, hoping to receive something. Entering that house, he sat down before the chamber. It so happened that he was given neither food nor drink, and he sat hungry and thirsty. Then suddenly he fell into an ecstasy and saw a vision. It seemed to him that he was sitting at the church of the saints. And he saw Boris and Gleb come out as if from the sanctuary and walk toward him, and he fell prostrate. The saints took him by the hand, seated him, and began to speak of his healing. Then they signed his lips with the cross, took his diseased leg, as if anointed it with oil, and pulled it by the knee. All this the sick man saw as if in a dream, for he had fallen prostrate in that house. Seeing him stretched out on the ground, people turned him this way and that. But he lay as one dead, having no strength to move either his lips or his eyes. Only his soul was in him, and his heart beat within him. Everyone thought that a demon had struck him. They took him up, carried him, and laid him before the doors of the church of the saints. Many people stood around, looking

26. That is, from 1072.

and marveling at the glorious miracle. From the sufferer's knee a leg appeared and began to grow until it equaled the other, and this took place not over a long time but within one hour. Seeing this, those present glorified God and His saints, the martyrs Roman and David. And all cried out:

"Who can utter the might of the Lord, or show forth all His praise? Blessed be the Lord God, who alone doeth wonders!" (Ps. 105:2; 71:18).

In the town of Dorogobuzh a certain woman, a slave, was working in her mistress's house by her command on the day of St. Nicholas, when everyone was going to his church. Other women, seeing her at work, began to reproach her and called her to church. But she did not heed them and continued her task. Suddenly three men in white robes rode into the yard. Looking out of the doors, she saw them. One of them was old; on either side of him were two youths. And the youths said to her:

"O woman, how dared you offend our father Nicholas by working on his feast and not going to church?"

She answered them:

"I am a poor widow; I must work, not go to church."

Then the old man said to the youths:

"Why do you talk with her? Pull down her house."

They came forward and tore down the house halfway. The old man, approaching the woman, took her by the right hand and threw her out of the room. And she fell down as one dead. Seeing the woman stretched out, her neighbors took her and carried her to another house. They laid her down and sat beside her, wishing to hear what she would say. But she could move neither her eyes nor her lips; she lay as one dead and ate nothing herself, only, parting her lips, they poured milk or water into her mouth with a spoon. So she remained until the Great Fast. On Meatfare Sunday they took the woman and carried her to the church of St. Nicholas. After the prayer said over her, she partly opened her eyes and, as if waking from sleep, asked for food; she was able to take nourishment and related what had happened. Her right hand, however, had withered, and she could not feel it. And so she no

longer had strength to serve her masters. Seeing her so feeble, her mistress drove her away, and the child who had been born to her in freedom became a slave. But the judges did not permit such a thing and ordered the mistress to forfeit her price, and they freed both of them, since she had worked under compulsion and had suffered punishment. Three years passed. The withered-handed woman heard that a man whose hands and feet had been drawn up received healing in the church of the holy martyrs Roman and David. And so she set out for Vyshgorod. She came on a Saturday, when the canon of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos was being sung, and presented herself to Lazarus, the senior of the clergy of that church. He bade her spend the night at the church. In the morning, when they were going with the crosses to the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, the withered-handed woman approached Lazarus and told him this dream of hers:

"When I was sitting at the church this night, two beautiful youths came to me and said: Who set you here? I answered: The priest Lazarus told me so, saying, 'Sit here; perhaps God, through the prayer of the holy martyrs, will heal you.' Hearing this, at once the elder of the youths, taking off a ring, gave it to me and said: Put it on your hand and cross yourself, and it will heal your hand."

Hearing this, Lazarus bade her attend the liturgy at the church doors, so that after the singing and prayers were ended her hand might be anointed with oil from the censer. They began to sing the liturgy. When they had sung "Holy God" and the cantor said "the song to the Theotokos, the prokeimenon: My soul doth magnify," suddenly the woman's dry hand began to ache; the bandage supporting the hand fell away, and the woman rushed toward the sanctuary, trembling and shaking her hand. Seeing this, all the people and clergy took her to be possessed and drew her toward the tomb of the saints. Looking at her and recognizing her, Lazarus was struck with terror. And at that moment her hand was being healed. All who saw this glorified God for such a miracle, marveling at the swift visitation of God and the power of the holy martyrs of Christ.

In the city there lived a certain blind man. He came to the church of St. George and prayed to the saint, asking for sight. One night St.

George the martyr appeared to him and said: "Why do you cry out to me? If you wish to see again, I will tell you how to attain it. Go to Sts. Boris and Gleb; if they are willing, they will grant you the sight for which you ask. For God has given them grace in the Russian land to forgive and heal every kind of torment and infirmity."

Seeing this and hearing it, the blind man awoke and set out on his way, as he had been bidden. He came to the church of the holy martyrs and remained there several days, falling down and beseeching the saints, until they visited him. And he regained his sight and began to see, glorifying God and the holy martyrs, since he had received healing. And he told everyone how, as he had seen, the holy martyrs had come to him, signed his eyes with the cross three times, and at once they were opened. All gave thanks to God for those glorious, wondrous and ineffable miracles that were wrought by the holy martyrs. For it is written: "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them" (Ps. 144:19), and again: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven and in earth" (Ps. 113:11).

The miracles of the saints multiplied and their grace grew. And as it is written in the holy Gospel: "the world itself could not contain the books" (Jn. 21:25), they were wrought without being recorded, and whoever knew of them told them. Then Svyatoslav, son of Yaroslav, resolved to build a stone church for the saints; he erected it to a height of 50 cubits, and died (in 1079). Vsevolod, having become prince in the Russian land, completed it entirely. But when it was finished, at once that very night its upper part fell and the whole of it was destroyed. Afterward Vsevolod died (in 1093), having lived peacefully and well administered the rule entrusted to him by God. The princely rule in Kiev was assumed by Svyatopolk Izyaslavich, while David and Oleg held Chernigov and Vladimir held Pereyaslavl. In those times the enemies of our land grew stronger than we and inflicted much violence upon us for our sins. The church of the holy martyrs fell into neglect, and no one could take thought for its building or for the recording of its miracles.

This is what eyewitnesses related of the miracle that occurred. Sviatopolk the Prince had cast two men into an underground dungeon in

heavy fetters on some charge, without examining the matter, but simply listening to those who had slandered them. He forgot what the prophet David had said: "A perverse heart shall depart from me: I will not know an evil thing. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off" (Ps. 100:4–5). Having shut the men up in the dungeon, the prince forgot about them. Being in such distress, they prayed much to the holy Passion-bearers, and every Sunday they gave a guard money to buy a prosphora and bring it to the church of Sts. Roman and David. Much time passed, and the prisoners still languished in sorrow and grief, praying unceasingly and calling upon the holy Passion-bearers. And they did not disdain them, but saved them, interceded for them and helped them. One night, when the doors of the dungeon were locked and the ladder taken away and lay outside, while these prisoners and many others were sleeping, one of the imprisoned men suddenly found himself sleeping outside, above the dungeon. He awoke free of his bonds and saw that the iron fetters which had been on him and on his companion were broken and lay beside him, and the hoops that had been on his feet were twisted like rope. Rising up, he glorified God and His saints. Remembering what he had seen, he called the guard, showed him what had happened and said: "Take me to the church of the glorious martyrs."

Coming to the church for Matins, which was on a Thursday, he bowed before the holy shrines and said to all the clergy and people present in the church:

"When we and many others were sleeping in the dungeon, suddenly its roof seemed to lift, and we saw that holy men had entered and said: 'Why are you here?' We answered: 'Such is the prince's will; we were slandered.' The saints said to us: 'We command you: you go to the church and tell what you have seen, but your companion we leave in the dungeon. We have made him blind as proof for others, when they do not believe. We ourselves will depart to the Greek land; returning in three days, we shall visit him and restore his sight. Then go and say to the prince: Why do you act thus, without examining the matter, tormenting and torturing? If you do not repent of this and cease to act so, know that you cannot escape hell.' Having said this and more, they

vanished from our eyes. I, who saw this, have told you, brethren. If you wish to see and hear better, let us go to the dungeon."

Coming to it, all saw that the locks were undamaged and fastened, and the ladder by which people go in and out lay outside. They marveled and glorified the Lord and the saints. Opening the dungeon, they saw that the prisoner of whom it was said had indeed gone blind, so that not even his eyelids or lashes could be distinguished; but he had no bonds on him. Questioned, he related the same thing. Then both prisoners were released, and they did not leave the church day or night, especially the blinded one; as if ashamed before the saints, and as if asking for what was owed, he fell down before the tombs and, praying, said: "O holy servants of Christ, do not disdain or forget your promise. Grant me according to your vow, to which you bound yourselves."

So he did for three days. Sunday came; he went to the church and prayed until Matins. His cries annoyed those who were singing, so that they became angry and said:

"This blind man should be removed, for one cannot sing."

But he remained, struggling and falling down before the saints, and cried out:

"Have mercy on me, for this was promised me."

Then he suddenly turned around and said:

"Sing: 'Lord, have mercy!' Behold the glory of God and of the saints: see, I have received my sight."

And his eyes became sound, as though they had never been ill or blind. Then all glorified God and the holy Passion-bearers. Then they went and told Prince Sviatopolk what they had heard and seen. And from then on he seldom did violence to people, and for many years he kept a feast for the saints, often coming in summer to Vyshgorod.

He also wished to build a church on the old site, above the tomb of the saints, saying: "I dare not move them from place to place."

But by God's providence and the will of the holy martyrs his purpose was not fulfilled. In those times, as has been said, Vladimir, son of Vsevolod, called Monomakh, was ruling in the land of Pereiaslavl. He had great love for the saints and made many offerings to them. He conceived the plan of overlaying the holy shrines of the honorable martyrs

with silver and gold. Coming by night, he measured the tombs, and, removing the silver boards, gilded them. Then, coming again by night, he overlaid all the wonder-working and most praiseworthy holy tombs, and left in the night. Those who came in the morning saw this with joy, bowed down, and gave praise to the saints and to God, who had placed such a thought in the heart of the right-believing prince. With many words they praised his meekness and humility, his nobility and great wisdom, his love for the saints and his zeal for God and the holy churches, which the right-believing Prince Vladimir displayed, especially toward these saints.

He did this in the year 6610 (1102), and after the translation of the relics he did an even greater work over the holy tombs. Having wrought silver panels with images of the saints, he gilded them, adorned them with silver and gold, and set large gilded crystal candelabra on which candles burned. He arranged everything so beautifully that such beauty cannot be described. And those who came from Greece and from other lands said: "We have seen many shrines of saints, but nowhere was there such beauty."

So well did he arrange everything, in memory of his good deeds and for a blessing from the Lord, who said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, but in heaven" (Mt. 6:19–20), and from the saints, whom he so honored, and for the praise and blessing of the people who saw and heard.

When Vladimir had overlaid the shrines of the saints, Prince Oleg, son of Sviatoslav, resolved to build a stone church in place of the one that had fallen into ruin in Vyshgorod. He brought church-builders and ordered them to build, giving them abundantly everything that was needed. When the church was built and painted, he often urged and begged Sviatopolk to translate the holy martyrs into the newly built church. But the latter, out of envy of his labor, did not wish to do so, since he had not himself built that church.

Some time later Sviatopolk reposed, in the second summer after the adornment of the church. There was then a great revolt and sedition among the people, and murmuring. Then all the people, especially the great and famous men, united and came to Vladimir with a request that

he put an end to the sedition. He went, quelled the revolt and the murmuring, and took the princely rule in the Russian land.

In the year 6623 (1115), when Vladimir was ruling in Rus', he resolved to translate these holy Passion-bearers into the newly built church, and announced this to his brothers David and Oleg. They had always begged and urged Vladimir to translate the relics of the saints. Then Vladimir with his sons, and then David and Oleg with their sons, came to Vyshgorod. Metropolitan Nicephorus also arrived, having gathered all the bishops: Theoctistus from Chernigov, Lazarus from Pereiaslavl, Mina from Polotsk, Daniel from Yuriev, and all the abbots: Prochorus of the Kiev Caves, Sabbas from the Holy Savior, Silvester from St. Michael's, Peter from the monastery of the Holy Theotokos of Blachernae, Gregory from St. Andrew's, Theophilus from St. Demetrius', and many other abbots, and the whole order of hierarchs and monastics, all clergy and all priests. And there gathered here from all the regions of the Russian land and from other lands a great multitude of people and princes, all the boyars, elders and voivodes of the whole Russian land and of all the regions subject to it; in short, all people were there, every region, rich and poor, healthy and sick, so that the whole city was filled, and the people found no room even along the city walls. On the 1st day of the month of May the church was consecrated, on the Saturday of the second week after Pascha. On the morning of the Holy Sunday, the 2nd day of the same month, they began to sing Matins in both churches. First they placed the shrine of St. Boris on a decorated sled that had been built for this purpose, and drew it. Vladimir went behind the sled with reverence and humility, and the metropolitan and priests with candles and censers. The sled was drawn by thick ropes, and the nobles and all the boyars strained and labored, pressing together. The ropes were tied on both sides, and by them the honorable shrines were drawn, and it was impossible either to walk or to pull the sled because of the multitude of people. Then Vladimir ordered money, furs and cloth to be thrown to the people. Seeing this, some of the people rushed to them, while others, leaving this, hastened to the holy shrines to be worthy of touching them. However many people there were, no one could hold back tears of joy and great re-

joicing. And so they could barely manage to draw the sled. The shrine of St. Gleb was likewise carried on another sled, accompanied by Prince David, bishops, clergy, boyars and countless people, who all cried out: "Lord, have mercy," and with tears called upon God. And a great miracle occurred. The relics of St. Boris were drawn safely, the only difficulty being the crowding of the people. But when they began to draw St. Gleb, the shrine stopped and would not move. They dragged it by force, but the ropes broke, though they were so thick that a man could barely encircle them with both arms. And they broke all at once. The people cried: "Lord, have mercy." There were a multitude of them throughout the whole city, crowding along the fences and the city walls. And from all the people there rose a cry: "Lord, have mercy." And at once the shrine began to move of its own accord. Thus the holy Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb were brought and honorably laid in the newly built church on the right side, on the 2nd day of the month of May. Then all went to their homes, glorifying God and the holy Passion-bearers.

In the city of Vladimir-on-the-Klyazma reigned Vsevolod Yurievich, grandson of Vladimir Monomakh. Two nephews rose against him, Mstislav and Yaropolk Rostislavich (in 1175), who came from Great Novgorod, secretly summoned by the people of Rostov to reign. They went to war against Vsevolod, their uncle, toward the city of Vladimir, desiring to drive the prince from his patrimony and obtain for themselves a greater domain. After a great battle the Rostislavichi were defeated by Vsevolod, taken captive and brought to Vladimir. Vsevolod set guards over them, but allowed them to go about at liberty. The men of Vladimir, seeing these captive princes at liberty and not in a dungeon, murmured, and coming with weapons to the court of their prince Vsevolod, they cried out:

"Why, Prince, do you keep our enemies not in chains but at liberty? Either put them to death, or blind them, or give them over to us."

Being merciful, Vsevolod did not wish to do harm to the princes taken in war, but for the sake of the people he ordered them to be placed in a dungeon, so that the popular uprising might be calmed.

After some time the men of Vladimir began again to call out to the Grand Prince Vsevolod:

"Give us the Rostislavichi, we wish to blind them."

The Grand Prince was saddened, but could not restrain the people from rebellion. The men of Vladimir broke open the dungeon and, seizing Mstislav and Yaropolk, blinded them and let them go. Thus the unhappy Rostislavichi, Mstislav and Yaropolk, who had desired greater glory and power, were subdued and blinded. And so they went to Smolensk and came to Smyadynya, to the church of the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb. It was then the day of the memory of the murder of St. Gleb, 5 September. And the princes prayed to God with great fervor and called upon the holy martyrs, as their kinsmen, that the saints might send them relief, since the sores in the place of their eyes were festering. As they prayed, the pain first was relieved, and then sight was unexpectedly granted to them. Seeing clearly, the Rostislavichi began to glorify and thank God, the Most Pure Theotokos, and the holy princes Roman and David. And they returned with joy to their homes, telling everywhere of the mercy of the Lord, bestowed upon them through the prayer of the holy martyrs.

In the city of Turov there lived in ancient times[27] a certain elder named Martin, who had formerly been a cook for the bishops of Turov, Simeon, Ignatius, Joachim and George. Bishop George released Martin from service on account of his old age. Having received the monastic habit, Martin began to live in the bishop's monastery by the church of the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb, alone in a cell. He often suffered from an illness of the bowels. When the pains came upon him, the elder lay crying out from the pain, unable to rise and attend to his body. Once, suffering from that ailment, he lay in his cell and was faint from thirst. But no one visited him, since water had then spread around the monastery. On the third day the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb came in to him, in the form in which they were depicted on the icon, and said:

"What ails you, elder?"

He told them of his affliction. And they asked him:

27. In the middle of the twelfth century.

"Do you not need some water?"

"O my lords," answered the elder, "I have been thirsting for it for a long time."

One of them took a yoke and brought water, and the other dipped a ladle. And they gave the elder to drink. Then he asked them:

"Whose sons are you?"

They answered him:

"We are the brothers of Yaroslav."

The elder, thinking that they were kinsmen of Prince George Yaroslav, said:

"May the Lord grant you many years, my lords. Take bread yourselves and eat, for I cannot myself serve you."

They answered:

"Let the bread remain for you, and we shall go. And do not be ill any more, but sleep."

And at once they became invisible. Recovered, the elder understood that the holy Boris and Gleb had visited him, and rising he glorified God and His saints. And from that time he never again suffered from that ailment, but was always well, and he told the brethren of the healing granted him by the holy martyrs.

The right-believing Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, surnamed Nevsky, during his reign in Great Novgorod, waged war against the Swedes. When he came with his army to the river Neva, one of his voivodes, a God-fearing man named Philip, fulfilling the night watch entrusted to him, saw at sunrise a ship sailing upon the water; in the midst of the ship stood the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb in crimson garments, while the rowers sat, clothed as it were in mist. And the holy Boris said to the holy Gleb:

"Brother Gleb, let us go quickly and help our kinsman, Prince Alexander, against the frenzied enemies."

The voivode related this vision to his prince. And on that day Prince Alexander, by the help of the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb, defeated and trampled down the might of the Swedes; he himself wounded their leader Birger with his sword in the face, and returned in triumph to Great Novgorod[28].

In like manner, when the Grand Prince of Moscow Demetrius Ivanovich waged war against the Tatar tsar Mamai, the night watchman Thomas Khatsibeev saw such a vision revealed to him by God. A great cloud appeared on high, and from the east there came as it were great regiments, while from the south there appeared two shining youths holding candles and sharp drawn swords. These youths were the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb. And they said to the Tatar commanders:

"Who has bidden you destroy our fatherland, given us by the Lord?"

And they began to cut down the enemies, so that none of them survived. In the morning that watchman related his vision to the Grand Prince. The prince, raising his eyes to heaven and lifting up his hands, began to pray with tears, saying:

"Lord, Lover of mankind, through the prayer of the holy martyrs Boris and Gleb, help me! As Moses against Amalek (Ex. 17), as David against Goliath (1 Kgdms. 17), as Yaroslav against Sviatopolk, as my forefather Alexander against the Swedish king, so grant me help against Mamai."

And on that day the Grand Prince of Moscow Demetrius, through the prayer of the holy passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, defeated Mamai, Tatar tsar[29].

This and very many other miracles the Lord wrought through the holy passion-bearers, whom people venerate, asking forgiveness of sins through Christ Jesus our Lord. To Him be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 2:

True passion-bearers and genuine hearers of the Gospel of Christ, chaste Roman with meek David, when your brother, who was an

28. This took place in 1240.
29. This took place on 8 September 1380.

enemy, rose against you, you did not resist; he could kill your bodies, but could not touch your souls. Let the wicked lover of power weep; but you, rejoicing with the choirs of Angels and standing before the Holy Trinity, pray for the realm of your kinsmen, that it may be pleasing to God, and that the sons of Russia may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Today your most glorious memory has shone forth, noble passion-bearers of Christ, Roman and David, calling us to praise Christ our God. Therefore, coming to the reliquary of your relics, we receive the gift of healing through your prayers, O holy ones, for you are divine physicians.

On the same day is the memory of our Father among the saints Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria. His memory is celebrated also on 18 January, where his life is also placed.

* * *

NOTES

2903. Concerning the early age of Sts. Boris and Gleb, the Venerable Nestor reports the following. St. Vladimir sent all his children out to the appanages that he had given them to govern, but kept Boris and Gleb with him, because they were very young. St. Gleb was still a mere child, while St. Boris already showed high understanding, was full of the grace of God, knew letters and loved to read books. He read the lives and sufferings of the saints, and praying with tears he asked the Lord to vouchsafe him the lot of one of these saints. Thus he prayed constantly, and St. Gleb listened to him, never leaving his side. When St. Boris reached maturity, his father planned to marry him. But the saint did not desire marriage. The boyars, however, persuaded him not to disobey his father. Out of obedience to his father, the saint entered into marriage at their request. Then his father sent him to reign at Vladimir Volynsky, where he showed much mercy; but learning that Sviatopolk, out of envy, was plotting against Boris's life, he recalled him to Kiev. This may have been before the sending of Boris to Rostov.

THE THIRD DAY OF MAY

May 3

3 мая

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

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Timothy and Mavra

Страдание святых мучеников Тимофея и Мавры

During the persecution of Christians raised by the impious Roman emperor Diocletian[1], the hegemon Arrian[2] was appointed to pursue the Christians in Thebaid[3]. Among the other Christians brought before him for examination was Timothy, a church reader[4]. He came from the village of Perapei, was still young in years, and had shortly before entered into marriage with the maiden Mavra. Twenty days after the wedding he was seized by the pagans and brought before the hegemon for interrogation. When the hegemon saw him, he first asked:

"Who are you, and what office do you hold?"

Timothy answered:

"I am a Christian, and I serve as a reader in the church of God."

The hegemon said to him:

"Have you alone not heard of the imperial edict commanding that all who will not offer sacrifice to our great gods be given over to torments and to death?"

Timothy answered:

"With my whole heart I believe, and I belong entirely to my Lord, Jesus Christ, and therefore I cannot offer sacrifice to your gods."

1. Diocletian governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
2. The governor Arrian afterward himself turned to Christ and was granted to receive the crown of martyrdom. His memory is celebrated on December 14.
3. Thebaid – a region in Middle Egypt.
4. A reader or cantor; Timothy's duties consisted not only in reading but also in keeping the liturgical books.

The hegemon Arrian continued:

"Do you not see the instruments of torture prepared and lying beside you?"

Timothy answered:

"In any case, you do not see the Angels of God who strengthen me."

The hegemon said to the saint:

"Give me your books[5], that I may understand the magical power contained in them."

The saint answered:

"Foolish and senseless man! Do you not know that no one ever gives his children over to death? And the books I have copied out are my children: when I read them, the Angels of God stand before me."

The hegemon said:

"You refuse both to offer sacrifice to our gods and to show me your books. Take care lest this disobedience of yours be the cause of your torments."

But the holy Timothy answered thus:

"I will not offer sacrifice, and I will not show you my books, because I am a Christian."

Then the hegemon, enraged, ordered his servants to bring two sharp iron rods, heated red-hot, and to thrust them into the ears of the holy Timothy. From the unbearable pain the martyr's eyes gushed out, so that he could see nothing.

After this the servants of the hegemon said to the saint:

"Since you would not offer sacrifice to our gods, see now, you have lost your sight."

The holy Timothy answered them:

"My bodily eyes, which have seen much that is unseemly, have now suffered and been blinded; but my inner, spiritual eyes enlighten my soul."

After the saint had said this, the hegemon ordered that his hands be bound behind him, that a piece of wood be put into his mouth, and that

5. It should be noted that Diocletian's edict prescribed not only the persecution of the Christians themselves, but also the destruction of their churches and the burning of their sacred books. On this basis, the governor Arrian demands from Timothy his liturgical books.

he be hung head downward; and to increase the saint's sufferings, the tormentor ordered a heavy stone tied to his neck.

When the servants of the hegemon set about carrying out this impious command, the saint, lifting his eyes to heaven, said:

"I believe that there is a God who dwells in heaven, Who is able to deliver me from these torments."

The sufferings which Timothy endured were so dreadful that even the tormentors themselves were moved to pity for him, and they begged the hegemon to induce Timothy, not so much by cruelty as by mercy, to comply with the imperial command. At the same time, wishing to appease the hegemon, the servants told him that Timothy had entered into marriage only twenty days before, and that his wife was a very young woman.

Hearing this, the hegemon ordered Timothy's wife brought before the tribunal, and said to her:

"What is your name?"

"My name is Mavra," the saint answered.

The hegemon said to her:

"I deeply sympathize with your misfortune, since you, being so young, are already preparing to become a widow. I command you: clothe yourself in your finest garments, braid your hair, adorn your face, and go at once to your husband; when you come to him, persuade him to offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you may not in truth become a widow at so young an age. If you persuade him to offer sacrifice to the gods, I will reward you with many gifts, gold and silver."

Mavra did everything as the hegemon had commanded. Arrayed in bright garments, she went to her husband and long urged him to fulfill, if only for a time, the hegemon's command, so that he might thereby be freed from many torments. But her husband could not say a word to her, for into his mouth had been put a piece of wood which prevented him from speaking.

Then Mavra returned to the hegemon and began earnestly to beg him to order that the wood be removed from her husband's mouth, so that he might be able to speak. The hegemon agreed to grant her re-

quest. The wood was taken out of the martyr's mouth, and Mavra went again to the holy Timothy.

The saint, who could not see, perceiving the fragrance from Mavra's garments, cried out loudly:

"Where is my father, the presbyter Pikolpos?"

His father, who was standing not far off in the crowd and watching his son's sufferings, approached him and said:

"What do you need, beloved son of mine?"

Timothy answered:

"I beg you, father, do one good deed for me: take some rag and cover my face, that I may not smell the soul-destroying fragrance rising from Mavra's garments. This fragrance is baneful to people; it prepares for them Gehenna; this aroma is the source of lust, the companion of the devil; it is loathsome and abominable to holy and righteous people."

When the saint had finished speaking, Mavra said to him:

"Beloved Timothy! Why do you so humiliate me? I have not yet offended you in anything! Only twenty days have passed since we were married, and you have not yet properly come to know my character, just as I have not yet properly learned the ways of your house. I am far from the vice of which you accuse me, for I have never yet promised myself to any man. Now, seeing you in such great torment, I weep bitterly for you and suffer unbearably in my heart, because you endure torments without guilt. Your sufferings wound my soul too, for you wish to leave me a widow. But perhaps you have borrowed money from someone and, having nothing with which to repay the debt, you now endure torments at the hands of your creditors? If that is so, let us sell our finest garments and pay the debt; and if you endure such great torment because of a public debt, because of taxes you have nothing to pay with, then here before you is all our household goods, our gold and all our clothing; sell all of it and pay the tax to the emperor."

After this the holy Timothy said to her:

"My sister Mavra! When I saw you with my spiritual eyes coming out of the house, I noticed the devil walking at your right side. He held in his hands a key with which he turned your heart toward worldly delights and attachments."

Mavra answered him:

"My brother Timothy! I have been seeking you; and afterward, where shall I find you? Here comes the Sabbath or the Lord's day: who will then read your books?"

The holy Timothy answered her:

"Leave the vanity of this world and come with me to this valiant contest, O Mavra! God will forgive us all our sins for this struggle and make us worthy of gracious crowns in His kingdom."

Mavra said:

"When I came to you, my heart was indeed full of worldly attachments, but as soon as you began to speak with me, the grace of God overshadowed me. Know, then, my beloved brother, that I desire the very same thing that you desire."

The holy Timothy answered her:

"If you truly speak the truth, then go to the hegemon and expose his impiety."

The holy Mavra answered:

"I am afraid, brother, that I may be terrified after I see the multitude of instruments of torture and the angry hegemon. I fear that I will not endure cruel torments, for I am still too young in years — I am only seventeen."

The holy Timothy answered her:

"Trust in the Lord and our God Jesus Christ, and all the torments will be for you as oil poured upon your body, and as dew refreshing your bones and easing all your sufferings."

Then the holy martyr began to pray to God on her behalf, saying: "God and Father of all grace, Who gave help to the three youths (Dan. 3) cast into the fiery furnace; Who delivered Daniel from the mouths of lions[2930]; Who through the prophet Habakkuk sent food to the prophet, Who helped not only in the lions' den but also in the fiery furnace, and Who saved those who trusted in Thee, as a testimony to all of Thy love for mankind, by the power of which Thou didst make prisoners into prophets and martyrs: Thou, O Lord, Lord, look also now upon Thy servant Mavra! Thou, O Lord, Who joined us in marriage, join us also in this struggle, that we not be cut off from the company of Thy holy

martyrs; Thou, O Lord, give us strength to endure bravely all torments and death itself, that all our adversaries may be put to shame, who will not be able to separate us from the one faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord. To Him, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, belongs all glory unto ages of ages. Amen!

After the holy Timothy had prayed to God for his wife Mavra, she, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, went to the hegemon and, standing before him, said:

"O impious hegemon! You promised to give me silver and gold in order to bring my soul to perdition; you desire nothing more than to bring human souls to perdition! Yet you will not overcome me by any enticements, for I stand before you clothed in the whole armor of our Lord and God."

The hegemon Arrian said to his counselors and servants:

"Did I not tell you that Timothy is a sorcerer? See, he has bewitched his wife with his magic, inciting her to oppose our command."

Then, turning to Mavra, the hegemon said to her:

And you, together with Timothy, choose death instead of life. Think for a little while, and you will see that you deprive yourself of this sweet life and deliver yourself to bitter torments. But perhaps, foreseeing your husband's death and your own widowhood, you have resolved to die together with him? In that case, do not be troubled or grieved, for you shall not be a widow: I will give you in marriage to one of my best and wealthiest centurions[6], so that you may enjoy this life with him and be exalted still further, since you will have a husband more noble than the first.

To this the holy Mavra answered:

"I have renounced all the vanity of the world; therefore I have no need of your centurion. I tell you truly that I have betrothed myself to the Heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Trusting in Him, I have come before you with a courageous heart, and I am in no way afraid of your unrighteous judgment."

6. A centurion – the commander of a detachment of soldiers, usually of one hundred men.

Enraged, the hegemon commanded that her hair be torn until every strand had been pulled out. Then he said to the holy martyr:

"Behold, the hair has already been torn from your head. I advise you to offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you will not have to endure many other, still more grievous, torments."

The holy Mavra answered:

"Now I know, O hegemon, that Christ Himself receives me to Himself and forgives me the sin I committed in ignorance: namely, that, having listened to your evil counsel, I adorned my hair in order to entice my husband. You did well to tear it out, for with the removal of my hair a great sin is removed from me. Now I shall no longer be a stumbling-block to the people standing around who are watching me."

Hearing such words from the saint, the hegemon was greatly enraged and commanded that her fingers be cut off and thrown aside. But the holy Mavra said to him:

"And in this too you do me good, for you take from me my fingers, with which I used to put on myself vain adornments. Know, then, that you do not understand what you are doing yourself, for through the cutting off of my fingers you have cleansed me of my second sin. Therefore I stand before you with cheerfulness and joy, ready for every torment."

The hegemon marveled greatly at the so great patience of the holy martyr. The presbyter Pikolpos, the father of Timothy, who was standing near that place among the people watching the interrogation of the saints, marveling at the exploit of the holy Mavra, said to her quietly:

"O Mavra, my honorable daughter! How could you bear the cutting off of your fingers?"

The holy Mavra answered him:

"Just as you, father, have seen how branches are cut from a plant in a vineyard, so I too looked upon the cutting off of my fingers with a similar feeling, and therefore I felt no pain."

After all this, the hegemon Arrian commanded twelve of his soldiers to fill a large cauldron with water and, having heated it, to cast the holy Mavra into it. When the water in the cauldron came to a boil and seethed from the fire, the holy Mavra was thrown into the cauldron.

But standing in the midst of the cauldron and not being scorched at all, she said to the hegemon:

"Again I thank you, for you have commanded me to be washed and cleansed of my sins, so that with a pure heart I may draw near to my God and receive from Him the crown of eternal life. The sufferings that I endure at your hands bring me salvation with Christ my Lord. But you seem to have been too hasty in casting me into this cauldron, which is not yet fully heated, for the water in it is very cold, and I feel no heat at all, just as I felt none of the other torments before."

The hegemon, greatly enraged, began to think that the soldiers, out of pity for the martyr, had poured out the hot water from the cauldron and filled it with cold instead, in order to keep Mavra alive for their carnal desires. Immediately the hegemon stepped down from his judgment seat and went up to the cauldron, wishing to learn whether the water in the cauldron was truly cold. Coming up to the cauldron, he said to the saint:

"Pour a little water on my hand, that I may learn whether the water here is cold."

The saint answered him:

"This water is very cold, and I feel no warmth in it at all. Therefore, if you have nothing else with which to heat the cauldron, send one of your servants to my father, and he will give you a bundle of firewood, for he is a carpenter; with these logs you may kindle the cauldron."

Having said this, the saint poured boiling water from the cauldron onto the hand of the hegemon, and at once his hand was scalded so that the skin came away from it. The hegemon himself cried out loudly from the pain, and, in the hearing of all, said in astonishment:

"Blessed is the Lord God of Mavra, and there is no God but Him, through Whom Mavra is now glorified."

Having said this, he commanded that the saint be released. However, before the saint had time to leave the place of torment, the devil again entered the heart of the hegemon and stirred him up to oppose all those who held the right faith in God and kept a pure conscience. Calling the martyr to him, he said:

"Do not trust and do not hope, Mavra, in your Christ; rather, offer sacrifice to our gods."

But the saint answered him:

"I will not offer sacrifice to idols, for I have Christ, who will protect me."

To this the hegemon said:

"I will fill your mouth with burning coals, if you do not offer sacrifice to our gods."

The saint answered:

"You do not understand what you intend to do in your madness. You wish to fill my mouth with burning coals so that I may be cleansed of the sins I have committed with my tongue and lips. For my Lord too, when He revealed His glory to the prophet Isaiah and deigned to let him hear the song of the Angels, in order to cleanse him of his sins sent to him one of the Seraphim, who had in his hand a burning coal taken with tongs from the altar. The Seraphim touched this coal to the prophet's lips and said: 'This has touched your lips, and your iniquity is taken away from you, and your sins are cleansed' (Is. 6:7). And if the prophet received forgiveness of his sins after the coal touched his lips, then I beg you: fill not only my mouth with burning coals, but cover my face and my head, and indeed my whole body, with burning coals and burn it, so that through this I may become a fragrance of Christ. God, who once cleansed the sins of the prophet, will cleanse me of my sins as well."

Hearing such words from the saint, the hegemon became still more enraged and commanded that a lamp filled with sulfur and pitch be brought, in order to burn the martyr. The people standing near that place and seeing everything began to call out to the hegemon with a loud voice, saying:

"How long will you go on devising ever new torments for this young maiden! Cease, hegemon, from your anger, for we marvel greatly at her patience."

But the holy Mavra, turning to the people, said:

"Let each of you attend to his own affairs: let the men carry out their works and duties, and the women theirs. As for me, let none of

you be concerned for me. I do not ask you for help or protection, for I have a Protector, God, in Whom I trust."

While the saint was saying this, the hegemon commanded that her body be scorched with the lamp. The saint, looking at the lamp, said to the hegemon:

"Do you think to frighten me with this lamp, as though you had not yet sufficiently tested me with the earlier torments? Did you not plunge me into the large and terrible cauldron, which boiled violently, and yet it did me no harm, for it seemed to me filled with cold water? You yourself were a witness that, while your hands suffered from the water and were scalded by it, I suffered nothing at all. Do you really think I shall be frightened by this small lamp? If you wish, hegemon, kindle a whole furnace and cast me into it, and you will see the power of my Christ, Whose servant I am. I believe that my God, who called me to this exploit through the blessed man, my husband Timothy, will not forsake me. As for the lamp with which you scorch my body, to me it seems like a morning dew descending upon the earth and helping trees and fruits to grow."

Overcome by the words of the holy martyr, confirmed by the deed itself, and not knowing what other torments to devise for the holy Mavra, the hegemon was deeply grieved. Then he commanded that Timothy and Mavra be crucified, with their faces turned toward each other.

When the saints were being led to crucifixion, the mother of Mavra met them, and embracing her daughter, said to her:

"My daughter Mavra! Why do you leave your mother, who is searching for you? Who will wear your adornments? To whom will your silver, gold and precious garments go, if you, my daughter, do not remain alive?"

The holy Mavra answered her mother thus:

"Gold and silver will perish, and moths will eat the garments; the beauty of the young face too will in time fade away. But the crown that Jesus Christ gives me will be unfading forever."

And the mother could make no reply to the holy Mavra. The martyr, freeing herself from her mother's hands, went to the place of crucifixion, saying to her mother:

"Why do you draw me away from the cross and not let me enjoy the crown from my Lord, to Whom I wish to be made like in my death?"

Then the soldiers crucified the saints with their faces turned toward each other. The saints remained on the cross nine days and nine nights, exhorting and comforting one another. The holy Timothy instructed his wife until evening, and the holy Mavra encouraged her fellow-sufferer until morning. At that time the holy Mavra said to Timothy:

Let us not give ourselves over to sleep, lest our Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes, find us sleeping and be angered with us. In a house where a man does not sleep at night, a burning candle keeps thieves from coming in; but when the candle is put out, a thief easily enters the house and steals from it. Let us therefore keep watch and pray without ceasing, that our Lord may find us patiently awaiting His coming; and so the enemy will not dare to draw near to us who are upon our crosses, nor presume to wound us.

After some time, St. Mavra spoke again to Timothy:

"Take courage, my brother, and drive sleep away from you. Keep watch and understand what I have seen. It seemed to me, as I was as it were in ecstasy, that a man stood before me holding in his hand a cup filled with milk and honey. This man said to me, 'Take this and drink.' But I said to him, 'Who are you?' He answered, 'I am an Angel of God.' Then I said to him, 'Let us pray to the Lord.' After that he said to me, 'I have come to you to lighten your sufferings. I have seen that you have greatly desired to eat and drink, since until now you have taken no food.' Again I said to him, 'Who moved you to show me this mercy? And what concern is it of yours, my endurance and my fasting? Do you not know that God is able to do even that which is impossible for men?' When I had prayed, I saw that the man turned his face toward the west. From this I understood that it was a satanic delusion, for Satan wished to tempt us even on the cross. Soon afterward that vision vanished. Then another man came, and it seemed to me that he led me to a river flowing with milk and honey, and said to me, 'Drink.' But I answered, 'I have already told you that I will not drink water or any other earthly drink until I drink the cup of death for Christ my Lord, which He Himself will mix for me with salvation and the immortality of

eternal life.' While I was saying this, that man drank from the river, and suddenly he vanished, he and the river with him. I also saw a third man, beautiful in appearance; his face shone like the sun. Taking me by the hand, he raised me up to heaven and showed me a throne covered with white raiment, and a crown, beautiful in appearance. Marveling at such beauty, I asked the man who had led me to heaven, 'Whose is this, lord?' He said to me, 'This is the reward for your struggle; this throne and raiment and crown have been prepared for you.' Then the same man raised me a little higher and showed me another throne, equally beautifully adorned, and a white raiment, and a crown. I asked again the man who had brought me, 'And whose is this, lord?' He said to me, 'This is for your husband, Timothy.' I ventured to ask him, 'Why, then, are these thrones not side by side, but at a great distance from each other?' He answered me, 'Because there is a great difference between you and your husband. Do you not know that you yourself took upon yourself the martyr's struggle at his exhortation, and therefore he is in a certain measure the cause of your crown? But now return to your body; in the morning, at the sixth hour, the Angels of God will come to take your souls and carry them up to heaven. Nevertheless, continue to keep watch, lest the enemy again begin to tempt you.'"

St. Mavra related this vision to her brother Timothy, and they comforted one another in the Lord.

When the sixth hour of the tenth day came, the Angels of God arrived to take the souls of the holy martyrs. Then St. Mavra, turning to the people who were looking on at their sufferings, said in a loud voice:

"Brethren and sisters! Remember that we lived in a human (worldly) manner while we dwelt among men; but afterward we lived according to God, being servants of God. And now we shall soon receive the immortal crowns from our Lord Jesus Christ. In the same way, you also, while doing all that human nature requires, strive to do also that which is pleasing to God; then you will receive forgiveness of sins and receive crowns from the same Lord and God of ours."

When St. Mavra had finished these words, both saints committed their precious souls into the hands of God[7]. Thus their sufferings were

concluded with the crown of righteousness from Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom glory is offered together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having endured manifold wounds and received crowns from God, pray to the Lord for us, O you who celebrate your all-holy memory, O great Timothy and most glorious Mavra, that the city and the people may be pacified; for He is the establishment of the faithful.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Theodosius, Abbot of the Kiev Caves

Житие преподобного отца нашего Феодосия, игумена Печерского

After our Venerable and God-bearing Father Anthony, the great luminary of the Russian Church and the valiant ascetic of the glorious Kiev-Pechersk Lavra was our Venerable and God-bearing Father Theodosius, glorified by God through numerous ascetic labors and miracles. For all who desire to become acquainted with the life of this glorious man, detailed information about him has been preserved for us by the Venerable Nestor, chronicler of the Kiev Caves; as a faithful heavenly witness, he offers us trustworthy information about the life of the Venerable Theodosius. On the basis of this life, the account offered here has been composed with slight abridgments.

The homeland of our Venerable and God-bearing Father Theodosius was one of the cities of the Russian land, Vasilev[8]. His God-fearing parents raised their son in piety from his earliest years, and when he had grown, they gave him over to be taught letters. Soon Theodosius so thoroughly studied the Divine Scripture that everyone marveled at his

7. The death of the holy martyrs occurred about 286. In Constantinople the memory of the holy martyrs Timothy and Mavra was afterward solemnly celebrated in a church built in their honor near the palaces of Justinian; on this basis it may be supposed that their relics, or part of their relics, were in this church.

8. Vasilev, with the name Vasilkov, exists even at the present time and represents a district town of the Kiev province; it lies 36 versts southwest of Kiev and is situated on the river Stugna, a tributary of the Dnieper. – The Venerable Theodosius was born between 1035 and 1038.

understanding and wisdom. From his boyhood Theodosius zealously attended the house of God every day, and, listening attentively to all that was read and sung there, he always stood through the church services to their end.

Already in these years he kept himself apart from his peers and took no part in children's games.

When Theodosius had reached the age of thirteen, his parents, for some reason, had to move to Kursk[9], a city lying nearer the center of the Russian land. Here, in a short time, according to the will of Divine Providence, his father was destined to die, and his righteous soul passed from this vale of tears to the mansions of heaven. Bereft of his father, the thirteen-year-old Theodosius lived with his mother, strengthened with the years by the grace of God. After the death of his earthly father, Theodosius began even more zealously to labor for the attainment of eternal life in heaven: he thirsted for works pleasing to God and withdrew from every worldly pleasure; he ceased to wear costly garments and wore only poor clothing. He always had but one desire: to attain salvation.

Once it happened that Theodosius met pilgrims from Jerusalem. Becoming interested in their accounts and kindled with a strong love for the holy places, the blessed youth besought them to visit with him those holy places where the Savior of the world dwelt and shed His precious blood for our salvation. And so, fulfilling his purpose, Theodosius set out secretly from his mother by night on the long journey. His mother, however, in tears, sought him throughout the city for three days, until she learned where he had gone. Then the mother, with her younger son, at once set out after him, and, overtaking him, in great anger began to inflict cruel beatings upon him, casting him to the ground and trampling him with her feet. Then, bringing him home, she locked him in a room. Theodosius bore all this without murmuring, even with thanksgiving. At last his mother took pity on him and, re-

9. The cause that prompted Theodosius' parents to move to Kursk was an order of the prince to transfer Theodosius' father from Vasilev to service in Kursk. In Vasilev, as in Kursk, Theodosius' father probably performed the duty of the prince's "tiun," or judge, a justice of the peace (in non-criminal matters).

leasing him, began with tears to entreat him not to go anywhere away from her house. Then Theodosius returned to his former labors and again attended the church every day.

Once he noticed that in the church the Divine Liturgy was often not celebrated for lack of prosphora, and Theodosius resolved to prepare the bread offered to God himself. To this end Theodosius bought wheat, ground it with his own hands, and baked from it prosphora, which he brought as a gift to the church. If he happened to receive a little money from those who gave prosphora for the proskomedia, Theodosius gave it to the poor. He led such a life for about two years, or somewhat longer, paying no heed to the obstacles which the enemy of the human race, the devil, placed in his way in this matter. At the devil's prompting, his peers were indignant with Theodosius for this and tried to turn even his mother against him. His mother said to Theodosius:

"I beg you, child, leave off your work; by it you bring reproaches upon our family."

But the blessed youth answered her with humility:

"Listen to me, mother, I beg you! The Lord our God Jesus Christ Himself humbled Himself for our sake and thereby gave us an example, that we too might humble ourselves for His sake. At the Mystical Supper He Himself transformed bread into His body. For what then can a man who prepares bread, upon which this great mystery of the transformation of bread into the Body of Christ must be accomplished, be reproached or blamed?"

Hearing such an answer, his mother was greatly astonished at the wisdom of the youth, and from that time she left him in peace. However, the devil did not cease to stir her against the humble and diligent youth, and he suggested to her that she forbid her son to prepare the prosphora. After a year had passed, his mother, seeing Theodosius baking the prosphora and burnt by the heat of the oven, again began to urge him to give up baking prosphora. She acted upon her son sometimes with caresses, sometimes with threats, and sometimes even with blows. The blessed youth, not knowing what to do, rose at night and secretly left the house. Having gone from there to a neighboring town,

he settled with a priest, where he continued his labors. His mother again sought him out and, inflicting blows upon him, compelled him to return once more to his own city.

The governor of the city of Kursk, noticing the humility and the reverent prayers of the blessed Theodosius in church, gave him bright clothing to wear. Having worn the new clothing for a short time, Theodosius gave it away to the beggars. The governor again clothed him in still finer clothing, but the youth gave that too to the beggars. Thus Theodosius acted many times.

After this the blessed one went to a smithy and ordered the smith to forge for him an iron belt in the form of a chain. This belt, which was tight and cut into his body until it drew blood, he put on directly over his body, and from then on he never took it off again.

Once, on a feast day, the governor of the city ordered Theodosius to be present at his festive dinner, wishing the youth to serve his guests. As they were preparing for the dinner, the youth, following his mother's instruction, was to dress in festive clothing. And so, when he began to dress, his mother saw blood on his chiton (undergarment), however hard the youth tried to conceal this from her. Wishing to learn why the youth's body was bloody, the mother began to look more attentively, and, noticing the iron belt on the youth's body, she became convinced that the blood was flowing from the wounds made by the iron belt cutting into the body. Angered with Theodosius, the mother tore his chiton and, with blows, removed the belt from her son. And the blessed one, as though he had experienced no insult, dressed and with great modesty served the governor and his guests at the dinner.

Some time later Theodosius happened to hear in church the words of the Gospel: "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt. 10:37); and again: "My mother and My brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it" (Lk. 8:21). Kindled to ascetic deeds by these words, Theodosius secretly left home and went to the city of Kiev. There he heard of the strict monastic life in the cave of the Venerable Anthony, and, being interested in the accounts of him, he desired to visit the venerable elder. Coming to Anthony in the cave, Theodosius fell on his knees before him and, with tears, began to en-

treat him to accept him for the monastic labors. The Venerable Anthony, having heard him, answered him thus:

"Youth, you see how gloomy and cramped this cave is; you will not endure the discomforts here."

To this the God-inspired youth replied with tenderness:

"God has led me to your holy cave, clearly indicating that I must be saved through you. I will carry out whatever you command me."

Then the Venerable Anthony received him with love and, having blessed him, entrusted him to the care of the learned priest, the blessed Nikon, who soon tonsured the youth into monasticism. Theodosius received the tonsure at the age of twenty-three, shortly after the death of the Right-believing Prince Yaroslav Vladimirovich of Kiev.[10]

Having received the holy monastic rank, the Venerable Theodosius gave himself entirely to the service of God and zealously carried out the will of his elder Anthony. He zealously performed the great monastic labors, as an ascetic who had taken upon himself the yoke of Christ. Overcoming drowsiness, he kept vigil whole nights, glorifying God; by day, subduing his flesh with abstinence and fasting, he performed various heavy labors. Such good conduct, humility, vigilance and diligence of the youth aroused wonder even in the Venerable Anthony and the blessed Nikon; seeing the righteous life of Theodosius, both of them glorified God for it.

Meanwhile the mother of Theodosius, having searched in vain for her son in her city and its environs, was mourning him as dead. Only later, after a long time had passed, did she learn of her son's tonsure in Kiev with the Venerable Anthony in the cave. Then she went to this elder and asked him to come out of the cave to her. When the elder at last came out to her, she, in tears, made an earnest request to him to show her her son. Learning from the elder of his mother's request, the youth was greatly disturbed that he could in no way hide from her; yet, heeding the exhortations of Anthony, he came out of the cave to his mother. Seeing her son as a monk, with a face made thin by great as-

10. This was in 1055–1056. Yaroslav I Vladimirovich reigned from 1019 to 1054.

cetic feats and labors, the mother fell upon his breast and, weeping bitterly, said to him:

"Return to my house, my son, and do all that you consider useful for the salvation of your soul according to your own will. But when I die, bury my body in the earth, and then return to this cave. For without you I cannot live."

The blessed youth answered her:

"Remain here, mother, in Kiev, and receive the tonsure in a women's monastery, and then you will have the opportunity to visit me from time to time. Thereby you will gain salvation for yourself and be granted to behold God in eternal life."

But the mother would not hear her son. Then the blessed one, returning to the cave, began to pray fervently to God for the salvation of his mother's soul. And God heard the prayer of His servant. After some days the mother came to him and said:

"My son, I am following your counsel and shall not return home any more. Having been tonsured according to the will of God, I shall spend the rest of my days in a women's monastery, for I have become convinced, as you told me, that this transient world is nothing."

Learning of this, the blessed one rejoiced in his soul and related his mother's intention to the Venerable Anthony. The latter glorified God for turning the heart of his mother to the path of truth, and, coming out of the cave, long instructed her with soul-profiting conversations; then he directed her to the women's monastery of Saint Nicholas, where she received the tonsure. Having lived here piously for several years, the mother of Theodosius departed in peace to God.

Having finally renounced all worldly cares after his mother's tonsure, the blessed Theodosius, together with the Venerable Anthony and the blessed Nikon, struggled in monastic labors with still greater zeal. In the company of the elders, Theodosius soon showed his power to overcome evil spirits, by acting upon them through fasting and prayer. In this God Himself helped them, who said: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

When the blessed Nikon had to leave the monastery for a more intense ascetic labor in another place, the blessed Theodosius, by the will of God and at the desire of the Venerable Anthony, was ordained to the priesthood.[11] Having received this rank, he strove to celebrate the Divine Liturgy daily with great reverence. Shortly after Theodosius's ordination, the Venerable Anthony, gathering twelve monks from the brotherhood in the cave, appointed the blessed Barlaam as their hegumen, and he himself departed from there and began to labor in another cave that he had dug himself. Then our reverend father Theodosius, honored with the priestly rank, who remained in Anthony's cave together with the blessed hegumen Barlaam, jointly set up over the cave a small church in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos, designating it for the common prayer of the brotherhood.

Saint Theodosius then surpassed all by his great ascetic feats: by fasting, vigilance, manual labor, and, above all, by humility and obedience. He helped the brethren: sometimes carrying water, sometimes bringing firewood from the forest, sometimes performing at night the work assigned to other monks; and besides, he always kept vigil whole nights, standing in prayer. Sometimes in summer at night he would climb to the top of the cave and, stripping his body to the waist, would give it over to the stings of numerous horseflies and mosquitoes. At this time he would spin wool with his hands, and with his lips chant verses from the Psalter. As a result of the numerous stings and wounds of the insects, his whole body would be stained with blood, but he sat motionless, not stirring from his place until the bell rang for Matins. He would come to church again first, and, standing in his place, would unceasingly perform the church prayers, not distracted by vain thoughts. And he would leave the church last of all. Seeing all this, everyone marveled at his humility and patience and regarded him with love, as a father.

After some time the Blessed Barlaam, head of the brethren of the Caves, was appointed by Prince Iziaslav[12] abbot of the monastery of St. Demetrius the Great Martyr. Then, at the desire and entreaty of all the brethren, the Venerable Anthony summoned St. Theodosius and

11. This was in 1056–1057.
12. Iziaslav I Yaroslavich reigned from 1054 to 1073, and then again from 1076 to 1078.

blessed him to be abbot over the twelve brethren who were then in the Monastery of the Caves. This praiseworthy abbot, our Venerable Father Theodosius, did not change his humble manner of life even in this lofty rank, and continued to watch strictly over his conduct, "showing himself a pattern of good works" (Tit. 2:7). He was the first to undertake the labors, came to church for the services before the others, and was the last to leave. Through the God-pleasing prayers of this righteous man, the Monastery of the Caves began from that time to flourish and grow rich. Thus was fulfilled what is said in Holy Scripture: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Ps. 91:13). Indeed, just as seed, by the grace of God, bears fruit a hundredfold in good soil, so St. Theodosius increased the number of the brethren of the Caves. Little by little he gathered about a hundred brethren in his monastery, whose lives flourished with good morals; many of the brethren brought forth "fruits worthy of repentance" (cf. Mt. 3:8).

Because the number of brethren had increased considerably, the cave became too cramped for the monks to keep the silent life in strictness; the church, too, was too small for common prayer. For this reason the Venerable Theodosius chose a beautiful place, not far from the cave, large enough to build the monastery walls upon, and he resolved to found a monastery here. With the blessing of the Venerable Anthony, he obtained this place from the Christ-loving Prince Iziaslav, and then, with the help of God, soon built upon it a spacious wooden church in honor of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. Then he raised the monastery walls there and, having built a sufficient number of cells, moved with the brethren into the new monastery.

Once the Blessed Ephraim visited this monastery; it was through him that God brought Theodosius to become thoroughly acquainted with the Studite Rule of monastic life[13]. Having received from Ephraim a complete copy of the Rule of the holy Studion monastery, Theodosius began to follow it in everything, including the affairs of his own monastery. And afterwards all the other Russian monasteries also adopted

this Rule, following the example of the most ancient Monastery of the Caves.

The Venerable Theodosius diligently instructed his disciples, rousing them to true repentance. This venerable teacher had the custom of going round the cells of the brethren every night; in this way he became acquainted with the manner of life of the brethren and learned the degree of zeal in the ascetic labors of each brother. He rejoiced and glorified God when, going round the cells, he heard a monk at prayer; but when, after evening prayer, he happened to hear the conversation of two or three monks who had gathered in a cell for talk, Theodosius, making known his presence, struck the door with his hand and withdrew with a contrite heart. On the following day he summoned the offenders and, without rebuking them directly, drew them to repentance by parables. The meek-hearted brother at once, recognizing his fault, asked forgiveness; but the stubborn one, thinking that the abbot was speaking in parables of some other person and not of himself, would not confess his deed until the Venerable, rebuking him directly, imposed a penance upon the offender. Thus Theodosius taught the brethren to pray diligently to God, not to converse after evening prayer, and still less to go from cell to cell for conversation; he taught each to pray in his own cell, and while doing manual work always to read the Psalms of David aloud. In his lifetime the monks seemed, by their ascetic labors, equal to the Angels of God, and the Monastery of the Caves was likened to a heavenly abode. Indeed, in his monastery our Venerable Father Theodosius shone with the light of good deeds, like a great heavenly lamp. For his righteous life Theodosius was glorified by God before men even during his lifetime, being illumined with visible light. This happened in the following circumstances.

13. St. Ephraim traveled to Constantinople, where he copied the Typikon of the Stoudios Monastery. This Typikon was composed by the Venerable Theodore the Studite, abbot of the Stoudios Monastery in Constantinople, at the beginning of the ninth century. At the end of the ninth century it was introduced as the guide of the Russian Church and remained in use there until the middle of the fourteenth century, when it begins to yield to the Jerusalem Typikon (this Typikon was introduced by the Venerable Sabbas the Sanctified in the Palestinian monasteries in the sixth century; the memory of St. Sabbas is celebrated on December 5), and to the coenobitic rules of monastic life of St. Basil the Great. The memory of St. Ephraim is celebrated by the Church on January 28.

Once, on a dark night, the abbot of the monastery of the holy Archangel Michael, Sophronius, was returning to his own monastery past the monastery of Theodosius. Suddenly there appeared before his eyes an extraordinary light shining above the monastery of the righteous one. Amazed at this unusual phenomenon, Sophronius glorified God, saying: "How great is Thy mercy, O Lord! Thou hast given men a lamp in this place, in the person of Theodosius, and by his radiance he illumines the monastery."

Such phenomena were observed many times by other people as well, and since the people talked a great deal about this, the report reached also the prince and his boyars. These radiances were the reflection of the light of the righteous life of the holy elder. So everyone explained this phenomenon to himself.

The Blessed Theodosius enjoyed great love also from the Christ-loving Prince Iziaslav, who occupied the princely throne in Kiev after his father Yaroslav. Iziaslav often came to the Venerable to enjoy his God-inspired conversation. It should be noted that our Venerable Father Theodosius had given his doorkeeper a strict order: in the interval between the Liturgy and Vespers not to open the gates and not to admit anyone into the monastery. He wished by this to give the brethren an opportunity to rest by day before the long night prayers and the morning chanting. Once, at these hours, the Christ-loving Prince Iziaslav came riding on horseback, accompanied by a servant (until then the prince had never ridden to the monastery on horseback). Dismounting, Iziaslav went up to the gate and knocked, ordering the doorkeeper to open it. The doorkeeper explained to him that by the abbot's order no one could be let in before Vespers. Then the prince, wishing to make clear to the doorkeeper who he was, said:

"It is I; open to me alone."

But the doorkeeper, not knowing that the prince was speaking to him, answered:

"I tell you: the abbot has ordered that the gates be opened to no one, not even to the prince himself, should he come. So, if you wish, wait a little until Vespers."

"I am the prince," said Iziaslav, "will you not open to me?"

The gatekeeper, bending down under the gate, became convinced that it was the prince, but still did not open the gate; he went to inform the Venerable. The prince was obliged to wait patiently at the gate. Then the Venerable came out and, seeing the prince, bowed to him. The prince then said to St. Theodosius:

"How strict, Father, is your order: the monk says that you did not command that even the prince himself be admitted."

The Venerable answered:

"It is so, gracious lord, in order that the brethren may rest a little at noon before the coming night of prayerful labor. But your praiseworthy zeal for our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos, is good and salutary for your soul; and we greatly rejoice at your coming to us."

Then they went into the church; here, after a prayer read by the Venerable, the Christ-loving prince enjoyed a soul-profitable conversation with St. Theodosius. Then the prince returned home with great benefit to himself, glorifying God. From this day Iziaslav became still more attached to the saint, and, seeing in him a man like the holy fathers of old, he began to be guided in everything by his counsels.

Despite the honor shown him by the prince and the nobles, our Venerable Father Theodosius was in no way puffed up by it; but truly, as a light shines brightly in darkness, so he, clothing himself with still greater humility, labored still more, teaching his disciples not only by words but by deed. Notwithstanding his abbatial rank, St. Theodosius often went into the bakehouse and worked there together with the bakers, kneading the dough and shaping the loaves. The Venerable did not bury in the earth the talent of bodily strength given him by God, but always, rejoicing in spirit, by his vigor he strengthened others too, urging them never to slacken in zeal for their work.

Once, on the eve of the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, the cellarer Theodore came to the Venerable and said that there was not enough water in the kitchen, and there was no one to carry it. Then the Venerable, rising, at once himself set about carrying water from the well. One of the brethren, seeing the abbot at this task, hastened to tell the other monks, and they gathered with great haste and brought water in abundance.

There was another similar case. Once there was not prepared a sufficient quantity of firewood for cooking food; the cellarer again came to the Venerable and said:

"Bid someone, Father, from among the brethren who is free, to go and prepare the necessary quantity of firewood."

"I am free; I will go myself," answered the Venerable.

This conversation took place at the dinner hour. The Blessed One, taking an axe, went and began to chop the wood himself, and told the rest of the brethren to go and dine. Coming out of the refectory after dinner, the monks saw their abbot at work. Put to shame by his humility, the monks themselves took up the axes and prepared so much firewood that it sufficed them for several days.

When the blessed Nikon,[14] who had tonsured the Venerable Theodosius, returned to the Caves Monastery from his ascetic journey, the Venerable Theodosius showed him every honor as a father, although he himself was then in the rank of hegumen. And when the blessed Nikon lacked thread for sewing books (which was his work), Theodosius would spin thread for him. Such was the humility and simplicity of this God-inspired man in his various labors and occupations. The hegumen wore modest and poor clothing: on his body a rough hair shirt, and over it another, very worn, which he put on so that people would not see the prickly hair shirt beneath.

Once the Venerable Theodosius set out on some business to the Christ-loving Prince Iziaslav; since the prince was at that time far from the city, Theodosius had to delay there until evening. When he began to prepare to go home, the Christ-loving prince ordered that he be taken to the monastery in his chariot. On the way, the youth driving him, seeing that the Venerable Theodosius wore poor clothing and thinking that he was not a hegumen but a simple monk, said to him:

"Monk, sit on the horse, and I will sit on the chariot."

The Venerable Theodosius at once humbly got down from the chariot, yielding his place to the youth, and himself either walked alongside or, when tired, sat on the horse. So they travelled through the night. At

14. The Venerable Nikon withdrew to the south of Russia, to Tmutarakan.

dawn they began to meet nobles riding to the prince. The latter, recognizing the Venerable Theodosius, dismounted and bowed low to him. Then the Venerable Theodosius turned to the youth and said:

"Now it is day; get down from the chariot and sit on your own horse."

The youth, seeing that the nobles bowed to the Venerable Theodosius, was frightened, and, getting down from the chariot, sat on the horse. Meanwhile those they met bowed to the Venerable Theodosius even more often when he sat in the chariot. The youth who accompanied him became still more confused.

When they arrived in this manner at the monastery, the whole brotherhood came out to meet the Venerable Theodosius and greeted him with a prostration to the earth. The youth was seized with still greater dread, wondering who this was to whom everyone bowed. The Venerable Theodosius, taking him by the hand, led him into the refectory, and there ordered that he be fed and given drink, and then dismissed him with gifts. This incident became known to all from the youth himself; the Venerable Theodosius, however, never told anyone about it, for he always taught the brethren never to exalt themselves in anything, but always to abide in humility and to place themselves below all.

Such humility did the Venerable Theodosius teach his brethren. Among other things, he taught them to ask a blessing of the elder at the beginning of every undertaking, remembering the words of Scripture: "He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6). He demonstrated the truth of this saying in deed. It was his custom that when pious people came to him in their need, the Venerable Theodosius, having imparted divine instruction, would dismiss them with bread and hot food from the monastery's stores. Once the prince himself, having tasted the monastery's food at his table, said to the Venerable Theodosius:

"You know, Father, that my house is filled with all the good things of the world, but I have never eaten with such sweetness as here. My servants, although they prepare various costly dishes, are not as sweet

as these. I beg you, Father, tell me why there is such sweetness in your food?"

The blessed Theodosius answered him:

"If, good master, you wish to know why this is, listen, and I will tell you: when our brethren gather to cook hot food or bake bread, they observe this order: first the monk goes to the hegumen and receives his blessing; then, bowing three times to the ground before the sanctuary, he lights a candle from the sanctuary and with this fire kindles the wood in the kitchen and the bakehouse. And when water must be poured into the cauldron, the monk says to the senior: 'Bless, Father.' The latter replies: 'God bless you, brother.' Thus every work among us begins with a blessing, and therefore there is sweetness in the food. But your servants, I think, work while cursing, grumbling and slandering one another, perhaps even often receiving blows from their superiors. Therefore their work, performed not without sin, is not sweet."

Having heard this, the prince said:

"Truly, Father, it is as you say."

When it happened that the Venerable Theodosius heard of some food that was prepared without the elder's blessing and contrary to the rules of monastic life, calling that food the enemy's, he did not allow his blessed flock to taste it; food prepared in this way he ordered to be thrown into water or fire. So it happened also when the Venerable Theodosius with the brethren went to the feast of the holy Great Martyr Demetrius at a neighboring monastery named for this saint. On that day some pious people had sent very delicious loaves to the monastery. Theodosius ordered the cellarer to serve them that same day at the meal for the brethren who remained. But the cellarer did not obey his command, thinking to himself: "When all the brethren gather tomorrow, then I will serve these loaves at dinner; today let the monks who remain eat the ordinary monastery bread."

And so he did. On the following day the hegumen with the brethren returned to the monastery for the meal. During the meal the Venerable Theodosius, noticing that the gift loaves had been served, called the cellarer and asked him:

"Where did these loaves come from?"

The cellarer answered:

"These loaves were brought yesterday, but I did not serve them that day because few brethren were at the meal; I thought it better to offer the delicious loaves to all the brethren when they gather together."

The Venerable Theodosius said to him:

"It would have been better for you not to be concerned about the coming day, but to act according to my command. For the Lord, who always cares for us, would have given us today all that is necessary, and even more."

Then he ordered the cut slices of bread to be gathered into a basket and thrown into the river, and imposed a penance on the cellarer as one who had disobeyed his command. He acted in the same way with other monks when they disobeyed their superiors in anything.

Noticing that the monks did not entirely abandon concern for the morrow and the acquisition of temporal goods (which contradicted monastic vows), the Venerable Theodosius taught his brethren to follow the virtue of non-possession. He said that monks ought to be enriched by faith and hope in God, and not seek perishable possessions. He often went round the cells, and if he found in anyone's possession something superfluous, not prescribed by the rule, whether food, clothing or anything else, he took it and cast it into the furnace, as coming from the devil and contrary to the monastic rule. The Venerable Theodosius exhorted the brethren in this way to the virtue of non-possession:

"It is not good for us, monks who have renounced everything worldly, to keep vain things in our cells. How shall we offer pure prayer to God when we keep perishable treasure in our cell! For you have heard the words of the Lord: 'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Mt. 6:21). And again: 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' (Lk. 12:20). Therefore, brethren," he said, "let us be content with the appointed clothing and the food offered at the meal, and in our cells it is not fitting for us to have anything of the kind. Thus with all zeal and from the whole heart let us offer pure prayer to God."

Thus did St. Theodosius exhort the brethren with great humility and tears.

The Venerable Theodosius was merciful, gentle, not quick to anger, and showed attention to all. So, when it happened that someone from his non-possessing flock grew weak in spirit and left the monastery, the Venerable Theodosius, in great grief and sorrow for the one who had departed, prayed to God with tears that He would return the sheep that had strayed from his flock. He prayed thus until the one who had gone away returned.

Among his brethren was one monk who was remarkable for great inconstancy. He often ran away from the monastery, and each time he returned, the Venerable Theodosius received him back with joy, saying that God would not forsake him nor allow him to end his life outside the monastery: "Although he leaves us many times," said the Venerable Theodosius, "yet he will end his life in our monastery."

And with tears he prayed God to grant the brother patience. Once this brother was absent for an especially long time, but nonetheless returned and, as was his custom, began to ask the Venerable Theodosius to receive him again. Truly merciful Theodosius received him now also with joy and joined to his flock the straying sheep that had returned. On returning after a long absence, that brother brought and laid before the Venerable Theodosius a small sum of money that he had earned with his own hands (he worked at sewing clothing). Then the Venerable Theodosius said to him:

"If you wish to be perfect, take this and cast it into the burning furnace, for what you have brought is an act of disobedience."

He, as one truly repentant, gathered it all and, at the Venerable Theodosius' command, threw it into the furnace and burned it. From that time the brother, no longer absent, lived in the monastery, spending the rest of his days in repentance, and here, as the Venerable Theodosius had foretold, he died in peace.

The Venerable Theodosius was very merciful to the poor. He built near the monastery a courtyard with a church in the name of the holy First-Martyr Stephen, and there he settled the beggars, the blind, the lame and the lepers, and sent everything necessary for them from the

monastery. A tenth part of the monastery's income was spent on this. Besides this, the Venerable Theodosius every Saturday sent a cartload of bread to those imprisoned in dungeons and jails.

Our Venerable Father Theodosius was merciful not only to the poor but even to those who did harm to his monastery. Thus, once, robbers who had come to steal were caught in the vicinity of the monastery and brought before the abbot. Seeing them bound and dejected in spirit, the Venerable Father wept and ordered them untied. Having fed and watered them, he instructed them not to do wrong to anyone, but to be content with the fruits of their own labours. Then, giving them sufficient money, he released the repentant robbers in peace.

The Venerable Theodosius firmly hoped that the Lord Himself would preserve from plunderers all that the brethren needed. That this hope was not in vain was confirmed by the following miracle.

As the number of the brethren increased, our Venerable Father Theodosius found it necessary to enlarge the monastery, since new cells had to be built. Together with the brethren the Venerable Father set to work and began to raise a wall of considerable size. And so, when the old wall was pulled down and the monastery was left without its protection, on a dark night robbers came to the monastery and began to reason among themselves: "The monks have their property hidden in the church buildings; let us go there."

But when the robbers, with this aim, drew near to the church, they heard singing. Supposing that it was the monks gathered for evening prayer, the robbers withdrew into the thick forest. Having lingered there a little, they again approached the church. This time too singing was heard, and a wondrous light was seen within, and a fragrance spread from the church. This was because Angels who glorified God were in the church. The robbers, however, supposing that the brethren were now performing the midnight chant, again withdrew. They resolved to wait further, so that when the monks had dispersed they might enter the church and steal everything in it. Thus they repeatedly approached the church, and each time they heard the same singing of the Angels.

Meanwhile the time for Matins came, and the sacristan, as usual, began to strike the bell. Hearing the sound, the robbers retreated into the forest, saying to one another: "What are we to do? For in the church we evidently saw an apparition. Let us do this: when the monks gather in the church, we shall block their exit, and, killing them all, seize their riches."

Waiting until all the monks, with their teacher, the Blessed Theodosius, had gathered in the church for morning prayer, the robbers rushed toward the church. They were already approaching the church with their criminal purpose, when suddenly they were struck by a terrible miracle: the church, with the monks within it, began to rise and stopped in the air at such a height that the robbers could not reach it even by shooting. Seeing this, they were greatly frightened, and in great fear and terror returned home. Struck by the miracle, the robbers resolved from that time on to rob no more; and their leader, with three companions, came to the Venerable Theodosius, repented, and confessed to him all his crimes. Having heard him, the Venerable Father glorified God, who had preserved not only the church's property but also the lives of the brethren. The robbers, dismissed with the abbot's saving admonitions, departed, praising and giving thanks to God and to His servant Theodosius.

A similar miracle took place a second time, during the abbacy of the Venerable Theodosius, in the same monastery church. Truly this church was guarded from heaven by God Himself, as it stood invisibly in the air under the protection of the Most Holy Theotokos.

It once happened that one of the boyars of the Christ-loving Prince Iziaslav was riding by night across a field some fifteen *poprishches* from the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius. Suddenly he saw in the distance a church standing in the air beneath the clouds. Such a vision filled the boyar with great terror; yet, with his servants, he at once urged his horse on to learn what church this was. When he drew near the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius, the church in his sight began to descend to the earth, and was found within the monastery enclosure in its own place. Then the boyar knocked at the gate and, entering the monastery, told the Venerable Father of his vision. From that

time the boyar often visited the Venerable Father and listened with delight to his God-inspired discourses. Afterwards this boyar devoted much of his means to the building of the monastery and to the adornment of the church preserved by God.

As will be seen from the following case, the Lord wondrously preserved not only the church itself but also the property belonging to the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius.

It happened once that some men had to bring captured robbers to a judge in the city. The road passed a settlement belonging to the Caves Monastery. When the bound robbers were being led past this village, one of them, nodding his head toward the village, said: "One night we came to this village, intending to kill the people and rob the whole monastery. However, we did not succeed, for when we arrived, the settlement proved to be standing at such a height that it was altogether impossible to approach it."

Thus God, the Provider, guarded the property of the monastery, heeding the prayers of the Venerable One who trusted in Him. Theodosius had the habit of going round the monastery at night in prayer, and with it, as with a strong wall, he enclosed the monastery together with all that was within it.

During the abbacy of the Venerable Theodosius, God and the Most Holy Theotokos not only guarded the monastery from plunderers but also helped from on high in its adornment. One of the boyars of the aforementioned Prince Iziaslav, named Sudislav Geievich, in holy baptism Clement, setting out with his prince to war, made this vow: "If God grants me to return home in good health, I shall give to the church of the Theodosius Caves Monastery two *hryvnias*[15] of gold, and for the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos I shall make a golden crown."

Many people fell in that battle, but nonetheless the enemies were defeated. The boyar, returning unharmed from the field of battle, forgot his vow.

15. A *grivna* (from Sanskrit *griva*, neck) – properly a necklace or chain, usually of gold, worn on the neck as an adornment. The custom of wearing the *grivna* on the neck took root among us in Rus' from the Tatars. Afterward the name *grivna* came to be applied to a bar of gold of a fixed weight (from 72 to 96 zolotniks), which circulated as a coin.

Some days later, he was sleeping peacefully in his house in the early afternoon, when suddenly a terrible voice woke him, calling him by name:

"Clement!"

Awakening, he saw before him the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos which was in the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius, and heard a voice issuing from it:

"Why, Clement, have you not given Me what you promised? Behold, I now remind you of this; take care to fulfil your vow."

As soon as the voice had spoken these words, the icon instantly vanished from the boyar's eyes. The boyar was terribly frightened by the vision and prepared as much gold as he had vowed, and also, having made a golden crown to adorn the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, at once went to the monastery and gave all this to the Venerable Theodosius.

Some time later the boyar wished to give a Gospel to the same monastery. With this intention he came to the Venerable One, having under his garment the Holy Gospel prepared for the offering. After prayer they wished to sit down, but since the boyar still did not show the Gospel, the Venerable Father said:

"Brother Clement, first take out the Holy Gospel promised to the Most Holy Theotokos, which you are hiding under your garment, and then let us sit down."

Hearing this, the boyar was amazed at the Venerable Father's foresight, for he was convinced that no one knew anything of the Gospel he had brought. At once, taking the Holy Gospel from beneath his garment, the boyar gave it to the Venerable Father. After this they sat down, and the boyar, having enjoyed spiritual conversation with Theodosius, returned home.

By many of His wonders the Lord showed that the hope and trust of the Venerable Theodosius in God had not been in vain. The divine help given to the Caves Monastery was especially evident whenever the monastery felt a lack of something. In his cell the Venerable Theodosius lived together with the monk Hilarion; usually the Holy Theodosius, quietly reciting verses of the Psalter, spun wool or did something else,

while Hilarion wrote books day and night. It was this monk who later related the following case.

One evening, when they were, as usual, each occupied with his own work, the steward, named Anastasius, entered the cell and said to the Venerable Father:

"Tomorrow we have nothing with which to buy provisions for the brethren, and we have no money to meet the monastery's other needs."

The Venerable Father answered:

"It is now evening, as you see, and tomorrow is still far off. So go and wait with patience. Pray to God: He will take thought for our needs and have mercy on us, if such is His will."

Having heard this, the steward departed. The Venerable Father at once rose and went into the inner cell to say his customary rule of prayer. Returning after prayer, he sat down and went on with his work. The steward entered the cell again and spoke of the same matter. Then the Venerable Father said to him:

"Did I not tell you: pray to God? Tomorrow go into the city and borrow from the merchants what the brethren need, and then, when God helps us, we shall repay the debt. Jesus Christ truly said: 'Take no thought for the morrow' (Mt. 6:34): God will not forsake us with His grace."

No sooner had the steward gone out than a youth shining with light, in military dress, entered the cell. Bowing, he placed a *hryvnia* of gold on the table near the Venerable Father and, saying nothing, went out. The Venerable Father rose, and taking the gold, prayed to God with tears of thanksgiving.

In the morning the Venerable Father called the doorkeeper and asked whether anyone had come to the monastery during the previous night. The doorkeeper answered:

No, as soon as the sun had set I immediately shut the gate, and since that time I have not opened it, for no one has come to the monastery.

Then the Venerable Father summoned the steward and, handing him a gold hryvnia, said:

"How can you say, Brother Anastasius, that we have nothing with which to buy what the brethren need? Here, take this gold and go and buy what is necessary."

The steward, understanding that this had been sent by the mercy of God, bowed down at the saint's feet, asking forgiveness. And the Venerable Father instructed him on this occasion as follows:

"Brother, never fall into despair, but always be strengthened by faith in God, and in every sorrow hope for the help of the Lord, for He will take care of us, if such is His will. Therefore prepare a festive repast for the brethren, for this is a visitation of God. When we become poor, God will then take care of us, as He has done today."

In a similar way, on another occasion, the cellarer named Theodore came to the Venerable Father and said:

"I have nothing edible which I could offer the brethren for dinner."

The Venerable Father, as on that other occasion, answered:

"Go, be patient a little and pray to God; He will take care of us. And if we are not worthy of His mercy, then serve boiled wheat with honey for dinner. But we must hope that the Lord, who in the wilderness sent bread to the rebellious people (Ex. 16:15), can also provide food for us."

Having heard this, the cellarer withdrew, and the Venerable Father began to pray fervently to God. And behold, by the secret inspiration of God, the chief boyar of Prince Izyaslav, named John, sent to the Venerable Father at the monastery three full carts of provisions: bread, fish, vegetables, millet and honey. Having received all this, the Venerable Father glorified God, and said to the cellarer:

"You see, Brother Theodore, God will not forsake us if only we hope in Him with all our heart. Go, then, and prepare a meal for the brethren, for this is a visitation of God."

Thus the Venerable Father rejoiced spiritually with the brethren during the meal and gave thanks to God, that "there is no want to them that fear Him" (Ps. 33:10). God often worked such miracles in the Monastery of the Caves through the prayer of the Venerable Father.

Once a priest came from the town to the Venerable Father, asking him to lend wine for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Immediately

Saint Theodosius summoned the church warden and bade him fill with wine the vessel which the priest had brought. The warden said that they themselves had so little wine that it would scarcely suffice for three or four liturgies. The Venerable Father answered him:

"Pour out all the wine for this man, and God Himself will take care of us."

The warden, stepping aside and not obeying the saint's command, poured only a little wine into the priest's vessel, and set the rest aside for himself for the next day's celebration of the Divine Service. Then the priest went and showed the Venerable Father how little wine the warden had poured for him. The Venerable Father again summoned the warden and said to him:

"Did I not tell you to give all the wine and not to be concerned about tomorrow? The Lord will not permit the church of His Mother to be left without service tomorrow; He will send wine in abundance even today."

Then the warden gave the priest all his wine and dismissed him. Meanwhile, after dinner, towards evening, according to the Venerable Father's foretelling, three carts of barrels filled with wine arrived. These had been sent as a gift to the monastery by a housekeeper of the Christ-loving Prince Vsevolod. Seeing what had come to pass, the church warden glorified God, marvelling at the fulfilment of the prediction of the Venerable Theodosius, who had said that God would send wine in abundance to the monastery that very day.

This same church warden was also a witness to another, similar miracle, which took place through the prayers of the Venerable Father. It happened thus.

When, on the eve of the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, there was no oil needed for kindling the church lamps, the church warden decided to prepare it from seeds, and to use this oil in the services in place of the wooden oil. The warden asked the Venerable Theodosius for permission to do this, and since the saint raised no objection, the warden acted as he had planned. But when he was about to pour the prepared oil into the lamps, he saw that a dead mouse was floating in the vessel of oil. Then the warden hastily went to the Venerable Father and said:

"I covered carefully the vessel with the oil I had prepared, and I do not know how a mouse could have got into it."

The Venerable Father, understanding that this had happened by the providence of God, said to the warden:

"We ought to have hoped in God, that He would supply us with all we need, and it was not good to act without faith in the almighty power of the Lord. Go and pour the oil out on the ground. Let us wait a little and pray to God; He will give us wooden oil in abundance this very day."

The warden did as he had been told, and the Venerable Father meanwhile began to pray. Towards evening a rich man did indeed bring as a gift to the monastery a very large barrel of wooden oil. The Venerable Father glorified God, who had so quickly heard his prayer. With the oil received, they not only filled all the lamps, but there was still more than half left over. Thus the brethren celebrated with due solemnity the bright feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Here is yet another of such miracles, by which the Lord, through the prayer of the Venerable Theodosius, satisfied the pressing needs of the monastery. The Christ-loving Prince Izyaslav, who cherished for the Venerable Theodosius a truly Christian love, often visited him, finding delight in his pleasant conversation. On one such visit he talked with him unnoticed until the time of the evening service; then the prince, together with the Venerable Father, went to the church. By the providence of God, at that moment a heavy rain suddenly began. Noticing this, the Venerable Father, summoning the steward, ordered him to prepare a meal for the prince.

"Father," said the steward, "we have no honey at all with which to entertain the prince and his companions."

Then the Venerable Father asked:

"Surely you have at least a little?"

"No, Father, we have none at all," answered the steward. "I have even turned over the empty vessel in which the drink was, setting it bottom up."

But the Venerable Theodosius, filled with grace-given gifts, as his very name also indicates[16], said:

"So be it. Nevertheless, go as I command, and in faith in the power of the name of our sweetest Lord Jesus Christ, you will find honey in that vessel."

The steward went with faith in the almighty power of the Lord and saw that the barrel stood in its place and was filled with honey, as the Venerable Father had foretold. The steward, in fear, hastened to tell the Venerable Father what had happened.

"Be silent," said the Venerable Father to him, "and do not tell this to anyone. Go and serve that honey to the prince and his companions; let them eat as much as they wish. Give the brethren honey from it too, for this is a blessing of God."

After some time the rain stopped, and the prince went home. In the monastery there remained so much honey that it sufficed the brethren for a long time.

On another occasion the head baker once came to the Venerable Father and said that there was no flour in the monastery for baking bread.

"Go and inspect the granary," the Venerable Father answered him. "Perhaps you will find a little flour there, and somehow it will suffice us until the Lord again takes care of us."

The baker said to the Venerable Father:

"I am telling you the truth, Father: I myself swept the granary, but there is nothing there except three or four handfuls of bran left in a corner."

Then the Venerable Father said to him:

"Believe me, son, that God can turn even these remaining bran into flour and fill our granary with it, just as in the days of Elijah He made from a single handful so much flour that the widow and her children were fed by it in the time of famine, until the harvest brought bread in abundance to all (3 Kgdms. 17:8–16). And now God is equally mighty, that He can make from our lack an abundance. Go, then, and see

16. Theodosius, translated from the Greek, means "given by God"; in a figurative sense: "endowed with gifts from God."

whether the Lord will bless with His mercy also the place where we keep our flour."

Having heard these words, the baker went away. Then, entering the granary, he saw that the storehouse, which had been empty before, was now, through the prayer of the Venerable Theodosius, so full that the flour was spilling on the ground over the edges of its walls. The monk was astonished at beholding such a glorious miracle; returning, he told everything to the Venerable Father.

"Go, brother," said the Venerable Father to him, "and tell no one of what has happened; bake your bread as usual. God sent us this mercy through the prayers of our holy brethren."

Praising and thanking God for such great benefactions, our Venerable Father Theodosius spent all his nights in prayer: bathed in tears and falling on his knees, he gave thanks to God for His great benefactions. The brethren of the monastery, who came to the Venerable Father daily before Matins to receive his blessing for the beginning of the service, always heard from behind the door how the abbot, all in tears, offered his prayer, often striking his head against the ground. The Venerable Father, hearing their footsteps, would fall silent and assume the appearance of one asleep, so that the brethren sometimes had to knock on the door three times, saying each time the words: "Bless, Father!"

Then the Venerable Father, feigning that he had only just awakened, answered:

"May God bless you!"

And, having given the blessing, he went to the church before all the others. It was related that he did so every night.

Besides these ascetic labors, the Venerable Father, during his abbacy, also toiled in many other works. He was never seen resting on a bed; and when, because of bodily weakness, he needed rest after the day's prayers, he would fall asleep only for a short time, and even then sitting upright. Soon he would awaken and go to the All-night Vigil, where he prayed, often kneeling. Nor was he ever seen washing his body for pleasure; he washed with water only his hands and his face. And when the monastic rule prescribed dry fare for the brethren, he himself partook of dry bread and of soup cooked in oil, and drank only

water. Still less was he ever seen sitting gloomily at table; he always had a cheerful countenance, for his heart was strengthened not by food but by the grace of God.

Each year, during Great Lent, the Venerable Father withdrew to the cave (where his honorable body was afterwards laid) and shut himself in there until Palm Sunday (the Flower-bearing Sunday). On the Friday before Palm Sunday, at Vespers, he would return to the brethren. The brethren thought that he lived continuously in the cave known to them, but in truth, at night, secretly from everyone, he went to one of the monastery's villages and there, in another cave situated in a hidden place, dwelt alone, so that no one except God knew of his true dwelling. From there, before the Friday in the sixth week of Great Lent, he again went by night to the first cave, from which on Friday he came out to the brethren; so everyone thought that he had spent the whole fast in the cave known to them.

Many sorrows and vain thoughts were then suggested to the Venerable Father in the cave by evil spirits, who at times even inflicted wounds upon him. But God granted him an invisible strength to conquer them, and the demons could in no way compel the blessed one to leave the cave. The Venerable Father dwelt alone in the dark cave and did not fear the multitude of the regiments of the prince of darkness. But he himself, as a good soldier of Christ, by prayer and fasting drove the demons away from himself, so that they no longer dared to approach him and appeared to him only from afar, in phantasmal forms.

Once, after the evening chanting in the cave, Theodosius sat down, wishing to rest a little. Suddenly a terrible outcry arose. It seemed that a multitude of devils had gathered in the cave: some drove about in chariots, others beat on tambourines, others played on pipes. From the noise and the voices the whole cave shook. Hearing all this, the Venerable Father was not frightened, nor was he terrified; but, having protected himself as with a weapon by the sign of the Cross, he rose and began to sing verses from the Psalter. The earthquake and the noise immediately ceased. But when, after prayer, he sat down again to rest, the former noise and the voice of countless devils were heard once more. The Venerable Father, rising, again began to sing, and again the

noise ceased. For many days and nights the evil spirits thus disturbed him, not allowing him to sleep even a little. This continued until the Venerable Father, by the help of the grace of God, finally conquered them and gained such power over them that they no longer dared to approach the place where the Venerable Father stood in prayer. The devils themselves began to flee from him, as confirmed by the numerous instances cited below.

In the room where bread was baked for the brethren, the devils caused the brethren no small annoyance by their schemes: now they scattered the flour, now they spilled the kvass prepared for the loaves, and they did many other unpleasant things to the brethren. Once the senior baker related the snares of the demons to the Venerable Theodosius. Then the latter went to that room and, shutting the doors behind him, remained there until Matins, praying to God all the while. From that hour the devils forever left that place in peace and no longer did any evil there.

On another occasion a brother came from the monastery's village to the Venerable Father and told him that in the barn, where the cattle were driven, devils had appeared and were causing great harm, not allowing the cattle to eat. The priest had many times read the prayer and sprinkled the cattle-house with holy water, but nothing helped. Then the Venerable Father, strengthened by prayer and fasting, went to that village. At nightfall he entered the barn, shut the doors behind him, and remained there in prayer until morning. From that hour the devils no longer appeared in that place and could do nothing evil to anyone in that village.

The Venerable Father not only himself overcame the power of the devils, but also taught others how to be delivered from the demons. If he learned that someone among the brethren suffered from devils, he taught such a brother not to leave the place, but to protect himself by prayer and fasting and to call upon God for victory over the demons.

The Venerable Father thus instructed the brethren concerning the snares of the devil:

"At first something similar happened to me as well. Once at night, when I was singing the customary psalms in my cell, a black dog sud-

denly appeared before me, and so near that I could not make a prostration to the ground. For a long time it stood thus, and I was about to strike it when it suddenly vanished. Such fear and trembling then seized me that I intended to flee from that place, had the Lord not helped me. Having recovered a little from the terror, I began to pray diligently and to make frequent prostrations. From that time I wholly ceased to fear the snares of devils, even though the devils appeared before my eyes."

One of the brethren, Hilarion (of whom mention was made above), related the following:

"The devils did me much evil in my cell. When I lay down to sleep at night, a multitude of devils would suddenly appear; seizing me by the hair and trampling me with their feet, they dragged me across the ground. Others of the devils, lifting up a wall, said: 'Let us drag him here and crush him with the wall.' They did the same to me every night; and I, unable to endure it, went and told everything to the Venerable Theodosius, intending to move from there to another cell. The Venerable Father said to me:"

"No, brother, do not depart, lest the devils should boast of their victory over you and say that you fled from them. If you leave, the devils from that time will do you even greater evil, as those who have gained power over you. Pray diligently in your cell, and God, seeing your patience, will help you overcome them, so that they will not dare even to approach you."

And I again said to the Venerable Father:

"I beg you, Father, allow me to move to another cell; now I have no strength left to remain any longer in the old cell, for a multitude of devils lives there."

Then the Venerable Father, making the sign of the Cross over me, said:

"Go, brother, to your cell. From this time the crafty devils will not dare to do you any harm."

I listened with faith to the words of Saint Theodosius, and, bowing to the Venerable Father, went out. From that time the bold devils no

longer dared to approach my cell, having been driven away once and for all by the prayers of the Venerable Theodosius.

As steadfast as the Venerable Theodosius was in his struggle with invisible enemies, so was he courageous in his struggle with the visible enemies of Christ the Lord. He had this custom: often, rising at night, secretly from everyone, he would go to the Jews and there boldly enter into disputation with them about Christ. He reproached and rebuked them, calling them transgressors of the Law and God-killers. As a true imitator of Christ, he ardently desired to receive death for confessing His name precisely from those people from whom our Lord Jesus Christ Himself had received death.

That this courageous confessor of the name of Christ truly had a desire to suffer for the truth is confirmed by the following incident.

During his abbacy, the invisible enemy, the prince of darkness, stirred up strife among three Russian princes. Two brothers according to the flesh, Sviatoslav, Prince of Chernigov, and Vsevolod of Pereiaslavl, raised an unjust war against their elder brother, the Christ-loving Prince Iziaslav of Kiev, and drove him from the capital city of Kiev[17]. Having seated themselves in his place at Kiev, they sent to invite the Venerable Theodosius to dine with them. The Venerable Father, with courage and resolution, answered their invitation:

"It is not fitting for me to go to the table of unrighteousness, as to the table of Jezebel[18]."

When Vsevolod withdrew to his Pereiaslavl territory and Sviatoslav sat down in Kiev in the place of Iziaslav, the Venerable Theodosius began unceasingly to rebuke Prince Sviatoslav for having seated himself on his brother's throne without right. To the princely envoys who came to him, the Venerable Father asked that it be conveyed to the

17. Sviatoslav II Yaroslavich reigned in Kiev from 1073 to 1076, and Vsevolod I Yaroslavich from 1078 to 1093.

18. Jezebel was the wife of the Israelite king Ahab, distinguished by extreme impiety and debauchery. Ahab, blindly submitting to her influence, surpassed in impiety all his predecessors and gave himself over to the most shameful idolatry. He built a temple to Baal in Samaria, planted sacred groves, and permitted Jezebel to erect altars to the gods of Tyre and Sidon (3 Kgdms. 16:31–33). Jezebel maintained four hundred false prophets, who were fed from her table (3 Kgdms. 18:19). It is evidently this very "table" that St. Theodosius has in mind here.

prince that he did not approve of his deed. Once he sent him a long letter of reproof, in which, among other things, he wrote: "The voice of the blood of your uterine brother cries out against you to God, as the blood of Abel against Cain" (Gen. 4:10).

For his instruction he recalled in the letter the names of many impious fratricides of antiquity. Prince Sviatoslav was so angered on reading this letter that he flung it to the ground in wrath, and from that time began to seek an occasion to imprison the Venerable Theodosius in a monastery. The brethren of the monastery, greatly grieved at the prince's intentions, besought the Venerable Father to cease rebuking the prince. Likewise many boyars who visited the Venerable Father, reporting to him the prince's wrath, advised him not to oppose the prince.

"For the prince," they said, "intends to imprison you."

The Venerable Father, hearing them speak of imprisonment, rejoiced in his soul and said:

"I rejoice greatly at this, brethren! There is nothing in life more pleasing to me than to be banished for the truth; for it I am ready to go both into prison and to death."

From that time on the Venerable Theodosius reproached the prince still more for his hatred of his brother, as though desiring by this to bring about an order for his own imprisonment. In spite of his anger, the prince did not dare to do the Venerable any harm, knowing his righteousness and holiness; for earlier he had envied his brother, Prince Izyaslav, for having in his domain such a righteous man as the great Theodosius. Soon after this, the Venerable Theodosius, perceiving that his severe rebukes had no effect on the prince, yielding to the entreaties of the brethren and the nobles, ceased to denounce the prince and from that time began to beseech him with tears to return to his brother his domain.

When, some days after this, Prince Sviatoslav learned of the Venerable Theodosius' intention to cease his rebukes, he rejoiced greatly and sent to ask the Venerable whether he would permit him to come to the monastery or not. And when he gave permission, the prince went gladly to the monastery together with his boyars. The Venerable, with

the brethren, coming out of the church, met the prince with honor, so that all the brethren bowed to the prince.

"I did not dare to come to you, Father," said the prince to the Venerable, "thinking that in your anger you would not admit me to your monastery."

The Venerable answered him:

"What does our anger mean, good lord, in the face of your power? But it is fitting for us to rebuke and to say what is salutary for the soul, and for you to listen to it."

They entered the church and prayed, and then the Venerable Theodosius long instructed him from Holy Scripture, discoursing on brotherly love, since the prince blamed his brother for many things. After a lengthy and soul-profiting conversation, the prince returned home, glorifying God that he had been granted to converse with such a man, and from then on he often visited his monastery. Many times afterward the Venerable Theodosius himself went to this sovereign prince Sviatoslav, reminding him of the fear of God and of love for his brother.

On one such visit the Venerable found musicians at the prince's court playing on various instruments. All were making merry. For a long time the Venerable sat silently beside the prince with downcast eyes; then he said:

"Will it be thus in the next world?"

The touched prince wept, and at once ordered the musicians to stop playing. And from then on, whenever the Venerable happened to find music being played in the palace, the prince, learning of the blessed one's arrival, immediately ordered it stopped.

When the prince was told of the Venerable's arrival, he often came out himself with a joyful face and met him before the doors of the palace. Filled with joy, the prince said to the Venerable who had come:

"Father, truly I tell you: if I were told that my own father had risen from the dead, I would not rejoice as I do at your coming, yet at the same time I would not fear him as I fear your holy soul."

"If it is as you say," answered the Venerable, "then fulfill my request: return to your brother the throne which your pious father gave him."

The prince was silent at this, not knowing what to answer the saint; so greatly had the enemy kindled his anger that he did not even wish to hear of his brother. Nevertheless, the Venerable Theodosius prayed to God day and night for the Christ-loving Prince Izyaslav, and at church services he ordered that he be commemorated as the lawful Prince of Kiev and elder brother, while Sviatoslav, who had unlawfully seated himself on his brother's throne, he forbade to be commemorated in his monastery. Only afterward, at the urging of the brethren, did the Venerable order both of them to be commemorated, though still Izyaslav first and Sviatoslav second.

Not wishing to witness such strife among the Russian princes, the aforementioned blessed Nikon (who had tonsured the Venerable Theodosius and afterward in everything helped him) withdrew a second time from the Caves Monastery to the peninsula of Tmutarakan, where he founded his own monastery. The Venerable Theodosius, after his departure, continued his labors as before, now alone.

Since during his hegumenate the number of brethren had increased to such a degree that the old Monastery of the Caves had become too cramped for the brethren, our Venerable Father Theodosius began to consider how, with God's help, and where, he might move to a more spacious place and there build a large stone church, likewise in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos. God heeded the prayer of the righteous one, approved the place he had chosen for the move, and blessed the building of a large stone church. The Lord made known His will by wondrous signs.

One pious and God-fearing man was walking one dark night past the old Monastery of the Caves and saw the following. A bright light issued from the monastery, and the Venerable Theodosius stood before the church with his hands raised to heaven, offering prayer to God. The passerby continued to gaze on this with wonder, when suddenly the vision changed, and he saw another wonder: above the church roof there appeared a very large flame, which, taking the form of an arc, passed over to another hill, namely the one on which the Venerable Theodosius afterward began to build the new stone church. Thus one end of the fiery arc stood over the old church, and the other over the

place where the new church was to be built. The witness of this wonder afterward related it at the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius.

At another time, at night, the neighboring inhabitants were awakened by the singing of many voices heard near the monastery. They rose, went out of their houses, and walked to a rise to see from where these voices were coming. Then they saw the following. The old Monastery of the Caves was flooded with bright light; a multitude of monks, coming out of the old church, were going to the new place: some carried an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, while the rest, singing hymns, accompanied the first, holding lighted candles in their hands. At the head of all walked the father and teacher of the monks, the Venerable Theodosius. Arriving at the new place, they performed singing and prayer there, and then, returning, again entered the old church with singing. Many witnesses afterward attested to the reality of this wonder. And since not one monk had taken part in the aforementioned procession, all understood that these persons had seen Angels.

On the place thus hallowed by God through such great wonders, a stone church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos began to be built[2944]. In the construction of this church the Venerable Theodosius himself took a great part by his labors: he came there daily, carefully supervised the work, and, as far as possible, helped in the building, working together with the masons. While working he dressed so poorly that he could have been taken for the lowest novice, but never for a hegumen.

Once, as the Venerable was walking to the construction of the church, a widow who had been wronged by a judge met him and asked:

"Monk, tell me, where is your hegumen? Is he not in the monastery?"

"What do you want with him," answered the Venerable, "for he too is a sinful man?"

The woman answered this:

"I do not know whether he is sinful or not; I know only that he delivers many from sorrow and evil. That is why I am going to ask him to protect me from the wrongs of the unjust judge."

The Venerable, having learned of her affair, took pity on her and said:

"Go home now, and when our hegumen returns, I will tell him about you, and he will deliver you from your trouble."

Hearing him, the woman went home, and the Venerable went to the judge. Heeding the entreaties of St. Theodosius, the judge entered into the widow's situation and, showing indulgence, returned to her everything in which she had been wronged by him.

By such and similar deeds worthy of the righteous one, the Venerable Theodosius accompanied the building of the Caves church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos. He did not finish this church during his lifetime, but even after his death, by his prayers pleasing to God, he helped the Venerable Stephen, who after him assumed the hegumenate and continued the building of the church begun by St. Theodosius.

Meanwhile the God-pleasing life of our Venerable Father Theodosius began to decline toward its close. Sensing his departure to God, on the day of his death the Venerable had all the brethren gathered, summoning to himself not only those in the monastery but also all who for any reason were absent and occupied with business, and even all the monastery servants. When all had assembled, he began to exhort each one, with all zeal and fear of God, to fulfill the duties entrusted to him. With tears he spoke of the salvation of the soul, of a God-pleasing, temperate life, of diligent attendance at church, of the reverent fear with which all must stand at the services, of love and obedience toward not only elders but also one's peers. Having spoken of each one's duties, he blessed the brethren and dismissed them in peace. Then the pious Prince Sviatoslav came to visit the Venerable. Him he taught with his grace-filled lips piety, the preservation of Orthodoxy, and care for the holy churches. Then he said to him:

"I will pray to the Lord God and His All-Immaculate Mother that you may be strengthened in piety. May God grant that your reign be quiet and tranquil. And so I entrust to your piety this holy Monastery of the Caves and the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, created by her will."

Alternating terrible chills and a painful burning fever so weakened the Venerable's body that he had to lie down in a bed, which he had never before lain upon. Lying in bed, he said:

Let the will of God be done! As the Lord shall please, so may He act! But I beseech Thee, my Master, Jesus Christ, be merciful to my soul: may it escape the wicked demons, may Thy Angels meet it and, leading it past the aerial toll-houses, present it to the light of Thy mercy!

Having said this, he fell silent.

For three days the Venerable could neither speak nor open his eyes, so that he might have been taken for dead, had there not been a faint breath perceptible on his lips. The dangerous illness of the holy elder caused the brethren great sorrow and grief. After three days in this condition, the Venerable rose from his bed and said to all the brotherhood who had gathered:

– My brethren and fathers! Behold, my life is ending; this the Lord revealed to me in the cave during Great Lent. Consider among yourselves whom you would wish to have as your hegumen in my place.

Greatly grieved by these words, the brethren began to weep. Going out from the Venerable and taking counsel together, all the monks agreed to choose as their hegumen Stephen, the keeper of the Rule[19]. On the following day the Venerable again summoned all the brethren and asked them:

– How have you decided among yourselves, children? Which of you is worthy to be hegumen?

They all said that Stephen was worthy of the hegumenate. Calling Stephen to him, the Venerable blessed him to the hegumenate in his place and said to him:

– Behold, child, I hand over the monastery to you; guard it diligently. The order of the services that I established, such keep you also, and in all things hold to the monastic tradition. Do not change the Rule, but do all things according to the law and the monastic order.

19. *Ustavshchik* – the manager of the choir, the precentor.

The Venerable instructed the brethren at length, charging them to obey the new hegumen. Then he dismissed them all, foretelling the day of his repose: Saturday.

– After sunrise, – he said to the brethren, – my soul will leave the body.

Then the Venerable again called Stephen alone to him and, in private, instructed him at length on how to shepherd the holy flock. Since the Venerable had become greatly weakened by illness, Stephen, without leaving him, served him with humility. On the Saturday that came, at dawn, St. Theodosius sent for the brethren. When all the monks had gathered, the saint, taking his leave, kissed each of them with love; and they wept bitterly, foreseeing the swift loss of so good a shepherd. St. Theodosius, now fully prepared for death, said to them:

– My beloved children and my brethren! I have kissed you all because I am departing to my Master, Jesus Christ. Here is your hegumen, whom you yourselves have chosen; honor him as your spiritual father, obey him, and at his command do all that is pleasing to God. And may God, who created all things by His Word and wisdom, Himself bless you and preserve you from the slanders of the evil one; may He keep in you, to your last breath, a firm and unshaken faith and love for one another. Then, I beg and adjure you: bury me in the garment in which I now am, and lay my body in that cave where I dwelt during Great Lent; in no case wash my humble body. Let none of the worldly people see my burial; you alone, monks, lay me in the place I have indicated.

Hearing the saint's words, the brethren wept greatly. The Venerable again comforted them, saying:

– I promise you, brethren and fathers, that although I depart from you in body, yet in my soul I shall always remain with you.

After these words the Venerable dismissed them all, keeping no one with him. One of the brethren who constantly served him, having bored a hole in the door, looked to see what he was doing. The Venerable, rising from his bed, fell prostrate and with tears implored merciful God for the salvation of his soul. In his prayer he called upon all the saints for help, and above all our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos, to whom he

entrusted his flock and his very monastery. After prayer he lay down again upon his bed, and then, having rested a little, he raised his eyes to heaven and, with joy upon his face, said in a loud voice: "Blessed be God! If it is so, then I no longer fear, but with still greater joy I depart from this world."

It must be supposed that, in uttering the words cited above, he was beholding some vision. Then, straightening his legs and folding his hands crosswise upon his breast, he commended his holy soul to God and was joined to the choir of the holy fathers. This took place in 1074, on 3 May, on Saturday, as the Venerable had foretold, after sunrise. Having mourned the repose of St. Theodosius with fervor, the brethren carried his holy body into the church, and there performed the customary prayers and chants for the departed.

By divine providence, many people learned at once of the Venerable's repose. The people and many of the boyars, gathered of their own zeal at the monastery gates, awaited the time when the Venerable's body would be carried out of the monastery for burial in the cave. The brethren, however, closed the gates and admitted no one into the monastery, waiting for the crowd to disperse, so that they might bury the Venerable's body, as he himself had directed, in the absence of laymen. And then, by the will of God, the sky was suddenly covered with clouds, and a heavy rain fell. No sooner had the people dispersed than the sun shone out again. Then the brethren carried the Venerable's body out of the church and laid it with honor in the cave.[2946]

At the very moment of the righteous man's repose, Prince Sviatoslav was not far from the Monastery of the Caves; suddenly he saw above the monastery a pillar of fire stretching from the earth to heaven. Surmising the Venerable's repose, the prince said to those present:

– I think that today the Venerable Theodosius has passed from earth to heaven; I was with him yesterday and saw that he was in a very grievous illness.

He sent to learn of the Venerable, and when he was assured of his death, he wept much.

In the year of the blessed Theodosius's death, through his prayers, all the monastery's treasures began to increase; the fields yielded

abundantly, and the monastery's animals bred in great numbers. Such a year had not been seen before. Seeing this, the brethren remembered their father's promise and glorified God, who had vouchsafed to His servant, the blessed Theodosius, His gracious gifts. These gracious gifts were made manifest after the death of St. Theodosius by many miracles which the saint wrought through the fervent prayer of all who called upon him for help.

At this time Prince Sviatoslav was greatly angered with one of the boyars. Many said that the prince intended to send him into confinement. That boyar fervently prayed to God and called upon the Venerable Theodosius for help, saying: "I know, Father, that thou art holy; behold, I am in distress; be merciful to me: by thy prayer to the heavenly Lord, deliver me from my trouble."

When the boyar fell asleep, the Venerable appeared to him in a dream and said:

– Why are you so grieved? Do you think that I have wholly departed from you? Though in body I have gone away, yet in soul I always abide with you. Behold, tomorrow the prince, without any wrath, will summon you and restore to you your former rank.

Coming to his senses, the boyar saw the Venerable behind him, near the door, going out of the room. What the holy Theodosius had foretold was truly fulfilled, and from that time the boyar cherished an even greater love for the Monastery of the Caves.

Setting out on a journey, a man brought to the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius a small silver casket and gave it into the keeping of a monk acquaintance of his named Konon. Monk Nicholas learned of this and, having stolen that casket at the instigation of the devil, hid it. Konon, returning, did not find the silver in his cell, and greatly grieved over this, began to pray to God with tears, calling upon the Venerable Theodosius for help. After prayer he fell asleep, and Konon saw the Venerable Theodosius appear to him, who said:

– The silver about which you are grieved was taken by the monk Nicholas at the suggestion of the devil, and he has hidden it in the cave.

Then, disclosing where the gold had been hidden, he said to him:

– Go, and without speaking of this to anyone, take what is yours.

Awaking, the monk, rejoicing, quickly rose and, lighting a candle, went to the indicated place. Finding what had been stolen, he gave thanks to God and to His servant, the Venerable Theodosius.

There was also the following case. A cleric of the holy great cathedral Church of St. Sophia in Kiev fell gravely ill: his whole body burned with a strong inner fever. Coming to himself, he prayed to God and to the Venerable, His servant Theodosius, asking that his sufferings be relieved. No sooner had he fallen asleep than he saw in a dream the Venerable Theodosius, who, handing him a staff, said: "Take this and walk with it."

Awaking, the sick man felt that the fever in his body was weakening and the illness ceasing. And when after this he recovered, he went to the Monastery of the Caves and told the brethren how he had been healed of his illness through the prayers of the Venerable Theodosius. The monks glorified God, who had given such grace to the righteous man.

There was also this instance. During his abbacy in the Kiev Caves Monastery, the Venerable Theodosius ordained that on the Friday of the first week of Great Lent, the brethren should be served at table – as good ascetics who had labored in abstinence – with pure loaves, certainly with honey and poppy seed. This ordinance was always observed, also by the Blessed Stephen,[20] who had been appointed abbot by the Venerable Theodosius himself. After Stephen, the Blessed Nikon[21] took up the abbacy of the Kiev Caves Monastery, and on the Friday of the first week of Great Lent that came, he commanded the cellarer to make the loaves according to the ordinance of the Venerable Theodosius. But the cellarer disobeyed the abbot's command and did not carry out what the Venerable Theodosius had established, on the pretext that there was no flour for such loaves. But God Himself did not allow the custom established by the Venerable Theodosius to perish. When, after the Liturgy, the brethren were making their way to the refectory for the Lenten meal, a cart of pure loaves was unexpectedly brought to them from somewhere. Seeing this wonder, the brethren

20. Stephen – was abbot from 1074 to 1078.
21. Nikon – was abbot from 1078 to 1088.

glorified God and His saint, who did not abandon them even after his death. They glorified their father and teacher, the Venerable Theodosius, who had preserved for the welfare of the monks his own ordinance and fulfilled his promise – always to render help to the monastery, the right to ask the Lord for which he had earned by his God-pleasing deeds. Aided by the holy and bold prayers of the Venerable Theodosius, may we too be granted to receive the gift of God – eternal life with Christ Jesus, our Lord, glorified with God the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Having risen to virtue, from youth thou didst love the monastic life; to the desire thereof thou didst attain with valor. Thou didst dwell in a cave, and having adorned thy life with fasting and radiance, in prayers thou didst abide as one bodiless. Thou didst shine in the land of Russia like a bright luminary, O Father Theodosius: intercede with Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Let us honor today the Russian star, which shone forth from the East and came to the West: for he enriched this whole land with wonders and goodness, and enriched us all through the institution and grace of the monastic rule, O blessed Theodosius.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Peter the Wonderworker

Память преподобного отца нашего Петра чудотворца

The native city of this Venerable Father was Constantinople. He was born of God-fearing parents. When his parents took the monastic habit, and soon afterward his two brothers, Paul and Dionysius, were also tonsured into monasticism, he too, imitating them and desiring to live the same life, likewise took up the monastic life together with his brother Plato. Having become a monk, he so zealously

devoted himself to monastic life that he surpassed all his contemporaries in this, for, seeking at first to imitate them, and then all the other monks, he took virtues from them and applied them to his own life. By his lofty ascetic life he won the love of Nicholas, the bishop of Italy at that time,[22] who wished to honor him with the episcopal rank, but he declined this, pleading that he considered himself unworthy of such an honor. Bishop Nicholas then went to his brother Paul and, to comfort the Church of Corinth, which then had no bishop, ordained him bishop of the city of Corinth.[23] After this, the Venerable Peter, avoiding the insistent entreaties to accept the episcopate, came to his brother Paul in Corinth and bound himself with a vow of silence, but he remained in it only one year, not bringing his struggle to its end, for notable men and shipowners came to Paul in Corinth from a distant land[24] and asked him to appoint his brother as bishop for them, because their bishop had died. They begged the holy Peter so insistently to be their bishop that he, finding no strength in himself to refuse them, contemplated fleeing from Corinth; but when a considerable time had passed, and those who had come continued their entreaties with even greater insistence, he was at last moved by their tears and accepted their proposal.

Having accepted the episcopal rank, the Venerable Peter devoted himself with all zeal to the work of church teaching, and his flock repaid his zeal with zeal toward him. In works of mercy he went so far as not to spare even his own clothing for the poor. He fed orphans, cared for widows, supplied food to the needy, and secretly gave alms to all who were in want. When once there was a year of poor harvest and famine visited the land, he, by his unceasing almsgiving, fed many thousands

22. This was the Patriarch of Constantinople Nicholas I Mystikos. In 895 he occupied the Patriarchal See of Constantinople; in 906, for excommunicating Emperor Leo VI the Philosopher from Holy Communion on account of his entering into a fourth marriage with Zoe, he was exiled by the emperor to the island of Iria; in 911 he was returned to his see, which he occupied until his death in 925.

23. Corinth – the most ancient of the cities of Greece, situated in the northern part of ancient Argolis, on the shore of the Corinthian Gulf. The foundation of the Christian Church there was laid by the holy Apostle Paul.

24. That is, from the city of Argos, situated on the shore of the Argolic Gulf. That the Venerable Peter was bishop in the city of Argos is stated in one of the synaxaria. There it is also said that he was ordained bishop by the Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos.

of the starving people. At this time it happened once that only a little food remained in a vessel, but the Venerable Peter soon found it completely full, so that the food in it sufficed for the needy for a whole year. Out of his mercy toward those who suffered, he ransomed captives and freed the weak from the violence of the strong. Besides this, he healed a demon-possessed maiden, foretold in a parable the calamity to befall the Peloponnese,[25] and long before foresaw the day of his death. Having reached the age of seventy and having performed countless good deeds, he gave his blessed soul to the Lord. And after his repose he worked miracles, exuding fragrance from his tomb, casting out demons and healing every kind of sickness, and also instructing those who sought this at his tomb.[26]

* * *

NOTES

2930. Daniel is the fourth of the "greater" prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel). He was of royal lineage and, while still a youth, was taken to Babylon among the other Jewish captives. Endowed with excellent spiritual and bodily qualities, he learned here the language and wisdom of the Chaldeans, and together with three of his companions – Ananias, Azariah, and Mishael – was taken into service at the royal court. Daniel interpreted for the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar his remarkable dreams, and himself was granted repeated visions in which the most important and remarkable sacred events were revealed to him. At the accession of Darius he was made one of the three governors of the empire, and he was miraculously saved from the lions into whose den he had been cast for his attachment to the faith of his fathers (Dan. 6:10–24). The history of his life and activity is described by him himself in the sacred book bearing his name. His memory is celebrated by the Holy Church on December 17.

2944. The church was founded in 1073. The Venerable Theodosius did not live to complete the construction of the church and monastery. It was brought to completion by Theodosius's successors: Stephen (who was abbot from 1074 to 1078), Nikon (who governed the monastery from 1078 to 1088), and John (elected abbot in 1088 or 1089). The stone church of the new monastery, founded by the Venerable Theodosius, was finished in masonry under Stephen in 1075, but, probably owing to a shortage of funds for its finishing, which proceeded slowly, it was consecrated only fourteen years

25. In antiquity the southern part of present-day Greece was called the Peloponnese.

26. The venerable one died in the tenth century. His relics were translated in 1421 from Argos to Nafplio. When the coffin was opened, as eyewitnesses related, the earth shook, the air was filled with fragrance, and many healings took place.

later, in 1089. In 1108 the construction of the refectory for the brethren was completed, and in 1182 the monastery was enclosed with a stone wall. The old monastery was not destroyed after the new one was built, but continued to exist with the small number of brethren who remained in it; the cave beside which this monastery stood, after the brethren had left it, came to serve the monastery as a burial vault or cemetery. In 1240 the Pechersk Monastery was largely destroyed by the Tatars. The restoration of the monastery followed at the end of the thirteenth century. In its present form the monastery has preserved from the pre-Mongol period only the lower part of the "great" or main church and, possibly, the gate church in honor of the Holy Trinity. The present stone walls of the monastery were built on the site of wooden ones (which had replaced the stone walls destroyed by the Tatars) at the end of the seventeenth century, and in general all the present buildings of the monastery were erected in the eighteenth century (with the exception of the aforementioned lower part of the main church and the gate church in honor of the Holy Trinity).

2946. In 1091 the honorable relics of the Venerable Theodosius were transferred by the brethren from the cave, where they had originally been laid, into the church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, where they were placed in the narthex on the right side. During the Tatar invasion the holy relics of Theodosius were placed, for safekeeping, under a covering at the western doors of the same church, where they rest to this day. The event of the translation of the honorable relics of the Venerable Theodosius is celebrated on August 14. In 1108 Metropolitan Nicephorus (from 1103 to 1121) decreed at a council that Theodosius be "inscribed in the synodikon in all the eparchies." From this time they began to celebrate everywhere both the repose of the Venerable Theodosius and the translation of his honorable relics. The Venerable Theodosius edifies generations far removed from him not only by his ascetic life but also by his written instructions, which have come down to us chiefly in the form of homilies on various occasions. Unfortunately, the question of the authenticity of some of the writings of the Venerable Theodosius has not yet been finally resolved. The following five homilies must with certainty be ascribed to the Venerable Theodosius: 1) a homily on Wednesday of the third week of Great Lent "at the hours," "on patience and love"; 2) a homily on Thursday of the third week of the fast, "on patience, on love, and on fasting"; 3) a homily on Thursday of the third week of the fast, "at the hours," "on patience and almsgiving"; 4) a homily on Friday of the third week of the fast, "on patience and on humility"; and, finally, 5) a homily on Friday of the third week of the fast, "at the hours," "on going to church and on prayer." In addition, the following homilies are also attributed to the Venerable Theodosius: 1) a homily "to the cellarer" (on his duties); 2) a homily "on the chastisements of God" (it is thought that it was delivered by the Venerable Theodosius in 1067, after the unfortunate battle with the Polovtsy); 3) a homily concerning "meals and drink" (for the brethren); 4) "the word of a certain lover of Christ and zealot for the right faith"; 5) "the spiritual father's admonition to the children concerning drunkenness"; 6) "the word on how Vladimir was baptized, having taken Korsun"; and, finally, 7) certain fragments of homilies. Two homilies for Tuesday and Wednesday of the third week of Great Lent are also ascribed to the Venerable Theodosius under the name of St. Theodore the Studite, as well as some others. Further, several

epistles (probably two or three) to Grand Prince Izyaslav belong to the Venerable Theodosius (these epistles bear, in the surviving monuments, the title "Inquiries" of Prince Izyaslav). All the works of the Venerable Theodosius enumerated above are written very simply and with great feeling. The homilies and epistles of the Venerable Theodosius are free of all rhetorical ornateness. As regards their content, in those of them intended for the brethren, the Venerable Theodosius speaks of monastic vows and obligations; he dwells especially at length on the vow of non-possession, while in the homilies intended for the people the Venerable Theodosius vigorously rose up against the various pagan customs which at that time were very widespread in Rus' and had only just begun to be eradicated by Christian preachers. He armed himself especially strongly against idolatry and drunkenness. Finally, some prayers are also attributed to the Venerable Theodosius, placed under his name in certain copies of the ancient Psalters.



THE FOURTH DAY OF MAY

May 4

4 мая

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

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Virgin Pelagia

Страдание святой мученицы девицы Пелагии

When the impious Roman emperor Diocletian[1] raised persecution against the Christians, many of them, fearing torments, fled to the mountains. But those Christians who were steadfast in the faith and feared God more than men remained at the churches to which they belonged, and fervently besought God to strengthen them for the ascetic struggle, that they might come forth victorious from the coming conflict.

At that time Clinon was bishop in the city of Tarsus.[2] He turned many pagans to the true God and baptized them; receiving them, as a good shepherd, into the flock of Christ, he exhorted each of them to stand bravely in confessing the name of Christ and to lay down his soul for Him, with the sure hope of receiving from Him in the Heavenly Kingdom the crown of victory.

Diocletian, who was then in Cilicia, hearing of this courageous bishop, ordered him seized and commanded that the city gates be closed, so that he could not escape from the city by flight. But even before the or-

1. The Emperor Diocletian ruled the Roman Empire from 284 to 305 A.D.

2. Tarsus was a large and populous city of ancient Cilicia, a region of Asia Minor. It was founded by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (705–681 B.C.). Thanks to its position on the river Cydnus it carried on a great trade. For Christians, the city of Tarsus is important as the birthplace and first home of the holy Apostle Paul. Called by the Lord Himself to his great service, the Apostle Paul first prepared for his preaching in Tarsus (see Acts 9:11–30). At present Tarsus is a small town of 8,000 inhabitants in the Adana vilayet, and it belongs to Turkey. It is remarkable that to this day the chief occupation of the inhabitants of Tarsus and its environs is the making of carpets, felt for tents, and all kinds of household utensils, as it was in the time of the Apostle Paul, who earned his living by making tents (Acts 18:3).

der was given, the bishop had received a revelation from God concerning all that was to come to pass, and he secretly left the city without anyone's knowledge, since his hour had not yet come. Together with other Christians he hid himself in the mountains and deserts. Diocletian, enraged that he could not find the bishop, turned his fury upon those whom the bishop had led to Christ; ordering many of the newly converted Christians seized, he cast them into prison.

At that time there lived in the city of Tarsus a maiden named Pelagia, of noble birth, renowned for wealth and beauty, filled with the fear of God and chastity. When she heard from Christians about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, her heart burned with love for Him; she believed in Him and vowed not to join in marriage with any mortal man, resolving to be betrothed to the heavenly, immortal, incorruptible Bridegroom; having believed in Christ, she desired to be made worthy of holy baptism.

But when she learned that the Christian bishop had left the city, she was greatly grieved, for she wished to see him and to receive holy baptism at his hands. Until then she had not yet seen the bishop and had only heard of him. Since Pelagia's mother, a widow, was devoted to idol-worship, Pelagia concealed from her both her faith in Christ and her intentions.

At that time the son of the emperor[3] heard of the wondrous beauty of the maiden Pelagia, and he had occasion to see her. He sent honored men to her, who were charged with conveying to Pelagia the intention of the emperor's son to be joined to her in marriage.

Pelagia's mother was very glad of such a turn of affairs, but the holy maiden decided otherwise. Making the sign of the cross over herself, she answered the envoys without fear: "I am already betrothed to the Son of God, the Immortal King."

With this answer the envoys returned to the emperor's son.

Hearing the reply of the holy Pelagia, the emperor's son fell into great wrath; he planned to take cruel vengeance upon the holy maiden,

3. Diocletian had no sons. The "royal son" mentioned here is to be understood, as St. Demetrius of Rostov explains, as a youth whom Diocletian took for upbringing and adopted with the right of succession to the royal throne.

but not at once, for he hoped that the maiden would come to her senses and fulfill his desire.

Meanwhile Pelagia told her mother that she wished to visit her nurse, whom she had not seen for a long time. Her nurse lived outside the city, and Pelagia resolved to leave the house for the purpose of finding the Christian bishop, of whose secret place of refuge she had heard from some Christians. But Pelagia's mother, at the devil's instigation, would not consent to fulfill her daughter's request and firmly opposed her, saying: "You cannot go there now; you may go another time."

This greatly grieved Pelagia.

That same night the Lord appeared to her in the form of Bishop Clinon, saying nothing to her. She was astonished at this vision, for the venerable countenance of the one who appeared shone with light, and his garment was wondrous.

Awaking, she secretly sent her two most trusted eunuchs[4] to the prison where the Christians were confined, in order to question them about the outward appearance of the bishop. They fulfilled the commission and returned with a detailed description of the bishop's appearance. The honorable maiden was amazed that the bishop's appearance, according to their words, agreed in every respect with what she had seen in her dream, and she understood that in her dream she had seen the bishop. Filled with joy, she longed with all her heart to see him in waking life, and she fervently prayed to God in these words: "Grant me, Lord, to see Thy servant, the messenger of Thy blessings, and do not deprive me of Thy holy mysteries."

After that she again began to ask her mother to let her go to her nurse, saying that she missed her, not having seen her for so long. Her mother did not want to let her go. But fearing that she would fall ill from grief, the mother granted her request and ordered chariots, horses and servants prepared for the journey. Then, clothing Pelagia in the imperial purple as the bride of the emperor's son and adorning her with golden ornaments and precious stones, she sent her off in a sumptuous

4. A eunuch is a castrated servant destined for service in the harems of the East. The custom of castrating servants existed in ancient Greece and Rome, but it was especially widespread in antiquity in Asia Minor.

chariot, accompanied by her most trusted servants and eunuchs, with the parting words: "Go, be well, my daughter, and give greetings from me to your nurse."

Pelagia set out with joy, surrounded by a multitude of servants. When they had gone about ten stadia[5] from the city, they approached a mountain covered with dense forest. At this time one of her servants, named Longinus, saw a venerable man coming down from the mountain. It was Bishop Clinon, whom, by God's providence, her attendants happened to meet here. Longinus, who was a secret Christian, recognized in this man the bishop Clinon, and said to another servant, a secret Christian:

"Brother Julian! Do you recognize the man coming toward us? This is a man of God, Bishop Clinon, whose fame spreads throughout the whole East because of the miracles he performs; the emperor, learning of him, long sought him but could not find him, and for this reason raised persecution against the Christians."

The two eunuchs whom Pelagia had sent to the prison to learn the bishop's appearance overheard this conversation between Longinus and Julian. They told Pelagia what they had heard.

The holy maiden stopped the chariot, and getting down from it, went toward the man of God. She ordered her servants to keep at a distance and rest in the shade of the trees, for she did not wish the pagans to hear of the mysteries of the holy Christian faith. Approaching the man of God, she greeted him with these words:

"Rejoice, servant of Christ!"

The bishop answered her:

"May the peace of my Christ be with you, maiden."

Pelagia continued:

"Blessed is God, who showed me in a vision the likeness of your face and sent you to me to save my soul from perdition. I beseech you in the name of the God whom you serve: tell me, are you Clinon, the Christian bishop?"

Clinon answered her:

5. A *stade* (*poprishche*) was a measure of length equal to approximately 690 of our sazhens.

"I am the shepherd of the rational sheep of Christ, who hope to receive eternal life."

"What do you command your sheep to do, that they may receive eternal life?" asked Pelagia of the bishop.

"I teach them to know the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and I instruct them to live a God-pleasing life in the fear of God and in love for Christ."

"Tell me, Father, what must those first do who wish to be united with your God?"

"I proclaim to you," was the bishop's answer, "baptism unto the remission of sins and unto eternal life; nothing can be more necessary than this."

Falling at the bishop's feet, Pelagia said with entreaty:

"Have pity on me, master, and grant me your gift! Since I have been talking with you, the light of God has shone in my heart; I renounce Satan, his servants, his snares, and the lifeless idols, which I have long hated, in which there is not life but death and eternal ruin. Now I pray to the Heavenly God that He would betroth me, unworthy as I am, to His Son, who has enlightened my heart, for He is the Sun of righteousness."

Hearing this, the bishop marveled at the great love for God of this maiden and rejoiced in spirit over her. Then, lifting his hands to heaven, he began to pray in these words: "O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Thou who dwellest in heaven and hast called this maiden to know Thee, send her the holy baptism of Thy beloved Son."

Thus the bishop prayed.

Suddenly there welled up before them from the earth a spring of living water. Seeing such a miracle, the bishop glorified God, saying:

"Great art Thou, our God, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, who gavest to men as their inheritance baptism unto eternal life. O Lord, Searcher of hearts! Before Thee lies open the humility of Thy servant. Thou seest that I am ashamed to baptize this maiden. Do Thou, Almighty, arrange all things by Thy providence, and teach me what to do."

"Master, my father," cried Pelagia at this moment, "your prayer has been heard; behold, I see two luminous youths standing by the spring and holding in their hands bright veils. You may baptize me without hesitation."

Giving thanks to God, the bishop approached the spring and saw two Angels of God, who, as Pelagia had said, held a veil whiter than snow, to cover the body of the maiden. Then the bishop sanctified the water, pronouncing over it this prayer:

"King of all creation, 'Who makest Thine angels spirits, and Thy ministers a flaming fire' (Ps. 103:4), make me worthy to offer to Thee as a spiritual sacrifice this maiden whom Thou hast sent to me. Number her among Thy chosen, that on the day of Thy Kingdom she too, with the five wise virgins, may enter into the bridal chamber of Thy Christ, with a lamp lit."[6]

Having completed the prayer, the bishop made the blessed Pelagia worthy of holy baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and communed her with a particle of the Body of Christ, which he carried with him.

When the sacrament was completed, the holy Pelagia bowed to the bishop and, kissing his feet, said to him:

"My lord, honorable father, pray to the Lord for me, that He may strengthen me with His Holy Spirit."

The bishop said to her:

"May God, to Whom you have given yourself, 'send you help from the sanctuary' (Ps. 19:3) of His dwelling, and grant you victory over your enemies."

Filled with great joy from the Holy Spirit, Pelagia said to the bishop:

"Father, I beseech you in the name of God, who through you has granted me salvation, do not refuse my request. From your holy hands I have received the incorruptible purple of the Eternal King; therefore it is not fitting for me now to wear this earthly, corruptible purple and these vain adornments. Take them from me, sell them, and distribute

6. See the parable of the ten virgins (Mt. 25:1–13).

the money received for them to the needy, for in me all these jewels arouse only one feeling: loathing."

The bishop answered her:

"It is not fitting for me to take these things into my hands. Yet I will take them from you, so as not to grieve you, since you ask me in the name of God. Good, I will fulfill your desire."

"I have heard," said Pelagia in reply, "that our Lord says in His Holy Gospel: 'No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon' (Mt. 6:24). Therefore I too, desiring to serve the One God, reject mammon.[7]"

The bishop marveled at the wisdom of St. Pelagia. Having prayed to God for her, he blessed her and departed from her.

St. Pelagia, greatly rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, glorified and gave thanks to God with all her heart, for He had deemed her worthy to receive the heavenly gifts.

When she reached the servants who were awaiting her, she saw that their eyes had been darkened by a demonic delusion: they could see nothing and did not know where they had to go. The saint, understanding that this had happened through the action of the enemy of our salvation, made the sign of the Cross over each of the servants, and thereby delivered them from blindness; they again began to see well, as before.

Having regained their sight, the servants began to question St. Pelagia:

"Mistress! Where is the man with whom you were conversing? In your absence we saw a most radiant Woman standing between you and us, with two maidens; on her head were two diadems, and above the diadems shone a cross.[8]"

St. Pelagia commanded the servants to be silent; then she began to teach them faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The servants answered her:

7. Mammon was the name of a Syrian deity, the patron of wealth. In a figurative sense "mammon" meant wealth in general, the good things of earth.
8. Evidently the wondrous Woman who appeared was the Mother of God.

"How could we not believe, our mistress, in Him who after death will deliver us from eternal torments, and who alone has power to grant us eternal life in heaven!"

The saint rejoiced, seeing the conversion of her servants, and advised them to approach holy Baptism at once. Then, seating herself in the chariot, she continued her journey to her nurse.

The nurse came out to meet her foster-daughter, and said that she had become even more beautiful than before, but she marveled that she was dressed so plainly and without any adornments.

After the first joy of their meeting, the nurse noticed a great change in the character of St. Pelagia: formerly she had been proud and haughty, but now she had become humble and meek; formerly talkative, but now silent; formerly she had loved various refined dishes, but now she kept fasting and abstinence, taking very little food; formerly she spent her days in idleness and pleasures and at night rested her body on a soft bed; now she spent most of the day in prayer, resting on a hard bed, and at night she too rose up to pray. From all these signs the nurse understood that Pelagia had embraced the Christian faith. Then she said to her:

"Dear daughter! As before you astonished the royal son and all who met you by your great bodily beauty, so now strive to please the Son of God, the Eternal King, to Whom you have betrothed yourself as a bride, by your true beauty of soul. I see that you have believed in the heavenly, true God. May He strengthen you for the ascetic feat of suffering for Him, may He grant you victory over the enemy, and may He crown you in His glory with the crown of triumph. And now, daughter, go quickly from me in peace; I do not wish you to linger in my house, and I dare not detain you, for I fear the wrath of the royal son, who considers you his betrothed. Yet do not think that I fear for myself: if I were to suffer with you, I would receive with you the reward from God; but I fear for my whole household and for all my kin. If the royal son, who intends to make you his wife, learns that you are a Christian, and also that you are staying in my house, he will destroy me together with my whole family."

Having heard these words of her nurse, St. Pelagia, lowering her face, returned to her mother.

When Pelagia drew near her house, her mother came out to meet her. Seeing her daughter not in royal purple and without precious adornments, but in plain clothing, she was struck with horror and bewilderment.

One of the servants told her everything that had happened on the way, related to her how Pelagia had received holy Baptism from the Christian bishop. Hearing this, her mother as though grew numb in body, and from great grief lay a long time on her bed, as one dead. Then, coming to herself, without saying anything to her daughter, she hastened to the Emperor and asked him to give her soldiers, to seek out and seize the bishop who had converted her daughter to Christianity and bring him to judgment. The Emperor gave her many soldiers, mounted and on foot.

Meanwhile the blessed Pelagia, seeing her mother in great anger, took with her several servants who believed in Christ, went out secretly from the house with them, and having crossed a river called the Cydnus,[9] resolved to hide here.

Her mother, returning home with the soldiers and not finding Pelagia at home, was grieved still more and dispatched soldiers everywhere, ordering them to seek Pelagia and Bishop Clinon.

The soldiers scattered through all the surroundings, inquiring about Pelagia along the roads and searching for her everywhere in the mountains and wildernesses, but they could not find her, for God Himself miraculously protected her. St. Pelagia, sitting on the bank of the river, saw on the opposite bank the soldiers seeking her; but the soldiers, whose bodily eyes at this time were by God's providence closed, saw neither her nor her companions. Then the saint said to her servants:

"Do you see how our Lord loves and covers His servants who hope in Him?"

After their intensive but fruitless search, the soldiers returned without having found either the bishop or Pelagia. This plunged Pela-

9. The Cydnus is today the Tersus-Chay, a small river in Cilicia; it rises in the Taurus and flows through the city of Tarsus.

gia's mother into the greatest sorrow and grief, so that she seemed barely alive.

Then Pelagia, perceiving in her heart the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and kindled with love for her Heavenly Bridegroom to such a degree that she was ready to give herself up to torments for the name of Christ, went to her mother's house and began to exhort her to abandon her false grief:

"Why," Pelagia said to her mother, "are you so angry? Why do you not wish to know the truth? You were not ashamed to summon soldiers to search for a holy man who honors the Most High God, the Creator of all creation. Is it not shameful for you to wage war against the Heavenly God! Do you not know that His servant, the bishop, could by prayer beseech Him to send to him one of His Angels, who in the twinkling of an eye would destroy all the armed companies?"

This and much more St. Pelagia said about the Lord Jesus Christ, exhorting her mother to know the true God, but without any success, for her mother was blinded by madness and hardened by malice. Not heeding the God-inspired words of her daughter, she sent word to the royal son as follows: "Your betrothed has dedicated herself to the Christian God."

Hearing this, the youth was greatly grieved. His hopes were shattered. He remembered how many Christians his father had tormented, without, however, persuading any one of them to submit to him. In confusion and sadness he sat alone in his chamber and reasoned with himself thus: "If Pelagia has believed in the Christian God and betrothed herself to Him, she will by no means agree to renounce Him and become my wife. What, then, shall I do? Shall I hand her over to torments? This will accomplish nothing, for I know with what great joy Christians themselves give themselves up to torments and to the most cruel death for their God. Pelagia will do the same; surely she will prefer to die rather than become my wife; and for me there will remain only shame and still greater grief. Shame and disgrace will come to me from this mockery of me by the Christians, and sorrow and grief from her death, for I love her beyond measure and burn wholly with the fire of love for her. I know my lot! So that I need not look upon her tor-

ments, and so that I myself may suffer no longer the torments of a heart wounded by love, I will kill myself, for it is better for me to die once than to undergo daily the agonies of death, scorned and hated because of the love with which I burn."

Having said this, the youth drew his sword, bared his breast, and, setting the point of the sword to his chest, said with weeping:

"Let the hour be accursed in which my eyes beheld the great beauty, which I can neither enjoy nor be satisfied with. But behold, at once I shall be freed from all my sufferings!"

After these words the youth struck himself a strong blow with the sword in the breast, and, piercing it, fell upon the sword and died.

Pelagia's mother, learning of this, was struck with horror, fearing that the Emperor Diocletian would put her to death together with her whole family out of vengeance for his son. Therefore she herself bound her daughter and brought her to the Emperor, laying upon her alone the guilt for the death of his son and delivering her up to death and execution. Diocletian, looking upon the mother and daughter, said to them with great sorrow in his heart:

"What have you done? You have killed my son."

The mother answered him thus:

"Here I have brought you the author of your son's death. Execute her and avenge this death."

Meanwhile, Diocletian had become enamored of Pelagia's great beauty, for she was more beautiful than all his wives and concubines, and he had never yet seen so beautiful a woman. Now he thought no longer of execution or vengeance, but only of satisfying the passion that had flared up within him. He began devising how he might turn Pelagia away from Christ and take her as his wife. He ordered that much gold and precious stones be brought and laid before the maiden, hoping thereby to entice Christ's bride, and gave her mother one hundred talents[10] of gold and dismissed her. She returned to her home, rejoicing with demonic joy. But St. Pelagia was left in the royal palace in the care of the royal maidservants.

10. A talent was an ingot of silver or gold of various sizes and values, depending on the time and place of circulation.

The next day the emperor ordered that the holy maiden be brought before him with honor, and he himself took his seat upon the throne in all his splendor, surrounded by all his counselors. A multitude of soldiers stood about him. Before this great assembly, he addressed the holy maiden in these words:

"I ask only one thing of you, Pelagia: renounce Christ, and I will take you in marriage. You shall be first in my palace; I will place the royal crown upon your head, and you shall share with me the rule of all my kingdom. If I have a son by you, after me he shall sit upon my throne."

Filled with divine zeal, St. Pelagia answered him without fear:

"You are mad, O emperor, to speak such words to me! Know, then, that I shall not fulfill your desire, for I loathe your abominable marriage, since I have a Bridegroom—Christ, the King of heaven. I do not desire your royal, vain, and short-lived crown, for in my Lord's Heavenly Kingdom three incorruptible crowns have been prepared for me. The first is for faith, because with all my heart I have believed in the true God; the second is for purity, because I have entrusted my virginity to Him; the third is for martyrdom, because I desire to endure every torment for His sake and lay down my life out of love for Him."

Hearing these words, Diocletian grew exceedingly angry and ordered that a bronze bull be heated, hoping thereby to frighten the holy maiden. When the bull was so hot that sparks flew from it like burning coals, the holy maiden was led up to it. Among the people gathered to witness this spectacle were many secret Christians. Seeing the maiden prepared for torment, they secretly prayed to God for her, that He might strengthen her from on high with His hidden power. The emperor and his nobles tried both entreaties and threats to persuade her to fulfill the emperor's desire, but she remained steadfast in her resolve.

Then the emperor ordered that all her garments be stripped from her. Seeing that they intended to strip her naked, the saint cried aloud to Diocletian:

"It would have been better, O emperor, had you remembered your wives and concubines, for I have the same body as they."

But the emperor, inflamed with lust and desiring to feast his eyes upon the sight of a maiden's nakedness, ordered them to strip her quickly. The Martyr, however, did not wait for the hands of the impious to touch her. Making the sign of the Cross over herself, she quickly stripped off all her garments, cast them into the emperor's face, and stood naked before the eyes of angels and men, adorning herself with maidenly modesty alone, as with a royal purple robe. Then she began to rebuke the emperor, saying:

"I deem you, O emperor, like that serpent which deceived Eve (Gen. 3:1–6) and incited Cain to murder Abel (Gen. 4:2–16), and like that demon who asked God's leave to tempt righteous Job (Job 1:6–12). But soon, O enemy of Christ, you shall perish with all who are of one mind with you."

Having said this, she again made the sign of the Cross over herself and went of her own accord to the red-hot bull, without waiting for them to cast her into it. When she laid her hands upon the bull, her hands melted like wax in the fierce fire. But as though feeling no pain, she placed her head into the bull's opening, entered within it, and began loudly to glorify God, saying:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord, Only-begotten Son of God Most High, for Thou hast strengthened me, who am weak, for this contest and hast helped me to overcome the devil and his wiles. To Thee, and to Thy Father without beginning, and to the Holy Spirit, be glory and worship for ever."

Having said this, the saint gave her soul into the hands of her Most Pure and Immortal Bridegroom and entered with Him into the heavenly bridal chamber, amid the rejoicing and singing of the angelic hosts.[11] Her venerable body melted within the bronze bull like oil and flowed out like fragrant myrrh, so that the whole city was filled with an ineffable fragrance. The impious emperor ordered that her venerable bones be cast outside the city, and they were carried to a mountain called Lita-

11. The repose of the holy Martyr Pelagia took place in 287. In the 8th century, under the emperor Constantine Copronymus (741–775), her honorable relics were transferred to Constantinople and placed in the church of her name.

thon. Four lions came from the wilderness and sat beside them, guarding them from other beasts and birds of prey.

Bishop Clinon received a revelation from God concerning the repose of St. Pelagia and the place where her bones lay. The bishop went to that mountain and found there the venerable bones of St. Pelagia, with the lions guarding them. When the lions saw the man of God, they approached him, bowed down before him, and returned to the wilderness. The bishop took the bones of the holy Martyr, carried them to the highest hill of that mountain, and laid a stone over them. Later, in the reign of Emperor Constantine, when piety shone forth everywhere, he built a church there over the venerable relics of Christ's bride. Upon the tombstone Bishop Clinon made this inscription: "The holy maiden Pelagia, who dedicated herself to God and contended for the truth unto the end, rests here in her relics; but her soul reigns in heaven with the angels in the glory of Christ."

Thus did the holy Martyr Pelagia complete her contest for Christ our Lord, to Whom be glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Having despised the things of time and become a partaker of heavenly blessings, and having received the crown for thy suffering, O most venerable Pelagia, thou didst offer to the Lord Christ the streams of thy blood as a gift. Pray that we who honor thy memory may be delivered from afflictions.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Silvanus, Bishop of Caesarea,[12] and the Forty Martyrs with him

Страдание святого мученика Сильвана, епископа Кесийского 2965 и с ним сорока мучеников

12. The holy Hieromartyr Silvanus is called Bishop of Kesi, that is, of Caesarea, after the place where he was condemned to forced labor, but by the place of his ministry he was of Gaza (or near Gaza), as is also indicated in the Chet'i-Minei.

The holy Hieromartyr Silvanus came from the vicinity of the city of Gaza[13] and was at first a soldier. Later, for the sake of faith in Christ, he left the army of the earthly king and became a soldier of the Heavenly King, Christ; therefore he was granted the grace of the priesthood: first he was a presbyter, and afterward a bishop. Standing at the head of Christ's Church, by his teaching he converted many unbelievers to the true God. For this, zealous worshippers of idols seized him and brought him to trial in the city of Caesarea.[14] There he was first cruelly beaten, then suspended and his body was scraped, and finally he was condemned to labor in the copper mines.[15] While performing this labor, the holy Martyr became utterly exhausted, but he continually confessed Christ as God. Therefore the pagans struck off his head with the sword, together with those of forty other Martyrs whom he had instructed in the faith of Christ.[16]

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Alvian, Bishop,[17] and His Disciple

Страдание святого мученика Алвиана епископа 2970 и ученика его

The holy Hieromartyr Alvian suffered in the reign of Emperor Maximian,[18] when Asia[19] was under the rule of Elian.

13. The ancient Philistine city of Gaza was in Palestine and lay not far from the southern border of Judea, near the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. From the 4th century Gaza was already a Christian city; in the 7th century it was conquered by the Muslims.
14. The city of Caesarea, once the residence of the Roman procurators of Palestine, was located within the bounds of ancient Samaria on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.
15. Eusebius, a contemporary of the holy martyrs, says that Silvanus was condemned to labor in the mines of the city of Phaeno, which some believed lay in the deserts of Arabia, but according to Eusebius was in Palestine.
16. The holy martyrs died in 311.
17. The holy Hieromartyr Alvian was bishop in the city of Anea, which lay in the Roman province of Asia in Asia Minor.
18. Here is meant Maximian Galerius, co-ruler with Diocletian, who from 305 governed the eastern part of the Roman Empire.
19. Asia was the name of a small, water-rich, marshy plain in Lydia, that is, the middle of the western part of today's Asia Minor peninsula, on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea. In it were located the seven cities of Asia Minor mentioned in the Apocalypse (Rev. 1:11), and it was for some time the place of the labors of the holy Apostle John the Theologian.

St. Alvian was seized at the time when a certain pagan priest named Agrippinus was offering sacrifices to idols. They began to compel the saint to sacrifice to the idols and to cast incense upon the altar, but he answered them with dignity: "I praise faith in Christ, and I condemn the service of idols."

For this they first seared his belly and shins with red-hot iron rods, and then beat him mercilessly with clubs.

By such tortures the tormentors sought to compel the saint to renounce Christ and sacrifice to the idols, but neither he nor his disciple, who suffered torments with him, would consent. After this he was condemned to be burned. They heated a furnace and cast him and his disciple into it, where the holy Martyrs died.[20]

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Erasmus

Страдание святого мученика Еразма

From his youth the blessed Erasmus burned with love for Christ, diligently kept His commandments, and was appointed bishop of the city of Formia.[21] When the impious Emperor Diocletian, by subjecting Christians to torments, threw the inhabitants of the cities of his kingdom into turmoil, St. Erasmus left his see and fled to the mountains of Lebanon,[22] where he remained in hiding from his persecutors for seven years. One day he heard the voice of an angel from heaven, who said to him: "Erasmus! No one will conquer his enemies if he sleeps. Go, then, to your city, contend valiantly, and you will conquer your enemies."

After these words, Erasmus set out along the route indicated to him by the angel. Soldiers met him and asked, "What God do you worship?" St. Erasmus declared himself a Christian. Then the soldiers seized him and brought him to Emperor Diocletian in Antioch.[23] On the way, the saint openly confessed himself a Christian, and the emperor ordered

20. According to Minius, the holy martyrs died in 304.
21. The city of Formiae was in Italy on the Gulf of Castana on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.
22. The Lebanon mountains are located in Syria.

him to be beaten with clubs, but he rebuked the emperor. Then the latter ordered him to be beaten with leaden rods; and, since even after this he remained steadfast in his faith, the tormentor commanded that he be subjected to further tortures: they first scraped all the skin from his body with iron hooks, then melted pitch and sulfur and poured them onto his wounds, but this caused him no pain. After this the tormentor ordered that heavy iron chains be placed around his neck and that he be cast into prison. But the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, freed him from his chains, and said to him: "Follow me; I will lead you to Italy. There, too, you will bring many people to salvation."

After this, the Angel led St. Erasmus to the city of Lykia[24] and left him there. Erasmus began to teach everyone the faith in Christ and to baptize them. In doing so he performed great miracles; among other things he raised to life the son of a certain nobleman named Anastasius, and after this he baptized ten thousand people. Maximian[25], learning of this, sent soldiers to bring him to Italy, and when the saint had been brought, he ordered that he be struck on the cheeks and threatened him with crucifixion on the cross if he did not offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Then Erasmus said to him:

"Where then are your gods, that I may offer them sacrifice?"

The saint was brought into the temple of Jupiter. Here he prayed, and at his prayer all the idols fell down, and fire came out of the temple and burned up the idolaters, so that Maximian was obliged to flee from the city. After this St. Erasmus baptized many people there and went on to the city of Sirmium[26]. In this city, by the command of Maximian, he was seized again and subjected to new tortures. They put a bronze breastplate on him and seated him on a red-hot bed, and his feet were nailed to the ground. After this they piled wood up to the top of the bed

23. Antioch, the ancient capital of Syria, was situated on the banks of the river Orontes, not far from where it flows into the Mediterranean Sea.

24. The location of the city of Lykia is variously indicated. According to Nicodemus it was the Macedonian city of Lychnidus, located on the shore of the lake of the same name.

25. Maximian Herculius, who bore the title of Augustus, was co-ruler with Diocletian and governed the western half of the Roman Empire from 285 to 305.

26. The city of Sirmium was situated in Illyria on the bank of a tributary of the Danube, the Sava.

and, lighting the wood, began to pour pitch and oil over it, but the wood burned up while the saint remained unharmed. Maximian feared the people and withdrew into the palace, and the Angel of the Lord, taking the saint, brought him to the city of Formiae, where a great multitude of people were also baptized. After all this, St. Erasmus, with a prayer of thanksgiving for everything, commended his soul into the hands of God[27], and the Christians buried him with honor.

* * *

27. The holy Hieromartyr died in 303, on July 10. In the time of St. Pope Gregory (590–604) his relics were at Formiae, and in the 9th century they were transferred to Caieta.

THE FIFTH DAY OF MAY

May 5

5 мая

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

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Irene

Страдание святой великомученицы Ирины

In those times, when the light of the holy Christian faith, through the preaching of the Apostles, shone forth among people plunged in the darkness of idol-worship, there lived in the city of Mageddon[1] a prince named Licinius[2]. He had a wife who, like him, bore the name Licinia. The daughter born to them they named Penelope. When she had grown and reached the age of 6, she was exceedingly beautiful of countenance, so that in her appearance she outshone all her peers. Her father built for her, far outside the city, in a picturesque place, a tower containing many rooms, furnished with the most exquisite taste and gleaming with richness. Chairs, tables, lamps, couches and all the vessels were here overlaid with pure gold. In this tower he installed his daughter Penelope together with thirteen beautiful maidens, and he set there his golden idols, that they might guard his daughter. In this tower he appointed his daughter to live until she should reach marriageable age. Licinius set over his daughter, as her governess, an honorable elderly woman named Caria, commanding her to be always with the daughter and to take her meals together with her, and entrusting to her the direction of all the maidens. Besides this, Licinius assigned to a

1. Magedon or Migdonia – a city in Thrace, a region on the northern shore of the Aegean Sea.
2. The prince Licinius mentioned here should be distinguished from the Roman Emperor Licinius (reigned 311–324), who governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire. The latter had married Constantia, sister of Constantine the Great; this man was married to Licinia. The emperor lived in the famous city of Nicomedia, while this one lived in Magedon; the emperor perished in his impiety, while this one died honorably, having believed in Christ. Finally, the emperor lived at the beginning of the 4th century, while this one lived at the end of the 1st century, almost in apostolic times.

respected and prudent elder named Apelian the daily duty of coming to his daughter and instructing her in book-learning. Thus the maiden spent six years and three months, and when she had reached twelve years of age, her father began to consider to which of the most illustrious princely sons he should give her in marriage[3].

One day, while the maiden was sitting in her chamber, a dove flew in through the open window facing east, carrying in its beak a small branch; laying it on the table, it at once flew out of the room through the window. Then, an hour later, an eagle flew into the room with a wreath of various flowers, and it too, laying the wreath on the table, at once flew away. Then through another window a raven flew in, carrying in its beak a small serpent, which it laid on the table, and it too flew away.

Seeing all this, the young maiden, together with her governess, were greatly astonished, wondering what this arrival of the birds portended. When the teacher Apelian came to them, they told him what had happened. Apelian was a secret Christian and possessed the gift of foresight. Having pondered within himself all that they had related, he said, turning to Penelope:

"Know, my daughter, that the dove signifies your good disposition, your gentleness, humility and maidenly chastity. The olive branch signifies the grace of God, which will be bestowed upon you through baptism. The eagle, soaring on high, represents a king and a victor; it signifies that you will reign over your passions, and, through contemplation of God, you will conquer the invisible enemies, as the eagle conquers the birds. The wreath of flowers is a sign of the recompense which you will receive for your labors from Christ the King in His heavenly kingdom, where is prepared for you the incorruptible crown of eternal glory. The raven with the serpent signifies the enemy, the devil, striving to inflict upon you sorrow, grief and persecution. Know then, maiden, that the great King, who holds heaven and earth in His power, wishes to betroth you to Himself as His bride, and you will endure many sufferings for His name."

3. In antiquity in the East, girls were given in marriage at a very young age (this was also customary among us in Rus' in former times).

Listening to her teacher, the young maiden pondered his words in her heart, and into that heart little by little there began to penetrate the fire of divine love.

On the following day her father, Prince Licinius, came up to Penelope in the tower, together with his princess and his courtiers. He wished to see her and to speak with her about her marriage. Seeing that her face shone with beauty like a ray of sunlight, he was exceedingly glad, and said to her:

"Behold, my dear child, you have now reached marriageable age. Tell me now: the son of which prince pleases you most of all? To that youth I shall give you in marriage."

And he named to her the names of the sons of many neighboring princes. The maiden Penelope answered her father:

"My father! Give me only seven days to consider, and then I shall answer you."

Fulfilling her request, the father left her and went home.

When Licinius had gone, Penelope, approaching the idols, said to them:

"If you are gods, then hear me: my father wishes to give me in marriage, but I would like to remain in virginity, for worldly cares hinder one from serving God with the whole heart. Tell me then: should I marry or not?"

The mute idols were silent, for they were soulless. Spitting upon them, Penelope turned to the east, and, gazing upon the height of heaven, said:

"If Thou art the true God, Him whom the Christians preach, I beseech Thee: tell me, should I take a husband, or always remain a virgin?"

Since it was already evening, Penelope fell asleep. In a dream she saw an Angel of God, who said to her the following: "Penelope! From now on you shall be called not Penelope, but Irene, for you shall be a refuge to many and a peaceful haven[4], and through you many thousands of human souls shall turn to God and be saved. Your name shall

4. The name "Irene" derives from the Greek word ειρήνη/eirini – peace, prosperity.

be great and wondrous throughout the universe. What the elder Apelian told you concerning the birds you saw is true, for it was the Spirit of God who spoke through his lips. This night there will come to you a man of God named Timothy, instructed in the Christian teaching and ordained to the priesthood by the holy Paul. This man carries about to the churches also the epistles of Paul. He will make you worthy of holy baptism and will tell you what you must do."

After these words the Angel disappeared. Penelope, coming to herself, felt joy and awaited with impatience the coming of the presbyter.

Soon, indeed, the man of God Timothy came to the tower, led and brought up into the tower by the Angel of God. Gladly received by the maiden, he sat down and began to teach her, her governess, and also all her companions the Christian teaching, and his words seemed pleasing to all. Having sufficiently instructed them in the faith and revealed to them all that it was fitting to know about the true God Jesus Christ, about the holy faith in Him, and about the Christian mysteries, he baptized Penelope in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. At her baptism Timothy gave her a new name: Irene, and thus he espoused her to Christ, enjoining her to preserve her virginity in chastity to the end. Timothy also baptized her governess Caria and all her servants; then he began to exhort Irene to be steadfast in the martyr's contest which she was to undertake for confessing the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true God, her immortal Bridegroom. Then Timothy blessed Irene and her companions, and, commending them all to the grace of God, took his leave of them.

The blessed Irene, together with her servants, day and night glorified and gave thanks to God, and diligently studied the apostolic writings which the holy Timothy had left her[5]. Then she took the golden idols which her father had set up and cast them down one by one through the window, saying: "If you are gods, save yourselves."

Falling from a great height to the earth, the idols were broken and crumbled into dust, while the saint mocked their powerlessness and rejoiced in our Lord Jesus Christ, the true God.

5. The Apostle Timothy diligently spread among Christians the epistles of the holy Apostle Paul, especially those (two) which were addressed to him.

When seven days had passed, the father and mother of Irene came up to her in the tower with the nobles and spoke with her about marriage. She answered them:

"Know that I am a servant of Christ. I believe in Him, I love Him, the eternal Heavenly King. I have betrothed myself to this Bridegroom, pure, heavenly and immortal. I desire no other bridegroom, and I will not bow down to any other god, for there is no God but Him. Have you not seen," Irene continued, "the destruction of your gods, which fell from the window to the ground? They could not help themselves. How then can they be your helpers? Your hope in them is vain, and all your labors and expenditures upon idols are empty. The gold and silver ought to have been given to those who ask, to the poor, the orphans and the widows; but you called craftsmen and had them forge for yourselves lifeless idols, and through this you deprived the poor of alms. By this you have become enemies of the living God and servants of demons. How long will you rage like an unbroken horse? When will you come to know the living God, the One who can kill and make alive? When will the light of God shine in your hearts? Then the devil, who leads man from light into darkness, into perdition, who turns people from the right path to the wrong, will flee from you. But you first, make haste now to flee from the devil, for he is evil and cruel. He is a seducer who blinds the eyes of your hearts, so that you do not know the truth. I beg you, Father, I implore you: know the true God, who created all things by His Word. When you resolved to erect this tower for me, you gathered many people for the work: there were three thousand five hundred laborers and three hundred overseers; and despite this, they barely finished the building in ten months. But the eternal God, by one word of His, created heaven and the sun, the moon and the stars, light and darkness, and named the light day and the darkness night. He upholds the earth in the air, commanded the waters to flow for our benefit, caused various trees to grow, arranged the seasons, years and months, created beasts on the earth, birds in the air and fish in the waters; and finally, with His most pure hands, He created man, taking a handful of earth, and set him as master over the whole universe, subjecting everything to him. And God accomplished all of this in six days

by His one Word, which is His Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, born of Him without a mother, co-eternal and co-enthroned with Him. He, by the working of the Holy Spirit, was born and became incarnate without a father of the Most Pure Ever-Virgin Mary, and lived among men, performing countless miracles: He gave sight to the blind, cleansed lepers, raised the dead and restored the paralytic. The Jews, out of envy, crucified Him of His own will, to suffer for our salvation. But after His death and burial, He rose on the third day by the power of His Divinity, ascended into heaven, sat at the right hand of God the Father, sent down the Holy Spirit upon His disciples, and sent them into the whole world, that they might enlighten those darkened in spirit, convert those who go astray, and save those who perish; for He desires the salvation of all, and His mercy toward the human race will never fail."

Thus spoke the saint, and her speech seemed sweet to all. The prince and princess took their beloved daughter and led her with them into the city. All the maidens of the city came out to meet her with garlands on their heads and bowed before her, and all the people, gathering on the elevated places, on the walls of the enclosures and on the rooftops of the houses, expressed joyful cries and praises to the beautiful maiden. As they approached the princely palace, Saint Irene saw a demon, who cried out to her:

"I have nothing in common with you in this city, young maiden; depart from our city, for no Christian lives here."

But the saint said to him:

"I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to tell me who you are."

He answered:

"I am a demon who dwells in idols, the teacher of fornicators and adulterers, the helper of sorcerers, the leader of enemies, the friend of drunkards. I rejoice in bloodshed; I am the father of all unrighteousness and falsehood and of all evil. I say to you again: go and flee from our city, or I will stir up your father against you, rouse his anger against you, and he will kill you."

Many heard this voice of the demon, but did not see him himself. The blessed Irene, turning to him, said:

"I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to depart from this city."

At once the demon trembled and became invisible. Then the demon entered the heart of the prince and stirred up anger in him against his daughter. Summoning the princess, Licinius said to her:

"What shall we do? Our daughter has been caught in the nets of the Christians. Ah, why did I erect this tower! I wished to preserve my child, and instead I have destroyed her. Now all my hopes are lost."

The princess answered him:

"What strange words you speak! By what has our daughter been beguiled, and what wrong has she done?"

The prince answered:

"She believes in Christ and rejects our gods."

"Then let the gods perish," the princess replied to him, "who did not create heaven and earth; and may my daughter be deemed worthy of the glory of Christ the King, who has called her to eternal life!"

In anger the prince ordered the princess to be led out of the palace. One of the servants conveyed this news to Irene, and she went to her father. When the king saw his beloved daughter, he bowed his head. But in his soul, through the slander of the devil, anger raged. Saint Irene said to her father:

"Why are you so sorrowful, my father? Your kingdom is at peace, no war threatens you; here I am, your daughter, who has come to you. Why then is your face so sad?"

Licinius answered her:

"It would have been better for me had I not begotten you. How attentively I cared for you, I erected for you a splendid tower, I placed golden idols in it for your protection, I adorned the pillars and the beds with gold for your sake, and yet you have repaid my kindness with evil."

"Explain to me, Father, what evil I have done to you?" said Saint Irene.

"And is it not a great grief to me that my daughter acknowledges Christ as God and renounces my gods?"

The saint answered:

"Father! I have done nothing wrong in believing in the true God and placing my hope in Him, and not in your idols."

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, Penelope!" rang out the prince's terrible cry.

"Do not change my name, Father: I am not called Penelope but Irene, and this name was given me by an Angel in a vision and by a priest at my baptism," Saint Irene answered Licinius with meekness.

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, not my child but another's!" cried Licinius again.

"I will not offer sacrifice to them. It is they who stir you to anger; because of them you will suffer in fire together with the pagans."

Beside himself with rage, the prince ordered the maiden to be bound and cast beneath the hooves of savage horses. When the command of Licinius began to be carried out, he himself came to see her death. But one horse, the most savage, broke free of its tether, rushed upon Licinius, seized his right arm, tore it from his shoulder, trampled the prince to death, and then stood calmly in its place. All the other horses behaved gently, like lambs, and did not touch Saint Irene. The horse that had killed Licinius, by God's command, cried out with a human voice, thus extolling the holy martyr:

"Blessed are you, dove of Christ, who have trodden down the serpent[6]. You are glorious on earth and will be received with love in heaven. You will rejoice among the righteous. Eternal light and the chamber of the immortal Bridegroom await you, as a wise and courageous maiden: though a woman by nature, you display the bravery of a warrior."

When the bonds were removed from Saint Irene, she raised her dead father by her prayer and healed his hand. Seeing such a miracle, the prince and princess believed in Christ, and their whole household, and many people, about three thousand in all.

Licinius soon gave up the governance of his principality, so as to serve Christ more freely, and settled with his wife and attendants in

the very pillar which he had once erected for his daughter. Saint Irene remained in the city, teaching the people the faith in Christ, and she brought many to Christ God. She lived in the house of her teacher Apelianus.

After Licinius, another king, named Sedekia, took over the governance of the state. Hearing of Irene, he summoned Apelianus and asked him whether the maiden, the king's daughter Irene, was with him. Apelianus answered affirmatively. Sedekia asked him:

"Do you not know how she lives?"

The elder answered him:

"She lives as I do and as all who believe in the true God live. Her life consists in fasting every day until evening; in the evening she eats a small piece of bread and drinks one cup of water. She has no bed and rests briefly on the bare ground; day and night she spends in prayer to God and occupies herself with reading the divine books."

The prince was astonished to hear this, and sent the eparch[7] for Irene, ordering him to bring the maiden to him with honor. When she came to him, Saint Irene said:

"Rejoice, O prince!"

Sedekia answered her:

"Rejoice too, wondrous maiden!"

"Why have you summoned me?" Irene asked him.

"Let us sit down and converse peacefully and lovingly," was the royal reply.

The holy maiden said:

"I fulfill the words of Holy Scripture, which says: 'I will not sit with deceitful men, nor will I go with lawbreakers'" (Ps. 25:4).

"In what are we transgressors?" asked Sedekia.

The holy maiden answered this:

"Every pagan who does not know the true God and worships idols is a transgressor."

"You compel me, against my will, to torment you, not sparing you, a princely daughter," Sedekia replied.

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6. That is, the enemy of the salvation of the human race – the devil.
7. *Eparch* – the head of a city or region.

"Then why do you waste time in idle talk?" Saint Irene answered him boldly. "Begin to torment me; I am ready for every torment for my Christ."

"Abandon your madness, maiden, and offer sacrifice to the gods."

The saint answered to this:

"Do not trouble yourself in vain, O king, disturbed by Satan. Know that I will not serve the devil, nor spare my flesh, for the sake of Christ my Lord."

Filled with wrath, the prince took counsel with the eparch as to what kind of execution to inflict upon the saint. At the command of the tormentor, a deep trench was dug and filled with serpents, creeping things, and all manner of reptiles, and the holy maiden was cast into it. But she remained there unharmed and unhurt for ten days, for the Angel of the Lord descended to her into the trench and preserved her unharmed; yet all the reptiles that were there died.

Sedekias, learning that the martyr had remained alive in the trench, marveled, and supposed that she had charmed the reptiles by the power of her sorcery and had killed them. He commanded that she be drawn out of the trench and brought before him for interrogation. Seating himself on the judgment seat, he said to her:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods who have spared you. See, they have destroyed the serpents, and have kept you alive, that you may know their power and mercy and bow down to them."

The saint answered him:

"Madman, deluded by Satan, whom I despise! Have these wooden or stone idols ever put serpents to death? You yourself will soon be cast into the pit of the infernal hell with your gods whom you serve, and you will be plunged 'into outer darkness' prepared for you by Satan: 'there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Mt. 25:30)."

The prince, in wrath, summoned carpenters with an iron saw and ordered them to saw the holy maiden asunder. When the saint was tied to a tree and they began to saw, the saw did not touch the maiden's body, but was blunted as though against a sharp stone; at last it broke in the middle. Another saw was brought, but this too broke, and those who were sawing fell, wounded themselves with the fragments of the

saw, and died. At last a third saw was brought, the sharpest and strongest, and Sedekias commanded that the maiden be sawn through at her loins. Binding her, they laid her on the ground, and pressed a large stone upon her breast, and began to saw the holy body of the Great Martyr: this time the saw touched the body, and blood flowed from it.

Then Sedekias said to the martyr with laughter:

"Where is your God? Let Him come now and help you, if He has power."

At these words of Sedekias, lightning suddenly flashed, a terrible thunder sounded, and a whirlwind arose in the air; the servants who were tormenting the body of the holy martyr lost consciousness. The prince fled in fear to his palace, and the people rushed from the square to their homes; a great rain poured down like a torrent, with heavy hail, and many of the tormentors fell dead, struck by the lightning, thunder, and hail. And the Angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, lifted the stone from the breast of the holy martyr, healed her wounds, and raised her up whole.

Eight thousand men, seeing this miracle, believed in Christ. But the prince, incited by the devil, again commanded that the saint be seized, and again began to deliberate with the eparch how to destroy her. The tormentors devised for her this execution: she was bound to a mill-wheel, so that in its turning it would tear her to pieces. But when water was let in under the wheel, the water stopped as though turned to stone; not one drop of it flowed, and the saint was unharmed. The prince, with his counselors, cried out:

"Oh, how great is her magical power, which has transformed the element of water into another substance!"

The people, beholding this miracle, rose up against the impious prince, and with loud cries of reproach and indignation began to cast stones at him, and drove him out of the city. He, returning to his homeland, lived there seven days and died of grief, anger, and shame.

After the death of Sedekias, his son Savakh, wishing to avenge his father's disgrace, gathered many warriors, about one hundred thousand in number, and went to war against the city of Mageddon. The inhabit-

ants of that city, learning of the approach of King Savakh, in fear shut themselves within the city and said to St. Irene:

"Because of you we are perishing."

But she bade them not to fear their enemies, and began to pray to God with these words:

"You who once heard Your servant, the prophet Elisha, hear my prayer also, and invisibly strike this people that comes to destroy the city. Blind our enemies, that they may understand that You alone are the true God."

And immediately, hearing her prayer, the Lord struck with blindness the prince and all the warriors who were with him.

Prince Savakh understood that it was Irene who had brought blindness upon him and upon his army, and sent a messenger to her with this request:

"I know now that the power of your God is invincible. I beg you, pray to your God for me and for my warriors, that we may regain our sight!"

Moved to mercy, the saint offered diligent prayer to the Lord of all, and the prince and all who were with him regained their sight. Then Savakh sent word to the city to the citizens, with these peaceable words:

"Take me to yourselves as prince, as you had my father as prince also; and I will forgive you the dishonor you did to my father."

The citizens, seeing how great the royal army was, concluded peace with him, opened the city gates to him, bowed down to him, and acknowledged him as their king. But when Savakh received the kingdom, he, at the instigation of the devil, became angry with St. Irene, and summoning the saint, said to her:

"I forgive the city its guilt, but I am angry with you, because you incited rebellion against my father, and for that he was stoned. But if you also wish to receive forgiveness from me, do my will: offer sacrifice to the gods, and you will be free."

The saint began to rebuke the prince for his madness, and thereby brought him into still greater wrath.

Savakh commanded that she be cast into prison, and began to consult with the nobles as to what torture to devise for her. Meanwhile the saint remained in prison for seven days. There Christ appeared to her and said:

"Fear not, My daughter, for I am with you, strengthening you."

Savakh commanded that the martyr be led out of the prison, iron nails driven into her heels, and then, placing upon her shoulders a heavy sack of sand, he ordered that she be driven to a certain place, distant from the city by five poprishches[8]. The servants put reins into the mouth of the saint and drove her, as horses are driven, to the appointed place. The saint, being thus humiliated, spoke, turning to God:

"Truly, 'I was as a beast before You,' O Lord. 'Yet I am continually with You; You have held me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me with glory' (Ps. 72:22–24)."

Looking to her right, the saint saw the Angels of the Lord accompanying her, and rejoiced in her soul. When the tormentors came to the appointed place, the servants turned back toward the city, leading the holy martyr on the reins with reviling words. A great crowd followed after them, and the saint saw before her an Angel striking the earth with a staff, and thought within herself: "The enemies of God will perish."

When they reached the place where the Angel stood, the earth suddenly split open and swallowed up the servants of the tormentor who were leading the saint. The saint felt herself freed from her bonds, and invisible hands removed the sack of sand from her shoulders, the nails fell out of her feet, and she was made whole in her legs, and walked, glorifying God. The prince, learning of this, said:

"The gods have opened the earth and drawn my servants under the ground away from this sorceress."

But others answered him, saying:

"The Living God is with the holy martyr Irene!"

Still others reviled the holy maiden with abusive words. Then the Angel, opening the earth, struck with sudden death many of the unbe-

8. *Poprishche* – a measure of length; it equaled approximately 690 of our sazhens.

lievers, to the number of ten thousand; and those of the pagans who survived cried out:

"God of Irene, spare us, for we believe in You and take refuge in You."

At that time indeed about thirty thousand people believed in Christ. But Prince Savakh did not believe in God, and for this the Angel of God struck him with death.

Meanwhile St. Irene continued to preach the name of Christ in the city and wrought many miracles by the power of Christ. She not only healed the sick, cleansed lepers, and cast demons out of people, but raised up a young man who had died, bitterly mourned by his parents, and converted to Christ up to ten thousand people.

At that time, by God's command, Timothy the presbyter, who had baptized St. Irene, came to the city. Joyfully meeting him, St. Irene, together with him and the other people who had believed in Christ, went to the pillar where her father and mother lived, laboring in silence for God; and there all who had believed in Christ received holy baptism.

For three years St. Irene remained in the city of Mageddon, teaching the people and strengthening them in the faith of Christ. Then she went to another city, named Callipolis[9], where Prince Numerian ruled, a kinsman of Irene's persecutors, the kings Sedekias and Savakh.

When Irene entered the city, the pagans were celebrating there an impious festival in honor of the goddess Artemis[10], and the king was offering sacrifice before the idol. St. Irene stood before him, rebuked him for his impiety, and confessed Christ as the true God. The prince said to his nobles:

"This maiden resembles her father Licinius in face and stature, but wicked children are the misfortune of their parents. So, because of this maiden her good father lost his kingdom. She, as I have heard, is the cause of the death of my brother Sedekias; she also destroyed his son Savakh by her sorcery; truly this maiden is a destroyer of kings."

Then Numerian said to St. Irene:

9. The city of Callipolis was located, like Magedon, in Thrace.

10. Artemis or Diana – the Greco-Roman goddess of light and the moon, who was also regarded as the patroness of the hunt.

"What do you say, sorceress? Will you offer sacrifice to the gods, or will you remain in your destructive error?"

The saint, making the sign of the cross over herself, answered:

"I will offer the sacrifice of praise to the Most High God, but I will not offer sacrifice to your demons and lifeless idols. As for your kinsmen the princes, know that it was not I but my God, who holds the life and death of every man, who commanded them to die; therefore fear also my God, for few days remain for you to live, and soon your end will overtake you as well."

Hearing this, Numerian was inflamed with rage, gnashed his teeth, roared like a lion, and commanded his servants to heat three bronze oxen, resolving that if the saint should overcome the force of the fire in one ox, she would be cast into another; and if she should do the same with that one, she would then be cast into the third. So it came to pass. When the bronze oxen had been heated like glowing coals, the saint was cast into one of them. There she began to pray aloud in these words: "O Lord! Make haste to help me, who suffer for Thy holy Name!"

The Angel of the Lord appeared to her. Exhorting her not to fear the torments, he cooled the flame of the fire. The people, however, murmured against Numerian, saying:

"In vain hast thou destroyed a maiden in the flower of her youth."

When the bronze had cooled, the saint was found alive and well, in no way harmed by the fire, and the prince said to those around him:

"Did I not warn you that this girl is a sorceress? You see how she has quenched the fire; cast her into the other ox."

And the saint was cast into the other ox. When this one too was miraculously cooled, she was cast into the third. And then this third ox, by the command of the All-powerful and Almighty God, set out from its place as if alive, traveled a quarter of a poprishche, and, returning to its place, fell apart; and the holy martyr came out of it unharmed. The people, seeing such a miracle, cried aloud:

"Great art Thou, God of Irene! Have mercy upon us according to Thy great mercy! Thou art our God, strong and mighty, who worketh wonders marvelous and most glorious!"

And up to a hundred thousand people then believed in Christ. Prince Numerian, however, not only remained in unbelief but also blasphemed the Most High God, for which, invisibly struck by the Angel of God, he fell mortally ill. Dying, he commanded his eparch Vavodan to subject Irene to various torments and then to put her to death by the most cruel execution.

When the impious prince Numerian had died, the holy Irene, remaining in the city, continued to teach the people the faith in Christ the Lord and healed every kind of infirmity; and the presbyter Timothy, who came there at this time, baptized those who believed in Christ.

The eparch, seeing that the whole people sympathized with St. Irene, feared to subject her to torments in this city, fearing to arouse murmuring and rebellion among the people. He went to another city, called Constantina,[11] and ordered his soldiers to lead the martyr behind him. Arriving in this city, he seated himself on the judgment seat and said to the saint:

"Dost thou know that power over thee has been given to me? Approach then our gods and offer sacrifice to them; otherwise I will deliver thee to cruel torments."

The saint answered him:

"Listen, eparch, to my answer: deliver me to all the tortures thou canst devise, and thou shalt see the power of God."

The eparch ordered an iron grate to be brought, and, placing the martyr upon the grate, ordered her to be bound to it with iron chains; then, placing wood beneath the grate, he ordered it to be set on fire. A strong fire blazed up, and then, at the eparch's command, oil, tallow, and pitch were poured upon the martyr; thus the saint was tormented for several hours; the grate and the iron chains were heated until they glowed red. Yet the saint remained unharmed and sang, glorifying God, as if cold dew were being poured over her. Then the iron chains fell away from her, and she arose healthy and entirely unharmed.

The eparch and his counselors, seeing this, were greatly amazed. Falling at the feet of the saint, the eparch said to her:

11. Constantina was located not far from Callipolis, in Thrace.

"Servant of the true God! I beg thee, do not destroy me as thou didst destroy our princes, for I too believe in the Son of God and wish to be a Christian."

Thus the eparch Vavodan believed in Christ, and with him a multitude of people. The Angel of God brought the presbyter Timothy into this city, and all who believed in Christ were baptized by him.

Having spent fifty days in this city, the holy Irene departed from there and was seized by the soldiers of Prince Savorius, who lived in the Thracian city of Mesembria. She was brought to him, for this prince had heard of her and had long desired to seize her. Seeing the saint, he flew into a rage, had her executed by the sword, and she was buried outside the city. After this Savorius said openly:

"Terrible rumors circulated about this sorceress, for with her spells she killed princes. Why then could she not kill me? But I have killed her, and where is her helper Christ? Why did He not deliver her from my hands?"

Thus the unbelieving king reviled the power of Christ and boasted of himself as the conqueror of Irene.

But what is impossible for the all-powerful might of God? He who, at His voluntary death, raised "many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep," so that they, "coming out of the graves after His resurrection, entered the holy city and appeared unto many" (Mt. 27:52–53) — could He not raise this saint from the dead, that she might enter Mesembria and appear to the prince? Truly Christ our God is mighty in heaven and on earth, and does all that He wills. He sent His Angel and raised the holy Irene alive from the grave; and the Angel of the Lord said to her:

"Although thou hast already accomplished the ascetic deed of thy suffering, and it was fitting for thee to rest already, for thou art worthy of blessedness in heaven; yet, lest the impious and lawless again exalt themselves, boasting that they have overcome the power of our God, go into the city, that all the ungodly may see thee alive and be put to shame, learning that our God is almighty; from no one henceforth shalt thou receive any further suffering."

And the saint entered the city of Mesembria, holding an olive branch in her hand. When the citizens saw her, their hearts were filled with great fear, and they were greatly astonished. The whole people surrounded the saint with loud cries:

"Wondrous is the God of Irene, and there is no other God besides Him."

It was reported to the prince of that city that Irene had risen from the dead. Hearing this, he was greatly frightened, and, seeing the saint, fell at her feet, saying:

"Now I have understood that thy God is great. I beg thee to remain in our city and make us Christians."

The saint remained with them for seventy days, teaching them the holy faith, and all the inhabitants of that city believed in Christ; and the blessed presbyter Timothy, coming there by God's command, baptized the prince and all the other people.

From there the holy Irene set out for her homeland, the city of Mageddon, where her father had died about this time. And she mourned his death, praying to God for him. For some time she remained with her mother, and afterwards she was transported on a cloud and set down at Ephesus,[12] and she walked through this city, preaching the name of Christ in the manner of the Apostles, working many miracles here and healing various infirmities. By her preaching the holy Irene turned many pagans from idolatry to the faith of Christ.

Some time later, the elder Apelian, who had once been her teacher and whom God had sent to her, came to St. Irene at Ephesus. The saint, seeing him, rejoiced greatly. After some days she said to the people:

"Rejoice, my brethren! May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you; be of good cheer, rejoicing in our Lord, and stand firm in the faith. I am departing from you, and I thank you for receiving me, a

12. Ephesus – in antiquity a very large city in Asia Minor, at the foot of the mountains Coressus and Pion; it possessed a spacious harbor (now entirely silted up), thanks to which it carried on extensive trade. In the history of the Christian Church, the city of Ephesus is notable as the place of St. Paul's preaching and as the place of the Third Ecumenical Council (in 431).

stranger. Know then that everyone who receives strangers becomes a friend of the Heavenly God."

The citizens, hearing her words, began to ask one another:

"Where is our teacher going?"

Others said:

"Does she not wish to die?"

Still others declared:

"She is worthy of God; she will be taken from our eyes, because we are sinful."

On the following day the holy Irene, taking the elder Apelian and six reverent men, went with them outside the city, and finding in a rock a new empty tomb in which no one had ever been laid, she entered this tomb and said to Apelian and the other men:

"Cover me closely from above with a stone, so that no one may open it before the fourth day."

Then she bade a final farewell to Apelian and the men with him. Then she made the sign of the cross over herself and lay down. The men placed a heavy stone over the tomb and returned to the city.

On the fourth day Apelian, with the same men, came to the tomb, but, not finding there the body of the holy Irene, he thought within himself that Christ God had called her to paradise. He went to the city to announce this. Many gathered at the tomb, and seeing that it was empty, they marveled and with awe glorified God.

Thus ended the sufferings of the holy virgin Irene; such were the deeds of this maiden, the bride of Christ. She confessed her faith in Christ first before her father Licinius, then before Sedekia and his son Savah, then before Numerian, the eparch Vavodan, and finally before Savorius. The cities in which she suffered are the following: Mageddon, her homeland; Callipolis (or Kalinik); Constantina; and Mesembria in Thrace. She reposed in the Lord at the city of Ephesus on the fifth day of the month of May.[13]

Standing before Christ, she entreats Him on behalf of the whole universe. The account of her deeds and sufferings was written by the

13. The repose of the holy Great Martyr Irene took place at the end of the 1st or beginning of the 2nd century.

elder Apelian, to the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God glorified in the Trinity, to whom is due honor and worship from every creature now, and always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thy lamb, O Jesus, Irene calleth with a mighty voice: "Thee, my Bridegroom, I love; and seeking Thee I suffer martyrdom, and I am crucified with Thee, and am buried with Thy Baptism, and suffer for Thee, that I may reign in Thee, and die for Thee, that I may also live with Thee; but accept me as a spotless sacrifice, offered to Thee with love; by her prayers, as Thou art merciful, save our souls."

Kontakion, Tone 4:

O Virgin adorned with the beauties of virginity, thou wast most radiant in suffering, O Irene, stained with the blood that flowed from thy wounds, having overthrown the delusion of godlessness; wherefore thou hast received the honors of victory from the hand of thy Creator.

* * *



THE SIXTH DAY OF MAY

May 6

6 мая

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

Life of the Holy Righteous and Much-Suffering Job

Житие святого праведного и многострадального Иова

The Holy Righteous Job, by birth, was descended from the tribe of Abraham. He lived in Arabia; his dwelling place was the land of Uz[1], which was inhabited by the descendants of Uz, the nephew of Abraham, the firstborn son of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen. 22:20–21). Job was a man of truth (Job 6:24–30; cf. Job 27:2–4). He was distinguished by blameless conduct, by justice together with goodwill toward all, and by beneficence; and above all by the fear of God, with the preservation of the innocence of his heart and his turning away from everything evil, not only in his deeds but also in his inner thoughts. He had seven sons and three daughters. He was known in his land for his wealth as well: he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and a multitude of servants. He took a living and active part in the life of his kinsmen and exerted great influence in public affairs, for throughout the East he was held in great honor for his nobility and integrity (Job 30:5–10; cf. Job 30:1–3). Job's sons, although each lived separately, in his own tent-house, nevertheless cherished between themselves so strong a mutual love and lived in such harmony that they never allowed themselves to eat and drink apart, outside their fraternal fellowship. Each day, in turn, they held feasts in their own homes and spent the time in a circle of brothers, together with their sisters, amid innocent entertainments, free from all excess, far from drunkenness and disorder. Their good and righteous father would not have permitted dis-

1. The land of Uz lay to the southeast of Palestine, beyond the Dead Sea.

orderly gatherings. But since the feasts of Job's children were an expression of their brotherly love and quiet good manners, the righteous man not only did not forbid them but even encouraged them, taking comfort in the peace of his household. Each time, at the end of seven days, when the turn of the brotherly gatherings was over, Job would invite his children to examine their conduct carefully and in sincere conscience, to see whether any of them had sinned against God in word or thought; for he greatly feared God, yet feared not with the fear of a slave but with the concern of a son's love, and he watched carefully both over himself and over his house, lest anything should happen among them that provoked the Lord God. Moreover, the God-fearing righteous man did not limit himself to observing his household and exhorting them to lead a blameless life, that none of them even in thought should sin before their Creator. But every time the round of feast days was completed, Job, in the presence of the whole family, early in the morning offered whole-burnt sacrifices according to the number of all his children, and one bullock for the sin of their souls, for, he said, perhaps my sons have sinned and blasphemed God in their hearts; so Job did on all such appointed days (Job 1:5).

At one time, when the Angels of God, the guardians of the human race, had gathered in heaven before the throne of the Almighty God, to intercede before Him with their supplication for men and to bring Him human prayers concerning all the needs of life, there came among them also the devil, the calumniator and tempter of the human race. Satan, cast down from heaven, by the permission of God appeared there among the Angels, not having changed his fallen nature, not out of a good will to intercede for a blessing, but in order to pour out his malice and to blaspheme the good. Satanic pride, in its inner blindness, never makes peace with truth, does not perceive joyful peace in humility and in obedient devotion to the will of the All-Good God; it boldly introduces a re-evaluation of what exists, according to its own gloomy view, even into the alien, radiant realm of the Divine life, boldly measuring everything by the measure of its self-conceit!

And the Lord said to Satan, who stood before Him together with the Angels:

"Where have you come from?"

Satan answered:

"I have been walking on the earth and have gone all over it."

The Lord said to him:

"Have you turned your attention to My servant Job? There is not on earth another man who, like him, is so blameless, just, God-fearing, and free from all vice!"

To this Satan answered the Lord:

"Is Job God-fearing for nothing? Is it not You who guard him? Have You not fenced about his house and all that he has? You have blessed the works of his hands and multiplied his flocks and spread them over the land. But stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, take it from him, and then you will see whether he will bless You."

Then the Lord said to Satan:

"All that he has I deliver into your hands; do with it as you will, only do not touch his person."

Satan went out from the presence of the Lord (Job 1:6–12). It was a day when the sons and daughters of Job were feasting in the house of their eldest brother. And behold, a messenger came to Job and said:

"Your oxen were plowing in the field, yoked in pairs, and the she-asses were grazing beside them; suddenly the Sabeans fell upon them, drove them off, and slew the servants; I alone escaped and have run to report it to you."

While he was still speaking, another messenger came to Job and related:

"Fire fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the shepherds; I alone escaped and have come to tell you."

Before this one had finished his speech, a new messenger came and reported:

"The Chaldeans came up and, dividing into three companies, surrounded the camels and drove them off, and slew the servants; I alone escaped and have come to announce it to you."

While this one was still speaking, behold, another messenger came and told Job:

"Your sons and your daughters were feasting in the house of their eldest brother; suddenly a mighty wind rushed from the wilderness, struck the house at its four corners, and brought it down upon your children; all perished; I alone escaped and have come to inform you."

Having heard these dreadful tidings one after another, Job arose, in token of his heavy grief rent his outer garment, shaved his head, fell to the ground, and, bowing before the Lord, said:

"Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return to the womb of the mother earth. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away! As it pleased Him, so it has come to pass; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Thus in all this Job did not sin before God by a single foolish word (Job 1:13–22).

There came a day when the Angels of God again stood before the Lord; among them came again Satan also.

And the Lord said to Satan:

"Where have you come from?"

Satan answered:

"I have been on the earth and have gone all over it."

The Lord said to him:

"Have you turned your attention to My servant Job? There is no man on earth like him: so good, truthful, and pious, so far from all evil! And even amid the misfortunes that have befallen him, he remains to this day steadfast in his blamelessness; yet you stirred Me up against him to destroy him without cause!"

And Satan answered the Lord and said:

"Skin for skin: a man will give everything he has for his own life." That is, in another's skin a man can suffer; blows are not so painful in another's skin; even the stripping of that skin is tolerable, not painful for him, and he can remain calm. But try to touch his own body: stretch out Your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and you will see whether he blesses You."

Then the Lord said to Satan:

"Behold, he is in your hand. I permit you to do with him what you wish; only spare his soul, do not assail the foundation of his being, his free will (Job 2:1–6)."

Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck the whole body of Job with a terrible leprosy from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. The sufferer had to withdraw from the company of living people, since he was intolerable among them because of the contagiousness of the disease that had seized him. His body was covered with loathsome, foul-smelling sores; a burning inner fire spread through all his joints; sitting outside the settlement, in the ashes, Job scraped his festering wounds with a fragment of pottery. All his neighbors and acquaintances drew back and abandoned him. Even his wife lost compassion for him.

After a long time she, in a state of despair, once said to Job: "How long will you endure? Behold, I will wait a little longer in hope of my salvation; for your memory has perished from the earth, and your sons and daughters, the pains of my womb, and the toils by which I wearied myself in vain. You yourself sit in the stench of worms, passing the night without covering, while I wander about and serve, moving from place to place, from house to house, waiting for the sun to set, that I may find rest from my labors and from the sicknesses that now oppress me. Do not persist, do not stubbornly defend your blamelessness; but say some word against God, blaspheme Him, and die. In death you will find release from your sufferings; it will also free me from my torments."

So simply and naturally, and apparently even satisfactorily, did Job's wife resolve for him and for herself the question of life, not extending her view beyond the earthly understanding of its meaning and purpose, under the suggestion of Satan: "skin for skin." Wearied and exhausted in spirit, she was ready to extinguish the last light of true life: "blaspheme God and die."

The sufferer Job, however, did not reason thus about his condition, looking upon his human nature not from the standpoint of narrow self-love. Regarding his wife with compassion, he said to her:

"Why do you speak as one of the foolish women? If we have received good from God, shall we not also endure evil—shall we not accept it?"

And in this also Job did not sin before God; his lips uttered nothing blasphemous against God (Job 2:7–10).

The news of the calamity that had befallen Job spread through the surrounding lands. His three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite,[2] having learned of his misfortune, gathered together to go and comfort the sufferer, sharing his grief. But as they drew near and did not recognize him, because his face was one continuous festering sore, they cried out in horror and wept already from afar; each tore his outer garment and in deep sorrow threw dust upward above their heads. Then they sat upon the ground opposite their friend for seven days and seven nights, and spoke not a single word, for they saw that his suffering was very great and found no means of comforting him in such a state (Job 2:11–13). This wearisome silence was broken by Job himself. He was the first to open his lips: he cursed the day of his birth and expressed his deep sorrow over why he had been given to see the light, which for him is now covered in darkness. Why was life given to him, when for him it is a joyless torment?

"The thing which I greatly feared has come upon me," said the sufferer, "and what I dreaded has come to me. I have no peace, no rest, no solace!" (Job 3:1–26).

Then his friends also entered into the conversation, although by their reasonings, with which they wished to comfort him, they only poisoned still more his wounded heart (Job 21:34; Job 16 and following). By their sincere conviction, by their faith that the just God rewards the good and punishes the wicked, they held it as unquestioned and certain that whoever suffers misfortune is a sinner, and the greater the misfortune, the darker, that is to say, his sinful state. Therefore they also thought of Job that he had some secret sins, which he had skillfully concealed (Job 32:1–22, 33:1–33 and others) from people, and for which the All-seeing God was punishing their friend. They

2. They were descended from Esau, otherwise called "Edom" (see Gen. 36:1–43).

made this felt by the sufferer from the very beginning of their conversations, and afterwards, throughout their long discourses, they urged him to confess and repent of his transgressions. Job, conscious of his blamelessness, despite the apparent persuasiveness of their speeches, regarded himself inwardly as far from acknowledging their reasonings to be just (Job 27:1–7; cf. Job 10:17); with all the strength of innocence he defended his good name.

"How long will you torment my soul and crush me with your words? Behold, already ten times you have shamed me, and you are not ashamed to wound me! Miserable comforters! Will there be an end to your empty words?" (Job 19:2–3; cf. Job 16:2).

Job explained to his friends and assured them that he suffered not for sins, but that God, by His will, which is incomprehensible to man, sends one a heavy and another a happy life. Job's friends, who supposed that God acts toward people according to the same laws of retribution by which human justice also pronounces its judgment, were not persuaded by his words of justification, although they ceased their accusations against him and stopped answering his words (Job 32:1–15). At this time there took an ardent part in the general conversation a man young in years, named Elihu, son of Barachel, of the family of Ram, a Buzite; with fiery boldness he took up arms against the venerable sufferer "because he justified himself, his innocence, more than God" (Job 32 and following). Ascribing to the Creator a justice inaccessible to man, this interlocutor also saw the cause of Job's sufferings in his wickedness, even though it might not be noticed by human eyes.

"God is mighty, and does not despise the heart of the strong in strength. He does not uphold the wicked, nor turn His eyes from the righteous; but you," Elihu said to Job, "you are full of the judgments of the wicked, for by your judgment the punishment sent to you from God is undeserved, 'but judgment and condemnation are near,' so closely are you in contact with one another" (Job 36:5–17).

At last the sufferer turned in prayer to God, that He Himself would bear witness to his innocence.

Indeed God appeared to Job in a stormy whirlwind and rebuked him for his intention to demand an account of the affairs of world gov-

ernance. The Almighty showed Job that for man there is very much incomprehensible even in the phenomena and creations of the one visible nature surrounding him; and after this, the desire to penetrate the mysteries of God's judgments and to explain why He acts with people thus and not otherwise, such a desire already represents a presumptuous self-confidence.

"Who is this that darkens Providence with words without meaning?" the Lord asked Job out of the stormy whirlwind. "Gird up your loins now like a man, and answer: where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you know. On what are its foundations fixed, or who laid its cornerstone amid the common rejoicing of the heavenly lights and the joyful hymns of the sons of God? Did you ever in your life give command to the morning, and show the dawn its place? Do you know the ordinances of heaven, can you raise your voice to the clouds, can you send forth lightnings?... Would you overturn My judgment, accuse Me, that you might justify yourself? Have you an arm like Mine? Adorn yourself with majesty and glory, clothe yourself in splendor and magnificence; pour out the fury of your wrath, look on every proud and haughty thing and humble it, crush the mighty wicked in their places. Then I too will acknowledge that your right hand is strong enough to save you. Let him who contends with the Almighty, and accuses God, answer Him."

And Job answered the Lord and said:

"I know that Thou canst do all things, and that Thy purpose cannot be changed."

"Who is this that darkens Providence, understanding nothing?"

"It is I, who spoke of what I did not understand, of wonderful things beyond my knowledge. I had heard of Thee before only by the hearing of my ear, but now my eyes see Thee; therefore I renounce and repent in dust and ashes; I am nothing, and what shall I answer Thee? I lay my hand upon my mouth" (Job 38–40).

And afterwards there came a command from the Lord to Job's friends, that they should turn to him and ask him to offer sacrifice for them, for, said the Lord to Eliphaz the Temanite, only the face of Job will I accept, lest I reject you for having spoken of Me not as truly as

My servant Job (Job 42:7–9). The friends fulfilled this command of the Lord and brought to Job for sacrifice seven bulls and seven rams. Job offered sacrifice to God and prayed for his friends. God accepted his intercession for them, restored to him his bodily health and gave him twice as much as he had before. His relatives and all his former acquaintances, hearing of his healing, came to visit him and to console and rejoice with him, and each of them brought him a gift and a gold ring. The Lord also blessed Job abundantly: he afterwards had fourteen thousand head of small cattle, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand she-asses. In place of those who had died, Job had seven sons and three daughters born to him; and in all the land there were no such beautiful women as Job's daughters, and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers (Job 42:10–15). The Lord did not double the number of Job's children as He doubled his pastoral wealth: this was so that no one should think that his first children who had died had perished completely. No, though they died, they did not perish; they will rise in the general resurrection of the righteous.

Job, after patiently bearing the trials sent to him, lived a hundred and forty years (in all he lived on earth two hundred and forty-eight years), and he saw his posterity to the fourth generation; he died, full of days, in deep old age (Job 42:16–17); but now he lives a life that does not grow old and is not sickly, in the kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God glorified in the Trinity, for even amid the misfortunes he bore on earth he already saw, as Abraham did, the great day of the Lord, and saw it and rejoiced (Jn. 8:56).

"I know," he said, struck with a foul-smelling sore, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and He will raise up from the dust on the last day this my skin which is decaying, and in my flesh I shall see God. I myself shall see Him; my eyes, not another's, shall behold Him. My heart faints within my breast at this hope!" (Job 19:25–27).

This the righteous Job confessed before his friends, teaching them to fear not bodily sufferings and the deprivation of earthly goods, but "the sword of the Lord," the wrath of the Almighty, "who is the avenger of unrighteousness."

"Know that there is a judgment" (Job 19:29),[2996] he proclaims for our instruction, "a judgment in which only he who has true wisdom will be justified: the fear of the Lord, and true understanding, which is turning away from evil" (Job 28:28).

Troparion, Tone 1:

Seeing the riches of Job's virtues, the enemy of the righteous plotted to rob him; and having torn apart the pillar of his body, he did not steal the treasure of his spirit, for he found the soul of the blameless one armed. Me, however, he has stripped and taken captive; therefore, having preceded me before the end, deliver me from the deceiver, O Savior, and save me.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Being truly righteous and just, godly and blameless, and having appeared sanctified, O all-glorious one, thou didst become a true servant of God, enlightening the world by thy patience, most patient and most valiant; wherefore, O God-wise one, we all sing of thy memory.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Barbarus the Soldier and Others with Him

Страдание святого мученика Варвара воина и других с ним

When the God-hating Emperor Julian the Apostate[2997] began war with the Franks[3], he sent against them the commander Bacchus, in whose regiment there served a brave soldier named Barbarus, a Christian in faith but a secret one. The forces of both countries prepared for battle; among the Franks there was one strong wrestler, like Goliath (1 Kgdms. 17), who came out before the Roman

3. The Franks were a confederation of Germanic peoples on the lower Rhine. By their attacks on Roman territory the Franks greatly hastened the fall of the Roman state. Having invaded northern Gaul, the Franks mingled with the native population and in part adopted its customs. After their victories over the Romans, the southern tribes of the Alamanni and the Visigoths, the power of the Franks rose under the Carolingians to world-historical significance.

ranks and challenged anyone to single combat, calling for someone to come out and wrestle with him. Since no Roman dared to go out against him, for his very appearance, which spoke of his strength, terrified them, he mocked them. Then the voivode Bacchus, knowing the courage of the Blessed Barbarus, summoned him and asked whether he could go out to wrestle this proud champion who boasted of his strength. Barbarus, trusting in the help of his Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he believed, did not refuse the single combat; arming himself with the sign of the Cross, he went out against the enemy, seized him, overcame him, and killed him with God's help, for an Angel had been sent from the Lord to the Blessed Barbarus and helped him. Then the Franks were put to shame and fell into fear; the Romans, inspired with courage, rushed upon them and gained a complete victory over them. Such valor of the Blessed Barbarus won him great honor among the Roman regiments and the approval of the Emperor: he was honored with the rank of comes[4].

Afterwards, the voivode Bacchus, after this glorious victory over the enemies, while with the troops in Thrace[5], desired to offer sacrifices to the idols, to render them thanks for the victory, which he ascribed not to Christ God but to his vain idols. And so he invited the comes Barbarus, as the first victor, to take part in the offering of his unclean sacrifices. But the holy Barbarus, openly confessing that he was a Christian, turned away from the idols. Then the voivode reported this to the Emperor; the Emperor, ordering the soldier of Christ to be brought before him, compelled him to offer sacrifice to the idols; but since the Blessed Barbarus would not obey, the Emperor commanded that he be hung on the torture tree and that his belly be cut with a sword until his entrails fell to the ground. But while the saint was praying, an Angel appeared and, gathering his entrails, put them back in their place in the martyr's belly and healed him, so that not even a trace of the wound remained on

4. Comites were the imperial bodyguards. Later this title came to be applied to officials (who formed the retinue of higher administrative officers in general: proconsuls, provincial administrators, and governors), upon whom the collection of taxes for the state treasury subsequently also came to rest.

5. A province of the Byzantine Empire in the north-eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. At present Thrace, under the name of Romelia or Rumelia, forms a province of European Turkey.

his body; then he untied him from the torture tree. Seeing such a miracle, the voivode Bacchus, together with two soldiers, Callimachus and Dionysius, believed in Christ and confessed Him, and reviled the foul pagan gods. For this, by command of the Emperor Julian, the new confessors of the name of Christ, Bacchus, Callimachus and Dionysius, were beheaded, and thus were numbered among the holy martyrs in heaven. But the wicked emperor commanded that St. Barbarus be bound to an iron wheel, beneath which a strong fire was kindled, and that the wheel be turned with the martyr tied to it, while boiling oil was poured upon his suffering body. But the martyr, offering fervent prayers to God, remained wholly unharmed by the fire; on the contrary, the fire turned upon the soldier-tormentors, scorched them, and reduced two of them to ashes. After this the suffering servant of Christ was cast into prison, where the Lord Himself appeared to him and strengthened him.

In the morning St. Barbarus was again brought out for torments; he was stretched naked in four directions, after which he was beaten mercilessly on the back and belly with ox sinews. Then the martyr was thrown into a furnace, which had been heated for three days beforehand. Remaining in it for seven days, the saint was found again alive, healthy, in no way harmed by the fire; in a word, he came out of the furnace as though out of a bath, glorifying God. After that St. Barbarus was again cast into prison, where a multitude of scorpions, serpents and all kinds of creeping things were thrown in to him, in the expectation that he would perish from them. But even in this confinement St. Barbarus, driving off the venomous reptiles with the sign of the Cross, remained unharmed.

Then the embittered tormentor, who would not know the power of Christ, commanded that a bronze bull be heated to the greatest possible degree and the martyr thrown into it; but there too the saint remained unharmed. He felt no pain from the fire, and the bronze bull, as though sensing the burning of the fire, began to move like a living thing, to utter some sounds, and to walk. Seeing this miracle, many of the pagans believed in Christ.

Finally, after all this, the tormentor commanded that the holy martyr Barbarus be beheaded. Thus he nobly accomplished his martyric struggle for Christ the Lord. His honorable body was taken up with honor by the pious bishop Philicius and laid to rest in the city of Methone in the Peloponnese, glorifying Christ God, who is praised forever with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

* * *

Memory of St. Barbarus, who was formerly a robber

Память святого Варвара, бывшего прежде разбойником

This Blessed Barbarus was formerly a fierce robber in the lands of the Lucanians[6]. He shed much human blood, and no one could catch him, much less wrestle with him, since he possessed an extraordinary bodily strength. But the most merciful and loving-kind God, who does not desire the death of a sinner and seeks the salvation of all, as once the Apostle Paul (Acts 22:1–30), so also this robber He caught in the nets of salvation by the working of His Providence. Once, when this robber was sitting in a cave and looking at a multitude of plundered gold, suddenly the grace of God, which leads the sinner to the path of repentance, touched his heart. And so the robber was moved in soul, and, recalling the Dread Judgment of God, began to grieve, saying in his soul: "Woe is me, a sinner, what have I done! I have shed much human blood, defiled many women, seized others' possessions, and done much other evil! Yet whether today or tomorrow, I must die; and what I have gained, to whom will it remain?!" And then he cried out again: "I know that Christ, in His mercy, received the ancient robber to Himself (Lk. 23:40–43); He will receive me too, if only I repent. Behold, now I repent, I grieve over my evil deeds and seek His mercy."

Having said this in the depth of his soul, Barbarus rose up and, saying nothing to his companions, took only a sword under his garment, and leaving everything behind, went at night to the nearest village, in which there was a church. Coming to the church during Matins, when it was finished, he fell at the feet of the priest with tears, crying out:

6. Probably in Greece.

"Holy father! Do not reject me, a wretched sinner, who has come to your holiness, for I wish to repent of the evil deeds I have done."

The priest, raising him from the floor, led him to the sanctuary and said:

"Confess, my son, before God the sins you have committed; and I shall be a humble witness of your confession and repentance."

The penitent began to speak:

"I, father, am that same robber Barbarus, of whom, I think, you too have heard. I am full of many sins, bodily impurity, robbery and murder: for I have killed as many as three hundred people, including two presbyters, whom I slew with the sword because they would not admit me to the Mystery of repentance. And now, father, if you know that God will receive me as I repent, then bind my sinful wounds as you see fit with the commandments of God; if not, take this sword and command them to kill me."

But the presbyter said to him in reply:

"Child! There is no sin that overcomes the mercy of God; only do not despair. Go to my house, and whatever I bid you, do it in deed."

Having come out of the church, the presbyter looked back and saw that Barbarus was following after him on elbows and knees, and said to him:

"What are you doing, child?"

Barbarus answered:

"From this time, since I have cast myself down upon the earth before the Lord my God with my sins, I shall not rise from the ground until all my evil deeds are forgiven me."

"Child," said the presbyter to him, "you are voluntarily giving a vow to God. So keep it, and all shall be forgiven you."

Coming home, the presbyter again said to him:

"Here, child, are my children, servants, cattle, dogs: to which of them do you wish to be made equal, so as to take food together with them?"

Barbarus answered:

"Father, I do not count myself equal even to the dogs; but, because of the necessary bodily need for food, put me with them, that I may eat

food with them and remain without shelter throughout all the days and nights."

To this the presbyter said:

"Then do so, child, as you say before God, and trust in His great mercy."

And Barbarus lived in this condition with that presbyter for three years, like a four-footed beast, crawling on hands and feet and not rising from the ground, considering himself unworthy to be among people, but only among four-footed animals and dogs; he ate together with them and was together with them outside the house by day and by night. When the third year was over, the presbyter said to him:

"Enough, child; stop feeding with the dogs, for the Lord is showing you His mercy."

"But I, father," answered Barbarus, "still wish to graze together with the cattle."

And the presbyter said to him:

"Child! God sees this vow of yours as well, which you offer Him out of your humility, desiring in this way to suffer for your sins."

And Barbarus went out with the cattle beyond the village, walking like a four-footed beast and feeding on scanty grass. Having reached a meadow, he remained there for twelve years, naked and without even the least rag upon him. His skin became like the bark of a tree: scorched by the heat of the sun and cracked by the frost, it turned black as charcoal. Thus the blessed Barbarus became a voluntary martyr.

When twelve years of such sufferings in the wilderness had passed, he received, by Divine revelation, assurance that his sins were forgiven and that his ascetic repentance was to be completed in martyrdom, with his blood. One day, as he walked across the meadow, Barbarus came near the road on which some merchants had halted. Thinking that a wild beast was approaching (for they could not make out what was in the thick grass), they shot at him with their drawn bows and struck him with three arrows. When they came up and saw that they had shot a man, they were terrified. But Barbarus bade them neither to fear nor to grieve, told them everything about himself, and charged them to an-

nounce his death to the priest of that village. Having said this, he committed his soul into the hands of God.

The aforementioned priest, learning of the event from the merchants, went to the place where he found the body of the blessed Barbarus, shining like light. After performing the customary singing over the dead, he buried him on the very spot where he had been killed. Afterwards, healings of the sick of various ailments began to flow from the tomb of the blessed Barbarus.

After some time, the people gathered there with the priest; they opened the tomb and saw that the saint's body was not only incorrupt but also exuded healing myrrh. All were then struck with wonder and glorified God. The honorable relics of St. Barbarus were carried with great honor to their village and laid in the church, marveling at the wondrous loving-kindness and mercy of Christ our God, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

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NOTES

2996. The subject of the Book of Job is the resolution of the question of how to reconcile with the existence of God's Providence in the world the frequent occurrence on earth that righteous people live out their lives amid misfortunes, while the wicked prosper. Job's friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, learned of the calamities that had befallen the righteous Job; they came to visit the sufferer, and when they saw their friend on the dunghill, they mourned him in silence for seven days. Then they entered into conversation with him: departing from the representation common to the Old Testament period, that every suffering is a punishment for some wrongdoing, they developed in their speeches to Job the thought that if he is suffering now, then without doubt it is for some sins of his own, for which he must therefore repent. Vexed by his friends' speeches, and feeling his own righteousness before God, Job, complaining that the hand of the Lord lay heavily upon him, expressed faith in the unsearchability of God's judgments, before which human thought is powerless, and also the desire that the Lord Himself would judge him. God appears to Job in a whirlwind. Having rebuked Job for the thoughtless demand that He give an account of His governance of the world, the Lord inspires Job with reverence before the boundless and incomprehensible paths of God's Providence, which directs all things toward good ends. In conclusion, the Lord commands Eliphaz and his companions to seek the intercessory prayer of Job for their sin of unjust condemnation, and He recompensed Job twofold for his losses and sufferings. The question of the author of the Book of Job is disputed. St. Gregory the Theolo-

gian and John Chrysostom inclined to the view that it was Solomon. But this is hard to reconcile with the general impression the book makes, which points to a far earlier origin. It makes no mention whatever of the laws of Moses; at the same time, its account presents features of patriarchal life, in which signs of a highly developed social order already appear. Job, as a noble warrior, prince and judge, lives with considerable splendor and enjoys honor during his frequent visits to the nearby city; the book, moreover, contains indications of regular forms of judicial procedure, of the ability of Job's contemporaries to observe celestial phenomena and draw corresponding astronomical conclusions; it speaks of mines, great constructions, and also of major political upheavals. All this gives grounds, with a very considerable degree of probability, for dating Job's lifetime to the time of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt. Job, after days of prosperity, having experienced the loss of his property, his children and a fierce illness, and then receiving back from God what he had lost, and that doubled (Job 42:10), serves as a prefiguration of Christ the Savior, who humbled Himself to accept the shameful death of the Cross and for this was exalted by God the Father (Phil. 2:7–9), receiving, as the crown for His redemptive labor on behalf of humanity, the glory which He had with the Father before the world existed (Jn. 17:6). St. Zeno, Hieromartyr and Bishop of Verona, who lived in the 4th century, finds other, still more particular points of resemblance between the type and its fulfillment. "Job, in my opinion," says the holy father, "was a figure of our Savior Jesus Christ. Comparison will explain this truth to us. Job was righteous; our Savior is righteousness itself, the source of our righteousness, for it was foretold of Him: 'Behold, the day comes... the Sun of righteousness shall rise' (Mal. 4:1–2). Job was true; our Lord is the true and perfect truth: 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life' (Jn. 14:6). Job was rich, but whose wealth can compare with the wealth of our Lord, to Whom the whole universe belongs, according to the testimony of the blessed David: 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein' (Ps. 23:1)? Job was tempted three times by the devil (by the loss of his property, the death of his children, and sickness); in like manner, according to the testimony of the Evangelist, the devil also tempted our Lord three times (Mt. 4:1–11). Job, stripped of all his property, became poor; our Lord, out of love for us, having come down to earth and left heaven with all its blessings, likewise became poor, that He might enrich us. Job's children were slain by the enraged devil; the children of our Lord, the prophets, were beaten by the frenzied Pharisaic people (Lk. 13:34; Acts 7:52). Job was struck with sores; our Lord, having taken upon Himself our flesh and the sins of the whole human race, likewise took upon Himself all the filth and sores of sin. Job was attacked by his friends; our Lord was opposed above all by the chief priests and scribes, who ought especially to have honored Him and been His friends. Job, stricken with leprosy, consumed by worms, sat on the ash-heap outside the city; our Lord, having taken upon Himself all the sinful sores of the whole human race, lived in this impure world among people full of vices and seething with lusts, who delivered Him to a shameful death outside the city. Job, by his invincible patience, regained both health and wealth; our Lord, having conquered death by His Resurrection, bestowed upon those who believe in Him not only health but immortality, and received from God the Father power and dominion over all, as He Himself testified: 'All things are delivered

unto Me of My Father' (Lk. 10:22). The blessed Job died in peace; our Lord, leaving us peace bought at the price of His blood, ascended to His Father in meek and peaceful glory." In view of this prefigurative significance of the life of the righteous Job, the Church from ancient times has appointed that, in the days dedicated to the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ, readings from the Book of Job be offered to the attention of the faithful. The paremias from the Book of Job for Holy Week are as follows: on Monday, at Vespers, Job 1:1–12; on Tuesday, at Vespers, Job 1:13–22; on Wednesday, at Vespers, Job 2:1–10; on Great Thursday, at Vespers, Job 38:1–23, 42:1–5; on Great Friday, at Vespers, Job 42:12–17.

2997. Julian the Apostate, nephew of Constantine the Great, was born in 331. In 345, together with his brother Gallus, he was exiled by Constantius to Cappadocia, where he spent six years under strict surveillance. In 351 he left the place of exile and spent some years in Nicomedia, where he devoted himself to the study of philosophy; in 355 Constantius appointed him 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 a pagan teacher, the dissensions among Christians caused by the Arian disturbances, and hatred for Constantius, kindled 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 after a battle with the Persians, during which he was mortally wounded by a spear; his last words, "Thou hast conquered, Galilean!", expressed his acknowledgment of the victory of Christianity over paganism.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF MAY

May 7

7 мая

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

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Acacius

Страдание святого мученика Акакия

Saint Acacius suffered for confessing the name of Christ in the reign of Maximian[1], and in the third persecution of Christians raised by this emperor at the instigation of the devil.

Saint Acacius came from Cappadocia[2]. He was a soldier, holding the rank of centurion, and served in the Martisian regiment[3] under the command of Colonel Firmus.

At that time Emperor Maximian had ordered that Christians be sought out not only in the cities but also in the ranks of the soldiers; and if there was found among the soldiers anyone who believed in Christ, such a one was ordered to be brought to trial and torment; and in case a Christian did not obey the imperial decree, he was to be put to death.

In consequence of this order, Colonel Firmus summoned each soldier separately and questioned everyone as to what his faith was; and if it turned out that any of his soldiers believed in Christ, Firmus, by every means, with flattery and threats alike, compelled him to idolatry. By acting thus, Firmus led many Christians who were weak in the faith and timid into paganism.

When Firmus summoned the centurion Acacius, the latter declared aloud:

"I was born among Christians, and a Christian I shall remain; let the Lord Jesus Christ Himself be my witness in this. Not only my fath-

1. Maximian governed the western half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
2. A province of Asia Minor.

er and mother, but also my grandfathers and great-grandfathers were Christians; therefore I too shall remain a Christian."

After these words of the saint, Firmus began to persuade him to idolatry, both with flattery and with threats; three times he summoned him and exhorted him to fulfill the imperial command. But seeing that Acacius remained unyielding, Firmus ordered him to be put in chains and sent to the military commander Vivian.

At the time when the military commander Vivian was seated at the tribunal and examining other confessors of Christ, the commentarisius[4] Antoninus approached him and said:

"Yesterday Colonel Firmus of the Martisian regiment put his centurion Acacius in chains; now he sends him to you, because Acacius does not obey the imperial decree and confesses the Christian faith."

Immediately Acacius was presented for examination before the military commander.

Looking at him, the commander asked:

"What is your name?"

The saint answered:

"The name that is most desirable to me and to all my kin is the one that derives from the glorious name of Christ: I am called a Christian, but in human terms I am named Acacius."

To this the commander said:

"From your name also your character is evident, for you are evil, since you do not obey the imperial command!"

To this the saint answered:

"O voivode! You speak falsely and misinterpret the meaning of my name, for Acacius means 'without malice'[5]. By this name I am rightly called, since I do not wish to be a partner of the diabolical malice that drinks human blood."

The commander said:

"Where did you pick up such unreasonable words?"

3. The Martisian regiment: a detachment of Mars' (that is, of the brave).

4. Commentarisius: the chief over the prisons.

5. Acacius (from Greek Αχαχιος, from χαχος, bad, evil, with the negative a) actually means "not evil-minded."

The saint answered:

"I am a native of Cappadocia; from there came many martyrs for the name of Christ, and I myself have seen the miracles that were performed after the death of the saints by the grace and power given from the Lord; I myself have seen how their tombs and honorable relics poured forth healing on many sick. Therefore I wish to be an imitator of these holy martyrs, and not of you, and therefore I do not obey your impious laws, which will perish together with you."

Then the commander said to the saint:

"Do not think that you will be subjected to trifling tortures. For your arrogance and vain talk you deserve a great punishment; but if you wish to escape it, renounce the Christian faith and fulfill the imperial command: worship the gods, by whose favor emperors reign and gain victories over their enemies; shame yourself before me, who sit on this tribunal; do not consider yourself wiser than all men, and do not trust in a man called Christ, who, as they say, was subjected to torment and lawfully condemned to death."

The saint answered:

"You are mistaken, judge, in speaking thus, and you sin grievously, being blinded by Satan, for emperors reign and win victories not by the favor of your gods, but by the providence and good pleasure of our all-good God. As to what you say, that I trust in a man who was subjected to torment and condemned to death, know that this is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who for the salvation of us sinful men came to earth and became man, while remaining true God. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in some wondrous and ineffable manner, took upon Himself our nature; how this was done you will not only fail to understand, but will not even hear, unless first you become a Christian. Christ the Lord, being true God, as I have said, being the Word (Jn. 1:1) co-abiding with the Father and co-eternal with Him, at the time well-pleasing to Him, accomplished the work of our salvation, and thus delivered us from bondage to the enemy-devil, who from the beginning of time envied us."

To these words of the saint the commander said:

"If the emperors are hostile to your Christ, why then does He not put them to death, being, as you say, the Almighty God?"

The saint answered:

"That is precisely why you must come to know His infinite mercy and boundless power: that, though you mock Him, He does not put you to death, patiently waiting for you pagans to repent and render to Him the honor due to God, and not to demons. Moreover, He bears long so that His chosen servants, beloved of Him, might display before the eyes of all men their glorious struggle. If our God had destroyed you soon, you too would have perished forever, and His servants would not have been revealed to the world; nor would the power of His grace have been shown to men. In what way would our Master be glorified, if He had not shown His long-suffering toward our great sins? Therefore He leaves you unpunished even now; yet you, who despise His long-suffering, who remain in your impiety and are angry at us, who are innocent —if you do not repent, you will prepare for yourselves destruction and plunge into it because of your lawless deeds; but we, who know the power and might of our God, patiently enduring sufferings for His name, shall receive from Him eternally blessed life; His glory will also be revealed to those men who, recognizing their error, will repent and amend their lives."

Marveling at such a wise answer of the martyr, the military commander Vivian asked him:

"Have you not studied books, since you answer me so wisely? You rightly say that the life of man lies in the power of God, in His providence and long-suffering."

The saint answered:

"From the fact that I, who have not studied book learning, have answered you thus, you ought to recognize the power and grace of our God, who rules over the whole world; for God Himself speaks through the lips of His servants, at which you too, who consider yourselves wise, are amazed. And from the beginning, when our Lord willed to proclaim the Gospel to the whole universe, He chose for preaching not noble and rich men, nor wise philosophers and sweet-speaking rhetoricians, but fishermen and publicans, simple and poor men. The Lord did

this so that His incomprehensible power and wisdom, surpassing all understanding, might be known in those whom the Holy Spirit Himself invisibly taught and instructed."

After this the commander said to the saint:

"Leave off your much speaking, and answer me this question: are you aware of the imperial decree that orders you Christians either to offer sacrifice to the gods or to undergo grievous torments? Tell me: will you submit to the imperial command; will you offer sacrifice to the gods or not?"

The saint answered:

"I have already declared to Colonel Firmus, who questioned me earlier, and that more than once, that I am a Christian; what I said to Firmus, I say to you as well: I am a Christian, and I will not offer sacrifice to your foul demons."

Then the military commander said:

"Sparing your youth, since you are not more than twenty-five years old, and out of respect for your rank of centurion, I would by no means wish to torment you. However, if you remain again in your impiety, you will compel me to hand you over to the most cruel tortures."

The saint answered:

"It is not madness, but the most reasonable and most God-pleasing thing, not to abandon faith in the One true God, my Creator, by whose will I have existed until this day."

The military commander said to the saint:

"How then do you say that God is One? For just now you confessed Christ, the Son of God. But if your God has a Son equal to Himself, then you must acknowledge two gods: one God the Father, and another God the Son. And if you have two gods, why then did you now confess to me only one God? I see now that you are in error and are lying to me, for you contradict yourself in your words."

To this Saint Acacius answered:

I believe and hope in my Lord Jesus Christ, crucified under Pontius Pilate, that by the Holy Spirit He will enlighten me and teach me how to answer your question, for your question, why we, while speaking of two, acknowledge only One God, is a difficult question and not easily

resolved. But I tell you that we Christians confess the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit alike as the true God. In these three names there are three Persons, but one Godhead and one power. We acknowledge the One God together with the Word and the Holy Spirit, because it does not befit God to be without His Word and the Life-giving Spirit. To make my words clear, let me give you a likeness: here is an emperor, whom you call lord and I call a man, named Maximian; he has a son, Maxentius. Here are two of them, yet their nature is one, human nature, and their rule is undivided; the son is honored for the sake of the father, and the father is glorified for the sake of the son. In like manner we think of God, for the divine essence of the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit is one and the same, never changing, since the God whom we worship is One.

The voivode said to the saint:

"I have more than once told you to speak to me only about the matter; but with all these empty words you only turn aside from the subject of our conversation. For the last time I say to you: offer sacrifices to our gods, by whose will the world exists; if you do not carry out this my command, I will no longer tolerate your disobedience."

The saint answered:

"Do not think to frighten me with torments; here is my body, already prepared to receive wounds; torture it as much as you wish. But my thoughts and my heartfelt convictions neither you, nor the emperor, nor your demons whom you worship, nor anyone else will ever change or turn to evil."

Then the commander, enraged, ordered the saint to be stripped naked and tied to four pillars, and six soldiers were to beat him without mercy with sinew-thongs, first on the back and then on the belly. At this the governor said: "Let us see whether his God will help him." The holy martyr was tormented in this way for a long time, so that the soldiers who beat him changed several times; the ground was already reddened with his blood. But the sufferer said nothing but this: "Christ, my Savior! Help me, Thy humble servant! Lord my God! Do not forsake me!"

When the commander saw that the holy martyr was all covered with sores and blood, he said to him:

"Perhaps now you will offer sacrifice to the gods?"

The saint answered:

"I will not offer sacrifice to demons, for I believe in my Lord Jesus Christ, who helps me; now I feel myself, amid the torments, even more courageous and firm than before. Until now the expectation of torments partly troubled me; but as soon as I began to suffer, the power of Christ strengthened me, and I felt in myself readiness for torments, even greater and heavier ones, for I firmly believe and hope in the Lord my God. But know that the more torment you inflict upon me, the more benefit you bring me; the greater the sufferings to which you deliver me, the greater grace from God you will obtain for me."

The commander, enraged at these words of the saint, ordered them to strike him on the mouth with tin boards. When the saint's beautiful cheeks were disfigured by the torturers, the commander said to the martyr:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, and then you will be spared the still harsher torments prepared for you." The saint answered him:

"I think as little of the torments that lie ahead as I think of those already past."

The commander said:

"How is it that you, being a soldier and moreover untrained in books, answer me so wisely?"

The holy martyr answered:

"The Holy Spirit gives His servants patience and helps them to answer at trial, for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, said to His disciples: ‘When they deliver you up to princes and rulers, take no thought how or what to speak; for in that hour ... it is not you who will speak, but the Spirit of your Father will speak in you’ (Mt. 10:19–20)."

Then the commentarisius Antoninus said to the saint:

"What benefit will your much speaking bring you, wretch, since you resist the emperor's command and for this receive torments? But now they will begin to torment you still more; then you will surely carry out the emperor's command."

The saint answered him:

"Go away from me, and rather admonish yourself. If I did not obey the voivode, though he subjected me to many torments, shall I obey you?"

After this the commander ordered the martyr to be cast into the prison of the city of Perinthus, in Thrace[6]. Here the holy martyr remained for seven days.

While St. Acacius was in prison, joyfully rejoicing in the Lord and giving thanks to Him for having deemed him worthy to suffer for His holy name, a letter came to the commander Vivian from the Thracian governor Flaccinus; in this letter Vivian was ordered to go to Byzantium together with all the prisoners he had. The commander Vivian set out at once, and St. Acacius went with him to Byzantium, walking together with several other prisoners who had been put in prison for certain crimes. The holy martyr grew very weak on the way, from his wounds, from the iron fetters, from hunger and thirst, and in general from the long and hurried journey, all the more because the soldiers escorting the saint were merciless and often struck him, urging him to walk faster. Amid all these sufferings the saint did not expect to remain alive and thought he would soon die; therefore he long asked the soldiers leading him to halt for a while so that he might pray to God, but his request was not granted. When at last they all stopped for the night in a certain place, the saint, lifting his eyes to heaven, at once began to pray thus: "Glory to Thee, O God, who by Thy bounteous compassion showest Thy mercy to all who love Thee! Glory to Thee, who didst call me, a sinner, to this exploit! Glory to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, who knowest the weakness of our flesh and hast given me strength to endure torments! And now, O Master, seeing that I am surrounded on all sides by so many sufferings, so that my soul itself, as it seems to me, wishes to be released from its union with the flesh, send Thy holy Angel to heal my wounds and lighten my sufferings; or else bid the torturers put me quickly to death, that I may sooner pass over to Thee, my Lord."

6. Thrace: a region of the Roman Empire lying to the northeast of Macedonia. At present Thrace, under the name of Rumelia, forms part of European Turkey.

While the saint was praying to God in these words, suddenly a cloud appeared in that place, and from the cloud a voice was heard saying: "Acacius! Take courage and be strong!"

All who were there heard this voice, both soldiers and prisoners; marveling, they said to one another:

"Can clouds too speak as men do? When has anyone heard what we have heard today?"

And all marveled at what had happened. Many of the prisoners, hearing that voice, believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and, falling at the feet of St. Acacius, zealously asked him to teach them the truths of the Christian faith. The holy martyr of Christ Acacius, walking with them, conversed, saying thus:

"Although until now I have occupied myself not with books but with the duties of a soldier's calling, yet I was brought up in a priest's house, for I come of a priestly family. I remember hearing from priests that God, wishing to save man, cast out of paradise and deliver from hell, sent into the world His co-eternal Word, His Son; and the Son of God, coming into the world, took flesh of the Most Holy and Most Pure Virgin Mary, becoming like a man in appearance; then He endured the death of the cross, to correct by the tree of the cross the sin of Adam's disobedience to God's commandment; to grant salvation to condemned man, He Himself paid our debt to the justice of God by His voluntary suffering on the cross. Nailed to the cross, the Son of God thereby destroyed the handwriting of our sins, conquered our death by His own death, took captive hell, and put to shame and rendered powerless all the power of the devil. When the Son of God had struck down all the demons, broken the brazen gates and worn away the iron chains[7], He rose from the dead on the third day, and thereby gave the human race the possibility that all should rise and live forever in the age to come. But this visible world is insignificant and will exist only a short time."

Hearing these and similar words of the martyr, the prisoners who accompanied the saint joyfully turned to the Christian faith.

When night came, the travelers stopped for the night in a nearby village. Here at midnight the prisoners had a wondrous vision: they

saw several youths clothed in bright garments (these were the holy Angels), as if of military rank, conversing with St. Acacius. The prisoners, seeing this, thought that relatives and friends of Acacius had come by night to visit him (fearing the torturer).

On the following morning all set out on their way. That day all walked very fast, so that by evening they arrived at Byzantium; for the night they all stopped to lodge in one house. And that night the prisoners saw the same youths conversing with St. Acacius, as on the previous night; and the prisoners noticed that these bright youths washed the martyr's wounds with warm water and healed them. Looking on this, the prisoners thought to themselves: "Truly, this vision is from God, for it was not men but Angels who came to the saint last night; and this night the holy Angels visited him."

When morning came, they were all led into the prison. But St. Acacius, by the order of the military commander, was confined apart from the others, in the innermost part of the prison; he was bound with iron fetters and put into the stocks. No one was admitted to speak with him, and they did not even give him anything to drink or to eat, for the tormentors wished by hunger, thirst and grievous suffering to compel him to renounce Christ and to carry out their command, to bow down to the idols. All the other prisoners were placed in the outer part of the prison.

Before nightfall the prisoners were granted once more to see the same wondrous sight: they saw that a bright light shone in the innermost part of the prison. Going to the windows to make out what it was, they saw several shining men who, releasing the martyr from his fetters, were tending his wounds and offering him wondrous food, white as snow, as well as drink.

Since this went on every night, the prisoners reported it to the jailer. He, coming to the window at night, saw the same thing. But when the jailer entered the innermost part of the prison, he found no one there except the holy martyr, who remained in his fetters. All this struck the jailer with great fear.

7. An expression from the church hymnody.

When seven days had passed since the prisoners' arrival at Byzantium, the military commander Vivian sat down in judgment and summoned St. Acacius to be examined. Seeing that the martyr of Christ was sound in body and joyful in countenance, Vivian was greatly amazed, for he had expected to see the martyr sick, worn out by his wounds and fetters, by hunger and thirst, and by the long journey. Vivian supposed that the soldiers had eased the saint's sufferings; therefore, greatly angered with them, he said to them:

"Did I not order you to confine this man in the innermost part of the prison, to put him into the stocks and iron fetters, and to give him absolutely no food or drink? But you have kept him at liberty and helped him to recover from his wounds. And now I see him in even better health and with a more blooming face than before."

The commentarisius Antoninus said in reply:

"Everything was done just as you ordered, commander. From Perinthus up to this city we led him in heavy iron fetters; you yourself can weigh them and learn how much they weigh. In this city we confined him in the innermost and most cramped part of the prison, and none of the soldiers gave him anything, whether food or drink. Ask the jailer and you will learn whether everything was as you commanded or not."

At once the commander ordered the jailer to be called. When the jailer appeared before the commander, the latter said to him angrily:

"Why, wretch, did you not carry out my order, but allow Acacius to be fed and his wounds tended, so that now he is so strong in body that he is fully fit for war?"

St. Acacius observed in reply:

"Strength and vigor were given me from heaven by Jesus Christ, the Author of our contest, who healed my wounds and made me whole."

The commander, however, said in anger:

"Strike him on the face and break his lips, so that he will not speak when no question is put to him."

After this the servants began to beat the saint. Then the commander said to the jailer:

"What have you to answer me, wretch?"

The jailer replied:

"I swear by your authority that I have done everything you commanded me. I kept him very strictly and restricted him in every way; but there were some who nourished and healed him, as all the prisoners in the jail know. Question them, and if you hear anything else, here is my head before you: do with me what you will. It often seemed to us that some soldiers came to him, some of whom released him from his fetters, others washed and healed his sores, and finally still others brought him food and drink and conversed with him in a friendly way. The prisoners who were brought here with him from Perinthus told me all this; they said it happened both on the road and here in the prison. But I did not believe their words, and therefore wished to see those shining men myself; and indeed I saw with my own eyes everything they had described to me. And when I suddenly opened the door and entered the innermost part of the prison to ask Acacius who had come to him, whence they had come, and how they had got through the locked doors, I found no one there except the prisoner himself, bound in the stocks and iron fetters; sometimes I found him praying to God, sometimes asleep."

Having heard the jailer, the commander said to him:

"You wretch, you must have been taking gold from Acacius' relatives and admitting them to him with food, drink and medicines."

And at once, having said this, the commander ordered the jailer to be severely beaten with iron rods.

The jailer, bearing the blows, cried out:

"I beg you, commander, first investigate the matter carefully; if it turns out not to have been as I have told you, then kill me."

The voivode said in reply:

"So that man must be a sorcerer and magician."

The jailer replied:

"I have told you only what I myself saw; whether that man is a sorcerer or not, I do not know."

After this the commander ordered the jailer to be beaten even harder. Thus this jailer suffered innocently for the sake of the martyr of Christ. The holy martyr Acacius, seeing this, laughed at the folly of the commander, although the lips and cheeks of the holy martyr had

been broken. Seeing this, the commander was angered still more and said to the martyr with fury:

"Have you come to mock us, hoping to save yourself by your sorcery?"

The saint answered:

"Do not think that I am laughing at you or rejoicing in your perdition; no, I grieve and suffer in heart over your eternal perdition. It is you who mock and deride us, because, having forsaken the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Author of all that exists, you worship and render divine honor to stone and wood."

After these words the commander ordered ten soldiers to beat the martyr with oaken staves on his back and belly. The martyr, bearing the blows patiently, said: "Lord Jesus Christ! Help me, Thy servant!" And a voice was heard from heaven, strengthening the saint; at the same time the soldiers who were striking him became as if numb and could not raise their hands against the martyr. The commander, not knowing what to do, decided to send the saint to the hegemon, who had by then arrived at Byzantium; and the commander wrote the hegemon this message: "To the beloved and most glorious judge Flaccinus, hegemon of Thrace, from Vivian, military commander: greetings. I have subjected Acacius, defender of the impious Christian faith, to every kind of torment; he was sent to me twenty days ago by Firmus, commander of the Martisian regiment, because he would not obey the imperial command. I could in no way compel him to submit to the imperial edict. Since you can punish this man even more severely, I am sending him to you together with the record of his deeds, made by the commentarisius."

The hegemon, having read Vivian's message, ordered the martyr to be confined in prison, but without fetters and without a strong guard; he did so because he had a Christian wife, who after many tearful entreaties persuaded him not to torment for too long the Christians brought before him for examination, but to put them to death quickly, if they could not be released.

Five days after this the hegemon summoned the martyr for examination, having first ordered the reading of the account of all the martyr's

affairs, the history of his sufferings, the record of which had been sent to him by the military commander Vivian. The hegemon was greatly astonished both at the cruelty of the tortures and at the courage of St. Acacius, and strongly reproached Vivian for having tormented for so long a man of the military rank, instead of having him soon put to death. Understanding that St. Acacius could in no way be turned away from confessing the name of Christ, the hegemon ordered his head to be cut off outside the city (Byzantium). When the holy martyr was led to execution, he cried out thus to God:

"How I would like to praise Thee, Source of life, Christ, Son of God, for having been so good and merciful to me, a sinner, as to grant me the struggle of martyrdom!"

When the saint reached the very place of execution and asked the soldiers for time to pray, he knelt and said:

"Glory to Thee, O God! To Thee ought unceasing praise to be given, for Thou art glorified in us, men burdened with sins; and the more Thou showest us Thy mercies, the more Thou forgivest our sins, the stronger and brighter shines the glory of Thy tender mercy and ineffable compassion. Blessed be Thy holy name, O God, for Thou hast granted me, unworthy as I am, so great an honor as the right to be called a martyr of Christ. And this great honor Thou hast bestowed upon me not for any merits of mine, but solely on account of Thy ineffable goodness and Thy unspeakable mercy. I glorify and praise Thee, Lord God, Holy One of Israel, with Thine Only-begotten Son and Thy Holy Spirit, for to Thee glory, honor and worship are due, now and always and unto ages of ages. Amen."

Having said this, the saint bowed his head under the sword and was beheaded.[8]

Thus the holy martyr Acacius completed his suffering for Christ. His honorable body was buried with honor by the Christians in the very place where he had been beheaded; the place was called "Staurion." All

8. The holy martyr's death followed in 303. His relics were kept for a long time in the church of his name, built by Emperor Constantine the Great on the site of his burial, at Staurion or Stavrodromion. Here the relics of St. Acacius were kept until the time of the iconoclasts, when the Christians, saving them from the persecution of the impious persecutors, transferred them to the southern Italian city of Scyllace.

this took place, as we have said, during the reign of the pagan Maximian, and during the reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ among Christians, to Whom glory, honor and worship are offered forever. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Sign of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross of the Lord that Appeared in the Heavens

Воспоминание явившегося на небе знамения Честного и Животворящего Креста Господня

After the death of the first Christian, right-believing and pious emperor Constantine the Great, the imperial throne was occupied by his son Constantius,[3010] who turned aside to the impious heresy of Arius, who blasphemed the Son of God.[9] Then, to the shame of the impious heretics, for the assurance of unbelievers and the confirmation of the Orthodox, a wondrous sign appeared in the holy city of Jerusalem: in the days of holy Pentecost, on May 7, at the third hour,[10] there appeared in the heavens an image of the Honorable Cross of the Lord, shining with an ineffable light stronger than the rays of the sun, which the whole people saw, struck with great fear and astonishment. This sign of the Cross, beginning above the holy Mount Golgotha, on which our Lord was crucified,[11] reached to the very Mount of Olives,[3014] which lies fifteen stadia from Golgotha; the breadth of the cross-sign corres-

9. The founder of the Arian heresy was the Alexandrian presbyter Arius. 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—almightiness, omniscience, etc. The heresy of Arius was decisively condemned at the first (325) 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, composed by the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. In the fifth century Arianism had almost no adherents in the Roman Empire, but it revived among the Goths, Burgundians, Vandals and Lombards in Germany, where it existed until the seventh century.

10. By our reckoning, about 9 o'clock in the morning. The event itself is to be assigned to 351. In that year Pascha was on March 31, so Pentecost fell on May 19; May 7 falls on the Tuesday of the last week before Pentecost.

11. Golgotha was formerly outside Jerusalem (Mt. 27:32–33; Jn. 19:17–41; Heb. 13:12); it lies on the northwest side of the holy city. It received its name (Golgotha, from the Hebrew, "skull," "place of the skull" (Lk. 13:33)) probably from its resemblance to a skull. According to tradition, Adam was buried here.

ponded to its length; and its beauty, resembling the likeness of a many-colored rainbow, was so great that it drew the gaze of all. And all, whether they had any business in hand or were in their dwellings, left all their affairs and came out of their houses, and with attention and fear contemplated the most wondrous sign. Then all the numerous crowds of the Jerusalemites, filled with fear and joy at this Divine vision, hastened with profound emotion and warmth of heart into the holy church: all the elders and youths, men and women, and also with the nursing infants, likewise the unwed virgins who had withdrawn into silence—even they, coming out of their dwellings, rushed there too; and in general the inhabitants of Jerusalem of every age and condition, both pilgrims and strangers, Orthodox Christians and those of other faiths. And all of them with one accord loudly glorified Jesus Christ, our Lord, the only-begotten Son of God, true God of true God, the Provider of great wonders.

Then the unbelieving heretics, enemies and blasphemers of the Divinity of Christ, were filled with shame, seeing in the appearance of the Cross such great Divine glory and power of Christ the Lord, and were assured by the very reality at that time that the Christian faith is right, true and pious, and offers to the believer not words learned from human external wisdom, but is founded on the revelation of the Holy Spirit and grace, and is attested by heavenly signs and miracles. Of this wondrous appearance of the sign of the Cross the most holy Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cyril,[12] informed Emperor Constantius by an epistle, exhorting him to turn to the Orthodox teaching. Hermias Sozomen[13] testifies that through this appearance in the heavens of the holy Cross,[14] very many

12. St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, held the patriarchal see from 350 to 387. He is known for his struggle against the Arian heresy. His memory is celebrated on March 18.

13. Sozomen was a church historian of the fifth century. His *Church History* embraces the period from 323 to 439 (but only the account up to 423 has survived to our time). Sozomen also wrote a history of the first three centuries of Christianity, but unfortunately it has not come down to us. Sozomen mentions the wondrous sign described here in Book IV of his *Church History*, chapter 5.

14. The appearance of the Cross in the heavens foretold hard times for the Church: the dominion of Arianism. For exactly ten years (until 361) Arianism held the throne in the person of Constantius; then it was succeeded by the apostasy of Julian (361–363); after Julian, for fourteen years, the Emperor Valens (364–378) patronized Arianism.

of the Jews and pagans came to the true faith, and, approaching Christ our God with repentance, received holy baptism. And all piously glorified Christ our God, Consubstantial and Co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. We, confessing the unsearchable power of His that was manifested by the Cross, exalt the Lord our God with our thankful praises and worship the footstool of His feet, the holy Cross, beseeching the mercy of the Lord, that at His second terrible Coming Christ may grant us to behold the "Sign of the Son of Man" (Mt. 24:30), the holy Cross, which is then to appear, in joy and in the hope of salvation; and that by it, as by a key, He may open to us the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven, as once He opened Paradise to the good thief (Lk. 23:40–43), and number us with His blessed sheep forever (Mt. 25:33–34). Amen.

Troparion of the Cross, Tone 8:

The image of Thy Cross hath now shone brighter than the sun, which Thou didst stretch forth from the holy mountain even to the place of the skull; and in it, O Savior, Thou didst make manifest Thy power, thereby strengthening our faithful rulers; preserve them ever in peace, through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Christ God, and save us.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having opened the closed heavens, the most radiant rays shone in heaven, and on earth the most pure Cross; wherefore, receiving the workings of its radiance, we are guided to the unsetting Light, and in battle we have it as the weapon of peace, the invincible victory.

* * *

NOTES

3010. Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, received the East, Asia and Egypt; in 357, having defeated Magnentius, the murderer of his brother Constans, he united the whole Roman Empire under his power. He destroyed pagan temples or gave them to the Christians to be converted into churches; several times a law was issued forbidding the practice of 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,

removed them from their sees and even subjected them to imprisonment; under him the Arians occupied the highest places in the state. Constantius died in 361, during a campaign against his cousin Julian, who had been proclaimed emperor by the troops in Gaul, whither Constantius himself had appointed him commander-in-chief. Gregory of Nazianzus reports that before his death Constantius repented of his persecution of the Orthodox.

3014. The Mount of Olives, also called the Olivet, is a Judean mountain lying to the east of Jerusalem (Ezek. 11:23). It received its name from the multitude of olive trees growing on it. The Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly life often went up the mountain with His disciples (Jn. 8:1, 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. 26:36–57; Mk. 14:26–53; Lk. 22:39–54; Jn. 18:1–13). On the southeastern slope of the mountain was the village of Bethany, whence the Lord made His solemn entry into Jerusalem (Mt. 21:21; Lk. 14:29). According to tradition, the Lord ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12). In the second century the mother of Constantine the Great built a Christian church on the Mount of Olives, which was later converted by the Turks into a mosque.



THE EIGHTH DAY OF MAY

May 8

8 мая

New Calendar May 8 · Old Calendar May 21 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Arsenius the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Арсения Великого

Venerable Arsenius was born at Rome to pious Christian parents, who brought him up in the fear of God and had him instructed in the sciences. Arsenius was a man not only virtuous but also very wise: he studied the writings of all the rhetoricians and philosophers, and knew well both the Greek and the Latin tongues. Yet he forsook the vain life of the world and disdained Hellenic learning; he entered the ranks of the clergy, dedicating himself to the service of God, for he sought the true wisdom praised by the holy Apostle James, the wisdom which is "pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits" (Jas. 3:17). Arsenius, having taken upon himself the rank of deacon of the great Church of Rome, lived a chaste life, striving to make of himself a worthy dwelling of the Holy and All-Sanctifying Spirit.

At this time the eastern part of the Roman Empire was ruled by Theodosius the Great[1], and the western part by Gratian[2]. Theodosius, having two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, sought for them a teacher who would instruct them not only in human but also in divine wisdom; Theodosius wished his children to be taught not only philosophy and the other Hellenic sciences, but also the virtuous, God-pleasing life of Christians. To this end Theodosius ordered that throughout his whole empire a man of such a kind be sought; yet he could not find one, for

1. Theodosius governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 379 to 395, and the western from 383 to 395.
2. Gratian reigned from 375 to 383.

those sent out by him found many clever and learned men who led lives not pleasing to God, and, on the contrary, met with men of pious life who were wholly untrained in secular learning. Therefore Theodosius was obliged to write to the western emperor Gratian that he needed for the instruction of his children a man of just such a kind as described above. Gratian, taking counsel in this matter with Pope Damasus[3], said to him: "It will be a shame for our kingdom if we do not find in it a virtuous and wise man such as the Emperor Theodosius asks for. We must find a man who could teach his sons philosophy, and instruct them in the fear of God not only by word but by the example of his virtuous life."

Having searched carefully throughout Rome, they found no wiser and more virtuous man than Arsenius the deacon, who led a virtuous life, surpassed many by his ascetic labors, and was no longer young in years. Summoning him to themselves, they related to him the wish of the Eastern emperor and bade Arsenius go to him. But Arsenius excused himself in every way, saying that he had long ago forsaken all worldly learning, having resolved to dedicate himself to the service of God in the rank of clergy; Arsenius said that he had long since forgotten all the speeches of the rhetoricians, having resolved to devote all his strength to the service of the Church and the sanctuary.

Yet the more Arsenius excused himself, the more the emperor and the pope urged him to fulfill their request, for they asked him to undertake a matter profitable to the whole Christian world and to the Church of God. They told him that he must teach the imperial children not only book-learning but also Christian piety, so that they would not believe in pagan fables but would defend and spread the Christian faith.

Then Arsenius, against his will, submitted to the command of the emperor and the pope. They sent him to Constantinople to the Emperor Theodosius with great honor.

When the Venerable Father arrived at Constantinople, he was received here by the Emperor Theodosius very graciously: seeing him, Theodosius recognized in him, even from his outward appearance, a

3. Damasus I occupied the papal throne from 366 to 384.

man of God, filled with wisdom and knowledge of God, and he rejoiced greatly at his coming. Giving thanks to God, Theodosius brought his children, Arcadius and Honorius, to Arsenius and entrusted them to him, saying:

"Now you will be more a father to them than I, for it is harder to bring them up than to beget them. I entrust them to you and to your prudence; bring them up as I ask you; accustom them to virtue and teach them wisdom; as their spiritual father, take care that they avoid the various temptations of youth. For all this you will receive a reward from God. Honorable Arsenius! Oh, if only you would rear them in piety and a virtuous life! How I would rejoice at this, and how I would thank God for it! I say all this to you in the presence of my sons, so that they may hear and see it themselves. Do not regard the fact that they are imperial sons; bring them up in obedience and submission to yourself, for I want them to obey you in all things as their father and teacher, and to listen to you as your children and disciples."

Having entrusted his children to Arsenius, Theodosius ordered a school to be built for them near the palace, so that it would be convenient for him to come to them himself and to observe their instruction and their life; and to the blessed Arsenius the emperor showed great honors: he gave him a place among his counselors and ordered that he be called not only the father of his children but also his own father, so that Arsenius was called by all "the father of the sovereign and of his children." There is also a report that the blessed Arsenius stood as sponsor at the holy baptism of the imperial sons Arcadius and Honorius, since both of them were baptized not in infancy but in youth.

Taking the imperial children under his guidance, Arsenius zealously cared for their upbringing and instruction; he studied with them the Greek and Latin books and at the same time trained them in a pious life, explaining to them the Holy Scripture; in particular Arsenius taught them how they must conduct themselves when the Lord should be pleased to grant them the governance of the state; he told them that they must adorn themselves not so much with the royal crown as with good works of piety; for although impious and lawless men have reigned, such as all the pagan emperors were, Christian kings must be

virtuous men, who must both please God and do good to men, if they wish their memory to pass from generation to generation.

Thus instructing Arcadius and Honorius, Arsenius showed them every reverence as the sons of the emperor; therefore he would customarily invite them to sit on thrones, while he himself conversed with them standing.

It happened once that Theodosius came to them unexpectedly during their instruction. Seeing that his sons were seated while their teacher Arsenius stood before them, Theodosius was greatly grieved and said to Arsenius:

"Did I command it so? Did I not tell you to regard my sons as your disciples and children, and not to pay heed to the fact that they are imperial children?"

But the blessed Arsenius answered Theodosius humbly, saying:

"O Emperor! To every thing belongs its own task: youth requires instruction, while imperial honor calls for reverence."

At these words the emperor was offended even more, and said:

"So you consider them to be emperors?"

Having said this, Theodosius took from his sons the tokens of imperial dignity and forcibly seated Arsenius on the throne, while he made his sons stand before him, and said:

"If they learn to fear God and keep His commandments and please Him by a virtuous life, the Heavenly King will set them as kings on earth, if they are worthy of it; but if they prove to be wicked men and unworthy of the imperial throne, it would be better for them not to reign at all. I pray God that He take them from this life in their youthful years rather than allow them to grow up in evil, to the perdition both of their own souls and of the other souls of men."

Having said this, the emperor went away.

Arsenius in his thoughts approved the emperor, and from then on he acted in accordance with his command: he instructed the imperial sons while seated, while they stood before him.

But the greater the glory that surrounded Arsenius, the more he grieved in spirit, for his heart was not drawn to glory, riches, or vain worldly praise; in the depths of his soul he earnestly desired to serve

God in the humble monastic life, in silence and poverty; therefore Arsenius began to pray fervently to the Lord, asking to be freed from his dwelling in the imperial palaces and to be granted the desert monastic life.

It happened once that Arsenius noticed some fault in Arcadius. Angered at him, Arsenius beat him with rods, and so severely that Arcadius remembered this punishment until his death, for the marks of the rods remained on Arcadius's body. All this came about by the providence of God, so that thereby Arsenius might be freed from this worldly life and be given the opportunity to lead the desert monastic life for which the Venerable Father so thirsted. Arcadius, harboring anger against his teacher in his heart, and having come to full age, began to think how he might kill Arsenius. He disclosed his intention to one trusted counselor and urged him to kill Arsenius by whatever method he pleased. But he, fearing God and the Emperor Theodosius, and not wishing to commit so evil a deed, all the more since he respected Arsenius for his many virtues, secretly, in private, conveyed Arcadius's design to him and advised the Venerable Father to take care of his life.

Arsenius, however, filled with grief and fear, again began to pray to God with tears, that He would direct him on the path of salvation.

At night, during prayer, Arsenius heard from on high a voice saying: "Arsenius! Flee from men, and thou shalt be saved."

Hearing this, Arsenius put on poor clothing and, leaving the imperial palace secretly, came to the seashore; there, by the providence of God, he found a ship bound for Alexandria[4]. He embarked on it and set out upon his journey, placing all his hope in God. When the ship arrived at Alexandria, Arsenius immediately went to the skete of the ascetics[5]. Coming into the church, he began to beseech the presbyters

4. Alexandria – the famous city of antiquity, standing at the mouth of the Nile in Egypt and founded by Alexander the Great (336–323 B.C.). In antiquity Alexandria was a center of commerce, industry, and learning, and in the first centuries of Christianity a seedbed of Christian enlightenment. At present Alexandria is among the most important port cities.

5. Egypt was the usual dwelling place of many ascetics. Monastic communities were found both in Middle and Lower Egypt. The desert of Nitria, situated in Lower Egypt and lying inland, beyond the river Nile, was especially renowned in Egypt. The Scetic desert was located near Libya. It was a wild, sandy wilderness; there was not even a beaten road to it – the way there was directed by the course of the stars.

with tears to receive him into the monastic life and to guide him on the path of salvation. These, seeing that the man who spoke with them was honorable and reverent, asked him:

"Who are you, and where have you come from?"

He answered them:

"I am a stranger, and I am a poor man."

The presbyters, consulting among themselves as to whom they might entrust the newcomer for instruction in the monastic life, resolved to give him to Abba John the Dwarf, and they informed him accordingly. The elder John, having prayed to God, said: "Let the will of the Lord be done!"

Meanwhile John gave orders to prepare a meal for the brethren, since it was the tenth hour of the day. The brethren sat down at the table, but Arsenius stood, because no one invited him to sit. The brethren began to take their food, but Arsenius ate nothing and stood the whole time with his head bowed low, as though standing before God and His holy Angels. The elder John took one of the rusks set out for the meal and threw it to Arsenius, saying:

"Eat, if you wish."

John did this in order to test the humility of the newcomer and to learn whether he had really come here in order to renounce the world.

Meanwhile Arsenius thought to himself: "This elder is an Angel of God and a seer, for he knows that I am worse than a dog; therefore he has thrown me the rusk as to a dog; for the same reason I must eat it, as a dog does."

And bending down to the ground, he went on all fours, like a four-footed animal, to the rusk, took it directly in his mouth, then withdrew with it into a corner and there ate it lying on the ground.

The blessed John, seeing such humility in St. Arsenius, said to the presbyters:

"He will be a great ascetic."

John came to love Arsenius greatly for his humility, and soon clothed him in the monastic rank; then, having taught him the ascetic life, he gave him a cell not far from his own, as to a monk already firm and experienced in virtue.

Meanwhile the emperor Theodosius began to search for Arsenius, soon after he had left the palace. Theodosius greatly grieved for Arsenius, and therefore gave orders to seek him in various cities. Yet he could not find him at all, for the Lord concealed the dwelling place of His servant until the time when it should please Him to reveal him to the world for the benefit of many.

Arsenius, however, living in the cell assigned him by the elder, labored in fasting, prayer and monastic toil, and so advanced in all the virtues that he surpassed many elders in his ascetic feats. Once, as he was praying, he said:

"Lord, teach me how to be saved!"

In answer to this there was a voice from heaven, saying:

"Arsenius! Flee from men and abide in silence; this is the root of virtue."

Heeding this voice, Arsenius went away from that place into the depths of the desert and built for himself a small cell; in this cell he always dwelt alone, striving with all his might to keep silence. He avoided every conversation and constantly lifted up his mind to heaven; dwelling on earth in body, he soared in spirit to the heavenly powers. Every Sunday and feast day he came to the church. When the service was over, he immediately returned in silence to his cell; he never entered into conversation with anyone; only occasionally, when questioned, did he answer as briefly as possible and then hastened back to his silent dwelling. All the ascetics who lived in the hermitage of Scetis greatly marveled at the virtuous life of the Venerable Arsenius. Once Abba Mark asked him:

"Why, honorable father, do you withdraw from us?"

Arsenius answered him:

"God knows how I love you; but I cannot dwell at once with God and with men, for in heaven, although there are very many heavenly powers, thousands of thousands or tens of thousands, yet they all have one will and therefore with one accord glorify God; but on earth there are many human wills, and each man has his own thoughts; each of us has various intentions and thoughts, and therefore I cannot, leaving God, live with men."

Striving to draw as near to God as possible, Arsenius shunned men in every way, so that he did not even wish that anyone should see him or know about him; but like a lamp he could not be hidden under a bushel; the report of his ascetic feats spread everywhere and reached Constantinople.

After the death of the pious emperor Theodosius the Great, his son Arcadius[6] ascended the throne. Having learned of the dwelling place and manner of life of the Venerable Arsenius, Arcadius wrote him an epistle, in which he humbly asked his forgiveness for the sins of his youth, and also asked him to pray to God for him and for his brother Honorius, who governed the western half of the Roman Empire[7], that their reign might be blessed by God. In addition, Arcadius granted Arsenius the right to make use of all the tribute collected from Egypt and to distribute it, at his own discretion, to churches, monasteries and all who were in need. The Venerable Arsenius did not wish to reply to the emperor in writing, but only said to the messenger:

"Say to those who sent you: thus says the humble Arsenius: May God forgive your sins, and may He bless your reign and help you to fulfill His holy will. You wrote about tribute; but Arsenius has no need of it, for he has died to the world; let no one consider him any longer alive (that is, living for the world)."

With this answer the messenger went to the emperor, while the Venerable Arsenius withdrew into his desert cell and dwelt in it in silence, constantly conversing with God in prayer, and only occasionally came out of it to instruct others in the monastic virtues.

Once the Venerable Arsenius came to a certain place where a great deal of reed was growing. He found monks here sitting near the reeds. Since the reeds rustled from the wind, the Venerable asked the monks:

"Whence comes this noise?"

The monks answered him:

"It is the reed rustling in the wind."

Then the Venerable said to them:

"Why then do you sit here and listen to the noise of the reed? He who truly loves silence must not even listen to the singing of birds,

which may disturb the peace of the soul; how much more can the rustling of the reed disturb the heart of a monk."

Once Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria[8], came to the Venerable together with a nobleman who wished to converse with the Venerable and receive instruction from him. The Venerable, however, after keeping silent for a little while, said to them:

"Will you do what I tell you?"

They promised to do whatever he might say.

Then the Venerable said:

"Never come to the place where Arsenius is."

The visitors were astonished at the answer of the Venerable; nevertheless they obeyed him and withdrew.

After some time the archbishop wished to see Arsenius again, and therefore sent to ask him: "Will you open your cell when the archbishop comes to you?"

The Venerable answered the messenger: "If you come, I will open; but if I open the cell to you, then I shall have to open it for everyone; and in that case I shall have to withdraw from the cell."

Hearing such an answer, the archbishop did not go to the Venerable, for he feared that he might depart from that place.

It once happened that a wandering monk came to the cell of the Venerable Arsenius, because he wished to see him. Approaching the door, he knocked on it. Arsenius, thinking that it was his novice who attended him, immediately opened the door. But, seeing a stranger, he fell face down on the ground, so as not to see the visitor. Yet the latter began to beseech the Venerable to rise from the ground. Arsenius, however, did not wish to rise and said: "I shall not rise until you go away from here."

And indeed he did not rise from the ground for a long time. The monk entreated the Venerable for a long while; but since the Venerable would not agree to grant his request, the monk went away from there.

Another time yet another monk came from afar to the hermitage, also wishing to see the Venerable, and began to beg the brethren to

6. Emperor Arcadius governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 395 to 408.
7. From 395 to 423.

show him the way to the cell of Arsenius. In saying this to the brethren he said:

"I want to converse with Father Arsenius."

But the brethren answered him:

"Wait, brother, until Sunday, and you will see him when he comes to the church." That monk then said to the brethren:

"I will not eat until I have seen the Venerable."

Therefore the brethren sent one monk with the newcomer and charged him to show him the way to the cell of the elder Arsenius (it should be noted that Arsenius' cell was thirty stadia distant from the hermitage)[9].

Approaching the cell, the brother knocked on it.

The elder opened the door and admitted the visitors into the cell; then he sat down, bowing his head, and kept silent. The visitors also sat in silence. All of them remained silent for quite a long time. At last the monk of the hermitage said:

"I shall go back, for I must perform my duties at the church."

And, rising from his place, he prepared to leave.

The other brother who had come with him, not having the boldness to remain with the elder, said to him:

"I too shall go with you."

Then, rising, he bowed to the elder and left the cell, without having heard a single word from the lips of the Venerable.

After that the wandering monk began to beg the brother to bring him to Moses, who had been a robber before his tonsure into the monastic life. The brother agreed to grant his request and led him to the Venerable Moses.

When they came to Moses, he received them with joy, invited them to rest and refresh themselves with food, and, showing them great love, sent them on their way.

On the way, the monk of the skete said to the visitor:

"You have seen both Father Arsenius and Father Moses. Which of them is the better, in your opinion?"

8. Theophilus was Patriarch from 385 to 412.
9. About 5 versts by our reckoning.

The brother answered:

"The better of them is the one who received us with love."

One monk, learning of this, began to pray to God, saying: "Lord, tell me which of them is the more perfect and deserves the greater grace of Thine: he who hides from men for Thy sake, or he who receives all men, also for Thy sake?"

In answer to his prayer, this monk had the following vision: two ships appeared to him, sailing upon some very great river. In one ship was the Venerable Arsenius, and the Spirit of God steered his ship, keeping him in great stillness. In the other was the Venerable Moses; his ship was steered by the Angels of God, who put honey into the mouth of Moses.

The monk told others of this vision, more experienced ascetics, and all found that Arsenius, who dwelt in silence, was more perfect than Moses, who received travelers; for with Arsenius dwelt God Himself, while with Moses there were only the holy Angels.

Withdrawing as far as possible from the sight and conversation of people in general, Arsenius was especially careful to avoid the sight of women and conversation with them, as may be seen from the following incident.

A certain wealthy noblewoman, pious, chaste, and very God-fearing, who led a strict life, having heard of the Venerable Arsenius, desired to see him. For this purpose she came from Rome to Alexandria to the archbishop, and asked him to persuade Arsenius to receive her as a pilgrim and to grant her his blessing, since she had undertaken so long a journey. The archbishop received her with great honor, for she came of a noble senatorial family, and did everything he could to persuade the venerable man to grant her request, but without success, for the elder not only did not wish to see her, but did not even want to hear of a woman.

Learning of this, the noblewoman ordered her servants to prepare for the journey, saying:

"I trust in God that He will grant me to see Arsenius, for I have come not to see an ordinary man (and there are many ordinary people

in our city); no, I wish to see a prophet. It is for this that I have undertaken so long a journey."

Having said this, she set out for the desert of the skete. When the noblewoman drew near to the venerable man's cell, it so happened, by God's providence, that the elder was outside his cell; she came upon him unexpectedly and fell at his feet. He, bidding her rise, said to her in anger, looking her full in the face:

"If you wished to see my face, then here it is: look at it."

But from shame she could not even lift her eyes to him. Then the elder said to her:

"If you have heard of any good deeds of mine, you will do well to practice them. As for my face, you have no need to look at it. Why then have you undertaken so long a journey? Do you not know that you are a woman, and that you ought therefore to be in your house and not go out anywhere? Have you come here in order that, on returning to Rome, you may boast before other women that you have seen Arsenius? If you do so, then all the women of the city will come to me."

She answered:

"If the Lord helps me to return, I will allow no one to come to you, so as not to hinder your ascetic labors. But I beg you: pray to God for me and remember me in your prayers."

The elder said to her:

"I will pray to God that He may blot out from my heart the memory of you."

Hearing this, the noblewoman departed from the venerable man with a very troubled heart. Arriving in the city of Alexandria, she fell into even greater sorrow.

The archbishop learned that the noblewoman had returned from the venerable man in great grief. He came to her and asked the cause of her sorrow. The noblewoman answered him:

"It would have been better for me had I not come here at all. I asked the elder to remember me in his prayers, but he said to me: 'I will pray to God that He may blot out from my heart the memory of you.' For this reason I am grieving mortally."

Then the archbishop said to her:

"Do not grieve over this, my daughter, for the elder said this not without reason: you are a woman, and through women the devil causes many troubles for holy men. Therefore the elder spoke those words, fearing a demonic temptation; but he prays for your soul, and will always pray."

After these words the noblewoman was comforted, ceased to grieve, and set out on her return journey with joy.

The Venerable Arsenius continued to dwell in silence, growing ever more deeply absorbed in contemplation of God; he burned with so ardent a love for God that he was, as it were, constantly on fire because of his fervent prayers.

Once a certain brother came from the skete to the elder's cell on some business. Approaching the window, he saw the elder standing in prayer, and the elder was kindled by his prayer as by fire. Seeing this, the brother was struck with terror. Since he was worthy of this vision, after standing a little while he knocked at the door. The elder came out of his cell and, seeing the brother, who was in some dismay, asked him:

"How long have you been here? Did you not see anything unusual?"

But the brother said:

"I saw nothing."

Then, after speaking with him about his business, the elder sent him back to the skete.

They also tell of this wonderful elder that, when he lived in the royal palace, no one wore finer garments than he; but when he renounced the world, no one had poorer garments than he.

This elder retained one habit from his royal life, namely, that at times, when seated, he would place one leg over the other, which might not seem altogether becoming. Some of the brethren saw this, but none of them dared to make him any remark, for they all greatly respected him. But one elder, Abba Pimen, said to the brethren:

"Go to Abba Arsenius, and I will sit beside him as he sometimes sits; then you shall make a remark to me, that I am not sitting well. I shall ask your forgiveness; and so we shall correct the elder as well."

They went and did so. The Venerable Arsenius, understanding that it was unseemly for a monk to sit so, gave up his habit.

The Blessed Arsenius was so humble that he even listened to instruction from simple monks. For example, when conversing with an Egyptian elder, he asked to be taught how one may drive away sinful thoughts. Another brother learned of this and afterwards said to Arsenius:

"Why do you, honored father, so skilled in learning, who know Greek and Latin well, ask counsel of a simple man about how to drive away sinful thoughts?"

The Venerable one answered that monk:

"I know well the secular learning of the Greeks and Romans; but I do not even know the alphabet of what a simple man knows concerning a virtuous life."

The venerable man said this to show that humility is the foundation of all virtues, just as the alphabet is the foundation of every science; whoever should learn all worldly wisdom but not have true humility cannot be saved.

Besides humility, the Venerable one also possessed the gift of compunction.

Throughout his whole life, whenever he was occupied with handwork, he kept a cloth upon his breast, for tears constantly flowed from his eyes. He was very vigorous in body, as in spirit; he worked all day and prayed to God all night, and only rarely gave himself to sleep. When his eyes closed and he very much wished to sleep, he would say to himself: "Begone, wicked slave, and do not remain with me!"

And if after this he yielded, while seated, to a slight drowsiness, he would soon rouse himself, rise, and pray to God. He often said to his disciples:

"A monk should give himself to sleep only for one hour."

On the eve of every Sunday, he would begin his prayer already in the evening of Saturday, with his hands raised upward; and he would stand with his back to the sun, and so stand until the sun, on the following morning, began to shine upon his face.

The blessed elder always occupied himself with handwork: namely, weaving baskets and mats from palm leaves, and he did not change the water in which he soaked the leaves for a whole year, only from time to

time adding a little water. Because of this some of the brethren said to him:

"Why, honored father, do you not change the water in which you soak the palm leaves? Do you not notice how your cell stinks from that water?"

The Venerable one answered them:

"Instead of the incense and fragrant perfumes that I smelled when I lived in the world, I must now smell this stench, so that on the day of the Last Judgment the Lord may deliver me from the unbearable stench of Gehenna."

At times the demons dared to tempt the Venerable one; and the brother who served him, drawing near his cell, heard the elder cry out to God on such occasions: "Do not forsake me, O Lord! Although I have done nothing good before Thee, help me, by Thy grace, to make a good beginning today!"

It once happened that the Venerable Arsenius fell gravely ill. The brethren of the skete came to the venerable man, took him up, and carried him to the infirmary at the church, that they might minister to him. They laid him on a well-made bed with a soft pillow. A certain brother came to visit the venerable man. That brother, seeing that the Venerable one lay on a soft bed, was scandalized and said:

"Is this Father Arsenius! And does he lie on a soft bed?"

Hearing this, one of the presbyters called that brother to him and asked him privately:

“Brother, when you were in the world, what occupation did you pursue, and what was your life like?”

He answered:

“I was a shepherd, and I spent my life amid many labors and sorrows.”

Then the presbyter asked him again:

“And how do you live now?”

He answered:

“Now I live in peace, have everything I need, and know neither care nor sorrow.”

Then the presbyter said to him:

"This man whom you see, Father Arsenius, was once the father of emperors; thousands of servants in bright garments, with golden belts and necklaces[10], stood before him; his bed was richly adorned, and his wealth was beyond counting. But you once tended cattle and were poor; in the world you did not enjoy such peace as you enjoy now. You rest from worldly labors, while Father Arsenius now labors and suffers in poverty, after having known rest and abundance in the world."

That brother, touched by the presbyter's words, bowed down and asked his forgiveness, saying:

"Indeed, honorable father, everything was as you said: I came here to rest from my labors, while Father Arsenius came here to labor after his rest."

Having received instruction profitable for his soul, that brother departed from the presbyter.

Once an invasion of barbarians came upon that country. All the monks fled from the skete to the cities and villages; but the Venerable Father did not wish to leave the desert for the city, reasoning thus: "If the Lord does not preserve me, then there is no reason for me to live on earth."

The barbarians plundered the whole skete, but could not find Venerable Arsenius, for God Himself concealed His servant from them. Yet, reflecting within himself that he might otherwise hear the other fathers praise him and fall into vainglory, the Venerable Father set out along the same road by which the other fathers had fled. Arsenius wept much over the desolation of the skete, saying:

"Rome destroyed the world[11], and the monks destroyed the skete."

When the barbarians had departed from the skete, the monks returned there once more. Having restored the skete, they again took up their lives in their former places. With them, Venerable Arsenius also returned to his cell.

Once a will was brought to the Venerable Father from Rome, belonging to a boyar, one of his kinsmen, who bequeathed all his great

10. A *grivna* – a gold chain worn as an ornament on the neck.
11. This should probably be understood as the persecutions raised against Christians by the Roman emperors.

wealth to the Venerable Father, that he might spend it as he himself wished. The Venerable Father took the will and was about to tear it up, but the messenger who had brought it begged him not to tear up the document, saying:

"I beg you, honorable father, do not tear up this will, for those who sent it will demand it of me."

The Venerable Father returned the will to him intact and said:

"I died to the world long ago; why, then, does he, who has only just died, make me, a dead man, heir to his wealth?"

And he sent the messenger with the will back to those who had sent him.

The Venerable Father did not always struggle in one and the same place, but sometimes moved from the desert of Scetis to more secluded and silent places, withdrawing from those who came to converse with him, for they disturbed the peace of his soul. Thus for a time he struggled at Trogine, near Babylon and opposite the city of Memphis; then at Canopus, near Alexandria, and in certain other desert places. Afterwards he returned again to Scetis, so that no one knew his manner of life.

Once, when the Venerable Father was living in the lower regions of Egypt, he wished to leave his cell and go somewhere else, because of the many people who came to him and disturbed his life of silence. Taking nothing with him, he set out, saying to his two disciples, Alexander and Zoilus:

"You, Alexander, remain here, and you, Zoilus, go with me to the river and find me a ship sailing to Alexandria. Then return to your brother Alexander."

His disciples were greatly troubled by these words, yet neither of them dared to ask the elder, "Why are you leaving us?"

Having sailed to Alexandria, the elder fell gravely ill and remained sick for a considerable time. Alexander and Zoilus, who had stayed in the elder's cell, began to ask one another whether either of them had offended the Venerable Father by some act of disobedience. Finding no fault in themselves, they fell into great sorrow over the elder.

When the Venerable Father recovered, he said to himself, "Now I will go to my disciples."

And he rose and set out.

It happened that he was near the river and met a crowd of travelers going along that road; among them was an Egyptian woman, who touched the Venerable Father's garment. Taking offense, he rebuked her, saying that a woman ought not to touch a monastic garment. But the woman said to him:

"If you are a monk, go into the desert mountain."

The elder was moved by her words and often said to himself, repeating what the woman had said: "Arsenius! If you are a monk, go into the mountains and wander in the deserts."

At last the Venerable Father came to the place called "The Stone," where his disciples lived. Alexander and Zoilus met him, fell at his feet, and wept for joy. The elder wept too, embracing them. Then the disciples said to the elder:

"Your departure from here, honest father, cast us into great sorrow, because some monks told us that Abba Arsenius would not have left his cell if his disciples had not grieved him by their disobedience."

The elder said to them:

"Children! I too thought that the monks would say this concerning my departure from here; therefore I returned to you. Now the monks can say of me: 'The dove that flew out of Noah's ark, finding no firm ground beneath its feet, returned to Noah in the ark'" (cf. Gen. 8:8–9).

By these words of the Venerable Father the disciples were comforted, and from then on they remained inseparable from him until the saint's repose.

Once, when the Venerable Father was in his cell, he received this revelation from God. He heard a voice saying: "Come out of your cell, and I will show you the deeds of men."

The elder came out of his cell and seemed to be in a kind of ecstasy. He saw an Angel of God, who took him by the hand and led him to a certain place. There he showed him a black man cutting wood and piling up a great deal of it. The man then tried to take the wood he had cut upon his shoulders and carry it, but could not, because there was

too much wood. Yet instead of taking some wood out of the bundle, the man continued cutting more and again tried to lift it; but now he could not do so at all. Still he cut more and more wood, increasing his burden ever further. Then the Angel of God showed the Venerable Father, in another place, a man standing beside a well and drawing water into a leaky vessel. The water flowed out of the vessel and back into the well, but the man drawing it continued to labor in vain. Finally, the Angel showed the Venerable Father another vision: Arsenius saw a church with its doors open and two horsemen, each holding a beam in his hands. They wished to ride through the church doors, but could not, because the beams lay crosswise in their path. One horseman prevented the other from turning his beam lengthwise along the way; instead of yielding the way to one another, they tried to pass through the door at the same time, and so kept struggling about the entrance and could not enter the church.

After all this, the elder asked the Angel:

"What does this vision signify?"

The Angel said to him:

"The two men, each holding a beam in his hand, are an image of virtuous men who are proud and unwilling to humble themselves before one another; they will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but will remain outside it because of their pride, which will destroy all their virtues. The man drawing water and pouring it into a leaky vessel is like a man who has certain good deeds but does not forsake his sins; this man labors in vain, because by his sins he destroys the reward he might have received from God. The black man cutting wood and adding more and more to his burden is like a man who gives himself over to many sins and, instead of repenting, adds iniquity to iniquity."

The Venerable Arsenius recounted this vision to his disciples for their edification, saying in his humility that he had not seen all these things himself, but had only heard them from another elder.

Arsenius also told his disciples of a fearful revelation concerning the Divine Mysteries of Christ, which had been granted to other fathers dwelling in the desert.

"There was," said Arsenius, "in a skete an elder who led a very strict life and was famed among all the monks for his virtues. Because of his simplicity—for he had not been taught the Holy Scriptures—this elder was scandalized concerning the most pure Mysteries of Christ, thinking that the bread which we receive from the sanctuary and the cup of which we partake are not truly the Body and Blood of Christ, but only an image of the Body and Blood of Christ. Two experienced elders learned of this. Understanding that the elder held this opinion not out of malice, but from simplicity and ignorance, they resolved to instruct him. To this end they went to him and, after speaking with him about many things profitable to the soul, said among other things:

'We have heard, honest father, of a certain brother who thinks wrongly concerning the bread which we receive from the sanctuary and the cup of which we drink—that they are not truly the Body and Blood of Christ, but only an image thereof.'"

The elder answered them:

"That is what I think."

They began to reason with him, saying:

Do not think so, honest father, but believe as the holy, catholic and apostolic Church teaches us to believe. We believe and confess that the bread is the true Body of Christ, and the wine in the cup is His true Blood, and not merely a likeness of the Body and Blood.

Then those fathers, to prove the truth of their words, brought forward numerous testimonies from Holy Scripture and from the writings of the fathers and teachers of the Church, striving to persuade that elder to abandon his false belief. But in the simplicity of his heart he said to them:

"If I do not become certain by the deed itself, I will not believe."

Then the elders said to him:

"Let us all three pray to God about this, that He may reveal this mystery to us, having first fasted the whole week. We believe that He will reveal this mystery to us, for He will not allow the many years of your labors to perish."

The elder listened with love to their counsel, and they all shut themselves up, each in his own cell, for the whole week, passing the time in fasting and prayer. That elder prayed to God thus:

"Lord! Thou knowest that I think this not out of malice, but with my simple mind I cannot grasp this mystery. Reveal to me, by Thy grace, the truth, that I may not go astray in unbelief."

The other two elders, however, said in their prayer:

"Lord! Reveal Thy great mystery to our brother, that he may not remain unbelieving in it and lose his labors and virtues."

God heard His servants and revealed to them that dread mystery in the following manner.

When a week had passed since the elders began their fast and prayer, and Sunday came, the three elders went to church to hear the Divine Liturgy, and in the church they stood close to one another. The Lord opened their spiritual eyes. When the bread had been prepared for the holy meal, they saw, instead of bread, a young infant. As the priest stretched out his hand to break the bread, the elders saw an Angel of God descending from heaven and holding a knife in his hands. Slaying the infant, the Angel poured the Blood into the cup. As the priest broke the bread, the Angel divided the Body into pieces.

Meanwhile the time of Communion arrived. Together with the other brethren, the brother who did not believe went up to receive. Taking into his hands a piece of flesh[12], raw and dripping with blood, and seeing blood in the cup, that elder cried out in terror:

"I believe, O Lord, that this bread is Thy Body, and this wine is Thy Blood."

At once the flesh was changed into bread and the blood into wine.

12. One should not be surprised that the brethren received the honorable Body of Christ into their hands; in the first centuries of Christianity even the uninitiated were permitted to take the holy Gifts into their hands and carry them home or on journeys. But later the Fathers and teachers of the Church forbade this, for the following reason: during the patriarchate of St. John Chrysostom in Constantinople, a woman took the holy Gifts home and mixed them with certain potions for sorcery. Learning of this, St. John Chrysostom issued an order in all churches that the honorable Body of Christ should not be placed in the hands of Christians, but that it should be given to the faithful together with the Divine Blood from the chalice. – St. Demetrius of Rostov speaks of this under November 9, in the account of the Life of Venerable Theoctista.

Then the elder partook of the holy Mysteries of Christ with great fear and tenderness of heart.

The other two elders said to him:

"Christ God knows that man cannot eat raw flesh and drink blood. Therefore He offers to the faithful His most pure Body under the appearance of bread and His life-giving Blood under the appearance of wine."

Then the elders gave thanks to the Lord for the revelation, and that He did not allow that virtuous elder to perish in unbelief.

Once a certain brother asked Arsenius about what is profitable for the soul. The Venerable one answered him:

"In every way take care that what thou thinkest in thy mind be pleasing to God. Acting thus, thou wilt easily overcome every sin."

The saint said this to show that all sins and passions are born from evil thoughts that the heart receives and holds with delight; but he who watches over his thoughts and drives away sinful thoughts thereby extinguishes his passions and overcomes sinful desires.

Another time the Venerable one said:

"If we truly seek God with our whole heart, He Himself will come to us and we shall see Him; and if we keep Him near us by a pure life, He will abide with us."

One elder asked Abba Arsenius:

"What am I to do, honest father? I cannot rid myself of the thought that I am old, and therefore cannot fast or labor in monastic ascetic feats because of my age. So it seems to me that I should go and visit the sick, since this is a work of Christian love."

The Venerable one, perceiving that this was a demonic temptation, said to that elder:

"Eat, drink, sleep, but only do not go out of thy cell."

The Venerable one said this because he knew that for a monk who goes out of his cell and approaches worldly settlements, many temptations and snares of the enemy await; and in general one who has died to the world should not go out of the monastery without a weighty reason, just as a dead man does not come out of his grave. A monk who

goes out of the monastery of his own will truly becomes dead, for he dies in his soul.

The Venerable one also said:

"There are many people who strive in every way to keep bodily purity and for this mortify their body with fasting, vigil and many labors; but few are those who zealously guard their soul from the sins of vainglory, pride, love of money, envy, hatred of brethren, anger, malice and condemnation. Such people are pure outwardly in body, but their soul is defiled; they are like tombs adorned outside, but within full of stinking bones. Blessed is he who strives to keep from defilement both his body and his soul; truly blessed are the pure in heart (not in body only), for they shall see God."

One brother said to the Venerable one:

"Honest father! I have studied many books and psalms and want to read them with tenderness of heart, but I have no tenderness, because I do not understand the power of Holy Scripture, and I grieve greatly over this."

The Venerable one answered:

"Child! Thou must unceasingly be instructed in reading the word of God, even if thou dost not understand its power and have no tenderness. I heard Abba Poemen and the other fathers say that snake-charmers themselves do not understand the words they speak, yet the snakes, hearing their words, are subdued, as if understanding their words, and submit unresistingly into their hands. We too can do the same, even if we do not understand the power of Holy Scripture. For when we have the words of Holy Scripture on our lips, the demons, hearing them, are filled with fear and flee from us, unable to bear the words of the Holy Spirit, who spoke through His servants the prophets and apostles."

When the time of the blessed repose of the Venerable one drew near, he said to his disciples:

"When I die, do not hold memorial feasts for me, do not gather the brethren to a meal, but only take care that the Divine Sacrifice be offered for my sinful soul."

His disciples, hearing this, were greatly grieved and began to weep. But the Venerable one said to them:

"Do not weep, children! The hour of my death has not yet come, though it is already not far from me."

Then the disciples asked him:

"How shall we bury thee, honest father?"

He said to them:

"Tie ropes to my feet and cast me out beyond the mountain."

When the very hour of the Venerable one's death began to draw near, he began to weep much and fell into great fear. His disciples, seeing him weeping, asked him:

"Dost thou too, honest father, fear death?"

But he answered them:

"Indeed, I have always felt the fear of death all the days of my monastic life, from the day on which I took the monastic habit."

Then the Venerable one fell asleep in the blessed sleep of death, committing his precious soul into the hands of his Lord, whom he had served so zealously all his life.

When Abba Poemen heard of the peaceful repose of the Venerable one, he wept and said:

"Blessed art thou, Father Arsenius, for thou didst weep all thy life; for this thou wilt rejoice forever. But he who here does not weep of his own will will weep against his will after death amid torments, and this weeping will profit no one."

It is told of the Venerable Arsenius that he often spoke such words to himself: "Arsenius! Why didst thou come here? Thou didst come not for rest but for labors, not for idleness but for ascetic struggle. Struggle, then, labor and do not be slothful."

The Venerable one also often said these words: "Many times I have regretted the words that my lips have uttered, but of silence I have never once regretted."

Abba Daniel related of the Venerable Arsenius that he never put questions to anyone from books, though he could have, for he knew Holy Scripture well. The Venerable one did this because he did not wish to appear wise in books; he never wrote letters to anyone, consid-

ering himself a simple man and an ignoramus for Christ's sake[13]; he never entered the sanctuary, although he had the right to do so, having been ordained to the rank of deacon, but always approached the Divine Mysteries together with the simple monks. He did all this because of his great humility. When the blessed Arsenius came to church for the services, he would stand behind a pillar, so that he would not see anyone's face, nor would anyone see him.

In outward appearance the Venerable one was comely as an Angel; he was gray-haired, beautiful of body, thin from great abstinence, and he had a beard down to his waist; his eyes were sunken from constant weeping; he was tall of stature but bent with age. The Venerable one died after he had spent fifty-five years in monastic labors and ascetic feats, pleasing God by fasting and prayer; he spent forty years in the skete; ten years he lived in the place called Trogin, near Memphis; then the Venerable one spent three years in Canopus, near Alexandria; from there he returned again to Trogin, lived here two years, and here he fell asleep in the Lord. In all the Venerable one lived about one hundred years[14]. May the Lord grant us also, through his holy prayers, forgiveness of sins and eternal life with Christ our Lord, to Whom glory is offered with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

By the streams of thy tears thou didst cultivate the barren wilderness, and from the depths of thy sighs thou didst bring forth a hundredfold harvest of labors; and thou wast a lamp to the whole world, shining with miracles, our Father Arsenius. Pray to Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

13. After Venerable Arsenius there remained only a few sayings and admonitions to the monks, like the two cited above, preserved in the ancient Paterikons and collections of sayings of the ancient desert Fathers.

14. The life and activity of Venerable Arsenius are arranged by years thus: he was born in 354; taken into the imperial court in his 29th year – in 383; he lived eleven years at court – until 394; he spent forty years in the Scetic desert – until 434; he lived ten years in Trogine (or Troyon); he spent three years in Canopus, and the last two again in Trogine, and he died in his 95th year, in 449 or early 450.

From Rome thou didst shine forth like a great sun, and thou didst most blessedly arrive at the royal city, enlightening it by thy words and deeds and dispelling the gloom of all ignorance. Wherefore we honor thee, glory of the Fathers, Venerable Arsenius.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian

Память святого апостола и евангелиста Иоанна Богослова

The honorable repose of this holy apostle and evangelist, the bosom-friend, virgin, and beloved disciple of Christ John the Theologian, is celebrated on the twenty-sixth day of the month of September; under that date his life is also placed. On this present day, however, is observed the commemoration of his honorable dust, which issued healing from his tomb.

When Saint John the Theologian had reached the age of one hundred years, having labored much in the preaching of Christ, he went out from the city of Ephesus[15] together with seven of his disciples and commanded them to dig for him a cross-shaped grave, into which he prepared to die, lying down in it while still alive (as is related in his Life). After the apostle's death, the Christians who lived in the city of Ephesus opened his grave, but did not find the body of the apostle; mourning his honorable departure, they returned to the city, and afterwards they often came to the apostle's grave and offered fervent prayers to God there, calling upon Saint John the Theologian for help and intercession before God. And each year on this day and month there issued from the apostle's tomb a kind of fine dust that worked cures[16]. The faithful gathered this dust and healed with it various ailments and diseases. Therefore it became the custom among the faithful on this day,

15. Ephesus stood on the shore of the Aegean Sea, in Asia Minor; it was famed for extensive commerce and was one of the principal centers of learning and art in antiquity. At present, of this once-famous city only ruins remain.

16. Of this dust, or manna, speak Blessed Augustine and Gregory of Tours. The Russian pilgrim of the twelfth century, Hegumen Daniel, also mentions the finding of the dust from the tomb of John the Theologian.

as also in the month of September, to glorify and extol with hymns this great servant of God, beloved of God above all other saints[17]. May the Lord, through his prayers, grant us healing in our spiritual and bodily infirmities, and may we also be counted worthy to be pleasing and beloved to Christ our God.

* * *

17. In the Sinai Gospels this feast is called *rhodismos*, that is, "rose-festival"; it is thought that the manna itself issuing from the tomb of John the Theologian was called *rhodis* – rose ointment, rose powder; but it is more likely that by "rose-festival" is meant a celebration with the use of roses, just as among us flowers are used on Trinity Day.

THE NINTH DAY OF MAY

May 9

9 мая

New Calendar May 9 · Old Calendar May 22 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Prophet Isaiah

Житие святого пророка Исайи

The time of the prophetic ministry of St. Isaiah (in Hebrew the name is pronounced "Iesha-Yahweh" and means "the salvation of Jehovah," that is, salvation received from the Lord) was a grievous time in the life of the Hebrew people: in the days of this great prophet the kingdom of Israel came to the end of its existence, and the kingdom of Judah was living out its last years before the Babylonian Captivity. This sorrowful lot, the subjection of the "chosen people" under the heavy hand of pagan kings, was to them a chastisement from the Lord for having departed from obedience to God and for sinking ever deeper into lawlessness and idolatry. The apostasy from the covenant of God was especially great in the kingdom of Israel, which for this reason was overtaken by a swifter chastisement, while "in the kingdom of Judah, from time to time, hope for a better future shone through." If the fire of holy zeal for God had not wholly died out in Judea, and if the Lord still delayed the corrective chastisement, this was owed chiefly to the prophetic activity of St. Isaiah.

The holy prophet Isaiah, who descended from the tribe of Benjamin, was born about 760 B.C. He was the son of Amoz, of whom the books of Holy Scripture report nothing, and whom Jewish tradition identifies with Amos, the brother of King Amaziah. The place of St. Isaiah's permanent residence was Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of Judah. The years of the prophet's conscious childhood and youth coincided with the glorious reign of the wise and good king Uzziah; this reign undoubtedly had a beneficial religious and political influence upon the soul

of the future prophet. Nothing is definitely known of the early youth of St. Isaiah, but his being granted a vision of the glory of the Lord and his election by the Lord to a great ministry give indisputable witness to the piety of the prophet even at that period of his life. His prophetic discourses also bear witness to this, from which it is evident that he had an excellent knowledge of the sacred books of his people; clearly, from his early years St. Isaiah was instructed in the Law of God. As a pious man, he also took a God-fearing wife, by whom he had two sons; of his wife it is known that she too was a prophetess (Is. 7:3, 8:3, 8:18).

St. Isaiah was called to the prophetic ministry in the year of the death of King Uzziah (in 737) by a special vision. Once he was present in the Temple at the Divine Service; before his eyes were the court of the priests and the sanctuary. As he prayerfully gazed toward the sanctuary, St. Isaiah suddenly saw that the Temple began to expand; before his spiritual eyes the interior of the sanctuary opened, then the veil concealing the mysterious Holy of Holies disappeared, where to the astonished and overwhelmed prophet there appeared a solemn vision of the Lord of heaven and earth, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," standing as it were between heaven and earth; the hems of the royal robes of God filled the Temple. Around the Lord "stood the Seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And they cried one to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!'"[1] From the thunderous praise of the Seraphim "the upper parts of the doorways were shaken, and the house was filled with smoke." St. Isaiah was seized with terror and cried out in alarm:

"Woe is me! I am undone! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people also of unclean lips,[2] and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."[3]

Then one of the Seraphim flew to the dismayed prophet, holding in his hand a burning coal taken with tongs from the altar, that is, as St.

1. This praise of the Seraphim, thrice pointing to the holiness of the Godhead, is recognized as a revelation of the three Persons of the Godhead not only by Christians but also by some rabbis.

Basil the Great explains, from the “heavenly altar.” He touched the lips of the prophet, saying:

"Behold, this has touched your lips, and your iniquity is taken away from you, and your sin is purged."

Immediately after this the prophet heard the mysterious voice of Jehovah asking:

"Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?"[4]

Filled with holy assurance, St. Isaiah stepped forward and expressed his desire to take upon himself the responsible and heavy duty of being a preacher of the will of God to the "stiff-necked" Hebrew people:

"Here am I; send me," he said.

The Lord did not reject the offer of St. Isaiah and signified His consent in these words:

"Go and say to this people: 'Hearing you will hear and not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive.' For the heart of this people has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I heal them."

Isaiah asked the Lord how long the people would remain in such moral dullness, and received from Him in reply a terrible revelation of the coming calamities that were to strike Israel:

"Until cities are laid waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land is utterly desolate" (Is. 6:1–11).

The vision ended, and the Spirit of God rested upon St. Isaiah, revealing to him the mysterious and distant future as though it were the present, and strengthening him in his difficult struggle against the moral disorders among his native people.

The prophet's heart, loving the people, did not recognize their political division, and obedient to the will of God he did not confine his

3. The Lord said to Moses: "No man can see Me and live" (Ex. 33:20). Sabaoth – the Lord of hosts (of heavenly powers).

2. Here St. Isaiah probably likens himself and his people to lepers who, according to the law of Moses (Lev. 13:45), were to cover themselves to the lips, warning those they met with the cry: "Unclean, unclean."

prophetic ministry within the borders of one kingdom. Nevertheless, when St. Isaiah came forward with his prophetic preaching, the days of the kingdom of Israel were already numbered, and nothing remained for the prophet but to foretell the great "woe" already hanging over Samaria, the capital of the Northern kingdom:

"Woe to Samaria, the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of the rich valley of those overcome with wine! Behold, the Lord has one who is mighty and strong... he will cast it down to the earth with force. The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trodden under foot. And the fading flower of its glorious beauty... will become like the early fig, which, as soon as someone sees it, he takes it in his hand and swallows it" (Is. 28:1–4).

This sorrowful prophecy was soon fulfilled. In 722 Samaria was taken by Sargon, king of Assyria, and the kingdom of Israel ended its existence forever.[5] Thus the Israelites, who had forsaken "all the commandments of the Lord their God," were cast out by Him from His presence. "There was none left but the tribe of Judah alone" (4 Kgdms. 17:16–18).

After the fall of Samaria, St. Isaiah directed his prophetic gaze chiefly upon the fate of the kingdom of Judah, in which, with the accession of Ahaz, moral corruption greatly increased. After the kings Amaziah, Uzziah and Jotham, the kingdom of Judah passed to Ahaz, raised to a considerable degree of national power, so that the Ammonites and many neighboring Philistine cities were tributaries of the Jews. Together with this, great riches had accumulated in Judea,

4. This plural pronoun – Us – referring to the One God, is also a disclosure of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Cf. Gen. 4:26, 11:7.

5. Concerning this event, the annals of Sargon himself say the following: "I besieged the city of Samaria and took it. I carried away into captivity 27,280 citizens; I chose from among the captured chariots 50 chariots for myself; all the other wealth of the people of that city I left for my servants to take. I appointed permanent officers over them and laid upon them the same tribute that had been paid before. In place of those carried into captivity, I sent there inhabitants of the lands I had conquered, and laid upon them the tribute which I demand from the Assyrians." Cf. 4 Kgdms. 17:6. From the union of the remnant of the Israelite population with the pagans forcibly resettled there by the Assyrian king there arose that mixed people which afterwards bore the name of Samaritans.

which in the hands of the impious Ahaz were put to a use unworthy of the people chosen by God. An Israelite by descent and a pagan in soul, Ahaz set himself the aim of making Jerusalem a full likeness of the capitals of the pagan states of Phoenicia and especially Assyria. He introduced into Jerusalem the worship of the sun, the moon and the other heavenly bodies (4 Kgdms. 23:5), not fearing even to defile the very Temple of Jehovah. In the house of the Lord an idol of Astarte, goddess of debauchery, was set up, and here too, beside the Temple, were "houses of ill fame," where women wove garments for Astarte (4 Kgdms. 23:6–7); at the very entrance of the Temple white horses were kept, dedicated to the sun-god; some of the chambers intended for keeping the sacred vessels and for the residence of the priests who performed their turn of service were turned into stables (4 Kgdms. 23:11). The very altar of burnt offering, erected by Solomon, Ahaz moved from its place before the sanctuary to the north side of the Temple and replaced with a new one, built after the Assyrian pattern (4 Kgdms. 16:14–15). At all the corners of Jerusalem altars were built, so that passers-by might have the opportunity to burn incense on them (2 Chr. 28:24); at the gates of Jerusalem and in the other Judean cities there remained from earlier times "high places" for the offering of sacrifices to Jehovah (4 Kgdms. 15:4, 35); their existence, since the building of the Temple of the Lord, was already unlawful (3 Kgdms. 3:2; Deut. 12:13–14). In honor of the Phoenician deity Moloch, right beneath the walls of Jerusalem, in the valley of Hinnom, a new shrine was erected; here stood a large bronze idol of Moloch; inside it was a furnace, and beneath its outstretched arms an altar, upon which children were offered. Ahaz himself set the example of zealous devotion to this inhuman idol-worship: he offered one of his sons to Moloch as a sacrifice (4 Kgdms. 16:3; 2 Chr. 28:3).

For this impiety, which corrupted the kingdom of Judah and aroused the righteous wrath of the Lord, Judea was soon struck by a chastisement that served as a forerunner of the more terrible judgments of God in the future. The king of Israel Pekah and the Syrian Rezin invaded the kingdom of Judah with combined forces; plundering and devastating everything on their way, they reached Jerusalem itself;

moreover, the Edomites and the Philistines rose up, regaining their independence. “For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Judah, for he had encouraged wickedness in Judah and had been very unfaithful to the Lord” (2 Chr. 28:19).

When the allied kings Pekah and Rezin stood before the gates of Jerusalem, terror and confusion reigned within the city, like a grove shaken by a mighty wind (Is. 7:2). But the merciful Lord did not abandon His sinful people: together with the chastisement, He sent them consolation and warning through the prophet Isaiah. Meeting Ahaz, by the command of God, on the road to the Fuller's Field, near the conduits of the upper pool, St. Isaiah said to him:

"Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint... (Rezin and Pekah, these tails of smoking firebrands) have taken evil counsel against thee, saying: ‘Let us go up against Judah, and trouble it, and seize it’... But thus saith the Lord God: It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass."

Seeing Ahaz's unbelief in his words, St. Isaiah said to him:

"Ask for a sign of the Lord thy God: ask it either in the depth, or in the height."

To this Ahaz, concealing his unbelief under a pretended unwillingness to tempt the Lord, replied:

"I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord."

Then the prophet, reproving the king for his unbelief, points to the sign that would confirm the fulfillment of his words: the future miraculous birth of the Messiah-Christ from a Virgin. Having foretold the speedy removal of Rezin and Pekah, he at the same time foretells a more terrible future invasion by the Assyrians:

"Hear ye therefore, O house of David!... Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel[6]. He shall eat milk and honey until he knows to reject the evil and choose the good. The land that

6. St. Matthew the Evangelist, in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ from the Most Holy Virgin Mary, sees the fulfillment of this prophecy of St. Isaiah: "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means, God with us." (Mt. 1:22–23)

thou fearest shall be forsaken of both her kings. But the Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come since the defection of Ephraim from Judah, even the king of Assyria" (Is. 7:1–17).

But the unbelieving Ahaz preferred hope in the king of Assyria, against whom the prophet had warned him, to hope in God. Seeking protection against the kings who had invaded Judah, Ahaz concluded an alliance with Tiglath-pileser II, king of Assyria, and in doing so gave him all the treasures not only of his royal house but also of the Temple. He himself went to Damascus to Tiglath-pileser to pay homage, and there received the plan of the aforementioned Assyrian altar. As a reward for this submission, the king of Assyria ravaged Syria and a part of Palestine that had formed the kingdom of Israel. Ahaz, having plundered the Temple, shut its great doors; the lamps of the Temple went out, incense was no longer offered, and the holy place was left in complete neglect. The true worship of Jehovah, displaced by the ever-growing abominable idolatry, was almost forgotten (4 Kgdms. 16:5–10; 2 Chron. 28:5–25).

At Ahaz's death (in 728) his twenty-year-old son Hezekiah ascended the throne; he was one of the best kings of the chosen people. From his father Hezekiah inherited a sorrowful legacy. The kingdom of Judah, paying a humiliating and ruinous tribute to Assyria, was further weakened by vices that undermined its internal order. Among the upper classes, who held justice in their hands, injustice reigned, and oppression of the poor was a common occurrence on the part of judges greedy for silver (Mic. 3:9–11; Is. 1:17, 1–23, 3:14–15). The priests, the teachers of the people, suffered from the same vices (Mic. 3:11), and the voice of the true prophets was drowned out by false prophets who were covetous (Is. 30:20–21; Hos. 9:8). The people as a whole, sunk in debauchery (Is. 1:21) and far from the Lord in heart, at best fulfilled only the ritual part of the law[7] without following its precepts in life. Therefore the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, addressed His

7. At the end of Ahaz's reign, as we have already seen, the temple too was closed.

people with such a touching and terrible admonition, calling them to amendment:

"I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children of destruction! They have forsaken the Lord (Jehovah), they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more, ye who continue in rebellion? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment... Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth; they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood" (Is. 1:2–15). "Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they defend not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them" (Is. 1:22–23). "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together... Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Is. 1:16–18).

King Hezekiah, a descendant on his mother's side of the prophet Zechariah, was the complete opposite of his father, an impious man inclined to everything Assyrian. Hezekiah was devoted to national customs and traditions, and, burning with love for the true faith, made the aim of his life the restoration of the worship of Jehovah and the cleansing of the land defiled by paganism. This activity was not easy among a people who for the most part were inclined to paganism. Here the pious king was helped by the prophets whom he esteemed, and at their head St. Isaiah. He gathered around himself a multitude of disciples who, enlightened by their teacher, in turn became enlighteners of the people themselves. Thus the prophetic school founded by St. Isaiah gave mighty support to King Hezekiah in the religious and moral revival of the people. – The first deed of Hezekiah was the cleansing of the Temple from pagan abominations and the restoration of worship in it (2 Chron. 29:3–36). At the same time, by the destruction of the "high places," Hezekiah put an end to the performance of private worship. Striving to root out idolatry, he did not spare even the national sacred treasure: by his command the bronze serpent, made almost 800 years earlier by Moses (Num. 21:9) and standing in Jerusalem, which many Jews worshipped as divine, was destroyed (4 Kgdms. 18:4). Then, after the fall of the kingdom of Israel, to which Hezekiah, fearing for his own kingdom, could not render aid, the Passover was solemnly celebrated in Jerusalem in the presence of a multitude of Jews[8], whereas earlier it had probably been celebrated privately, by families (2 Chron. 30).

Meanwhile Sennacherib, the younger son of Sargon, the conqueror of Samaria, ascended the throne upon the death of his father. Sargon's death gave the signal for a revolt which spread like a broad wave among the peoples who groaned under the heavy yoke of the Assyrians, peoples inhabiting a vast territory that embraced all of Western Asia and reached from there as far as the banks of the Nile. At the head of the rebels stood Seti, the Egyptian pharaoh, and Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia. King Hezekiah also joined the insurgent peoples. At the head

8. Although Hezekiah invited the Israelites remaining after the resettlement by Sargon to the festival, the latter scornfully rejected this invitation (2 Par. 30:5–10).

of vast hordes, Sennacherib set out to put down the rebellion. Setting Egypt as the final goal of his campaign, he first entered Palestine from the north. Having again subjected to Assyrian power some of the rebellious peoples here, Sennacherib sent a part of his forces against Jerusalem. After storming and plundering forty-six fortified cities of Judah, Sennacherib's detachment soon besieged its capital, Jerusalem; Sennacherib himself encircled Lachish, likewise a city of the kingdom of Judah on the border with Egypt. Terror seized the inhabitants of besieged Jerusalem, to whom the holy Isaiah did not fail to address a word of encouragement, foretelling that the Assyrians would be visited by the punishment of God, and precisely in the land of the chosen people (Is. 14:24–25). But the prophet's word did not infuse courage into souls confused by fear. The siege of the city dragged on, for Hezekiah did not wish to surrender Jerusalem and strengthened it vigorously; to complete the disaster, famine appeared, and some, in despair, gave themselves over to debauchery, which called forth a stern rebuke from the holy Isaiah (Is. 22:1–2, 12–14). Finally, seeing the uselessness of resistance to the Assyrians, Hezekiah resolved to surrender: he sent envoys to Sennacherib at Lachish with an expression of submission. Sennacherib lifted the siege of Jerusalem, imposing upon the kingdom of Judah a tribute larger than before, so that to pay it they had to strip off the gold that still remained from the earlier plunder of the Temple, on the gates and the doorposts of the doors leading into the sanctuary. But then Sennacherib heard that against him had advanced Seti, the Egyptian pharaoh, whom he had earlier defeated, together with Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, who had moved his troops from the banks of the Upper Nile. In such circumstances Hezekiah's submission seemed to Sennacherib nothing more than a treacherous desire to gain time until allied kings came to help. Therefore Sennacherib, paying no attention to the agreement just concluded with Hezekiah, again sent a detachment against Jerusalem with three commanders, among whom was Rabshakeh, the chief of staff. The detachment found the gates of Jerusalem closed and its walls ready for defense. The commanders of the Assyrian army entered into negotiations with the representatives of King Hezekiah, urging Jerusalem to a voluntary surrender; of neces-

sity, the negotiations were conducted across the city walls in the presence of a multitude of people. They ended with the following blasphemous speech of Rabshakeh, addressed to all the besieged:

"Hear the words of... the great king of Assyria. Thus says the king: let not Hezekiah deceive you... nor let him encourage you... in the Lord, saying, The Lord will deliver us, and this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria: make your peace with me and come out to me, and let each one eat the fruit of his vine and of his fig tree, and let each one drink the water of his own well, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of fruits and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, and you shall live and not die. Do not listen to Hezekiah, who deceives you, saying, The Lord will deliver you. Have the gods of the nations delivered each his own land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands has delivered his land out of my hand? Shall the Lord then deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" (4 Kgdms. 18:28–35).

When this speech was reported to Hezekiah, in sign of great grief he rent his garments and, clothing himself in sackcloth, went into the Temple; to the prophet Isaiah he sent Eliakim and Shebna, court officials, together with the senior priests; clothed, after the king's example, in sackcloth, Hezekiah's messengers said to the holy Isaiah:

"This day is a day of distress, and of rebuke, and of disgrace... It may be that the Lord your God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and to revile with words such as the Lord your God has heard. Therefore lift up a prayer for the remnant that is still left alive" (4 Kgdms. 19:3–4).

To these words, which breathed a certain uncertainty, the prophet of God gave an answer full of firm faith in the help of the Lord:

"Thus you shall say to your master: thus says the Lord: do not be afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled Me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and

he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land[9]" (4 Kgdms. 19:6–7).

Encouraged by the prophet, Hezekiah answered the envoys of the Assyrian king with a refusal to surrender the city, although afterward he sent an embassy of his own to Sennacherib, desiring to save his country from the Assyrian invasion by assuring him of the absence of treacherous designs. Hezekiah's messengers found Sennacherib already at Lachish itself and had no success; Sennacherib did not even hear them out. In order to secure his army's rear, he resolved to take Jerusalem. Not wishing to spend time on a siege of the city, he first tried to persuade Hezekiah to surrender the city without a battle; therefore Sennacherib sent Hezekiah a second embassy with a letter in which, relying on his own might, he urged him to abandon the hope of saving the city by Jehovah. Having received the scroll, Hezekiah went into the Temple of God, unrolled it before the face of the Lord, and addressed Him with such a heartfelt prayer:

"O Lord God of Israel, who sittest upon the cherubim! Thou alone art the God of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear (me); open Thine eyes, O Lord, and see, and hear the words of Sennacherib, who has sent to reproach Thee, the living God. It is true, O Lord! The kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire. But these are not gods, but the work of human hands, wood and stone – therefore they have destroyed them. And now, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou, O Lord, art God alone" (4 Kgdms. 19:15–19).

To the prayer of Hezekiah the holy prophet Isaiah also joined his own prayer (2 Chron. 32:20). And their prayer was heard. The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, addressed Hezekiah with such a word to strengthen the soul:

"Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: that which thou hast prayed to Me concerning Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard. This is the word which the Lord has spoken concerning him: The virgin

9. Sennacherib indeed died a few years later in Assyria, killed by his own sons (4 Kgdms. 19:37).

daughter of Zion despises you and laughs you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head after you. Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes so high? Against the Holy One of Israel... Because of your insolence against Me, and because your arrogance has come up to My ears, I will put My ring in your nose... and I will turn you back by the way you came. And this shall be the sign for you, Hezekiah: eat this year what grows of itself from the fallen grain, and in the second year that which springs up of itself; and in the third year sow and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. And the remnant that is left of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward[10]. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion[11]. Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: he shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast up a siege mound against it... For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for the sake of David My servant" (4 Kgdms. 19:21–22, 28–34).

And the Lord did not delay to display His power over the Assyrian king in a miraculous way, and His favor toward Judah. With the sunrise, which dispelled the night's darkness, fear and anxiety that hung over Jerusalem were dispelled: in that very night "the Angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies" (4 Kgdms. 19:35), and the king of Assyria "returned with shame to his own land" (2 Chron. 32:21). To the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell a vast booty, filling the Assyrian camp, which had been deprived of its defenders[12].

Enjoying peace, Hezekiah occupied himself with the peaceful good ordering of his kingdom, which gradually acquired the respect of the

10. All the harvests of Judea had been reaped or trampled by the Assyrian armies; therefore Judea was apparently threatened with an inevitable famine. But the Lord – says the prophet – will not allow this: the grains fallen to the ground will bring forth fruit sufficient for sustenance, not only in the year of the Assyrians' withdrawal, but also in the following year. Thus "the remnant that has escaped (of the grain crops) will again take root below and bring forth fruit above."

surrounding peoples (2 Chron. 29:22–23). But these peaceful and happy days were succeeded by a new anxiety: King Hezekiah fell mortally ill; to his bedside came the prophet Isaiah and delivered the sorrowful word of the Lord, that Hezekiah should make a will concerning his house, for death was soon to overtake him. Living in the times of the Old Testament, when in the gloom of the underworld there barely glimmered the reflection of the Coming Redeemer, the Conqueror of hell and death, and moreover lacking an heir to whom he might pass on the kingdom, and not yet sated with life, Hezekiah in despair turned his face to the wall, away from the sunlight, and wept bitterly: "O Lord," he cried, "remember now how I have walked before Thee faithfully and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in Thy sight" (4 Kgdms. 20:3).

The prophet Isaiah, who had left the sick king, "had not yet gone out of the city, when the word of the Lord came to him," the Lord who had heard the prayer of His faithful servant:

"Return, and say to Hezekiah, the ruler of My people: Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father: I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears. Behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake" (4 Kgdms. 20:5–6).

For the healing of Hezekiah's sickness, the Prophet Isaiah ordered the use of a remedy as common in the East even now: a poultice of figs. By the Prophet's command it was applied to the boil[13] that had appeared on the king's body. To encourage the king, and at his request, the Lord gave him a wondrous sign, removing all doubt that the re-

12. The rapturous joy and gratitude of the chosen people to God the Deliverer found their expression, as some interpreters suppose, in Ps. 45:1–12, 46:1–10, 75:1–13.

11. Here by the "remnant" is meant the "remnant" of those faithful to the true God that constantly remained among the faithless Jewish people (Is. 1:9; 10:22; Ezek. 6:8; Rom. 8:29), from which the righteous of the Old Testament arose, to which Christ's apostles belonged, and from which the Church – salvation for the world – grew.

13. In the Hebrew text Hezekiah's illness is called "shechin"; it is supposed that this was a plague-boil.

stored Hezekiah would "go up into the house of the Lord." The Prophet Isaiah said to the king:

"This shall be the sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that He hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?"

Hezekiah answered:

"It is an easy thing for the shadow to move forward ten steps; no, let the shadow go back ten steps."

"And Isaiah the Prophet cried unto the Lord, and He brought the shadow back ten steps, on the steps where it had descended the steps of Ahaz" (4 Kgdms. 20:8–11).[14]

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah records the prayer that Hezekiah uttered on receiving the joyful news of his recovery. This prayer, in words so moving, depicts the mood of the king's soul on the threshold of death and after deliverance from it: "I said to myself: in the midst of my days I must go into the gates of the netherworld; I am deprived of the remainder of my years. I said: I shall not see the Lord, the Lord in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more among the inhabitants of the world. My dwelling is removed and carried away from me as a shepherd's tent; I must cut off my life like a weaver; He (that is, God) will cut me off from the warp; day and night I waited for Thee to send me death. I waited until morning; like a lion He broke all my bones; day and night I waited for Thee to send me death. Like a crane, like a swallow, I uttered sounds; I mourned like a dove; my eyes looked sorrowfully toward heaven: O Lord, I am oppressed; save me. What shall I say? He hath spoken unto me, and He hath done it. I shall go softly all my years, remembering the bitterness of my soul... Behold, it was for my good that I had great bitterness, and Thou hast delivered my soul

14. Here are meant the sundials set up by Ahaz after the Babylonian model; they could represent either a high structure with ascending steps or a horizontal circle with marks arranged on it in a certain order; the shadow of the sun, falling on these dials, gradually moved along the steps or marks, which in fact served as the indicator of time. It is notable that according to astronomical calculations, on 26 September 703, the year falling at the time of Hezekiah's illness, there was a partial solar eclipse visible in Jerusalem; it could have been the cause of that wondrous phenomenon (the return of the sun's shadow ten steps back) of which the Bible speaks.

from the pit of destruction (that is, from the grave); Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back" (Is. 38:11–15, 17).[15]

The report of Hezekiah's wondrous recovery, spreading swiftly, reached even so distant a land as Babylonia. Its king, Merodach-baladan, who still preserved the independence of his state under the mighty pressure of the Assyrians, seized the opportunity and sent an embassy to Hezekiah under the pretext of congratulating him on his recovery and of learning more fully about the wondrous sign that had accompanied it. The true purpose of the embassy, however, was to conclude an offensive and defensive alliance with Hezekiah; the envoys brought Hezekiah a letter and gifts from the Babylonian king. Hezekiah rejoiced at an embassy sent by the king of a vast kingdom, and showed the envoys all his treasures. This embassy was a trial of Hezekiah by God, "to reveal all that was in his heart." And the pious king did not withstand the trial: Hezekiah, who had so recently seen over himself a manifestation of God's mercy joined with a wondrous sign, was carried away by vanity, in which there was no room for thought of the glory of the Lord, and transferred his trust from God to men and to himself. Yet the very disclosure by Hezekiah to the envoys of the Babylonian sovereign of all the secrets of his realm was a revelation of the weakness of the human mind in knowing the unsearchable judgments of God, by which Judah was destined to fall precisely through the invasion of the Babylonian ruler. With this sorrowful disclosure, which was Hezekiah's punishment for presumptuousness, the Prophet Isaiah came before the king of Judah after the envoys had departed. Having learned from Hezekiah himself that the envoys had come "from a far country, from Babylon," and that "there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah did not show them," Isaiah said to the king of Judah:

"Hear the word of the Lord: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried into Babylon; nothing shall be left. And of thy

15. That is, forgave, forgot them.

sons that shall issue from thee, whom thou shalt beget, they shall take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

"Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken," humbly answered the repentant Hezekiah, praying at the same time that peace and well-being might accompany at least his own days (4 Kgdms. 20:13–19; 2 Chron. 32:31; Is. 39).

The Lord did not reject the prayer of the erring king: in peace "Hezekiah slept with his fathers" (4 Kgdms. 20:21) and was buried with every honor, in the presence of a multitude of Jews, over the tombs of the sons of David in Jerusalem[16] (2 Chron. 32:33).

Soon the great Prophet, St. Isaiah, also ended his days: according to the Jewish tradition accepted by Tertullian, Lactantius and Blessed Jerome, St. Isaiah died a martyr's death, sawn asunder with a saw[17], under Hezekiah's successor Manasseh.

If, as St. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "Christ was not unknown to any of the Prophets," this must be said in particular of the Prophet Isaiah. His Book contains predictions of Christ the Savior so full and clear that, justly, by the voice of the Fathers of the Church, St. Isaiah has been given the title "Evangelist of the Old Testament."

In this great Old Testament Prophet we find the image of the Coming Messiah drawn in detail.

Preceded by the coming of the Forerunner (Is. 40:3), the Messiah, descending in His humanity from the race of Jesse (Is. 11:1), will be born of a Virgin without a husband (Is. 7:14), will be filled with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Is. 11:2), and will bear names that indisputably indicate His Divine dignity (Is. 9:6). A humble and meek Servant of God, beloved of the Lord and called by Him to proclaim truth to the nations, the Messiah "will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," while at the same time displaying great power in establishing on earth His kingdom (Is. 9:1–4), which will appear as a kingdom of righteousness, peace and knowledge of God. "Then the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little

16. Hezekiah died, according to the most trustworthy sources, in 699.
17. Probably points to the martyr's death of St. Isaiah. Heb. 11:39.

child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and a little child shall lead them; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Is. 11:6–9). But the coming of this kingdom must be preceded by the humiliation, sufferings and finally the death of the Messiah for the sins of men: "Lord," the Prophet exclaims, as if standing at the Cross of the Crucified Savior, "who hath believed our report (that is, the preaching of the incarnate Son of God), and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Whereas "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, but suffered willingly, and opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. He was taken from bonds and judgment; and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people was He stricken. They appointed Him a grave with the wicked, but He was buried with the rich, because He had done no sin, and there was no deceit in His mouth." Beside this majestic image, in its immeasurable humility, of the suffering Messiah, the Prophet depicts the Messiah, the Founder of the Church, glorified for His sufferings: "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and He delivered Him to suffering; when His soul shall make an offering for atonement, He shall see a long-lived offspring, and the will of the Lord shall

prosper in His hand. He shall look upon the labor of His soul with satisfaction; through His knowledge, He, the Righteous One, My Servant, shall justify many, and He shall bear their sins. Therefore will I give Him a portion among the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Is. 53:1–12).

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having received the gift of prophecy, O Prophet-martyr, Isaiah the God-proclaimer, thou didst declare to all the Incarnation of the Lord, crying aloud at the end: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in her womb.

* * *

Passion of St. Christopher the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Христофора

Of this most glorious martyr[18] they tell something strange and extraordinary: that he had the head of a dog and came from the land of cannibals.[19] When he was taken captive in war by a certain comes,[20] he had no gift of human speech. He prayed to God, and the Lord sent an Angel to him, who said: "Take courage, Reprobus!"—for this was his first name—and then touched his lips, thereby granting him the ability to speak. After this, when he arrived in a certain city, he began to rebuke those who persecuted the Christians. For this a certain Bacchus beat him, but in reply he told Bacchus that he endured his blows humbly only for the sake of Christ's commandment; had he given way to anger, neither Bacchus himself nor even the emperor's power

18. The memory of St. Christopher is greatly honored both in the East and still more in the West, especially in Spain. In the West people turn to him during contagious diseases.

19. Some assert that St. Christopher was by birth a Canaanite, while others derive him from the Canineans (canis—dog) or from the anthropophagous Cynocephali. The dog-headed appearance of the saint in the Slavonic Prologue is rejected, and Nicodemus in the Synaxarion gives him only an ugly appearance.

20. The comites were called imperial bodyguards, and afterwards this title came to be applied generally to persons forming the retinue of proconsuls, provincial governors, and others.

would have stood against him, for he would have reduced it to nothing. Soon two hundred soldiers were sent for him, to bring him before the emperor,[21] and as they went, the completely dry staff in the saint's hands miraculously blossomed on the way. Then, when the soldiers ran short of bread during the journey, he multiplied it in abundance. This great miracle astonished the soldiers, and they believed in Christ and were baptized together with the saint by the Bishop of Antioch, the holy Hieromartyr Babylas; and the saint was given the name Christopher in place of Reprobus. When the saint was brought before the emperor, the latter was struck with terror at the sight of him and suddenly fell backward. Coming to himself again, he devised a plan to make him renounce Christ, not by overt violence, but by first altering his disposition through cunning and then persuading him by entreaties to do his will. To this end he ordered two women to be summoned—harlots, beautiful of face and ready to give themselves to fornication, who by their seductive conversation stirred in young men an irresistible, mad desire for fornication. One of these women was named Callinicia, and the other Aquilina. The emperor ordered them to go in to the saint and fill his mind with various seductive thoughts, as was their custom, so that, urged on by unlawful love for them, he might consent to renounce faith in Christ and offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. But St. Christopher began to instruct them in faith in Christ, and by his words turned them away from idol worship. Returning to the emperor, they declared themselves Christians, for which they were subjected to cruel tortures; and having thus suffered for their faith in Christ, they received the crowns of martyrdom. Enraged at these women, the emperor ordered St. Christopher brought before him and mocked him on account of the extraordinary appearance of his face. In reply, the saint called him a vessel of the devil's workings, for such was the meaning of the emperor's name, Decius. After this the emperor sentenced to death the two hundred soldiers who had been sent to bring St. Christopher before him and who had received holy Baptism with him, because they had come to the saint and bowed down to him in the emperor's presence. He

21. In agreement with the Greek Prologues, Assemani holds that this was the emperor Decius, who reigned in the Roman Empire from 249 to 251.

ordered all of them beheaded and their bodies burned, while St. Christopher was to be shut inside a copper vessel, nailed fast within it, and then the vessel heated red-hot. But when this had been done, the saint remained unharmed. Feeling no suffering either from the fire or from being nailed, he stood in the glowing vessel as though in some pleasant coolness. Many of those present thought this a deception; but to the faithful the saint told quite truthfully and joyfully that during his torment he had seen a man of very great stature and beautiful appearance, clothed in white garments, whose radiance surpassed the sun and who wore a shining crown upon his head. A multitude of warriors surrounded him, and certain black, foul-smelling Ethiopians were fighting them, striving to seize and drag him away; but that terrible leader looked upon them in anger, and with his gaze threw all that hostile host into confusion and struck them down, while giving the saint strength to endure the torment unharmed. Hearing this account and seeing the saint entirely unharmed, many among the people believed him and turned to Christ. They then took the saint out of the glowing vessel, and for this they were cut to pieces by the royal executioners. After this a stone was tied around St. Christopher's neck and he was cast into a well, but an Angel drew him out. Then they put a red-hot copper garment on him and, at last, beheaded him with a sword.[22] The memory of St. Christopher and the other holy martyrs who suffered with him is celebrated in Cyparissus[23] on the day of his death, which falls near the day of the death of St. George the Great Martyr.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Adorned with garments dyed in blood, thou standest before the Lord, the King of the hosts, O ever-memorable Christopher; wherefore, together with the bodiless powers and the martyrs, thou singest the thrice-holy hymn with fearful sweetness. Therefore, by thy prayers save thy flock.

22. The holy martyr died in Lycia under the emperor Decius around 250. In agreement with the acts of the martyr, all the oldest calendars, Eastern and Western, assign the day of his death to 23 April.
23. Kyparissios or Kyparissos – a locality in Constantinople.

* * *

Narrative on the Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra[24]

Сказание о перенесении мощей святителя Николая, архиепископа Мирликийского

In the year 1087, in the reign of the Byzantine emperor Alexius Comnenus[25] and of Nicholas Grammaticus, Patriarch of Constantinople,[26] while Vsevolod Yaroslavich reigned in Kiev in Rus'[27] and his son Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh in Chernigov,[28] the Ishmaelites[29] invaded the Greek territory from both sides of the sea. They passed through all the cities and villages, from Cherson[30] to Antioch and Jerusalem; they slaughtered the men, took the women and children captive, and burned houses and possessions. The churches and monasteries were deserted, and the cities passed into the power of the unbelievers. At that time Myra in Lycia was also laid waste, where the body of St. Nicholas rested—a precious and most venerable body, which wrought wondrous and most glorious miracles. This Venerable man could have defended his city and the Church from devastation, but, by the command of God, he did not resist, saying: "Lord, I will do that which is pleasing in Thy sight."

But our Lord Jesus Christ could not allow the relics of the saint to rest in a desolate place, unhonored by anyone, as it is said in Scripture: "Let the saints exult in glory" (Ps. 149:5); and again: "Glory shall be to all His saints" (Ps. 149:9).

In the city of Bari, which at that time belonged to the Normans,[31] there lived a certain presbyter, a lover of Christ and a righteous man. St. Nicholas appeared to him in a dream and said: "Go and tell the cit-

24. For the Life of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, see under 6 December.
25. Alexis I Komnenos governed the Byzantine Empire from 1081 to 1118.
26. Nicholas III Grammatikos was Patriarch from 1084 to 1111.
27. Vsevolod Yaroslavich, son of Yaroslav the Wise and grandson of St. Vladimir, reigned from 1075 to 1076 (6 months); then a second time from 1078 to 1093.
28. Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh reigned from 1073 to 1125.
29. By the Ishmaelites are meant here the related eastern peoples: the Turks, the Pechenegs, and the Polovtsy.
30. An ancient city in the Crimea, near Sevastopol, also called Tauric Chersonesus.

izens and all the clergy to go to the city of Myra, take me from there, and lay me here, for I cannot remain there, in a desolate place. Such is the will of the Lord."

Having said this, the Hierarch became invisible. When the presbyter awoke in the morning, he told everyone of the vision that had come to him. They rejoiced and said: "Today the Lord has magnified His mercy toward His people and our city, for He has granted us to receive His servant, St. Nicholas."

At once they chose from among themselves men who were reverent and God-fearing, and sent them in three ships for the relics of the Hierarch. Pretending that they were setting out to trade, the men loaded their ships with wheat and departed.

Arriving at Antioch, they sold the wheat and purchased all that they needed. There they learned that the Venetians who were staying there intended to forestall them and take the relics of St. Nicholas. At once the men of Bari hastened away, reached Myra in Lycia, and came ashore at the city's landing place. Having devised a plan for the salvation of themselves and their city, they armed themselves and entered the church of St. Nicholas. There they saw four monks and asked them where the relics of St. Nicholas rested. The monks showed them the place of the reliquary. The men of Bari broke up the church flooring and found the reliquary, full of myrrh. They poured the myrrh into a vessel, took the saint's relics, and carried them to the ship; then they set sail. Two of the monks remained in Myra, while the other two accompanied the relics of St. Nicholas.[32] They departed from the city of Myra on the 11th day of April and arrived in the city of Bari on the 9th

31. The city of Bari lies in the south of the Italian peninsula, on its eastern shore at the Adriatic Sea, in the region called Apulia. The population of southern Italy had long been Greek. By the end of the 9th century the authority of the Greek emperor was established here. In 1070 the city of Bari was taken from the Greeks by the Normans, a northern tribe of the Germanic people; but even after this, in some Apulian monasteries the Orthodox faith and worship were preserved, and they remained subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople.

32. In the service for the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas it is sung: "Thy journeys, O hierarch, were by sea, from Myra of Lycia to Bari: for thy coffin was taken up from the tomb and came from east to west, piously followed by the monks who were at thy tomb, honoring thee at the gesture of the Lord of all, O glorious Nicholas" [2nd stichera at the Stichos. – Redaction of the "Azbuka Very"].

day of May, on Sunday evening. When they saw that the men had arrived from the city of Myra with the relics of St. Nicholas, all the inhabitants of Bari, men and women, young and old, went out to meet the Hierarch with candles and incense. They received the relics with joy and great honor and laid them in the church of St. John the Forerunner by the sea.

Many miracles were wrought here by the Hierarch's relics. They arrived in Bari on Sunday evening, and already on Monday morning they healed 47 sick men and women afflicted with various ailments: one had a headache, another suffered in the eyes, another in the hands and feet; some had pain in the heart, and some suffered throughout the body from unclean spirits. On Tuesday 22 sick people were healed, and on Wednesday 29. Early on Thursday morning St. Nicholas healed a deaf-mute who had been ill for 5 years. Then the Hierarch appeared to a certain devout monk and said: "Thus, by the will of God, I have come to this land of yours on Sunday, at the ninth hour, and behold, 111 people have been healed by me."

St. Nicholas worked other wonders every day, like a spring flowing without end. Many gifts were brought to the saint: gold and silver and costly garments. Seeing his glorious wonders, the citizens were filled with great joy; they built a large and beautiful church in the name of the hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas[33], and forged for his relics a silver-gilt reliquary. In the third year after the translation of the relics from Myra of Lycia, they sent to the Roman Pope Urban, asking him to come to Bari with his bishops and with all the church clergy for the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas. The Pope arrived accompanied by bishops and clergy; they placed the relics of the saint in the silver reliquary, and then the bishops and nobles carried it into the new, great church and set it in the sanctuary, on the 9th day of the month of May. They also transferred the old tomb of the hierarch, in which he had been brought from Myra, set the tomb in the church, and placed in it a portion of the hand from the saint's relics. Many people came and venerated the saint, kissing his relics and the reliquary. Pope Urban, the

33. The feast of the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas was established in Rus' under Metropolitan John II of Kiev, in 1089.

bishops, and all the citizens made on that day a great feast and glorification of the saint, which they celebrate to this day[34]. In those days they refreshed themselves with food and drink, and, having distributed generous alms to the poor, they returned to their homes in peace, glorifying and praising God and His holy servant Nicholas.

Troparion, Tone 4:

The day of bright festivity has come; the city of Bari rejoices, and with it the whole universe exults in songs and spiritual hymns: for today is the holy solemnity of the translation of the honorable and much-healing relics of the hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas, which, like an unsetting sun, has shone forth with radiant beams, dispelling the darkness of temptations and misfortunes from those who faithfully cry: Save us, for thou art our great intercessor, O Nicholas.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thy relics, O hierarch Nicholas, have risen like a star from east to west, and the sea was sanctified by thy passage, and the city of Bari received thy grace: for our sake thou hast appeared as an excellent, marvelous, and merciful wonderworker.

* * *

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34. This church exists to this day.

THE TENTH DAY OF MAY

May 10

10 мая

New Calendar May 10 · Old Calendar May 23 (civil dates)

Memory of the Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot

Память святого апостола Симона Зилота

This holy Simon was from Cana of Galilee, and was personally known to the Lord and to His Most Pure Mother, for the city of Cana lay at no great distance from Nazareth. When Simon celebrated the festivities of his marriage, he invited to the feast the Lord with His disciples, and the Most Pure Mother. But when the guests lacked wine, the Lord changed the water into wine (cf. Jn. 2:1–11). Struck by this miracle, the bridegroom believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as the true God, and, leaving the wedding festivities and that very house, followed the Lord Jesus with zeal; therefore he was called Zealot, or zealot,[1] for he was kindled with such fervor that for the love of Christ he left both his bride and all his attachments, betrothing his soul to the Heavenly Bridegroom. For this, Simon was numbered among the disciples of Christ and in the choir of the holy twelve apostles.

When the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost in the form of tongues of fire, they received the gift of tongues, so that they could preach the Gospel to all peoples; and Simon, together with the other eleven apostles, was counted worthy to receive the Holy Spirit. Having received the Holy Spirit, he went forth to preach about Christ in various lands; he traversed Egypt, Mauretania,

1. "Zealot" and "zealous one" (*revnitel'*) are words of similar meaning; "Zealot" is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew word *Canaanite* (from *kana*, "zeal"). There is a supposition that Simon the Zealot, before his calling to the apostolate, had been a member of the sect of the Zealots, zealous defenders of the ancestral faith, who paid special attention to the observance of the ritual prescriptions of the Law of Moses.

Libya, Numidia, Cyrenaica, and Abkhazia. He was also in Britain. There he enlightened with the faith of Christ many pagans who knew not Christ, for which he was crucified by the unbelievers and ended his life in a martyrdom like the crucifixion to which Jesus Christ was delivered up.[2]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us all praise and bless Simon, who spoke of God, renowned for the wisdom of the teaching he planted in the souls of the pious; for now he stands before the throne of glory, and rejoices with the bodiless powers, ceaselessly interceding for us all.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Isidora the Fool-for-Christ

Житие преподобной Исидоры юродивой

In the women's monastery of Tabennisi,[3] which was in the Thebaid, among the other sisters there ascetically labored a maiden named Isidora, who took upon herself the ascetic feat of folly-for-Christ. She behaved as one foolish and deranged, and for this she was held in such great contempt by the other sisters that none of them ever ate food together with her. She was belittled and insulted by all, yet Isidora

2. Simon the Zealot died a martyr's death in Abkhazia and was buried in the city of Nicopsis, which lay near Jigetia. The local inhabitants still point out the ruins of this city some 20 versts from Sukhum, not far from the sea shore. On the site of the saint's death a church was built, which was restored in 1875 through the zeal of one of the Grand Princes. The holy Apostle Simon the Zealot commemorated today must be distinguished, first, from Simon Peter, likewise one of the Twelve Apostles, and from Simon or Symeon, kinsman of the Lord according to the flesh (Mt. 13:55), who belongs to the number of the 70 Apostles and was the second Bishop of Jerusalem, the successor of the Apostle James, brother of the Lord according to the flesh. The memory of Simon the Zealot is also celebrated by the Holy Church on 30 June together with the memory of the other eleven Apostles.

3. The Tabennesiot monastery was founded by the well-known Egyptian ascetic, St. Pachomius the Great (whose memory is celebrated on 15 May), and was located in Upper Thebaid. The occasion for the founding of this monastery was the desire of Pachomius' sister to live the life of a hermit. The place chosen for the community was called Men and was located on the bank of the Nile, whereas the men's monastery was situated on an island in the midst of the Nile. St. Pachomius gave the women hermits a strict rule, almost identical with that of his own monastery.

bore her ascetic feat with great patience, always giving thanks and praising God.

Isidora constantly labored in the monastery kitchen, serving all the sisters and performing all the monastery's works, not disdaining even the most difficult and filthy tasks. With her own hands she cleansed the monastery of all dirt and filth. Thus the Venerable One labored constantly, from morning until night, not yielding to rest even for an hour, always wearing down her flesh.

At times Isidora would pretend to be as if demon-possessed, so as to conceal her virtues from the sisters around her. Thus was fulfilled in her the apostolic word: "If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise" (1 Cor. 3:18).

There were forty sisters in that monastery, and all of them, according to the rules of monastic life, wore cowls upon their heads; Isidora, however, covered her head with a simple rag. No one ever saw her eat a piece of bread or sit at the table and partake of cooked food, for she gathered the crumbs that fell from the table and fed on them; instead of cooked food, Isidora drank the very water with which she washed the pots and kettles. The Venerable One never insulted anyone with a word, never grew angry with anyone, never murmured against God, but always remained in silence; she never engaged anyone in conversation, long or short, and in general spoke with no one, although the other sisters often beat her and spoke evil of her.

After the Venerable Isidora had spent a sufficient number of years in such ascetic labors, there was a revelation concerning her to Pityrim, who ascetically labored in the nearby Porphyrite desert, a man of great virtue. An Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "Why do you exalt yourself in your mind and consider yourself virtuous, dwelling in this desert place? Do you wish to see a woman more virtuous than you, who has pleased God by her labors more than you have? If you wish to see such a woman, go to the women's monastery of Tabennisi; there you will meet one sister who wears a rag upon her head instead of a cowl; this sister has pleased God by her labors more than you, for living always among the other sisters and always serving all with love, she is held in contempt by all; yet despite this, her heart is never separated

from God, and her mind is always absorbed in the thought of God. But you, dwelling here in solitude and never going out from here, go around all the cities with your mind."

Pityrim at once set out for the women's monastery of Tabennisi. Arriving at the men's monastery located in Tabennisi, Pityrim asked the abbot of that monastery to give him guides who could lead him to the women's monastery. Since Pityrim was known here for his ascetic labors, out of regard for his ascetic life and also for his old age, the abbot gave him guides from the brethren, who with caution and love ferried him across the river that divided the two monasteries—the men's and the women's—and brought him to the women's monastery.

Arriving at the monastery, the Venerable One went first to the monastery church. Having offered the customary prayer there, Pityrim asked all the sisters to gather before him so that he could see them all. All the sisters assembled, except Isidora. Not seeing that very sister about whom he had been informed by the Angel, and for whose sake he had come here, the elder said:

"Bring me all the sisters, for it seems to me that one is missing here."

But the sisters answered him:

"Here we all stand before your honorable countenance."

But the elder said:

"One is missing here, concerning whom I received a revelation from the Angel of God."

Then the sisters said:

"We are all here, honored father; only one sister is not here, who is in the kitchen, but she is foolish and demon-possessed."

The elder said:

"Bring this sister to me as well, that I may see her, for it is for her sake that I have come here."

The sisters went for her and told her that the elder was calling her. But she did not wish to go, for she understood in spirit the revelation which the Angel had given to the elder.

Then the sisters, seizing her, forcibly dragged her along, saying:

"The honorable father Pityrim is calling you."

When Isidora had been brought to the elder, he, seeing her and understanding that she was indeed that sister of whom the Angel had told him, fell at her feet, saying:

"Bless me, honorable mother!"

But Isidora herself fell at his feet and said:

"You bless me, honorable father!"

Seeing all this, the sisters were greatly astonished and said to the elder:

"Let there not be such dishonor to you, honorable father! For this sister is deranged."

But the blessed Pityrim said to them:

"Perhaps you are all deranged; but this sister has pleased God more than I and all of you; she is a mother to us all, and I will pray the Lord that He may grant me to share one lot with her on the Day of Judgment."

Hearing this, all the sisters fell before the elder and with tears told him of all the insults which they had heaped upon her daily. One of the sisters said:

"I always reviled her."

Another:

"I poured slop water upon her."

A third:

"I struck her with my hand."

A fourth:

"I beat her with a stick."

And the other sisters told the elder of many other insults which they had inflicted upon the Venerable One. Falling prostrate before Isidora, all of them asked her forgiveness.

The honorable elder Pityrim, together with the Venerable Isidora, offered to God a fervent prayer for the sisters, that their sins might be forgiven. Then Pityrim for a sufficient time instructed the sisters and conversed with them for the benefit of their souls, and at last returned to the place of his labors, praising and glorifying God, who had granted him to see His servant hidden from all.

The Venerable Isidora, not wishing to receive honor from the sisters, soon after the elder had left, secretly from all departed from that monastery and labored in places unknown to anyone until the day of her death.

Such was the life of the servant of God who was concealed from all, who served the Lord secretly from all under the veil of her folly. For this she shall receive from the Lord a reward openly in the heavens, before the eyes of all her heavenly fellow-citizens; dwelling with them, she glorifies the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity.[4]

* * *

Memory of the Blessed Thaisia

Память блаженной Таисии

In Egypt there lived a Christian maiden, a young girl named Thaisia. When her parents died and she was left an orphan, wishing to preserve herself in virginal purity, Thaisia distributed all her property to the poor, and made her house a hostel for the monks of the sketes. Thus she labored for a long time, receiving into her house ascetics and providing them rest from their journeys. After a fairly long time, Thaisia completely spent all her property, so that she fell into great poverty. Through the cunning of the devil, some lovers of sin became intimate with her, who seduced her to sin and turned her aside from the path of salvation; from that time Thaisia began to lead a sinful life, given over to fornication and debauchery.

When the ascetics of the sketes learned of this change in Thaisia's life, they were greatly grieved. Having taken counsel among themselves, they went to Abba John Kolobos and said to him:

"We have heard of that sister, that she lives a sinful life. But since she has shown us great love, giving us shelter in her house, we too will show her our spiritual love and care for the salvation of her soul. Labour then, honorable father: go to her and exhort her to repentance. You will be able to do this, for you are endowed with wisdom from God.

4. The repose of St. Isidora occurred in the late fourth century.

We will fast and offer fervent prayers to God, that the Lord may help you."

Abba John Kolobos, fulfilling the request of the honorable fathers, went to the city to the woman, praying as he went, within himself, to God, his Helper, Who desires that all should be saved.

Approaching the house of Thaïsia, the elder knocked at the door and then said to the woman who guarded the entrance to the house:

"Tell your mistress that I have come to speak with her."

The doorkeeper, however, answered him with anger:

"You monks have squandered all her property!"

But the elder said to her:

"Tell her about me, that I have brought her something of very great value." The doorkeeper went and reported to her mistress what the elder had said.

The woman then answered:

"Those monks, walking near the Black Sea, sometimes find pearls. Bring that elder to me."

Entering the house, the elder sat down beside Thaïsia; then, looking into her face and heaving a deep sigh, he bowed his head and began to weep.

Then Thaïsia asked the elder:

"Honorable father! Why are you weeping?"

The elder answered her:

"I see how Satan plays upon your face; how could I not weep? Why did you not wish to have as your bridegroom our Lord Jesus Christ, the Most Honorable and Immortal Bridegroom? Why did you despise His bridal chamber and give yourself to Satan? Why do you follow his foul deeds?"

Hearing such words, Thaïsia was moved in her soul, for the elder's words were to her as a fiery arrow piercing her heart. At once there arose in her an abhorrence of her sinful life; she began to be ashamed both of herself and of her sinful deeds. Then she said to the elder:

"Honorable father! Is there repentance for sinners?"

The elder answered her:

"Truly there is, and the Saviour awaits your turning, being ready to receive you into His fatherly embrace; for He does not desire that a sinner perish, but desires that the sinner turn to the path of salvation. And so I will be your surety that, if you repent sincerely and turn to the Lord with all your heart, He will love you again as His bride, and, cleansing you from every sinful defilement, will lead you into His heavenly, incorruptible bridal chamber. Then all the orders of Angels will rejoice over you, for they rejoice also over one sinner who repents."

To this Thaïsia said:

"Let the will of God be done, honorable father! Take me from here and lead me wherever you know I might find a place suitable for repentance."

The elder said:

"Let us go."

Then, rising, he made his way toward the exit of her house.

Thaïsia also rose and followed the elder, arranging nothing in her house, telling no one anything about the house, but leaving everything at once, for Christ's sake.

Seeing that Thaïsia had taken no care at all for her house and had said nothing to anyone, Father John was greatly amazed at such a sudden change and at Thaïsia's zeal for God. Giving thanks to God for this, he set out on his way. Thaïsia followed behind him at a considerable distance.

When the travellers reached the desert, it was already late; night was falling.

Having made a small pillow of sand on the ground, the elder said to Thaïsia:

"Sleep here under the covering of God's grace."

Then, having signed her with the sign of the Cross, he withdrew a short distance from her. Having said his customary prayers, the elder lay down on the ground and fell asleep.

When midnight came, the elder awoke, for he saw a light in the sky. Lifting his eyes upward, the elder saw a fiery streak coming down from heaven in the direction of Thaïsia.

At this vision John was struck with terror. Looking more intently at Thaïsia, he noticed that the Angels of God were carrying Thaïsia's soul up to heaven along that path. John gazed upon this wondrous vision until it vanished from his eyes. Then, rising, John went to Thaïsia; approaching her, he nudged her with his hand, but saw that she had died[5]. Then the elder, in fear and trembling, fell prostrate on the ground. And there came to him a voice from heaven, saying: "Her repentance, made in one hour, is more pleasing than repentance that continues for a long time; for in the latter case the penitents do not have such warmth in their hearts."

The elder remained in prayer until morning. Then, having committed the precious body of the blessed Thaïsia to the earth, he came to the skete, where he related to the fathers all that had happened. Learning of everything that had taken place, the monks glorified and gave thanks to Christ God for His great mercy. To Him, the true God, be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of Venerable Simon, Bishop of Vladimir and Suzdal

Житие преподобного Симона, епископа Владимирского и Суздальского

What Jesus, son of Sirach, said of Simon, son of Onias[6]: "A great priest who in his life repaired the house, and in his days fortified the temple" (Sir. 50:1); and again: "as the morning star in the midst of clouds, as the full moon in its days, as the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High, as the rainbow shining in glorious clouds" (Sir. 50:6–7) – these same things we must say also of our Venerable Father Simon, Bishop of Vladimir and Suzdal, witness and

5. The repose of St. Thais occurred in the fifth century.

6. Here is meant Simon I, High Priest of Judea, son and successor of the High Priest Onias I, who for his piety was called "the Righteous" by his contemporaries. Taking advantage of a peaceful time under the rule of the Egyptian kings, he restored the fortifications of Jerusalem, adorned the Temple, enclosed it with high walls, and made in it considerable repairs and improvements; but, what is most important, he raised the religious and moral life of the people by the example of his pious life, for which reason he left behind the best of memories (Sir. 50:1–21). Simon exercised his high-priestly ministry at the beginning of the third century before Christ.

writer of the lives of the saints of the Kiev Caves, the second chronicler after the blessed Nestor. Truly, he well built the house of God and fortified the Church by the example of his life and by edifying accounts of the lives of the saints, as one of those good shepherds of whom the Lord promised through the prophet Jeremiah, saying: "I will give you shepherds according to My heart, and they shall feed you with a sign and prudence" (Jer. 3:15). Truly, all the titles applied to Simon, the good shepherd and keeper of the Jewish law, may be applied also to this Venerable Simon, Archpastor of Vladimir and Suzdal.

This blessed Simon received the monastic habit in the holy Monastery of the Caves, which, like the heavens, is adorned with holy ascetics, as it were intellectual stars, with the moon and the sun. Having entered the monastery, Simon read diligently the accounts of the lives of the saints who had lived before and were pleasing to God, as numerous as the stars in the sky. And the blessed Simon himself was kindled with love for the labours of these saints and strove in every way to imitate them. With love he recalled the labours of the first builder of that monastery, Venerable Theodosius, who thus multiplied those spiritual stars of the monastery, the monks, and he strove in every way to imitate his life. He also recalled the labours of St. Anthony, who enlightened all, like the sun, with the light of his good deeds; and the Venerable imitated his angel-like life; looking upon the venerable fathers, multiplied like the stars that serve the moon and the sun, Simon learned humility; especially did he learn humility from the example of Venerable Theodosius, who, like the moon, shone brighter than all the other stars and earned from God a more glorious crown than the other brethren. From Anthony, as from the sun that travels alone across the sky without other luminaries, Simon took over the angel-like, silent life. Like a mirror, he reflected in himself all those spiritual luminaries – the stars, the moon and the sun – and himself gave forth the light of the stars, the moon and the sun. Moreover, like the ancient high priest Simon, this one too was as a morning star, as a full moon, and as the sun shining upon the Church of the Most High. He zealously laboured in the holy Monastery of the Caves, which is like the heavens, and by his labours Simon himself was likened to the morning star, always imitating

the Most Holy Theotokos, beautiful as the moon and glorious as the sun. As much as he had strength, he zealously served the Mother of God, remaining constantly in great humility and fervent prayer, both common with the brethren and in solitude.

When this holy Simon had shone forth through his labors in many of the surrounding lands, so that he became known even in very distant countries, it happened that at that time the episcopal throne of the Diocese of Vladimir and Suzdal had no head of its own. Yet the Church is fittingly adorned with a crown of stars (cf. Rev. 12:1), as St. John writes in his Apocalypse. On that throne of Vladimir and Suzdal there was no shepherd, a most bright sun and a beautiful moon, so that that Church could not boast in the words of the psalm: "my throne is as the sun before me," and "as the moon, perfect forever" (Ps. 88:38). At this very time, by the good pleasure of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus, who once entrusted His sheep to Simon Peter, who loved Him "more than all" (Jn. 21:15–17), this blessed Simon, who from his whole heart loved the Most Pure Mother of God, was called by God to the episcopal throne to govern the cities of Vladimir and Suzdal, which God preserves. Thus that Church's crown was adorned with the light of stars, and its throne was illumined as the sun and as the full moon. This blessed shepherd shone upon the throne by his good deeds as a morning star, as the moon and as the sun; by his teaching he enlightened all, by his love he warmed them, and by the grace obtained from God he gave all spiritual life. This blessed Simon always regarded himself as a morning star, which announces the end of night and the beginning of day; therefore he always kept himself from all evil and sinful deeds and with all his strength pressed toward good and gracious works. The holy man also reflected that the sun and the moon are, as it were, two eyes that watch unceasingly in heaven; therefore he took every care that his throne should shine as the sun and as the full moon, and he himself strove to imitate those unsleeping heavenly eyes, for which reason with tireless vigilance he diligently tended his spiritual flock.

The blessed Simon labored for a long time as a zealous shepherd, diligently and attentively caring for his flock; and it should be noted that the Venerable Father performed his ministry very successfully. At the

same time the saint did not neglect his monastic labors, always keeping in his mind the labors and exploits of the honorable ascetics of the Kiev Caves, and rejoicing in his soul that the Lord had granted him to receive the monastic habit in that honorable monastery and to be, as it were, a fellow-dweller with the holy ascetics of the Caves; St. Simon constantly called them to his aid in his prayers, and through their intercession before God, by the grace of God, he successfully ordered the affairs of his flock, so that in him were fulfilled all the other likenesses and designations which Jesus, the son of Sirach, ascribed to Simon, the High Priest of the Jews, who pleased God in the Old Testament. Besides the above-mentioned designations, Jesus, the son of Sirach, writes of that Simon that he was as the rainbow in the heavens, as a flower among thorns, as a lily, as a stalk of Lebanon, as frankincense in the fire, as a vessel of gold, as an olive tree and as a cypress (Sir. 50:8–11). All these episcopal virtues, foreshadowed by these designations, the good shepherd Simon manifested in his life. Thus he took great care for preserving and establishing among men the peace foreshadowed by the heavenly rainbow; further, he taught everyone by his own deeds patience, flourishing like the flower of the apple tree among thorns, always laboring in the mental vineyard of his flock; he instructed all, by deed and word, in spiritual purity, as if planting a white lily; he taught everyone unceasing prayer to God, multiplying as it were the fragrant plants of Lebanon; he always gave thanks to God, even amid his sorrows, and moreover instructed his flock too, presenting himself as it were as frankincense fragrant in the fire, offered to all in the precious vessel of love and spiritual wisdom; he planted among his flock the olive of mercy and love for one's neighbor, and he also kept alive in his flock, like the cypress, a constant thought of God.

This blessed Simon so thoroughly studied the ascetic life of the holy ascetics of the Kiev Caves that he might be said to have written it upon the tablets of his heart; therefore he wished that the life of the Kiev ascetics should be known also to other pious people; and for this purpose he resolved to compose a written account of the ascetic life of the monks of the Caves. It should be noted that at this time, because of numerous wars and civil strife, many books had been lost, so that many

events described in those books were beginning to be forgotten. In view of this, the blessed Simon with great zeal sought out all the eyewitnesses of this or that miraculous event that had occurred in the Kiev monastery, and all the information thus obtained the Venerable Father diligently gathered into a single whole, laboring like a wise bee. Therefore he has enlightened us with the light of sun, moon and stars, for he described for us the miracles of St. Anthony, that radiant sun, and the miraculous metal covering of the shrine of St. Theodosius, the full moon; to all this the blessed Simon added the account of the holy church of the Caves, heavenly-like, whose throne truly shone as the sun and as the full moon; all this was recorded by the Venerable Father Nestor in the first part of the Paterikon[7]. Besides this, the blessed Simon in his epistle to Polycarp provided information about the lives of many of the Kiev ascetics who shone like stars by their exploits; this entered the second part of the Paterikon. Afterwards Simon wrote yet another epistle to the same Polycarp, in which he speaks also of the exploits of many other Kiev ascetics.

From the writings of this blessed Simon it is evident that he had a great love for the Most Holy Theotokos and for the Venerable Fathers Anthony and Theodosius of the Kiev Caves, so that in spirit and mind he dwelt with these Venerable Fathers as if in one cave, although in body he lived in his own diocese.

Just as Simon Peter loved the Lord more than the other Apostles, so this Simon, who bore the name of that glorious Apostle, showed above all love and zeal for the Most Holy Theotokos and her monastery of the Caves.

In the days of his life the faithful saw a wondrous sign in heaven: namely, they saw that a certain Woman, the unwedded Bride, the Most Pure Theotokos, had beneath her feet not only the light of the moon

7. "Paterikon," in translation from the Greek, means "book of the Fathers," that is, a collection containing brief narratives about the lives of ascetics of piety or their edifying sayings. The Kiev-Pechersk Paterikon is a collection of brief narratives about the exploits of the monks of the Kiev Caves. The basis of this Paterikon was formed by fourteen tales by Simon, Bishop of Vladimir and Suzdal, as well as the lives of saints composed by the chronicler Nestor and other persons. As for Simon's tales, nine of them relate the miracles of the Kiev Cave wonderworkers and five relate the wonders that accompanied the construction of the main church of the Kiev Caves.

but also of the stars and of the sun; for this good shepherd shone by his good works (as we said above) like a star and like the moon, and at the same time he showed such great humility that, though a bishop, he wrote in his epistle that he would consider it an honor for himself to be refuse, trodden underfoot and scattered aside by the feet of passers-by, as his epistle bears witness.

This good shepherd labored for a fairly long time, feeding his spiritual sheep with the imperishable food that leads to life, since he set before all his flock the lives of the saints who had ascetically labored in the Kiev monastery, both in writing and by the example of his own life.

Having spent twelve years on the archpastoral throne, the blessed Simon departed to the shepherds who sit upon the twelve thrones and to the Chief Shepherd Himself, the Lord Jesus, that he might receive from Him the unfading crown of glory. His honorable body, according to his wish expressed in his epistle to the blessed Polycarp, and in accordance with his love for the holy ascetics of the Caves, was laid in the Caves, where to this day it remains incorrupt, to the honor, glory and praise of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God glorified in the Trinity, now and always, and unto ages of ages. Amen[8].

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Hesychius

Страдание святого мученика Исихия

The holy martyr Hesychius suffered in the reign of the emperor Maximian[9]. At the court of the latter he held the first place, bore the rank of magistrianus[10], and lived in Antioch[11]. Maximian excluded Christians from military service, and those who wished to re-

8. The repose of Venerable Simon occurred in 1226, in the eleventh year of his administration of the Diocese of Vladimir and Suzdal (he governed the diocese from 1215 to 1226).

9. Here is meant Maximian Galerius, son-in-law and successor of the Emperor Diocletian, who reigned in the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 305 to 311. In 292 Diocletian chose Galerius as his assistant in the governance of the empire, with the title of Caesar, and entrusted him with Illyricum and the lands along the Danube. Being related to Diocletian by marriage, Galerius had strong influence over the aged emperor, and even before the general edict against Christians was issued in 303, he compelled him to issue a private edict by which Christians were removed from military service; he himself was the most zealous executor of this edict. He not only expelled Christians from military service but also removed them from his court.

main in the Christian faith he commanded to take off their military belts and to pass into the condition of hired servants. After such an imperial command many preferred the inglorious life of servants to the ruinous honor of military rank. Among them was the glorious Hesychius. Learning of this, Maximian ordered him to take off his precious garments of office, to put on a coarse hair-shirt[12], and to remain among the women servants. A few days after this he summoned Hesychius to himself and said to him:

"Hesychius, tell me, are you not ashamed to remain in such dishonor?"

But the saint answered him:

"The honor which I had from you is temporal."

After this answer Maximian commanded that a millstone be tied around Hesychius's neck and that he be thrown into the river. Thus the holy martyr died[13].

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Alphius, Philadelphus, Cyprian[3082] and the Others Who Suffered with Them

Страдание святых мучеников Алфия, Филадельфа, Киприана 3082 и других, с ними пострадавших

These holy martyrs of Christ came from Italy. Of them, Alphius, Philadelphus and Cyprian were sons of an Italian prince[14], and they were instructed in the Christian faith and baptized by a certain Onesimus. At that time an order was sent from Rome into their country to search out Christians, and when it became clear that they

10. The title *magistrianus* or *magister* designated, at the court of the Roman emperors, one of the highest court offices, something like our Minister of the Court.
11. Here one must understand Antioch in Syria, once the magnificent capital of Syria, and now a poor town in the Turkish province of Antioch.
12. A *vlasyanitsa* is a garment woven of horsehair.
13. The holy martyr died under Diocletian, but the year of his death is unknown.
14. According to the researches of the Bollandists, the homeland of these holy martyrs was the city of Basta in southern Italy, near the shores of the Sicilian or Ionian Sea; according to the Menologion of Emperor Basil, their father bore the name Vitalius.

were Christians, they were sent together with Onesimus, Erasmus and fourteen other Christians to Rome, to the emperor Licinius[15]. By the order of the latter a huge stone was placed upon Onesimus's chest, from which he died. As for Erasmus and the other fourteen holy martyrs, their heads were cut off with the sword, while Alphius, Philadelphus and Cyprian were sent to Seleucia[16] and there put to death for their faith in Christ[17].

* * *

15. Licinius, as the Bollandists maintain, was not yet emperor at that time, but only held the office of governor of a province; the empire was governed by Decius. According to the Menologion of Emperor Basil, the tormentor of the holy brothers, the martyrs, and of the others who suffered with them was the prefect Diomedes, to whom Licinius gave them for judgment and punishment.

16. Seleucia is a city in the Roman province of Cilicia in Asia Minor, but here in the Prologue there is a typographical or copyist's error. According to the acts of the saints, the holy three brother-martyrs wandered in Sicily, in the city of Leontini.

17. The holy martyrs died in 251, on 10 May. The governor Tertillus ordered Alphius's tongue to be cut out, and he died from loss of blood; Philadelphus was burned on an iron grate, and Cyprian on a frying pan. In 1517 their bodies were discovered in the city of Leontini and solemnly exposed for veneration.

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF MAY

May 11

11 мая

New Calendar May 11 · Old Calendar May 24 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Mocius

Страдание святого священномученика Мокия

In the reign of Diocletian,[1] under the anthypati[2] Laodicius and Maximus, during the persecutions raised everywhere against the Christians, there lived in the city of Amphipolis, in Macedonia, a Christian presbyter named Mocius. At the time when the pagans were celebrating an unclean festival to their impious god Dionysius, or Bacchus,[3] this presbyter, kindled with zeal for the name of Christ, stood in the midst of the pagans and cried out before all:

"Hear, you who are deceived and gone astray! How long will you go astray, walking senselessly in the darkness of idol-worship? How long will you fail to perceive your own perdition? When at last will all these demonic abominations become loathsome to you? Turn, then, and know the Lord God, who was made manifest to us by His Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who by the light of truth has dispelled the darkness of ignorance."

Many other words like these did the blessed Mocius speak, and not once but daily, approaching the people and openly rebuking the error of the pagans who worshipped idols, and preaching Christ, the true God.

1. Diocletian ruled the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
2. Anfipat – governor of a province.
3. Dionysus, or Bacchus, according to Greek mythology the son of Zeus and Semele, god of the vine and of winemaking, who gladdened the hearts of men with the gift of wine. Dionysus was considered the patron of everything that grows in the fields, flowers and fruits. The festivities in honor of Dionysus were at first of a moderate character, but later degenerated into revelry and debauchery. During these festivals the pagans ran about in an excited, intoxicated state, tore animals apart and ate the bloody flesh. In honor of the god Dionysus festivals were celebrated four times a year and each time lasted several days or even weeks.

But the citizens, blinded by madness, paid no heed to the words of the Venerable one and continued to perform their unclean rites.

Meanwhile there arrived in Amphipolis from the city of Apollonia, also in Macedonia, an anthypatos named Laodicius, who began to offer sacrifice here to Dionysius. It was told to Laodicius concerning Mocius, the servant of Christ, that he was drawing many away from the celebration of the god Dionysius. The pagans slandered the saint greatly, saying: "There is here a Christian teacher who has sought to beguile the people with some strange doctrine; he persuades everyone to believe in a Man who was crucified and died; and indeed many, abandoning our gods, have embraced his faith. If you do not forbid him to spread this teaching, the whole city will follow him, and then there will be no one left to offer sacrifices to the gods."

The anthypatos, greatly enraged, ordered the saint to be beaten. Then, seating himself in the place of judgment, he commanded that the holy Mocius be summoned before him. When he was brought, the anthypatos asked him:

"Tell me: who are you, who refuse to offer sacrifice with us and turn people away from offering sacrifice to the gods?"

St. Mocius answered:

"Ignorant man, who knows not the truth! Why do you ask me about what in any case you will not understand? Think a little within yourself and acknowledge the truth, for I have studied the Holy Scripture and learned from it that all the pagan gods are demons (Ps. 95:5), and hope in them is vain."

Laodicius said:

"I see that you are skilled in words."

To this Mokios said:

"Our speech teaches us the truth; if you wish to understand the truth, listen to what I say to you: the gods you worship are demons; they are mute and deaf."

Laodicius said:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, if you desire to keep your life, which you are willfully trying to destroy."

But the saint answered:

"O anthypatos! Death for Christ is a great gain for me."

Then the anthypatos, filled with fury, commanded that the holy Mocius be hanged on the torture-tree and that his body be scraped from head to foot with iron instruments.

While being tormented, the saint called upon God, saying thus: "O Master, who reignest for ever, shining with the rays of righteousness! Show Thy servants Thy divine power, and give me the strength to contend to the end for Thy holy commandments."

The tormentor's servants tore the body of the saint for so long that they themselves at last grew weary. Then the anthypatos ordered them to depart, as lazy and feeble; and he commanded that the martyr be summoned again for interrogation.

Despite the sufferings he had endured, the saint appeared before Laodicius with a body still strong, ready to bear witness to the truth with even greater courage. Going toward the tormentor, Mocius glorified God in a loud voice.

Laodicius said to the saint:

"Offer sacrifice to the god Dionysius, that he may deliver you from many misfortunes."

But the martyr answered:

"Do you really consider a god an idol that does not move and has no voice, made by the hand of man? O deluded servant of the devil! Do you not see that my body has not grown faint under your torments? Do you not see that I feel no pain at all in my wounds? All your power is nothing."

Hearing these words, Laodicius said:

"Your steadfastness in torments depends not on the power of your God, but on your sorcery. Behold, I give orders that your body be burned in the fire, so that all your members will be turned to ash and scattered by the wind."

And at once the tormentor commanded that a very great furnace be prepared; he ordered it filled with pitch and brushwood and kindled; the smoke from the furnace rose upward sixty cubits, so that the air around the furnace was darkened over a great distance. Then Laodicius said to the saint:

"Offer sacrifice to the god Dionysius."

But the martyr was silent.

Then Laodicius said again:

"How long will you resist my commands? Behold the fire prepared for you. Look upon it, and understand the greatness and might of our god Dionysius, and worship him."

The saint answered:

"I have already told you, anthypatos, that I will not worship the deaf, blind and mute destroyer of human souls. Do you not wish to be convinced that the one you call a god is not God but an idol?"

Laodicius answered with anger:

"O accursed one! Can he be an idol who has within him divine power? You yourself see that the power dwelling in him receives sacrifices from us and grants us prosperity."

But the saint said to him:

"Do you not wish me to offer sacrifice to your god, so that everyone, seeing that I offer sacrifice to the god Dionysius, may know his great power?"

Laodicius said:

"Worship and offer sacrifice, and understand his greatness."

Then Mokios, entering the idol-temple, first of all made the sign of the Cross upon himself, that he might arm himself with the weapon of Christ against the devil; then, standing near the place where the idol of Dionysius was, he prayed to God, saying thus: "O Master, who holdest all creation in Thy power and hast created all things through Thy Christ, who hast put to shame the devil, who knoweth not Thy truth, and hast granted the blessing of knowledge of God and of chastity to all who fear Thee and honor Thy holy name! Thou, O Holy Lord, who didst shatter the idols of Babylon and didst show forth the true faith of Thy prophet Daniel; Thou who didst overthrow the abominable altar of the idols through Thy three youths and didst quench the fire in the furnace (Dan. 3); Thou who didst drown Pharaoh in the depths of the sea and didst hearken to the prayers of Moses (Ex. 14); Thou who didst bring water out of the rock (Ex. 17:1–7); Thou eternal King, who now existest and who wert before and shalt ever exist—hear me, Thy ser-

vant! Behold, I beseech Thee: come to my aid and show forth Thy power to those who hold falsehood in place of truth, that they may know that Thou alone art the true and eternal God, and that Thy light may drive away the darkness of idolatrous error."

Having prayed thus, the saint cried out with a loud voice, turning to the idol:

"Vile and vain one! Mute and insensible Dionysius! I command you by the great and glorious name of my Christ, who dwells in the heavens: fall and be prostrated upon the earth, that all may see your weakness and your powerlessness."

And at once the earth and the temple shook; the idol fell to the ground with a great crash and was broken into small pieces. Seeing this, all the pagans who were there fled in terror, marveling among themselves at what had happened.

After this, the holy Mocius said to the anthypatos Laodicius:

"Look upon the vanity of your idols, your demons. Come, then, and gather the remains of your god upon whom you relied, and understand upon what perilous path you stand!"

Laodicius was greatly grieved, lamenting over the idol of Dionysius, and at once commanded that the saint be cast into the kindled furnace.

When the saint was cast into the fire, he stood fearlessly amid the flames, as if in some garden, and cried out before all, glorifying God. In the furnace there were seen three other men singing with him; among these three men one had a very bright face, shining like the sun; the radiance that came from his face was stronger than the brightness of the fire. Then the saint said to the men who were with him in the furnace:

"I thank Thee, O Lord God of our fathers, to whose word all things obey; blessed art Thou, Lord of hosts, Creator of all the heavenly powers, praised by the lips of the holy Archangels, who didst once stand with the three youths in the flame (among those three youths Thou wert seen as a fourth). I beseech Thee, my Savior, destroy and annihilate the fire of this kindled furnace and burn with fire this anthypatos here. Show forth Thy wrath upon him and destroy him from the face of the earth, that all may see that Thou art the one true God, dwelling in the heavens."

And at once the fire went forth from the furnace and reached the anthypatos and turned him to ash together with nine armor-bearers who stood near him, so that nothing remained of their bodies, for the wrath of God consumed them. The people, seeing all that had happened, were seized with great fear and fled in terror from the furnace; but the holy Mokios came out of the furnace entirely whole and unharmed.

Learning of such a miracle, the city governor Phallasius was filled with great fury and, seizing the holy Mocius, commanded that he be cast into prison.

Twenty days after this, another anthypatos, named Maximus, arrived in that city. Having learned all that the saint had done, and also learning of the perdition of Laodicius, Maximus began to devise a means by which he might destroy the saint. Seating himself in his place of judgment, Maximus commanded that the martyr of Christ be summoned before him for interrogation. When the saint was brought, the anthypatos asked him:

– Tell me, what is your name, and of what family do you come?

The Saint answered:

– If you wish to know my name and family, then listen: my father bore the name Euphratius, and my mother Eustathia. When they received holy Baptism, they named me Mocius. Brought up by my parents in a life of piety, I was granted the honor of the priesthood in the Church of Christ my God; and now my life has already drawn near to old age.

Then Maximus said:

– Who were your parents?

The Saint answered:

– My father was a citizen of the great city of Rome and held the duties of a military rank; my mother was the daughter of the anthypatos Lampadius.

Maximus said:

– If you come of so noble a family, why have you given yourself to sorcery, unbefitting for you? Why have you destroyed the great god Dionysius, and burned the friend of the Emperor, the anthypatos Laodi-

cius? Why have you hindered the offering of festal sacrifices to the gods?

The Holy Mocius answered:

– It was not I, but my almighty God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who destroyed and crushed the senseless god Dionysius, and who burned Laodicius with the fire of His wrath. I only serve my God with fear and love, and with my lips I confess His holy Name.

Maximus said in reply:

– Abandon your madness and offer sacrifice to Apollo[4]; otherwise you will die a cruel death.

But the Martyr answered:

– I shall die a cruel death if I forget the benefactions and mercies of my God toward me, and if I should worship and honor those who are not gods but idols.

Then Maximus ordered the Martyr to be bound to two wheels devised for torment, so that as the wheel turned his body would be torn apart.

But the Saint, in the midst of the torments, cried out:

– How sweet is the love of God!

Then, turning to the tormentor, he said:

– Diligently carry out the will of your father, the devil. As for me, I am ready for all torments, and even for death itself, for the sake of the Name of Christ.

Then the Saint began to pray, saying thus: "O Lord, Source of purity, my Helper, Defender and Deliverer! I thank Thee that Thou hast granted me, unworthy as I am, to accomplish this ordeal, and hast helped me to overcome the devil. Thou art the One True God, who keepest my mind in purity and guardest it from impure thoughts. Thou dost ordain that my mind should delight in Thee, my Creator, for great is Thy Name to those who love Thee."

4. Apollo – according to Greek mythology, the son of Zeus and Leto, god of well-being and order, guardian of law. As the one who announced the will of Zeus to men, he was also considered a god of prophecy and of the oracle.

After the Saint had prayed thus, the wheels of torment were suddenly broken, and the Martyr stood upon the earth, entirely whole and unharmed.

All who saw this miracle were greatly astonished at what had happened. The tormentor, filled with shame as one overcome by a Martyr, was yet more enraged against the Saint and ordered him cast into prison. Three days later he ordered the Saint brought out of prison and given to the wild beasts to be devoured.

Two hungry lions, roaring loudly, were let loose upon the Saint. When they came near to the Saint, they lay down upon the ground before him, as if worshipping him and embracing his feet; then the lions began to lick the Saint's feet, as if kissing them.

The people, seeing all that had happened, cried out loudly, saying:

– Let this righteous man be set free, whom even the beasts honor and whom God loves!

Then the anthypatos Maximus sent the Martyr to the Thracian city of Perinthus, now called Heraclea, to the governor Philippicius, to whom he wrote everything concerning the Martyr. This governor, after keeping the Saint eight days in prison, ordered him to be taken to Byzantium, that the Martyr's head might be cut off there.

When the Saint was brought to the place of execution, he raised his eyes to heaven and said:

– Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast created the ages and bringest to completion the struggles of the saints. Receive my spirit in peace!

And a voice came to the Saint from heaven, saying:

– Rejoice, good ascetic of Mine, Mocius, who hast openly overcome before all the power of the tormentor. Come and dwell with the other ascetics in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thou hast labored enough in the world; rest now and rejoice in heaven.

Then the Martyr of Christ was beheaded[5].

St. Mocius accomplished his martyric struggle on the eleventh day of the month of May, on which day the Emperor Constantine afterward established a feast in his honor. This same emperor also built a church

5. The death of the holy martyr took place about 295.

in honor of the Saint and transferred the relics of the Martyr into it. May all who keep the memory of the holy martyr Mocius be inspired with faith that they too will share with him in the blessed kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, honor and worship, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Armed with the shield of faith, thou didst scatter the ranks of the impious, O Hieromartyr Mocius, and didst receive the crown from Christ; therefore rejoicing with the Angels, deliver from afflictions those who sing unto thee, and ever intercede for us all.

* * *

Life and Labors of our Venerable Fathers Methodius and Constantine, in monasticism Cyril, Teachers of the Slavs

Жизнь и труды преподобных отцов наших Мефодия и Константина, в монашестве Кирилла, учителей славянских

In the days of the iconoclast Greek emperors Leo the Armenian[6], Michael Travlus[7], or Balbus, and then Michael's son Theophilus[8], there lived in the city of Thessalonica, in Macedonia, a noble and wealthy nobleman, by rank a centurion, named Leo. His wife was called Mary. He lived piously, fulfilling all the commandments of God, as once Job did. They had seven sons: the eldest was called Methodius, and the youngest Constantine, in monasticism Cyril.

St. Methodius at first served, as did his father, in military rank. The Emperor, learning of him as a good warrior, appointed him voivode over a Slavic principality, Sclavinia, which was under Greek dominion. This happened by the special providence of God, so that Methodius might better learn the Slavic tongue, as the future spiritual teacher and pastor of the Slavs[3095].

Having served in the rank of voivode for about ten years, and having come to know the vanity of worldly life, Methodius began to dispose his

6. Leo V the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820.

will toward renunciation of all earthly things and to direct his thoughts toward the heavenly. At this same time the iconoclast emperor Theophilus raised a persecution against the holy icons. This persecution revealed still more to Methodius the vanity of worldly life, and he, leaving the voivodeship and all the pleasures of the world, went into monasticism on Mount Olympus[9], where with great obedience and submissiveness he strove to fulfill the monastic vows, while at the same time occupying himself with the study of the Holy Scriptures.

The blessed Constantine, the youngest of Leo's sons, even in infancy showed something wondrous. When his mother, after his birth, gave him to a nurse to be suckled, he would by no means consent to feed on another's milk, but only on the milk of his own mother. Evidently a pious offshoot ought not to feed on strange milk. At the birth of Constantine the good parents made a vow to live as brother and sister, and they did so for fourteen years until their death. Before her husband's death, Mary wept, saying:

– I grieve for nothing so much as for Constantine: how will he be settled in life?

– Believe me, wife, – Leo answered, – I hope in God that the Lord God will make him such a father and builder that he will establish all Christians.

So it came to pass.

When he was seven years old, Constantine saw a dream, which he related to his parents.

"It seemed to me," said Constantine, "that the voivode gathered all the maidens of the city and said to me: choose for yourself one of them as your bride. I looked them over and chose the most beautiful of them, with a bright face, adorned with many golden things and precious stones, named Sophia."

The parents understood that the Lord was giving the youth the maiden Sophia[10], that is, the Wisdom of God; they rejoiced in spirit and

7. Michael II Balbus, or the Stammerer, reigned from 820 to 829.
8. Theophilus reigned from 829 to 842.
9. Olympus – a mountain in Asia Minor, on the borders of Phrygia and Bithynia.
10. Sophia – in Greek means "wisdom."

zealously began to teach Constantine not only book-reading but also godly virtue – spiritual wisdom.

"Son," they said to Constantine in the words of Solomon, "honor the Lord and thou shalt be strengthened; keep the commandments and thou shalt live; write the words of God upon the tablets of thy heart: 'Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister, and call understanding thy kinswoman' (Prov. 7:1–4). Wisdom shines brighter than the sun, and if thou hast her as thy helper, she will deliver thee from much evil."

The parents gave Constantine to book learning. He was distinguished by a good memory and understanding, so that in his studies he surpassed all his peers. There happened to him the following incident:

As the son of wealthy parents, Constantine once went with his companions on a falconry hunt. As soon as Constantine released his falcon, a strong wind arose which carried the falcon away no one knew where. Constantine was so grieved over the falcon that for two days he ate nothing, not even bread. The merciful Lord, not willing that the youth should grieve so over worldly things, caught him by this very falcon, as once He caught Placidas by a stag. Reflecting on the delights of this life, St. Constantine said: "What a life this is, in which joy inevitably brings sorrow! From this day I will go another way, better than this, so that I may escape worldly vanity." From this time he almost always remained at home, striving with great diligence to study the sciences, especially the teaching of St. Gregory the Theologian.

Constantine had great love for this hierarch, and he knew much of his teaching by heart. Having drawn an image of the holy Cross on the wall, under this cross he wrote a eulogy to St. Gregory in the following words: "O divine hierarch Gregory the Theologian! Thou wert a man in body, but in life thou wast revealed as an Angel, for thy lips, like the lips of the Seraphim, glorified God with praises, and by thy orthodox teaching thou didst enlighten the universe. I beseech thee, receive me, who with faith and love fall down before thee, and be my teacher and enlightener."

Studying the books diligently, Constantine saw how slight his knowledge still was for lack of a good teacher, and he fell into great dejection. In their city there lived a certain man, a wanderer, who knew

grammar. Constantine went to him, implored him, and, falling prostrate before him, said:

"Do me a kindness: teach me grammar."

To this the wanderer replied:

"Youth, do not ask me. I have vowed no longer to teach anyone."

Again Constantine began to speak to him with tears:

"Take that portion of my father's house which belongs to me, only teach me."

But even this did not move the man. Then Constantine went home and here began to pray earnestly that the Lord would fulfil the desire of his heart and find him a teacher. The Lord soon granted his desire.

At this time in the Greek land Emperor Theophilus died, and his son Michael reigned with his pious mother, the Empress Theodora. This emperor was left a minor after his father, and three nobles were appointed as his guardians: the domestic[11] Manuel, the patrician[12] Theoctistus, and the logothete[13] Dromi, who was well acquainted with the parents of Methodius and Constantine. The logothete, knowing of Constantine's progress and diligence, sent for him, that he might study the sciences together with the young Emperor Michael, who would imitate Constantine's zeal. The youth took heart and set out gladly, praying to God with the prayer of Solomon: "God of our fathers and Lord of mercy," so prayed Constantine, "who hast made man, give me wisdom, which sits by Thy throne, and do not exclude me from the number of Thy servants, for I am Thy servant and the son of Thy handmaid. Grant me to know all that is pleasing to Thee and to labour for Thy name all my life."

In Constantinople Constantine lived now in the house of a boyar, now in the imperial palace. In three months he learned grammar, then he studied Homer[14] and geometry; dialectics and philosophy he studied under Leo and Photius[15]. Besides these sciences he studied rhetoric,

11. Domestic – the highest military dignitary, who lived permanently at the imperial court. His duty was to guard the person of the emperor.

12. In antiquity, patricians were the name given to people of noble birth.

13. Logothete – keeper of the seal, the equivalent of our state chancellor.

14. Homer – the famous ancient Greek writer, author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, who lived 3000 years before our time.

arithmetic, astronomy, music, and in general all the other Hellenic sciences. He knew well not only Greek but other languages as well: Latin, Syriac, and some foreign ones. By his mind and diligence he astonished his teachers, and for this he later received the name of the philosopher-sage. But he was wise not only in the sciences but also in life: he strove to be humble, conversed with those from whom he wished to receive instruction, and avoided those who might lead him into evil. In a word, he strove to exchange the earthly for the heavenly and to live with God.

The logothete, seeing Constantine's good life and his success in the sciences, made him steward over his household and also allowed him to enter the imperial chambers without announcement. Once the logothete asked Constantine:

"Tell me, philosopher, what is called philosophy?"

"Philosophy," answered Constantine, "is the understanding of divine and human affairs, which teaches a man, through virtue, to draw as near to God as possible, God who created man in His own image and likeness."

After this the logothete loved Constantine still more and desired to receive from him instruction in philosophy. Constantine set forth the philosophical teaching before him in a few words, for which the logothete showed him special respect and even offered him much gold, but Constantine refused it.

This nobleman had a goddaughter, a maiden of a rich and famous family. The logothete resolved to marry her to Constantine and urged him thus.

"Your beauty and wisdom," said the logothete, "involuntarily compel one to love you. I have a spiritual daughter, a beautiful girl, rich, of good and noble birth. If you wish, take her for your wife. From the emperor you will receive great honour and a principality, and before long you will be appointed voivode as well."

"Great is this gift for those who desire it," answered Constantine, "but for me nothing is more precious than learning, through which I can acquire understanding, true honour, and riches."

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15. Later became patriarch.

After such words the logothete went to the empress and said:

"The young philosopher does not love the vanity of this life. Let us try to keep him near us, and for this let us persuade him to be ordained to the sacred rank and to be the patriarchal librarian at the Church of St. Sophia. Only in this way can he be kept."

So they did. Constantine became a priest and librarian at the Church of St. Sophia. But even in this office Constantine was not long with them. Saying nothing to anyone, he set out for the Golden Horn[16] and there hid himself in a certain monastery. They searched long for Constantine and found him only after six months. They could not persuade him to take up his former post, and only begged him to be teacher of philosophy at the chief Constantinopolitan school.

At this time Patriarch John[17] raised a persecution against the holy icons. Then a council was assembled, which decreed that this patriarch be removed from the throne. Upon this decision of the council John said:

"They removed me by force, but could not refute me, for no one can withstand my words."

The emperor and the new patriarch sent Constantine to John with these words:

"If you are able to refute this youth, you will again occupy the throne."

Seeing so young a philosopher and not knowing his powerful mind, John said to Constantine and to those sent with him:

"You are not worthy to be my footstool. How then shall I argue with you?"

"Do not hold to human customs," answered Constantine, "but look to the commandments of God. As you, so we also were created from the earth, but the soul is from God. Therefore, looking upon the earth, O man, do not be proud!"

"It is foolish to seek flowers in autumn," said John, "and likewise to send an old man to war."

16. The Golden Horn – a long narrow inlet forming the bay of the Bosphorus strait.
17. John VII was patriarch from 832 to 842.

"You yourself condemn yourself," answered the philosopher. "Tell me, at what age is the soul stronger than the body?"

"In old age," answered John.

"To what war do we summon you," asked the philosopher, "to a bodily or a spiritual one?"

"To a spiritual one," answered John.

"If you are now stronger in spirit," said the philosopher, "then do not bring us such comparisons. We do not seek flowers out of season, nor do we summon you to dispute out of season."

After this they turned to conversation. The elder asked:

"Tell me, youth: if a cross breaks, we no longer worship it or kiss it. How is it, then, that you, if only one face is preserved down to the breast, are not ashamed to render honour to it as an icon?"

"The cross has four parts," answered the philosopher, "and if one part is missing, the cross loses its appearance; but an icon has appearance and likeness if the face of him whom it was meant to depict is painted. The beholder looks not at the face of a lion or of a lynx, but at the prototype."

"Behold, you bow to the cross," said the elder, "and even if there is no inscription on it; but to an icon, if there is no painting, you do not render honour."

"Every cross," answered the philosopher, "has the likeness of the Cross of Christ, but icons do not have one form; they are various."

At last the elder said:

"Why do you bow to icons, when God said to the prophet Moses: 'Thou shalt not make... any likeness' (Ex. 20:4)?"

"If the Lord had said, 'Make no likeness,'" answered the philosopher, "then you would be speaking correctly; but the Lord said, 'any,' that is, except the worthy."

To this the elder could say nothing in reply and fell silent. About this time envoys came to Constantinople from the unbelieving Agarenes, or Saracens, who held Syria. These Saracens, already in the time of the former emperor Theophilus, by God's permission and for sins, had advanced upon the Greek land and laid waste the splendid city of Amorium[18]. From that time they began to boast before the Christians of their power, and they sent a letter to Constantinople containing blasphemy against the Most Holy Trinity.

"How is it, you Christians," wrote the Saracens, "that you say God is one, and yet divide Him into three, confessing Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? If you can prove this, then send to us such men as could converse with us about the faith and convince us[19]."

At this time the blessed Constantine was twenty-four years old. The emperor together with the patriarch assembled a council, to which they summoned Constantine and said to him:

"Do you hear, philosopher, what the wicked Agarenes say against our faith? If you are a servant and disciple of the Holy Trinity, go and refute them. And may God, the accomplisher of every work, glorified in the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you grace and strength in words, to show you as another David, who with three stones overcame Goliath (1 Kgdms. 17), and then bring you back to us in safety."

Hearing such words, the philosopher answered:

"I am glad to go for the Christian faith. What can be better for me: to die, or to remain alive for the sake of the Holy Trinity?"

They gave Constantine two deacons[20] and sent them to the Saracens. They came straight to the capital of the Saracen principality, Samara, situated near the River Euphrates, in which lived the Saracen prince Amirmushna. Here they saw strange and loathsome things which the Agarenes did to mock and deride the Christians living in those places. By order of the Saracen authority, on the outer side of the doors where Christians lived, images of demons had been inscribed. By

18. The account of this is found in the description of the sufferings of the holy Martyrs of Amorium, under 6 March.
19. This was in 851.
20. One named George.

this the Agarenes wished to show that they loathed the Christians as demons. As soon as Constantine arrived, the Saracens, pointing to the demons, asked him:

"Can you, philosopher, understand what these images are saying?"

"I see a demonic image," answered the philosopher, "and I think that Christians live here. Demons cannot live together with Christians and flee from them (they stand outside the doors). Where there is no such image on the outer side of the doors, there, evidently, demons live inside the building."

The Saracens invited Constantine to dinner in the prince's hall. Seated at the table were men wise and learned in books, who had studied geometry, astronomy and other sciences. Tempting Constantine, they asked him:

"Consider, philosopher, a marvelous thing: the prophet Muhammad brought a good teaching from God and converted many people. We all hold firmly and in the same way to his law, and change nothing in it. But among you Christians, who keep the law of Christ, one believes in one way, another otherwise, and lives as he pleases. Among you there are many teachers who teach in different ways, and there are monks who wear black garments and live a special manner of life. Yet all of you call yourselves Christians."

"You have put two questions to me," replied the blessed Constantine, "concerning the Christian faith and the Christian law, that is, how Christians believe and how they carry out their faith in life. I shall speak first of the faith. Our God, like the depths of the sea, is of boundless breadth and depth, incomprehensible to the human mind and inexpressible in human words, as the holy prophet Isaiah says: 'Who shall declare His generation?' (Is. 53:8). On the basis of this our teacher, the holy apostle Paul, cries out, saying: 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!' (Rom. 11:33). Many who desire to seek out God enter into this deep, and those among them who are strong in mind and have obtained the help of the Lord Himself swim safely over the sea of the incomprehensibility of God. Those who are weak in mind and, through their own presumption, have lost the help of

God, wish to cross this deep in leaky ships; they sink, falling into heresies and errors, or with difficulty remain in one place, troubled by uncertainty and doubts. Therefore many Christians, as you say, differ in faith. This is what I have said of the faith; of the works that accord with faith I shall say the following. The law of Christ is none other than that which God gave to Moses on Sinai (Ex. 20:1–18): not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to covet what is another's, and so on. Our Lord said: 'I am not come to destroy the law... but to fulfill' (Mt. 5:17). For a more perfect life and a better pleasing of God, the Lord gave the counsel to lead a purer, virginal life and to perform special works which lead to eternal life by a narrow and sorrowful way. Yet the Lord does not compel anyone to this life, and it does not come by force. God created man between heaven and earth: by reason and understanding man is distinguished from the unreasoning beasts, by anger and lust he is distinguished from the Angels. Then God gave man free will, so that he might do what he wishes and draw near to what he will; and with that he will have communion: either he will be a companion of the Angels, working for God, as his reason enlightened by faith teaches him, or he will have communion with senseless beasts, if without any restraint he fulfills all the lusts of the flesh. And since God created man with free will, He desires that we be saved not by compulsion but by our own desire, and He says: 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' (Mt. 16:24); and: 'He that is able to receive it, let him receive it' (Mt. 19:12). Some of the faithful Christians walk in this life by a more convenient path, living chastely according to the laws of nature in honorable marriage; others, more zealous and desiring to be more perfect, strive to live like the Angels and walk the narrow way. Therefore Christians live in different ways."

"Your faith and your law," Constantine continued, "have no difficulty of this kind; they are like not a sea but a small brook, which anyone, great or small, can leap over without any trouble. In your faith and your law there is nothing divine and inspired by God, but only human customs and carnal reasonings, which can be fulfilled without effort. For your lawgiver Muhammad did not give you any commandment hard

to fulfill: he did not even turn you away from anger and lawless lust, but permitted everything. Therefore you all carry out your law uniformly, since it was given to suit your lusts. Our Savior Christ, however, did not act so. He Himself, the Most Pure and the source of all purity, desires that His servants too live holily, withdrawing from every lust, and that the pure be joined only to the pure, since into His kingdom 'there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth' (Rev. 21:27)."

Then the Saracen sages asked Constantine:

"Why do you Christians divide the one God into three, calling Him Father, Son and Spirit? If God can have a Son, then give Him a wife too, so that there are many gods?"

"Do not blaspheme the most divine Trinity," replied the Christian philosopher, "which we have learned to confess from the ancient prophets, whom you also acknowledge, since you too, being circumcised, hold to their teaching. They teach us that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are three hypostases, while their essence is one. A likeness of this can be seen in heaven. Thus in the sun, created by God in the image of the Holy Trinity, there are three things: the disc, the bright ray and the warmth. In the Holy Trinity the solar disc is a likeness of God the Father. As the disc has neither beginning nor end, so God is without beginning and without end. As from the solar disc there proceeds the bright ray and the solar warmth, so from God the Father is born the Son and proceeds the Holy Spirit. Thus the solar ray, which enlightens the whole universe, is a likeness of God the Son, begotten of the Father and manifested in this world; and the solar warmth, which issues from the same solar disc together with the ray, is a likeness of God the Holy Spirit, who together with the begotten Son eternally proceeds from the Father, though in time He is sent to men also by the Son,[21] as for example He was sent upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire. And as the sun, which consists of three things, the disc, the bright ray and the warmth, is not divided into three suns, although each of these things has its own properties, one being the disc, another the ray, the

21. That is, for the sake of the merits of Christ's Cross: "for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn. 7:39).

third the warmth, yet it is not three suns but one, so the most Holy Trinity, although it has three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is not divided in its Godhead into three gods, but is one God. Do you remember how Scripture tells of God appearing to the patriarch Abraham by the oak of Mamre, from whom you keep circumcision? God appeared to Abraham in three Persons. 'And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said: Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant' (Gen. 18:2–3)."

Note: Abraham sees before him three men, yet he converses as with One, saying: 'Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight.' Clearly the holy patriarch confessed One God in Three Persons.

The Saracen sages, not knowing what to say concerning the teaching of the most Holy Trinity, fell silent, and then asked:

"How do you Christians say that God was born of a woman? Can God be born from a woman's womb?"

"Not of an ordinary woman," the philosopher replied, "but of the unwedded Most Pure Virgin was God the Son born by the action of the Holy Spirit, who in the most pure virginal womb ineffably formed the flesh of Christ God and accomplished the supernatural incarnation and birth of the Word of the Father. Therefore the Virgin who conceived the Son from the Holy Spirit remained a pure Virgin, before the birth, during the birth and after the birth, by the will of God, to whom every created being is subject, as the church hymn says: 'For where God wills, the order of nature is overcome.'[22]"

That Christ was born of the pure Virgin by the Holy Spirit is also witnessed by your prophet Muhammad, who wrote the following: 'The Holy Spirit was sent to the pure Virgin, that by His will she might bear a Son.'

"We do not dispute," said the Saracens, "that Christ was born of a pure Virgin; only we do not call Him God."

"If Christ were a mere man and not at the same time God, then why should His conception have taken place from the Holy Spirit? A mere

man is born of a married woman, not of a Virgin who knew no marriage, and he is conceived by nature from a husband, not by a special inspiration and action of the Holy Spirit."

After this the Saracens asked:

"If Christ is your God, why do you not do what He commands you? For it is written in the Gospel: pray for your enemies, do good to those who hate and oppress you, and turn the other cheek to those who strike you. Yet you do not act so; against your adversaries you sharpen your weapons."

To this the philosopher answered as follows:

"If in some law two commandments were written and given to men to fulfill, which of the men would be the true keeper of the law: he who fulfills one commandment, or he who fulfills two?"

"Certainly the better keeper," the Saracens answered, "will be the one who fulfills both commandments."

"Christ our God," said the philosopher in reply, "commanded us to pray for those who wrong us and to do good to them; but He also said this: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (Jn. 15:13). We bear wrongs when they are directed against some individual alone, but we stand up for others, and even lay down our souls, when they are directed against the community, so that our brethren do not fall into captivity, where they might be seduced into godless and evil deeds."

Again the Saracens said:

Christ your own paid tribute for Himself and for others (for the Apostle Peter). Why then do you not do this and do not wish to pay tribute? If you truly stood up for one another, you would surely pay tribute for your brethren to so great and mighty a people as the Ishmaelites.

"If someone walks in the footsteps of his teacher and wishes always to walk in them," answered Constantine, "and another person turns him from that path, is such a man a friend to him or an enemy?"

"Without doubt an enemy," answered the Saracens.

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22. From the Dogmatikon of the 7th Tone.– *Edition of the "Azbuka Very"*

"When Christ paid tribute," Constantine then asked, "which kingdom was it: the Ishmaelite or the Roman?"

"The Roman," answered the Saracens.

"Therefore we also, following Christ, pay tribute to the emperor who dwells in the New Rome (Constantinople) and rules the Old Rome," answered the philosopher. "But you, when you demand tribute from us, turn us from the path of Christ and become our enemies."

After this they put to Constantine many other questions from the sciences which they knew. To all the questions Constantine answered in such a way that the Saracens could say nothing. Then they asked him:

"Why do you know all this?"

Then Constantine offered the following comparison:

"A man," he said, "drew water from the sea and afterwards carried it in a bag. Having gone far from the sea, he pointed to the bag of water and said to everyone: 'Do you see the water, which no one but I possesses?' A certain inhabitant of the seashore came up to him and said: 'Are you not ashamed to boast of a bag of water, when we have the whole sea?' So you act when you ask questions from those sciences which you learned from us (the Greeks)."

Then, as a marvel, the Saracens showed Constantine a vineyard, once diligently planted and grown very well.[23] Constantine explained how this is done. Then the Saracens showed him all their wealth: palaces adorned with gold, silver and precious stones, and said:

"Do you see, philosopher, what power and wealth Omar, the lord of the Saracens, possesses?"

"There is nothing marvelous in this," answered the philosopher. "For all this one must glorify God, who gave these riches for the enjoyment of men. All this belongs to God and to no one else."

In the end the Saracens showed themselves to be what they are. They gave the blessed Constantine poison to drink. But the Lord, who promised to all who labor in His name that "if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" (Mk. 16:18), kept His servant whole and

23. Evidently a special kind of vine-training by some artificial method is meant here.

unharmed. The Saracens, seeing this miracle, sent Constantine away, together with the other envoys, to his own land with honor and gifts from their prince.

In Constantinople the emperor and the patriarch met the blessed Constantine with praise for the God-pleasing labor he had accomplished. But Constantine did not remain long in Constantinople. Soon he withdrew to a quiet and remote place, where he occupied himself only with his own salvation. He took no provisions with him, but placed his hope in the Providence of God, who through Christ-loving people supplied him with food. From the food brought to him Constantine kept nothing for the next day, but after his customary meal distributed all the rest to the poor, trusting in God, who opens His generous hand and feeds all that lives with His goodness.

Once, on the eve of a great feast, Constantine had no food at all, and his servant grieved greatly over this. The blessed Constantine said to him:

"He who once fed the Israelites in the wilderness for many years, will He not feed us also on this great day? Go without fail and invite to our meal at least five of the poor, and we shall wait for the mercy of God, for He will not forsake us."

And so it really came to pass. At the time of the midday meal a man came, bringing much food of every kind and ten gold coins. The blessed one received this and offered praise to God, his Provider.

From here Constantine set out for Mount Olympus, to his elder brother Methodius, with whom he came to live together, fulfilling the ascetic labors of monastic life in fasting, spending his time in prayer or in reading of books.[24]

At this time envoys came to the Greek emperor Michael from the Khazars,[3112] with such words:

24. On Olympus the blessed Constantine first began to study the Slavonic language. The environment in which he found himself favored this. In the monasteries on the mountain there were many Slavic monks from various neighboring lands, so that Constantine could have constant practice here, which was especially important for him, since he had spent almost his entire life from childhood in a Greek environment. That the holy brothers studied the Slavonic language here is attested by the testimony of the Bulgarian Slav, the black-robed monk Chrabr.

"We know first of all the One God, who reigns over all, and we pray to Him, bowing toward the east, but at the same time we keep certain unseemly customs.

The Jews strive that we should accept their faith and practices, and already many of us have become Jews in faith. The Saracens, entering into alliance with us and offering us gifts, compel us to accept the Mohammedan faith, and they say that the faith of the Saracens is better than the faith of all other peoples. Therefore we also desire from you, with whom we have kept an old love and friendship, to receive useful counsel, and we ask you to send to us some learned man, and if he refutes the Jews and the Saracens, we shall accept your faith."

Then Emperor Michael, by the counsel of the Most Holy Patriarch Ignatius,[25] who was after St. Methodius,[26] resolved to send the blessed Constantine, whom they summoned from Mount Olympus, to the Khazars. Having conveyed the Khazars' request, the emperor said to Constantine:

"Go, philosopher, to these people, and with the help of the Holy Trinity preach to them the teaching about the Most Holy Trinity. No one can fulfill this commission better than you."

"If you so command, Master," answered Constantine, "I shall go there gladly on foot, barefoot, and without everything that the Lord did not bid His disciples take when He sent them to preach."

"If you were doing this on your own account," answered the emperor, "I would have nothing against it. But since you are setting out from us, go with honor and with imperial assistance."

After this Constantine persuaded his brother, the blessed Methodius, who knew the Slavonic language, to go with him on the apostolic ministry, to enlighten the unbelievers with the light of the Christian faith. Methodius agreed, and they set out together. Their road lay through the steppes, and in the steppes at that time dwelt the Ugrians, today's Hungarians or Magyars. These Ugrians were so terrible that they hardly resembled men: they wore their furs with the fur turned outward, did not sow bread, and lived by plunder. When the holy

25. Ignatius was patriarch from 847 to 857; then a second time from 867 to 877.
26. The memory of St. Methodius is celebrated on 23 October.

brothers stopped here to pray, the Ugrians attacked them, howling like wolves, wishing to tear them to pieces. Constantine was not frightened, did not cease his prayer, and, calling upon the Lord, often repeated: "Lord, have mercy!"

At the end of the prayer the Ugrians, seeing Constantine, by the Divine providence became gentle and began to bow down before him. Constantine spoke some instructive words to them, after which the Ugrians let them go on their way.

First the holy brothers went to the Greek city of Kherson, bordering on the Khazars, which stood on the seashore not far from (present-day) Sevastopol. Here they spent a considerable time studying the Khazar[27] and Greek languages. Constantine here also translated eight parts of Hebrew grammar. They studied it in order to enlighten the Khazars more successfully and to contend with the Jews, who were numerous among the Khazars.[28]

There also lived a certain Samaritan, who came to Constantine and talked with him about the faith. Once he brought Samaritan books and showed them to Constantine. Constantine obtained them from the Samaritan and, shutting himself in his room, began earnestly to beseech God to help him study them. By God's help Constantine soon and well mastered these books. Learning of this, the Samaritan exclaimed: "Truly, whoever believes in Christ quickly receives the grace of the Holy Spirit."

The Samaritan's son was baptized at once; after him the Samaritan himself also accepted the Christian faith.

In Kherson Constantine succeeded in finding "the Gospel and the Psalter written in Russian letters," and also a man who spoke this language. Constantine, conversing with him, learned this speech, and on the basis of these conversations divided the letters into vowels and consonants, and with God's help soon began to read and explain the books he had found. Many, seeing such wisdom, marveled and glorified God.

Here also the holy brothers learned that the relics of the holy Hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome,[29] were in the sea. They began to per-

27. The Kozars spoke the Slavonic language.

suade the bishop of Kherson to uncover the holy relics. Concerning these relics the following is told:

When St. Clement was imprisoned from Rome in Kherson and converted many there to the Christian faith, then the hegemon Aufidian, by command of the emperor Trajan,[30] ordered him to be drowned in the sea, tying a ship's anchor to his neck, so that the Christians could not find his body. The faithful disciples of the saint stood on the shore and watched weeping as their teacher was drowned. Then two most faithful disciples, Cornelius and Phoebus, said to the Christians:

"Let us all pray with one accord that the Lord may reveal to us the body of the holy martyr."

By the prayer of the Christians the sea withdrew back three *poprishche*.[31] The people, as of old the Israelites in the Red Sea, went over the dry bed, and they found a marble tomb made in the manner of a church, and there they saw lying the holy body and the anchor with which the saint had been drowned. The Christians intended to take the holy body from there, but the aforementioned disciples were granted a revelation that the holy relics should be left untouched, and that every year, in memory of the saint, the sea would withdraw back for seven days, giving a way to those who wished to venerate the holy relics. So it continued for 700 years, from the reign of Trajan to the reign of the Greek emperor Nicephorus.[32] But because of the sins of men, the sea ceased to withdraw in the reign of Nicephorus, which caused great sorrow to the Christians.

Saints Constantine and Methodius arrived at Kherson when more than fifty years had already passed since the holy relics had been finally hidden away. George, the blessed Bishop of Kherson, whom the holy brothers persuaded to open the holy relics, first went to Constantinople to the Emperor and the Patriarch to obtain their permission for this opening. Together with the bishop, the whole clergy of the Church of St. Sophia came from Constantinople to the opening of the holy relics.

28. The influence of the Jews here was so strong that even the dynasty of Kozar kagans with their court, that is, the higher class of Kozar society, accepted Judaism.
30. Trajan reigned from 98 to 117.
31. A *poprishche* consisted of a thousand great paces, and in each such pace five feet are counted.
32. Nicephorus I reigned from 802 to 811.

Then all of them together, and also Saints Constantine and Methodius, accompanied by the people, went to the seashore, hoping to obtain what they desired. But the sea did not withdraw. Then, at sunset, they embarked on a ship and sailed out to sea. Suddenly, at night, at the very midnight, a light shone forth from the sea and the honorable head appeared, and then the whole body of St. Clement became visible. The holy relics were placed in the ship and with great honor were carried to the city and laid in the Apostles' Church[33]. Saints Constantine and Methodius took a part of the holy relics and carried them everywhere they went, until they brought this part to Rome.

From Kherson, Constantine and Methodius went to the Khazars, where they were received with honor by the Khazar khagan, to whom they gave a letter from the Greek emperor. The blessed Constantine had to hold lengthy discussions with the Khazars, Jews and Saracens. In these discussions Methodius took almost no part, since he was less learned than Constantine: as a former voivode, he knew better how to deal with the people than how to conduct learned disputations. Therefore it fell to Constantine, who from his early years had been skilled in the sciences, who knew the Holy Scripture well and was a good preacher, ready to give an answer to every question, to conduct the discussions about the faith alone; Methodius, however, helped Constantine by his God-pleasing prayer.

The Khazars sent to Constantine a certain crafty and cunning man, who said to him:

"You Greeks have the bad custom of setting over yourselves, in place of one emperor, another of common, non-imperial birth. Thus after Nicephorus they set as emperor the boyar Michael Curopalates, and, abandoning him, they raised to the throne Leo the Armenian of common stock, and after he was murdered they set up Michael Travlus, from Amorium by birth. But with us it is not so: all our khagans are of

33. According to the Pannonian list of the Life, the uncovering of the holy relics took place thus: everyone set out in a ship to the place where it was supposed the holy relics were. When the sea became perfectly calm, they began to search and to sing church songs at that time. At first a great fragrance spread, as if from many censers, and after this the holy relics appeared.

the khagan line, and no one among us can reign unless he is of this line."

To this Constantine replied in brief words:

"Did not God act well when He rejected King Saul, who was displeasing to Him, and chose from among the shepherds of the flocks a man after His own heart, David?"

The Khazar could make no reply to this and put forward another question:

"You utter moral teachings from the books that you hold in your hands, but we do not so; rather we speak all wisdom from its source, not priding ourselves on our writings, as you do. All wisdom seems to be within us."

"If you were to meet a naked man," Constantine answered, "who would assure you that he had much clothing and gold and estates, would you believe him, seeing him naked and having nothing in his hands?"

"No," said the Khazar. "If he had anything, he would not go about naked."

"If you, as you boast, have swallowed up all wisdom," said Constantine to the Khazar, "then tell me: how many generations were there from Adam to Moses, and where did each generation live on earth?"

The Khazar could say nothing. Constantine went on:

"Therefore I do not believe you that you have learned all wisdom and have no need of books."

The holy brothers were invited to dinner with the khagan. Before they sat down at the table, the khagan asked them:

"Tell me, of what lineage are you, so that we may know at what place to seat you."

"Our grandfather," answered Constantine, "was of a great and glorious lineage and stood near the King. But he could not keep the great glory given to him; he was expelled from the King and withdrew to a foreign land, where he begat us. We now seek the ancient glory of our grandfather and desire no other. Our grandfather was Adam."

"You speak fittingly and rightly, guest," said the khagan, after which he began to hold Constantine in special esteem.

When they had sat down at the table, the khagan took a cup and said:

"I drink in honor of the One God, who created all creation." Constantine then took a cup with the words:

"I drink to the glory of the One God and His Word, by whom the heavens were established, and the Life-giving Spirit, by whom the existence of created creation is sustained."

"Behold," said the khagan to Constantine, "we hold the same teaching about God, the Creator of all creation; we differ only in that you glorify the Trinity, while we glorify the One God, as the Jewish books teach."

"If you have learned from the Jewish books that God is one," answered Constantine, "then from those same books learn also the Holy Trinity. The Jewish books in their prophecies proclaim, besides the Father, the Word and the Spirit. Thus King and Prophet David says: 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth' (Ps. 32:6). In this place unity and trinity are quite clearly indicated: the Lord, His Word, and His Spirit. The Lord is God the Father, the Word is God the Son, the Spirit of the Lord's mouth is God the Holy Spirit. Yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord with His Word and Spirit; nor are they three gods in the Godhead, but one God who is worshipped. Consider also this: which of two would be the better worshipper of your royal person, he who showed honor to you alone, but despised your word and the spirit of your mouth, or he who equally honored you, your word, and the spirit of your mouth?"

"Without doubt the latter," answered the khagan.

"Therefore we," the philosopher continued, "equally honoring the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, are better and truer worshippers than you. We have learned such worship from the prophetic books. Besides the place cited above, I will cite others. Thus the holy prophet Isaiah speaks of God the Son in the following words: 'Listen to Me, Jacob and Israel, My called one: I am the same, I am the first and I am the last... and now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit' (Is. 48:12, 16). Our ancient fathers[34] explained this place of Holy Scripture thus:"

"Who is the One sent, if not the Son? And from whom is He sent, if not from the Father and the Holy Paternal Spirit?"

There were many Jews at this dinner. Some of them said to the blessed Constantine:

"Tell us, Christian philosopher: how can a female sex contain in its womb God, whom even the Angels cannot behold?"

The philosopher, pointing with his finger to the khagan's first counselor, said:

"If someone were to say that this first counselor cannot receive the khagan into his house and entertain him, when even the lowest slave can do so, how would we call him: mad or wise?"

"Even very mad," the Jews answered.

Then the philosopher put forward this question:

"Which of all the visible creatures under heaven is the most honorable?"

"Man is the most honorable creature," the Jews answered, "because he has a rational soul, created in the image of God."

"Therefore those are unreasonable," answered the philosopher, "who consider it impossible for God to be contained in the human womb, when they know that He was contained in the thorn bush (the burning bush) at Moses' time. Is a bush, a soulless and insensible creature, more honorable than a sensible and rational creature having a God-like soul? Besides the bush, God was contained in a cloud, smoke and fire, when He appeared to Job, Moses and Elijah. But what is most

34. Athanasius the Great, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa.

wondrous is that God was contained in the most honorable living creature, wishing to appear on earth and live with men, in order to deliver them from the deadly wound inflicted on the human race by the sin of Adam. From whom, tell me, if not from the Creator Himself, should the most honorable creation, that is, the human race, await healing and renewal? Did not David prophesy: 'He sent His Word and healed them' (Ps. 106:20)? Therefore the Word of the Father, God the Son, came and healed human nature. How could the Word of the Father heal man, if He had not united Himself with man through the Incarnation and applied Himself to man like a healing plaster? Does a physician, wishing to heal a wounded man, apply a plaster to a tree or a stone rather than to the sick man? So also God applied His Only-begotten Word, like a plaster, not to a tree, although earlier It had appeared among the trees in the bush, nor to a stone, although It was visible to Moses and Elijah in the rocky mountains of Sinai and Horeb, but to man, seized by the sickness of sin. The union became indissoluble, for the Lord was pleased to dwell in a pure, virginal, and not merely feminine womb, as Isaiah prophesied: 'Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in the womb and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which means: God with us' (Is. 7:14). Here the prophet clearly says that God the Son would be born on earth of a pure and unwedded Virgin. And that it was possible for God to dwell in a virginal womb for our salvation, remember what is written in your books. Your rabbi Achilla says:"

"In thunder of stone and in the voice of the trumpet do not appear to us, O Lord, do not appear to us, O merciful Lord, but dwell in our womb and take away our sins."

"If Moses prayed to God that He would dwell in our wombs, why then do you reproach us, who confess that God dwelt in a woman's womb, and not merely a woman's but a virginal, pure, blameless and unwedded womb? He dwells also in our wombs when we Christians partake of the mystical sacrifice. As you see, the ancient prayer of Moses, recorded in your books on the testimony of the rabbi Achilla, has been fulfilled: God has dwelt in our wombs, taking away our sins."

After dinner everyone dispersed and appointed a day on which they would again converse about the faith. On the appointed day they all

gathered and, at the invitation of the khagan, sat down in the places assigned to them. Constantine made this preface to the discussion:

"Here am I, a stranger among you, and yet we are all conversing about God, in Whose hands are all things, and our hearts too. When we speak, let whoever among you is strong in words confirm our words if he understands them; and if he does not, let him ask again, and we will endeavor to explain."

The Jews began the discussion with this question:

"Tell us: which law did God give first, that of Moses or the one you Christians hold?"

"Is it not for this reason," the Blessed Constantine answered, "that you asked me which law came first, so that afterward you could say that the first is the best?"

"Yes," the Jews answered. "And therefore one should obey the first law, as the most ancient and the best."

"If you wish to keep only the first law, then renounce circumcision," Constantine said to the Jews.

"Why do you say this?" the Jews asked.

"Tell me truly," said Constantine to the Jews, "was the first law given in circumcision or in uncircumcision?"

"We think," the Jews answered, "that it was in circumcision."

"Was it not to Noah," said Constantine, "that God gave the first law? And this was before circumcision and after the commandment given to Adam in Paradise following his fall. God enjoined upon Noah that human blood not be shed: 'whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed' (Gen. 9:6). Then, speaking of the eating of herbs, beasts, cattle, birds and fish, God said to Noah: 'I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you' (Gen. 9:9)."

"But a covenant is not a law," said the Jews. "God did not say to Noah: My law, but My covenant. We are speaking of law."

"Do you keep circumcision as a law, or not?" asked Constantine.

"We keep it as a law," the Jews answered.

"But God did not call circumcision a law either," Constantine continued, "only a covenant, when He said to Abraham: 'As for you, keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their genera-

tions... every male among you shall be circumcised... and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you... and My covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant' (Gen. 17:9–13). Look," said Constantine, "God never once called circumcision a law, but a covenant. Will you therefore renounce circumcision as unlawful? But if you keep the covenant of circumcision as a law, then you must also keep the covenant given to Noah as a law, and call it the first law, which God gave to the human race, expelled from Paradise and preserved from the waters of the flood."

"No," the Jews answered. "Only the law given to Moses is a law, and that is what we keep."

"If the covenant given to Noah," said Constantine, "is not a law but only a covenant, because God did not call it a law but a covenant, then the law given to Moses is not a law either, because in the eleventh chapter of the book of the prophet Jeremiah God does not call it a law but a covenant: 'Hear the words of this covenant... thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt' (Jer. 11:2–4). If this covenant is a law for you, then the covenant given to Noah is a law too. And since this law was given before circumcision, you ought to keep it as the first and not heed the other laws that came after it, that is, those of Abraham and Moses. For you yourselves said that the first law is the best and must be obeyed."

The Jews then evaded this question, began to speak of something else, and said:

"Whoever held to the law of Moses pleased God. Therefore we, keeping it, hope also to be pleasing to God. But you hold to a new law which you have invented for yourselves, and you despise the ancient law."

"In accepting the new law," the philosopher answered, "we have done well. For even Abraham, had he not accepted circumcision but only kept the covenant of Noah, would not have been called the friend of God. Likewise Moses, after Abraham, not content with the laws previously given to Noah and to Abraham, wrote a new law. Following

their example, we too act thus. Yet just as they, following one another, did not abolish the earlier laws (Abraham did not reject Noah's, and Moses rejected neither), but by supplying what was lacking, set forth in fuller laws the more perfect will of God, so that the commandment of the Lord might be firm, so we too do not reject the old covenant written on the tablets of Moses, but keep all of it that teaches us to know the One God, Creator of all creation, as well as: not to kill, not to steal, and the other commandments. We depart only from what is not written on the tablets of Moses, for example: circumcision, the offering of sacrifice of irrational animals, and other such things. These were only a shadow and an image of the new law that was to come, and therefore with its coming they had to be abandoned. What need is there to keep the shadow when we have the thing itself in our hands?"

"If what you say about the old covenant," the Jews objected, "that the ordinances and covenants apart from the tablets of Moses were only a shadow and image of your new covenant, were true, then the ancient lawgivers would have known it and would have spoken of your new law, which was to come in future time. For a shadow and an image must outline the thing that people are to see with their eyes. But the lawgivers did not expect your law, and therefore all the ordinances and covenants of the Old Testament, like the tablets of Moses, are not a shadow and image but the truth itself, which you too, as well as what is written on the tablets of Moses, must keep as truth."

To this the philosopher answered thus:

"If the ancient lawgivers of the Old Testament did not know that a new law would follow theirs, I would ask you: when God at the beginning gave Noah the covenant we spoke of earlier, did He tell him then that He would give another law after him to His servant Abraham? Surely not; He confirmed the first covenant as existing for everlasting generations. Did He also tell Abraham, when He gave him the covenant, that He would afterward give another law to Moses? But about our new covenant He told in detail through His holy prophets. Listen, then, to Jeremiah speaking: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on

the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that covenant of Mine they broke, though I remained in covenant with them, says the Lord' (Jer. 31:31–32). You see the well-known prophecy about our new covenant. Also the prophet Isaiah foretold the new covenant in the name of the Lord, saying: 'Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth' (Is. 43:18–19). Thus the ancient lawgivers knew of the new law of grace, awaited it, and prophesied of it. Therefore your Old Testament ordinances and covenants are a shadow and image of the law we await, not the truth itself, and so they must be cast aside as unnecessary.

"Every Jew acknowledges as true that a new law will come," the Jews said, "but the time for the Anointed One to appear has not yet arrived."

"What are you still waiting for?" Constantine answered. "Has not the power of your kingdom and principality, which by the prophecy of the patriarch Jacob was to last only until the coming of Christ the Messiah, ceased? Is not Jerusalem destroyed? Are not the sacrifices rejected? Has not the glory of the Lord passed from you to the pagans, as the prophet Malachi clearly foretold, saying: 'I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hands. For from the rising of the sun to its setting My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts' (Mal. 1:10–11)?"

"We understand this passage thus," the Jews answered, "that the pagans will be blessed through us, as we, the seed of Abraham, are blessed, and will be circumcised in the city of Jerusalem."

"Through Whom the seed of Abraham is blessed," answered Constantine, "through Him also are we blessed, namely through the Messiah, who came forth from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jesse and David. For God said to Abraham: 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed' (Gen. 12:3), and to Isaac: 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed' (Gen. 26:4), and the same to Jacob (Gen. 28:14); and David says: 'In him shall the tribes be blessed; all nations shall call

him blessed' (Ps. 71:17). That the Messiah was to come both for the sake of the tribe of Abraham and for the salvation of the Gentiles, Jacob long ago declared when blessing Judah, saying: 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from his loins, until there come the Reconciler, and unto him shall be the obedience of the nations' (Gen. 49:10). And the prophet Zechariah, announcing to the daughter of Sion, Jerusalem, the coming of the meek King, seated upon a she-ass and a colt, says: 'And I will destroy the chariots of Ephraim and the horses in Jerusalem, and the bow of war shall be broken, and He shall proclaim peace to the nations' (Zech. 9:10). You see, then, that the Messiah was to come not only for your sake, Jews, but also for the sake of the Gentiles. It seems to me that He came more for the sake of the Gentiles than for yours, for you did not receive Him, while the Gentiles received Him; you slew Him, while the Gentiles believed in Him; you rejected Him, while the Gentiles loved Him; therefore He also rejected you, and called the Gentiles, and in them is glorified. That the Messiah so long expected has indeed already come, you may be convinced by the holy prophet Daniel. To this prophet in Babylon, in the first year of the reign of Darius, the Angel of the Lord Gabriel appeared, and from that time until the coming of the Messiah into the world he appointed seventy weeks. Each week contains seven years, and all together make 490 years. Thus your Talmud also reckons. How long ago have these years passed? If you consider, you will find that more than 800 years have already passed since the weeks spoken to Daniel were fulfilled (Dan. 2:1–49)."

"I will ask you yet another thing," said Constantine, "what kingdom do you think was the iron one, of which Daniel spoke to Nebuchadnezzar when he interpreted to him the dream of the great image?"

"The iron kingdom signified the Roman," answered the Jews.

"And whom," asked the philosopher, "does the stone signify, which was cut out of the mountain without hands and broke that image in pieces?"

"The stone signifies the Messiah," answered the Jews, and added: "If, according to the prophecies and other events, as you say, the Messi-

ah has already come, then why does the Roman kingdom still hold power even to this day?"

"No," answered the philosopher, "it no longer holds power, but has passed away like the other kingdoms. Our kingdom is not Roman but Christ's, as the prophet said: 'The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and this kingdom shall not be given to another people; it shall break in pieces and destroy all kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever' (Dan. 2:44). Is this not the Christian kingdom, called so after the name of Christ? The Romans served idols, while these are Christians, partly composed of this people, partly of other tribes and nations, and they reign in the name of Christ, as the prophet Isaiah describes, saying: 'You shall leave your name to My elect for a curse; but the Lord will slay you, and will call His servants by another name; by that name whoever blesses himself on earth shall bless himself, and whoever swears on earth shall swear by the true God' (Is. 65:15–16). Have not all the prophecies spoken of Christ been fulfilled? Isaiah foretold His birth of a Virgin, saying: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel' (Is. 7:14). And the holy prophet Micah speaks of the birth in Bethlehem thus: 'And thou, Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, art thou small among the thousands of Judah? Out of thee shall come forth to Me He who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from the beginning, from everlasting days. Therefore He will give them up until the time when she who is to bear shall bear' (Mic. 5:2–3).

"We," said the Jews, "are the blessed descendants of Shem, who received the blessing from his father Noah. But you have received no blessing."

"Noah's blessing of Shem has no relation to you," said Constantine, "but is only a glorification of God, for Noah said: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Shem' (Gen. 9:26). Here the Lord God is blessed by the mouth of Noah for the sake of the virtuous Shem, and nothing more. To Japheth, from whom we are descended, Noah said: 'May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem' (Gen. 9:27). You yourselves can see how by the grace of God Christianity spreads, and how you more and more lose your significance. Even where you once dwelt,

there now the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is blessed and glorified by Christians."

"Behold," said the Jews, "you, trusting in man, think to be blessed, whereas the books curse such."

To this the philosopher put to the Jews the following question:

"Is David cursed, or blessed?"

"Exceedingly blessed," answered the Jews.

"Then," said Constantine, "we too are blessed, since we trust in Him in whom he trusted when he said in the psalm: 'The man of My peace, in whom I trusted' (Ps. 40:10). That Man is Christ God. Whoever trusts in a mere man, him we also consider cursed."

After this the Jews put another question:

"Why do you Christians reject circumcision, when Christ did not reject it, but fulfilled it according to the law?"

The philosopher answered:

"He who first said to Abraham, 'It shall be a sign between Me and you,' He, when He came, fulfilled it, and therefore it was observed from that (Abraham) until this (Christ)[35]. In place of circumcision Christ established baptism."

Then the Jews said:

"Why, then, did some men please God without accepting that sign (baptism), but Abraham's (circumcision)?"

"None of those," answered the philosopher, "had two wives, except Abraham. Therefore God gave him circumcision, to set a limit so that they should not transgress further, but live according to the first pattern of Adam's life (having one wife). And to Jacob He gave a similar sign, when He injured his leg, because he had two wives. When Jacob understood the reason why this had been done to him, he then received the name 'Israel,' that is, one who sees God with the mind. Abraham, however, did not understand this."

35. Circumcision was given as a sign from the time of Abraham and ended with its fulfillment by Christ ("between Me and thee"), for which reason it was to end with Christ. Circumcision was altogether abolished, as an unnecessary yoke for Christians, at the Apostolic Council (Acts 15:1–41).

"How," asked the Jews in a new question, "do you think you please God by bowing down to idols?"

"First of all," answered the philosopher, "learn to distinguish the names, what an icon is and what an idol is, and then you will see that you reproach the Christians wrongly. Many indications concerning images are found in your books. I will ask you about some of them: Did Moses build the tabernacle according to the pattern he saw on the mountain, or according to a pattern conceived by his artistry, when he constructed the tabernacle from wood, skins, wool and worthy Cherubim? But since the first is true, shall we say that you honour and bow down to wood, skins and wool, and not to God, who gave Moses in his time such a pattern (image) of the tabernacle? The same I will say of the temple of Solomon, in which there were many images of Cherubim, Angels and others. So we Christians, honouring the rites of those who pleased God, give honour to God."

"Why do you eat pork and hare," said the Jews, "when this is abhorrent to God?"

"The first covenant (of Noah)," said the philosopher, "ordained: 'Every moving thing that lives shall be meat for you; as the green herb I have given you all things' (Gen. 9:3), for to the pure all things are pure, while to the defiled, the conscience is defiled. Also God, speaking of all created things, says: 'All was very good'[36] (Gen. 1:31). By your gluttony, however, and for your instruction, God took away from you the least important things. And how harmful gluttony is for you, is written: 'And Israel ate and was satisfied, and forsook God' (Deut. 32:15), or 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play' (Ex. 32:6)."

Such were the conversations that the blessed philosopher Constantine held with the Jews concerning the Christian faith. These conversations took place every day in the presence of the kagan himself, and lasted for a considerable length of time. They were afterwards written down by the blessed Methodius and divided into eight parts, of which only a very few are given here.

36. At the Apostolic Council Christians were enjoined to abstain from what is sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from what is strangled (Acts 15:29).

The blessed Constantine held conversations not only with the Jews but also with the Saracens, whom he likewise confuted with the help of our Lord, who promised His servants to give them "a mouth and wisdom, which all that oppose them shall not be able to gainsay or resist" (Lk. 21:15).

Hearing such sweet words, fitting the Christian faith, the kagan and his chief counsellors said to Constantine:

"God has sent you to us for our instruction. From Him you have learned the books, you have spoken everything correctly, and with the honeyed words of the holy books you have fed us to the full. Although we are people unlearned in books ("unlettered folk"), yet we believe that this teaching is from God. If, however, you wish to put our souls completely at rest, then tell us not only from the books, but also through comparisons (parables) about all that we shall ask you concerning the faith."

After this all dispersed to rest. On the next day they assembled again and said to Constantine:

"Prove to us, most honourable man, by reasonings and comparisons, which faith is the best?"

"With a certain King," the philosopher answered, "a man and his wife were held in great honor. When they sinned, He cast them out of the land where they lived (out of Paradise). For many years they lived there in poverty and bore children. As the children gathered, they pondered how they might restore their parents' former dignity. One proposed one thing, another something else, each offering counsel which, in his opinion, ought to be followed. Which of these counsels, then, ought to be followed? Surely the best?" Constantine said this, bringing his comparison to a close.

"Why do you say this?" the Khazars replied. "Each man considers his own counsel better than another's. But do you tell us, that we may understand, which of these counsels is the very best?"

"Fire," the philosopher answered, "refines gold and silver, and the mind distinguishes falsehood from truth. Tell me: was the first fall not caused by the sight of the sweet fruit and the desire to be as gods?"

"So it was," the Khazars answered.

The philosopher continued:

"If honey or cold water is harmful to a sick man, which physician gives the better counsel: the one who tells the man for whom honey is harmful, 'Eat honey,' and the man for whom cold water is harmful, 'Drink cold water and stand naked in the frost,' or the one who gives a remedy contrary to the harm: instead of honey, a bitter drink taken with care, and instead of cold water, something warm and heating?"

"Surely," they all said, "he who gives the contrary remedy gives the better counsel. So too the lust of sin must be put to death by the bitterness of life, and pride by humility; in general, the contrary is cured by the contrary. We observe that if a berry bush stands in spring bristling with thorns, in autumn it bears good, sweet fruit."

"You have spoken well," Constantine replied. "And the law of Christ also says that to live according to God means to lead a stern life (to walk the narrow way), which in the eternal dwelling will yield fruit a hundredfold."

After this, one of the chief counselors of the khagan, who knew well the impious teaching of Muhammad, asked the philosopher:

"Tell me, guest, why do you not honor Muhammad? For he greatly praised Christ in his books and said of Him: 'From the Virgin, the sister of Moses, was born a great prophet, who raised the dead and healed every sickness with great power.'"

"Let the khagan himself judge between us," said the philosopher. "Tell me: if Muhammad is a prophet, shall we believe Daniel, who said that with Christ every vision and prophecy would cease? How then can he be a prophet? Therefore, if we call Muhammad a prophet, we thereby reject Daniel."

To this many of those present said:

"We know that Daniel prophesied by the Spirit of God, but of Muhammad we know that he is a liar and a destroyer of the salvation of many."

Then the first counselor of the khagan turned toward the Jews and said:

“With God's help the guest has cast to the ground all Saracen pride, and yours, like a defilement, he has thrown out.” Then he turned to all present and said:

"God has given dominion over all peoples and perfect wisdom to the Christian emperor; his faith is the best, and outside it eternal life cannot be attained."

All said:

"Amen."

After this the philosopher, with tears in his eyes, addressed them all and said:

"Brethren, fathers, friends, and children! Behold, with God's help we have explained and answered everything as it deserves. If now any of you has still not understood something, let him come and ask me about it. Whoever heeds this teaching, let him be baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity; and whoever does not heed it, I shall bear no sin for it, but he will see his sin on the Day of Judgment, when the Judge, the Ancient of Days, sits to judge all nations."

To this the Khazars and the khagan replied:

"We are not enemies to ourselves, and so we decree: from this time forward, whoever wishes and is able may, having considered, come to holy baptism. But whoever bows toward the west (pagans), or performs Jewish prayers (Jews), or keeps the Saracen faith (Muslims), shall meet a swift death."

Having made this decision, all departed with joy. Two hundred Khazars forsook the abominations of idols and their lawless cohabitations and embraced the Christian faith.

Having planted the Christian faith in the Khazar kingdom, the venerable teachers Constantine and Methodius resolved to return to their own land. Among the Khazars they left the priests who had come with them from Cherson. The khagan entrusted the holy brethren with the following letter to convey to the Greek emperor: "Master! You sent us a man who proclaimed to us the Christian faith and preached the Holy Trinity. Through him we learned that this faith is the true faith, and we commanded that all who wish may freely receive holy baptism, hop-

ing to receive it ourselves. We are all friends and associates of your kingdom and are ready, if you wish, to serve you."

As he escorted the holy brethren, the khagan offered them many gifts, but they refused, saying: "Release with us all the Greek captives who are here; this will be for us the best gift of all."

More than 200 captives gathered, and they all set out on the way with joy. The travelers had to pass through deserted and waterless places, and here all were exhausted by thirst. Now and then lakes appeared, but it was impossible to drink from them, for the water contained so much salt that it was bitter as gall. All scattered to seek good water, except Constantine, who had grown so weak that he could go no further. He addressed his brother Methodius with these words:

"I can no longer bear the thirst. Draw this water, for I believe that He who once changed bitter water into sweet for the Israelites will also sweeten for us, who are faint with thirst, the bitterness of this water."

When they drew the water and tasted it, it proved as sweet as honey and as cold as in winter. With this water all quenched their thirst and glorified God.

Arriving at Cherson, the holy brethren visited the bishop. At supper Constantine said to the bishop: “Pray for me, vladyka, and bless me, as a father blesses his child with a final blessing.”

Those who heard supposed that Constantine was preparing to set out on the way in the morning, and they asked him about it. But he secretly told some that the bishop would leave the world in the morning and depart to the Lord. So it happened: in the morning the bishop died.

On the road to Constantinople they had to pass through the land where the Fulian people dwelt[37]. This people offered sacrifices beneath a great oak grown together with a cherry tree, which was called Alexander. Women were forbidden to approach this oak, and likewise to take part in the sacrifices. The blessed Constantine went to this people, stood in their midst, and said:

“The pagans did not escape eternal torment by worshipping heaven and earth, such great and good creations; how much more, then, will

37. A pagan tribe that lived near the Sea of Azov.

you not escape the eternal fire by bowing to an oak, a creation immeasurably inferior."

"We," the pagans answered, "have not only now begun to act thus, but received this custom from our fathers. Offering sacrifices before the oak, we receive what we ask for: rain and much else. And how shall we renounce this worship, when none of us is able to do so? And if anyone should dare, he will die without seeing rain again."

The philosopher began to exhort them with these words:

"God speaks of you in the sacred books; how then can you reject Him? Thus the prophet Isaiah cries out in the Lord's name, saying: 'I will come to gather all nations, and they shall see My glory. And I will set a sign upon them, and I will send from among them those who are saved to the nations: to Tarshish, Pul and Lud, Tubal and Javan, to the far-off isles that have not heard of Me nor seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the nations... says the Lord: I will send many fishers, and they shall fish for them on every mountain and on every hill, and in the clefts of the rocks' (Is. 66:18–19; Jer. 16:16)."

"Listen, then, brethren," Constantine continued, "to God, who created you. Here is the Gospel of the New Testament of God, by which you must receive holy baptism."

With such words the blessed Constantine persuaded the pagans to cut down and burn this oak. The elder of this people came up to Constantine and kissed the Holy Gospel. The other pagans followed this example. Then the philosopher distributed white candles, and all, with lighted candles and singing, went to the oak. Constantine took an axe and struck the oak thirty-three times, and after this others cut the oak down to its root and burned it. On that same night the Lord sent a heavy rain. All, rejoicing, praised God, who rejoices over the salvation of sinners. In Constantinople Constantine and Methodius were received with great honor, as apostles. They were offered the episcopal rank, but they would not accept it. Methodius became abbot of the Polychronion monastery, and Constantine settled at the church of the Holy Apostles. Soon both were called to new labors.

Boris, or Bogoris, Tsar of the Bulgarians, after a war with the Greeks, desired to accept the Christian faith. His sister, who some

years before had been a captive in Constantinople, had returned to Bulgaria a Christian and tried to persuade her brother to accept the same faith. For a long time he did not consent; but famine and a deadly plague laid waste his land. Then, on his sister's advice, he turned in prayer to the Christian God, and the calamities ceased. Boris sent to Constantinople to ask for teachers. Methodius undertook the journey to Bulgaria. He painted on the wall of the royal palace the Last Judgment and explained to the Tsar the bliss of the righteous and the torments of sinners. The Tsar, already prepared by the words and example of his sister and by the miraculous cessation of the calamities, accepted the Christian faith. This was in 860 or 861.[38]

Scarcely had Constantine and Methodius finished the work begun among the Bulgarian people, when a new field opened for their apostolic labors. Rostislav, Prince of Moravia, by the guidance of God, took counsel with his princes[39] and with the whole Moravian people, concerning sending envoys to the Greek Emperor Michael to ask that he send Christian teachers. At the council it was resolved to dispatch envoys with these words: "Our people[40] has rejected paganism and keeps the Christian law. Only we have no teacher who could explain the faith of Christ to us in our own language. Other lands (the Slavic ones), seeing this, will wish to follow us. In view of this, Master, send us such a bishop and teacher: from you the good law goes out to all lands."[41]

Emperor Michael convened a council, to which the philosopher Constantine was summoned. The Emperor declared to him the desire of the Slavs, and said:

"Philosopher, I know that you are unwell; but it is necessary for you to go there, since no one can accomplish this work better than you."

38. The baptism of all Bulgaria took place in 869.

39. Taking part in this council were also the nephew of Rastislav, Svatopluk, prince of Moravia (of the city of Nitra), and Kocel, prince of Blatno (in Pannonia).

40. In Moravia there had been earlier preachers from Constantinople and from the West, who baptized, but few were counted as Christians. Then German priests arrived and began to baptize everyone indiscriminately. These priests performed the services in Latin, and spoke with the people in German. Therefore the Slavs, not understanding these languages, did not know into what they were being baptized, and did not understand the Christian teaching.

41. This embassy belongs to 862.

"Although I am sick and infirm in body," the philosopher answered, "I will go there gladly, if only they have letters in their own language."

"My grandfather and my father, and many others," the Emperor answered, "sought them but did not find them; how then can I find them?"

"How then shall I preach to them?" said the philosopher. "It would be the same as writing a conversation on water. Besides, if the Slavs misunderstand me, I may be reputed a heretic."

To this the Emperor, together with his uncle Bardas, said to the philosopher:

"If you desire it, God will give you what you ask, for He gives to all who ask Him in faith, and opens to those who knock."

Constantine went out from the Emperor and told all this to his brother Methodius and to some of his disciples.[42] According to his custom, Constantine first began with prayer, and then imposed upon himself a forty-day fast. Before long God, who hears the prayers of His servants, fulfilled what Constantine asked. He invented the Slavonic alphabet, containing thirty-eight letters, and then set about translating the Greek sacred books into the Slavonic language. In this the blessed Methodius and the disciples helped him. The translation of the sacred books was begun with the first chapter of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" — these were the first words translated into the Slavonic language.

The holy brothers presented their translation for examination to the Emperor, the Patriarch and the whole ecclesiastical council. The Emperor rejoiced, and together with the whole ecclesiastical council glorified God for the mercies shown.

After this Constantine, together with his brother Methodius and the disciples, set out for the Slavonic lands. The Emperor gave them for the road a sufficient quantity of all necessary things, and wrote to Rostislav the following epistle: "God, who desires that everyone have true under-

42. Constantine, while he was on Mount Olympus, already had disciples, with whom he occupied himself studying the Slavonic language. Of these disciples the following are known: Gorazd, Clement, Sava, Naum and Angelar.

standing and rise to the higher dignity, seeing your faith and your zeal, has willed to fulfill your desire in our own years now. He has opened the letters of your language, which until this time were not known ('were not known, only in the early years'), so that you too may be counted among the great peoples who glorify God in their own tongue. And so we send you the one to whom God has opened them, a man honorable, right-believing, learned and a philosopher. Receive this gift, which is far more precious than all gold and silver, precious stones and transitory riches, and help him quickly to fulfill his commission. Seek God and the common salvation with all your heart, and for this do not be slow to urge all (your subjects) to care for their salvation and walk the true path. Then you too, having labored to bring your people to the knowledge of God, will receive a reward for this both in this age and in the age to come, for all the souls that desire to believe in Christ our God until the end. Thereby you, like the Grand Prince Constantine, will leave true remembrance of yourself to succeeding generations."

When Constantine and Methodius came to Moravia, they were met there with great honor. First of all Rostislav gathered many youths and commanded them to learn from the holy brothers the Slavonic alphabet and the newly translated books. Then Rostislav, under the guidance of the holy brothers, began to build churches. Within a year the first church was completed in the city of Olomouc, and afterwards several more churches appeared in Moravia. Constantine consecrated these churches and served in them in Slavonic.

During his stay here Constantine, with his disciples, translated the whole church order of service and taught them Matins and the Hours, the Liturgy and Vespers and Compline and the "secret service." And according to the prophetic word the ears of the deaf were opened to hear the words of the book, and the tongue of the stammerers became eloquent. God, who rejoices over the salvation of one sinner, looked with joy upon the correction of a whole people.

When the divine teaching began to spread among the Slavs and worship was performed in their language, then the first and malicious envier, the devil, unable to bear this, entered into his vessels and began to stir up many, saying to them: "God is not glorified by this. If it had

been pleasing to Him, could He not have arranged that from the beginning, for His glorification, the preaching of the word of God should have been written down in the language of the people to whom it was proclaimed? But only three languages did God choose: Hebrew, Greek and Latin, in which alone it is fitting to offer praise to God."

So spoke the Latin and German bishops, priests and their disciples. Constantine entered into dispute with them, as David once did with the foreigners, and with the words of the sacred books he overcame them, and called them "trilinguists," like Pilate, who wrote the titles on the Cross of the Lord in three languages.

Not only this, but many other impieties did the German and Latin priests teach the people. They said: "Under the earth live people with great heads,[43] all reptiles are the creation of the devil; whoever kills a serpent, nine sins are forgiven him for this; whoever kills a man, let him drink from a wooden cup, and let him not touch a glass one."

They did not forbid the people to offer pagan sacrifices according to the old custom, nor polygamy.

These false teachings the holy brothers strove to root out, like weeds, with the fire of the word.

"Offer to God," they reproved them with the words of the prophet, "a sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High" (Ps. 49:14). "Take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth: if thou hatest her, put her away, saith the Lord Almighty, and it shall cover thy thoughts with iniquity; therefore take heed to your spirit... and do not forsake your wives. And if thou hatest, remember that the Lord was witness between thee and the wife of thy youth..., she is thy companion and thy lawful wife" (Mal. 2:15–16, 13–14). In the Gospel the Lord says: "You have heard that it was said to the ancients, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you, whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt. 5:27–28). "I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for adultery, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Mt. 19:9).

43. With large heads.

So the holy brothers lived in Moravia forty months, moving from one place to another, everywhere teaching the people in the Slavonic language. Delivering to the Slavs the priceless gift — the word of God in their native tongue — Constantine, in the preface to the holy Gospel, says to them: "Hear, all you Slavs, the word which strengthens hearts and minds." Establishing schools for Slavonic youths, they gained many disciples, ready to be good teachers and worthy clergy among their people. To this end, in order to ordain their disciples to the sacred ministry, the holy brothers resolved to go to Rome. Moreover, Pope Nicholas,[44] who was at that time, learning of the successes of the preaching of Sts. Constantine and Methodius, desired to see them in Rome as Angels of God.[45]

On the way to Rome the holy Constantine and Methodius came to Pannonia.[46] There the prince was Kocel, son of Pribina, who invited the holy brothers to the city of Blatno, both to learn the Slavonic alphabet himself from them, and so that they might teach it also to the fifty disciples whom the prince had gathered from his people. At their parting Kocel showed the holy preachers great honor and offered them large gifts. But Constantine and Methodius, both from Rostislav of Moravia and from Kocel, did not wish to take either gold, or silver, or any other thing. They preached the Gospel word without reward, and only from both princes did they obtain the freedom of 900 Greek captives.

Besides Pannonia the holy Constantine and Methodius also visited Venice. Here the Latin and German priests and monks fell upon Constantine like crows upon a falcon, preaching the trilinguist heresy:

"Tell us, man," they said to Constantine, "why have you translated the sacred books for the Slavs and teach them in this language, when no one did this before: neither the apostles, nor the Pope of Rome, nor Gregory the Theologian,[47] nor Jerome, nor Augustine?[48] We know only

44. He ruled from 858 to 867.
45. It may be supposed that the Pope summoned the holy preachers to Rome also on the slanderous reports of German and Latin priests.
46. The present-day Hungary.
47. The most celebrated father of the Eastern Church, who lived in the fourth century. See his Life under 25 January.

three languages in which it is fitting to glorify God: Hebrew, Greek, Latin."

The philosopher answered them:

Does not God send rain alike upon all, or does not the sun shine for all, or does not all creation breathe one and the same air? How then are you not ashamed to think that, apart from the three languages, all the other tribes and tongues must be blind and deaf? Or do you perhaps think, tell me, that God is not almighty and therefore cannot do this, or that He is envious and does not wish to do it? We know, however, many peoples who have their own books and who offer praise to God each in his own tongue. Among them the following are known: Armenians, Persians, Abkhazians, Iberians (Georgians), Sogdians, Goths, Avars, Turks, Khazars, Arabs, Egyptians, Syrians, and many others.

If you are unwilling to agree with this, let the holy books be your judge. For David cries out: "Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth" (Ps. 95:1), and in another place: "Shout unto the Lord, all the earth; sing, and rejoice, and make melody" (Ps. 97:4), and again: "All the earth shall worship Thee and sing unto Thee; they shall sing to Thy name" (Ps. 65:4), and again: "Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye peoples... Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord" (Ps. 116:1; 150:6). In the Gospel it is said: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (Jn. 1:12). "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee" (Jn. 17:20–21). In the Gospel of Matthew it is said: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mt. 28:18–20). The Evangelist Mark also says: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these

48. Teacher of the Western Church; lived at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries.

signs shall follow them that believe: In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues" (Mk. 16:15–17). Let us also say, in the words of Scripture, concerning you (the German and Latin priests): "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Mt. 23:13). "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Lk. 11:52). The Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians: "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied" (1 Cor. 14:5), or again: "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11).

With these and many other similar words, Saint Constantine rebuked the Latin and German priests.

From Venice, Constantine and Methodius went directly to Rome. While they were still in Venice, Pope Nicholas died, and Adrian II was elected in his place[49]. The new pope, learning that Constantine and Methodius were in Venice, invited them to Rome. As the holy brothers approached Rome, the pope himself came out to meet the holy preachers with his clergy and citizens, bearing lighted candles, because they were carrying the relics of Saint Clement, martyr and pope of Rome, uncovered at Chersonesus. The Lord glorified the translation of the holy relics with many miracles. Thus a paralytic received healing, and many other sick were freed from their infirmities.

The pope accepted the Slavonic books, blessed them, and placed them in the church of the Holy Virgin Mary called “Fatni” (the Manger), and according to these books the services began to be celebrated. After this, the pope commanded two bishops to ordain the Slavic disciples who had come with Constantine and Methodius. The ordination of the disciples on the first day was performed in the church of the holy Apostle Peter, and the Liturgy was sung in the Slavonic language; on the second day, in the church of Saint Petronilla; and on the third day, in the church of the holy Apostle Andrew. Then the All-night Vi-

49. Adrian II ruled from 867 to 872.

gil was sung in the Slavonic language in the church of the great teacher of the nations, the Apostle Paul, and in the morning the Liturgy was celebrated over the holy tomb. Arsenius, one of the seven bishops, and the librarian Anastasius assisted the two bishops in the service.

Constantine and Methodius with their disciples did not cease to offer up praise to God for all things, and the Romans did not cease to come to them, especially to Constantine, and to ask them about everything. Some came two and three times and received instruction. Once a Jew came to Constantine and said that Christ, of whom the prophets say that He will be born of a Virgin, had not yet come. Constantine counted for him how many generations there were from Adam to Christ, proved that Christ had already come, and how many years had passed since then.

Soon after this, Constantine, who had been weak before and was worn out by his labors and the long journey, fell seriously ill, and during his sickness the Lord revealed to him his death. Constantine, learning of his death, began to sing the following church hymn:

"I rejoiced when they said unto me, Let us go into the courts of the Lord; my spirit rejoiced, and my heart was glad" [50].

Then he put on his best garments, spent that whole day in joy, and said:

"From this time I am servant to no one on earth, but only to God Almighty, and I was, am, and shall be forever, amen."

On the next day Constantine desired to receive the schema, and he was named Cyril. His illness lasted fifty days.

Once during his sickness, Cyril addressed Methodius with these words: "See, brother," he said to him, "we have been like a united pair of oxen plowing one field, and now I fall in the furrow, having finished my day. I know that you have greatly loved Mount Olympus, but for the sake of the mountain do not think of abandoning your teaching. By this labor you can better attain salvation."

When the time drew near to receive repose and depart to the other life, Saint Cyril raised his hands to God and prayed with tears: "O Lord

50. Antiphon, Tone 1.

my God! Thou who didst create the incorporeal Angelic powers, who didst stretch out the heavens, establish the earth, and bring all that is upon it from non-being into being, who always and in all things hearkenest to those who do Thy will, who fear Thee and keep Thy commandments: hear my prayer and preserve Thy faithful flock, which Thou didst set me, a sinner and unworthy servant, to shepherd. Deliver this flock from all impiety and wickedness, and from every many-worded heretical tongue that speaks blasphemy against Thee. Destroy the trilingual heresy, and increase Thy Church in multitude. Unite them all in concord, and make them all of one mind in the true faith and right confession of Thee. Breathe into their hearts the word of Thy teaching, for this is Thy gift. If Thou hast deemed me, unworthy as I am, worthy to preach the Gospel of Thy Christ, I, who strive to do good works and all that is pleasing to Thee, then permit me to give back to Thee, as Thine own, all that Thou hast given me. Establish them with Thy mighty right hand, cover them with Thy protection, that they may all praise and glorify the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit forever, amen."

Then, having kissed all, he said: "Blessed is our God, who has not given us as prey to our invisible enemies, but has broken their snares and delivered us from corruption."

With these words Saint Cyril fell asleep in the Lord on February 14, 869.

Pope Adrian commanded all the Greeks who were in Rome, as well as the Romans, to be present at the burial and to stand at the tomb of Cyril with lighted candles, and he ordered the funeral procession to be arranged as at the burial of the pope himself. Saint Methodius, learning that they were preparing to bury the honorable body of Saint Cyril in Rome, came to the pope and said to him:

“Our mother adjured us, saying that if one of us should die first, the other should carry his brother to his monastery (on Olympus) and bury him there.”

After this, the pope gave orders to place the honorable body of Cyril in a reliquary, to fasten it with iron nails, and to prepare it for the journey. In this state the holy relics remained for seven days.

The Roman bishops, however, said to the pope:

"Since God brought Cyril here, who had walked in many lands, and here took his soul, it is here that he should be buried, as an honorable man."

"If so," said the pope, "I will change the Roman custom and bury Cyril, for his holiness and love, in my own tomb, in the church of the holy Apostle Peter."

Then Saint Methodius said:

"If you have not heeded me and have not given him to me, since you yourselves wish to keep him with you, then in that case lay him in the church of Saint Clement, with whom he came here."

The pope commanded that it be done as Saint Methodius said. Again all the bishops, monks and people assembled, and they escorted the holy relics with honor to the church of Saint Clement. Before lowering the coffin, the bishops said:

"Let us open the reliquary and see whether anything has been taken from the holy relics?"

But however much they tried, by the providence of God they could not open the reliquary, and then the holy relics were laid on the right side of the sanctuary in the church of Saint Clement. Afterward many miracles took place here. Seeing this, the Romans began more and more to glorify Saint Cyril, and, having painted his icon, they began to light candles before it day and night, giving praise to God, who glorifies those who love Him.

After the death of Saint Cyril, envoys from Kocel, prince of Pannonia, came to the pope, asking him to send them the blessed Methodius. The pope answered the envoys thus:

"I send him not only to you, but also to all the Slavic peoples, as a teacher from God and from Saint Peter, the first throne-bearer and keeper of the keys of the Heavenly Kingdom."

When he sent St. Methodius to the Slavs, the Pope gave him the following letter to the Slavic princes: "Adrian, bishop and servant of God, to Rostislav, Svatopluk and Kocel: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men' (Lk. 2:14). With joy we have learned that the Lord has stirred up your hearts to seek Him, and has

shown you that He is to be served not by faith alone, but by good works also: 'faith without works is dead' (Jas. 2:26). Therefore they sin who think that they know God but are unwilling to keep His law. Not only from this Apostolic See did you ask for teachers, but also from the faithful Emperor Michael: you asked him to send you the blessed philosopher Constantine with his brother. These holy brothers, when they learned that your land lies under the authority of the Apostolic See, did nothing contrary to the canons, but came to us and brought the relics of St. Clement. Rejoicing, we resolved to send to your lands our son Methodius, a man perfect in wisdom and orthodox, ordaining him and his disciples to the sacred office. He can teach you, as you have asked, and translate the holy books into your language, and by them perform the holy service (the Liturgy), the baptism and the whole order of the Church, which the holy philosopher Constantine began, by the help of God and through the prayers of St. Clement. Likewise, if anyone else is able to translate the holy books correctly and orthodoxly into your language, that you may more easily come to know the commandments of God, let that work be holy and blessed by God, by us and by the whole Catholic Church. Only keep this custom: that at the Liturgy the Apostle and the Gospel be read first in Latin and afterward in Slavonic, that the word of Scripture may be fulfilled: 'Praise the Lord, all ye nations' (Ps. 116:1), and again: 'they began to speak with other tongues... the greatness of God,' as 'the Holy Spirit gave them utterance' (Acts 2:4). But if anyone dares to reproach these appointed teachers, and to turn you from the truth to fables, or, corrupting you, to revile the books of your language, let him be excommunicated and brought to the judgment of the Church, and let him obtain no forgiveness until he amends. For these are wolves and not sheep, and they must be known by their fruits and guarded against. But you, beloved children, hear the teaching of God and do not refuse the instruction of the Church, and then you will be true worshippers of your heavenly Father with all the saints. Amen."

Kocel received Methodius with great honor, but after a short time sent him back again to the Pope, together with twenty men of noble birth, asking the Pope to consecrate St. Methodius bishop for Pannonia,

to the see of St. Andronicus, one of the Seventy Apostles. The Pope did so.

After this, the old enemy and opponent of the truth stirred up against Methodius the Moravian prince[51] and the German and Latin bishops of that region. St. Methodius was summoned to a council, at which the following question was put to him:

"Why do you teach in our territory?"

"If I had known," St. Methodius answered, "that this was your territory, I would not have taught here; but this territory belongs to the holy Apostle Peter. If, however, out of strife and greed you act not according to the canons, forbidding the preaching of God's teaching, take care that when you try to break through an iron mountain with your head, you do not crack your own skull."

"In speaking with anger," the bishops answered, "you yourself are calling down misfortune upon your head."

"I am not ashamed to speak the truth even before kings," St. Methodius replied. "As for me, do with me as you wish. I am no better than those who for the truth endured many torments in this life."

Many speeches were made at this assembly, but his opponents could say nothing against Methodius. Then the prince said with mockery:

"Do not trouble my Methodius. He has sweated as if he were standing near a hot stove."

"Yes, master," Methodius answered. "Once a sweating philosopher was met and asked: 'Why are you sweating?' 'I was arguing with a coarse servant,' the philosopher answered."

The bishops spoke much concerning Methodius. At last they exiled him to Swabia, where he was kept in a dungeon for two and a half years[52].

51. At this time Rastislav, who had helped the holy brothers, died in captivity, and his successor became his nephew Svatopluk, who in the first period of his reign was on very friendly terms with the German emperor.

52. Swabia is located in Germany. In the dungeon the Germans maltreated St. Methodius in every way: they did not give him food for several days at a time; when it was winter, they led him out barefoot and bareheaded into the prison courtyard, set him in the snow and made him stand in one place like that for a day or even longer. They even beat St. Methodius with rods. But the Lord preserved and strengthened the saint. His disciples, who often visited him in prison, brought the saint great consolation.

The news of St. Methodius's imprisonment reached the Pope. When he learned of it, Pope John VIII, successor of Adrian II, sent a curse upon the German bishops and a prohibition on their celebrating the Liturgy until they should free Methodius. Then the bishops released Methodius, but they said to Kocel, prince of Pannonia: "If you take Methodius to yourself, do not count us as your well-wishers"[53].

Yet these very bishops did not escape the Judgment of God and of the Apostle Peter. Four of them soon died.

At this time, in Moravia, a quarrel arose between the Slavs and the German priests. The Moravians perceived that the German priests who lived among them were enemies of the Slavs and were trying to hand them over to the Germans. They drove them out, and sent the following petition to the Pope: "As our fathers formerly received baptism from St. Peter, so now give us Methodius as archbishop and teacher."

The Pope at once sent St. Methodius to Moravia, where he was received by Prince Svatopluk, who had now broken with the Germans, and by the Moravians, and they entrusted to him all the churches and clergy in the Slavic cities. In place of the expelled German priests, St. Methodius appointed Slavic priests. Because St. Methodius and the priests celebrated the services and taught the people in the Slavonic language, the teaching of God grew mightily. Many of the pagans renounced their errors and believed in the true God[54]. At this time the Moravian state was stronger than it had ever been[55].

St. Methodius possessed the gift of prophecy. Many of his foretellings came to pass; we shall cite some of them.

A certain pagan prince who lived along the river Vistula mocked the Christians and inflicted hardships upon them. St. Methodius sent to him

53. Evidently Kocel also took part in the liberation of St. Methodius.

54. Thus Borivoj, prince of the Czechs, sent messengers to Svatopluk to say that the Czech prince wished to be baptized and asked for priests. Svatopluk said to the Czech messengers: "Ask Bishop Methodius; let him choose two or three priests and send them with you to your prince." St. Methodius himself went to Bohemia and baptized Borivoj, his wife Ludmila, and their two sons. St. Methodius remained in Bohemia about a year and consecrated the first two Czech churches: one in the city of Litomyšl, and the other at Levý Hradec. Then Methodius left several Slavonic priests in Bohemia and returned to Moravia. St. Methodius sent priests to Poland, where they baptized the king and many Poles.

to say: "It is better for you, son, to be baptized of your own will and in your own land, than to be baptized against your will as a captive in a foreign land."

This is what came to pass.

Once Svatopluk was waging war against the pagans, and the war dragged on. The day of the memory of the holy Apostle Peter was drawing near, and St. Methodius sent word to Svatopluk: "If you promise to be with me with your troops on the day of St. Peter, I believe that God will soon deliver the pagans into your hands."

So it happened.

A rich man had married his daughter-in-law. St. Methodius taught and admonished him much, but could not persuade them to separate. Others, for the sake of wealth, flattered them. Then Methodius said to this rich man: "A time will come when flatterers will be unable to help you, and you will remember my words, but it will be too late."

Suddenly, by the providence of God, such a sickness fell upon these rich people that they could find no peaceful place for themselves. In this condition they died.

The old enemy and envier of the human race again stirred up against Methodius, as once Dathan and Abiram against Moses (Num. 16), open and secret enemies. At this time there appeared heretics who taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son. These heretics led the orthodox away from the true path, and of St. Methodius, who exposed their impious teaching, they said: "The Pope has given us authority and commanded us to drive out Methodius and his teaching."

All the Moravians gathered and had read before all the people that letter by which Methodius was supposedly expelled. The people grieved greatly at losing such a shepherd and teacher, except those whom flattery governs as the wind governs leaves. In this same letter of the Pope it was written: "Our brother Methodius is orthodox and performs the apostolic ministry. To him, from the Apostolic See, all the Slavic lands are subject, and whomever he curses is cursed, and whomever he sanctifies is holy[3144]."

55. This was the time after the battle of Velehrad, when Svatopluk defeated the Germans and united almost all the Slavs.

After this all the enemies of Methodius dispersed in shame. Yet the malice of St. Methodius's enemies did not end there. Wishing to vex the saint, they said that the Greek emperor was angry with him, and that if Methodius were under his authority, he would not be left alive. But the merciful God, not wishing them to blaspheme His servant on this account, put into the heart of the emperor—for the heart of a king is always in the hands of God—to send this letter to St. Methodius: "Honorable father, I greatly desire to see you. Do a good deed and take the trouble to come to us, that we may see you while you are alive and receive your blessing[56]."

St. Methodius went to Constantinople and was received there by the emperor and the patriarch with great honor and joy. The emperor praised his teaching, and, keeping with himself two of St. Methodius's disciples, a priest and a deacon, together with the Slavonic books, he sent Methodius himself back to Moravia with great gifts.

Great were the afflictions that St. Methodius endured: in the deserts, from robbers; on the seas, from mighty waves; in the rivers, from sudden whirlpools; so that in him the word of the Apostle was fulfilled: “perils in rivers, perils from robbers... perils in the sea, perils from pagans; in labor and weariness, often in fasting, in hunger and thirst” (2 Cor. 11:26–27). Then, leaving all cares and laying all sorrow upon God, St. Methodius, together with his two disciples who were priests, began to translate those books which he had not managed to translate together with his brother, the blessed Constantine. Together with them he succeeded in translating the whole of the Old Testament, except the Books of the Maccabees, and he also translated the Nomocanon (the rules of the Holy Fathers) and the patristic books (the Paterikon). St. Methodius began his translation in the month of March and finished it in October, on the 26th. Having completed the translation, St. Methodius rendered due praise and glory to God and to St. Demetrius of Thessalonica, on whose day of commemoration he finished the translation, and to whom, as a native of Thessalonica, he was especially devoted.

56. At this time the emperor was Basil the Macedonian.

About this time the king of Hungary, who was in the Danubian lands, wished to see St. Methodius. Many persuaded Methodius, out of fear of torments, not to go to this king, but St. Methodius went. The Hungarian prince, as befits a king, received Methodius with honor, conversed with him, and dismissed him with great gifts. Taking leave, the king said to the saint: "Remember me, honored father, always in your holy prayers."

Thus St. Methodius cared for his flock, seeking out faithful followers of Christ in all lands and stopping the mouths of the garrulous. Together with the Apostle he could say: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, and now a crown of righteousness is prepared for me" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

When the time drew near for St. Methodius to receive rest from his sufferings and the reward for his many labors, they asked him:

"Honored father and teacher, which of your disciples will you name as your successor?"

Pointing to one of his disciples, Gorazd, the hierarch said:

"Here is a man of your land, orthodox, and well versed in the Latin books. If it be the will of God and your love, I desire that he be my successor."

In Flowery Week St. Methodius came to the church and, from weakness, could not serve, but only prayed for the Greek emperor, the Slavic princes, the clergy and the whole people, and said:

"Watch over me, children, until the third day."

And indeed, at dawn on the third day, St. Methodius, with the words "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," reposed in the Lord in the hands of the priests. This was on 6 April 885.

The funeral service was performed in Latin, Greek and Slavonic, and they laid him in the cathedral church in Velehrad. An innumerable multitude of people gathered for the burial. There were men and women, great and small, rich and poor, free and slaves, widows and orphans, wanderers and natives, sick and healthy. All escorted with tears such a good teacher and shepherd, who was all things to all men, "that he might gain all."

O holy and honored head! From on high, in your prayers, remember us who call upon you, and deliver from all calamities your disciples who spread the teaching of Christ and expose heresies, so that, having fulfilled with dignity their calling in this life, they may stand with you, your flock, on the right hand of Christ our God, and receive from Him eternal life. For to Him belong glory and honor unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Ye who were teachers of the Slavic lands, equal in mind to the Apostles, God-wise Cyril and Methodius, entreat the Master of all to establish all the Slavic peoples in Orthodoxy and unity of mind, to grant peace to the world and to save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Let us honor the sacred pair of our enlighteners, who by translating the Divine Scriptures opened to us a source of knowledge of God, from which we draw without ceasing even unto this day. We extol you, Cyril and Methodius, who stand before the throne of the Most High and fervently pray for our souls.

* * *

NOTES

3095. When the Slavs arrived in Europe is unknown. Approximately in the 2nd century A.D. the Slavs were known along the middle and lower course of the river Danube. Here they had to endure much from the Vlachs, that is, the Romans, in the times of Trajan, so that the Slavs were forced to abandon their Danubian dwellings. After this the Slavs stopped in the Carpathian mountains from the 2nd to the 7th centuries. From there, under the leadership of the prince of the Dulebes, the Slavs waged protracted wars with Byzantium, and from there, as a result of the invasion of the Avars, they spread out in various directions. There is a tradition that Heraclius, emperor of Greece, in the 7th century, to fight the Avars, invited the Slavs to the Balkan peninsula. Other tribes of the same Slavic people, under pressure from the Avars, went up the tributaries of the Danube and settled there under different names. Along the river Morava – the Moravians; to the west of them – the Czechs. To the north of the Czechs – the Serbs, the Lusatians; to the east along the river Vistula – the Poles. Part of the Slavs from the Carpathians went east and northeast and occupied places along the Dnieper, the Oka,

and as far as Novgorod – the Polyane, Drevlyane, Severyane and others, who settled the Russian plain.

3112. The Kozars, whom the Greeks called Khazars and the Romans Gazars, were known under the general name of Scythians. They spoke the Slavonic or Russian language and lived near the Maeotian or Dead (Azov) Sea, into which the river Don flows, which (in ancient times) separated Europe from Asia. In this land there first dwelt the tribe of Gomer, the first son of Japheth, called the Gemeri, in Greek the Cimmerians, and in Russian the Cimbri; and from them the outlet of the Maeotian Sea, which flows into the Pontus Euxinus (the Black Sea), was called the Cimmerian Bosporus, that is, the narrow place in the Cimmerian Sea. When the Cimbri departed to the northern lands (to the north) and mingled with various peoples, being called Lithuanians, Zhmudians, Goths and others, then in their place, near the Maeotian Sea or the Cimmerian Bosporus, there came to dwell one of the Scythian tribes of Turkic origin, named Alans (from the Alan Mountains), which afterwards received the name Kozars (from the river Kozary). This tribe multiplied greatly and came to dwell on both banks of the river Don: in Asia as far as the Volga, which flows into the Caspian or Khvalynsk Sea, and in Europe as far as the Dnieper, which flows into the Black Sea, and even further, to Pannonia, but already under other names: Avars, Huns and others. The Kozars had rough manners and were unattractive in appearance. As a nomadic people, they lived in tents, moving from place to place. They fed more on vegetables and half-raw meat than on bread; in war they were very brave and feared by all. The ruler of the Kozars was called "kagan" (khagan or khayan), as among us the tsar or prince. There are many testimonies to the valor of this people in the Greek and Roman chroniclers. The Kozars caused much grief to Constantinople in the reign of Heraclius, in the patriarchate of Sergius, when they were miraculously defeated by the invincible power of the Most Pure Mother of God, who protected Her city from the pagan Kozars and the Persians allied with them, as this event is described at length in the Synaxarion, on the 5th Saturday of Great Lent. Long afterwards the Greek emperor Leo the Isaurian, desiring to live in peace with the Kozars, married his son Constantine (Copronymus) to the daughter of the Kozar kagan, who after baptism was named Irene. They had a son Leo, who was called Kazarin or Khazaris after his mother (this Leo had a wife Irene, who after her husband's death restored Orthodoxy, rejecting the iconoclastic heresy at the Seventh Ecumenical Council). After this marriage the Greeks lived in peace with the Kozars, and the latter began to become acquainted with the Christian faith. Christianity began to spread among the Kozars chiefly from the Chersonites (Cherson being a Greek colony), and especially after Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the teachers. The Kozars had long exacted tribute from the Russian Slavs: from each house the skin of a squirrel, and from each plough a shelyag. This tribute was ended by Askold and Dir, who took it from the Kozars, the Northerners and the Radimichi. The Kozars (of Europe) were finally crushed by Sviatoslav, father of St. Vladimir, who took their city of the White Tower and imposed tribute upon them; the Asian Kozars (who lived between the Don and the Volga) were conquered by the Polovtsians and Pechenegs.

3144. By this time the circumstances had altogether changed. German priests, many of whom were infected with the heresy mentioned above, began again to appear in Moravia

and to win Svyatopolk to their side. Svyatopolk, although he had been baptized, did not live as a Christian: he drank much wine, had many wives, and could not restrain himself when angry. Methodius did everything he could to persuade the prince to abandon his vices, rebuking him in private and in public, but nothing helped. When the German priests began to visit Svyatopolk, they started to speak to him about Methodius: "Why do you, prince, listen to this old man? You see that he is not like other men; he gives everything away to everyone and lives like a beggar. You, prince, are the master of your own land." By many such flattering words the German priests completely set Svyatopolk against St. Methodius. Then they began to complain of Methodius to Pope John, accusing him of heresy, and chiefly seeking to root out the Slavonic liturgy. Pope John, wishing at that time to obtain the help of the German king against the Saracens, took the side of the German priests and sent to Moravia a letter which forbade the Slavonic service and allowed only sermons to be preached in the Slavonic tongue. Methodius, on reading this letter, said: "What will become of us now? People will come into the church and stand there, understanding nothing. They will forget the teaching of Christ, and the pagan customs of Moravia will rise again. No, I will not serve in Latin; this will be harmful to the people." The German priests reported this to the pope, and the pope summoned Methodius to Rome. St. Methodius arrived in Rome, and the pope instituted a trial over him. At this time the pope had received help in his war with the Saracens from the Greek emperor Basil the Macedonian, and therefore he took the side of Methodius. At this trial St. Methodius was acquitted, restored as archbishop of the Slavonic lands, and granted permission to celebrate the liturgy in the Slavonic tongue. But, not wishing to offend Svyatopolk, the pope wrote to him this letter: "If, prince, the Slavonic Mass is not to your liking, you may hear the Latin Mass in your palace from the German priests." Together with Methodius, as his assistant, there went to Moravia the priest Wiching, an appointee of the German king and a fierce enemy of the Slavs. This Wiching became the chief enemy of St. Methodius. The German priests began to tell Svyatopolk that Methodius had brought not the true document, but that there was another, by which Methodius must be expelled and Wiching set up as archbishop. Then St. Methodius wrote to Pope John this letter: "Whom, Father, have you appointed archbishop: me or Wiching?" It was in reply to this letter that the pope sent the aforementioned letter.



THE TWELFTH DAY OF MAY

May 12

12 мая

New Calendar May 12 · Old Calendar May 25 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople

Житие святого отца нашего Германа архиепископа Константинопольского

Saint Germanus was born in the city of Constantinople. His father Justinus, honored with the rank of patrician, was one of the foremost senators, surpassing the rest in glory and honor; out of envy, Constantine Pogonatus[1] took his life when he ascended the Greek throne. After the murder of this noble senator, Constantine commanded that his son, still a youth, the Blessed Germanus, be castrated and given over to the clergy of the Church. He did this so that Germanus, when he came of age and attained a known rank in the world and the dignity of a senator, could not take revenge upon the house of Pogonatus for the murder of his father. Thus enrolled in the clerical state, the Blessed Germanus lived as an Angel of God: far from attachment to the world and worldly vanity, he turned his whole mind to God, always having praise of the Lord on his lips, and diligently occupying himself day and night with the study of the Divine Books. From this he came to know the depth of wisdom and drew the living water of God-inspired teachings, with which he watered the Church of Christ in the rank of shepherd and teacher. When Saint Germanus attained full years, he, a man shining with his virtuous life like a lamp, was first ordained bishop of the city of Cyzicus[2]. Here he struggled against the Monothelite heresy[3148] together with the Most Holy Patriarch Cyrus[3], and with him he was subjected to exile by the impious emperor Philippicus[4]. After

1. Constantine Pogonatus reigned from 668 to 686.
2. Cyzicus was a city in the Asia Minor region of Phrygia.

the death of this persecutor, who soon perished in disgrace, and after the death of Patriarch Cyrus, who died in exile, following the deposition of the pseudo-patriarch, the heretic John, in the reign of Artemius, who was renamed Anastasius the Second, Saint Germanus was raised, to the joy of the people, to the Constantinopolitan throne. He was a worthy man, moreover filled with the grace of God, which was revealed in that he foresaw the future and prophesied concerning it. Thus, when he solemnly entered the church of Saint Sophia for the first time in his service, a pregnant woman named Anna approached him, surrounded by the people who wished to see the newly elected patriarch, and said:

"Bless, Father, what is conceived in my womb."

The patriarch looked at her and, seeing the future with his inner eyes, said:

"May the Lord bless you through the prayers of the holy protomartyr."

By these words he foretold that a male child would be born, bearing the name of the holy protomartyr Stephen. He confirmed this prophecy with a miracle. As Germanus spoke, a fiery flame issued from his mouth together with the words, which the woman saw, and of which she afterwards assured everyone with an oath, which led her to firmly believe in the saint's prophecy. And indeed Anna bore a male child, whom she named Stephen according to the prophecy of the Most Holy Patriarch Germanus. This Stephen, when he came of age, took the monastic habit and piously labored on Mount Auxentius, and afterwards appeared as a confessor for the name of Christ, suffering martyrdom for the holy icons at the hands of the impious emperor Constantine Copronymus[5]. Concerning this Copronymus, son of the Greek emperor Leo the Isaurian[6], there was also a prophecy of Saint Germanus that he would be a fierce persecutor and tormentor of the orthodox. At his baptism, which the Most Holy Patriarch Germanus per-

3. St. Cyrus occupied the patriarchal throne in Constantinople from 705 to 711; he died in 714 in exile.
4. Philippicus Bardanes, Byzantine emperor (711–715).
5. Constantine Copronymus reigned from 741 to 776.
6. Leo the Isaurian reigned from 716 to 741.

formed, Constantine defiled the holy font with natural pus. Then Saint Germanus said of the one being baptized:

"This child, when he comes of age, will bring great evil upon Christians and upon the whole Church: he will defile the sanctity of the Church with heresy and shed much blood of the faithful servants of Christ."

Constantine was afterwards called Copronymus, which means "dung-named"[7]. The prophecy of Saint Germanus was fulfilled exactly: Copronymus tortured many for venerating the honorable icons, among whom was the above-mentioned Stephen.

The iconoclastic heresy began in the reign of Leo the Isaurian, the father of Copronymus. Leo the Isaurian, steeped in this heresy, strove to strengthen and spread it as much as possible among his people. He sent throughout all the provinces of his realm an impious decree that the holy icons be cast out of the churches everywhere, trampled underfoot and burned, for he regarded the holy icons as idols and those who venerated them as idolaters.

The holy Patriarch Germanus manfully opposed the heretic emperor. He repeatedly sent to the emperor prudent and honest men from the clergy, and also himself came and urged him to abandon his evil design; but the admonitions of Saint Germanus had no success.

Once the patriarch said to the emperor:

"I have heard the prophecy of a holy man that a persecution of the holy icons by those of evil belief will one day arise, but may it not be during your reign."

"And at what time and in whose reign will it come?" asked the emperor attentively.

"A king named Conon," said Saint Germanus, "will raise a persecution against the holy icons."

"My name is Conon," answered Leo the Isaurian. "It was given to me at baptism; I was called Leo only afterwards."

"Therefore the prophecy must be fulfilled completely in the days of my reign."

7. Copronymus, from the Greek *kopros*, dung, excrement.

"No, sovereign," replied Saint Germanus to the emperor, "may it not be so, may such evil not come to pass in your reign, for he who wishes to bring about this wickedness is the antichrist, the enemy of the Divine Incarnation. Remember also, O king, that before you ascended the royal throne you gave an oath to keep the holy faith inviolate, to annul nothing of the traditions of the holy Apostles and the God-inspired fathers, and to introduce nothing new contrary to the Christian faith."

The emperor, hearing such words from the most holy patriarch, now felt shame, now fell into rage, seeking some accusation against the patriarch so as to remove him from the throne not as a confessor of the truth but as a rebel. He found an accomplice in his evil purpose in a presbyter named Anastasius, a disciple of Germanus. To this Anastasius, a man of Judas-like disposition, the emperor promised the patriarchal throne upon Germanus's expulsion, and he in turn promised to help the emperor establish the heresy and destroy the holy icons. Therefore Anastasius became a bitter enemy of Saint Germanus, seeking, even before Germanus's expulsion, to seize the patriarchal throne. Saint Germanus, discerning in spirit his evil intention and his future fate, foretold Anastasius's destiny in the following circumstances.

Once Patriarch Germanus was entering the imperial palace. Anastasius, following him with pride, stepped on the hem of his garment from behind. "Do not hurry," Germanus then said to Anastasius; "a time will come when you, surrounded by a crowd of people, will be led to the dippin with shouts."[8]

At that time, however, neither Anastasius nor the others who heard these words paid attention to them, and they remembered them only afterwards, when what had been said came to pass, as will be told below.

Saint Germanus, like a good soldier of Christ, fearlessly and manfully fought the heretics with the sword of the word of God. He sent one of the best of the church servants to the emperor with these words:

"It does not befit you, O king, to exalt yourself unseemly before God, your Creator, who gave you life and reign, and you have no right, as the saying goes, to move the immovable; it is not fitting for you to overstep

8. The Dippin in Constantinople was the public place where various spectacles were usually held.

the boundaries established of old by the holy fathers. For by the human form which the Word of God assumed from the Most Pure and Most Holy Virgin, the service of demons was destroyed and idolatry was abolished. The painting on a board of the likeness of the human form of Christ and of her who ineffably bore Him, as well as the images of the holy servants of God, has been handed down to us to venerate for 725 years, since our Lord appeared on earth in the form of man. After the ascension of the Lord, the woman who was healed of a flow of blood by touching the hem of His garment (Mk. 5:25–34) made an image of the Savior in gratitude for this. But even before this, the Lord Himself imprinted His Divine Face upon a towel (kerchief) and sent it to Abgar at Edessa. The holy evangelist Luke painted the image of the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God. Therefore the Divine councils, which were held at various times and in various places, commanded not to destroy but to venerate the holy icons. Know then, O king, that if you help establish this iconoclastic dogma, I will be the first to oppose it. I am ready to shed my blood for the image of my Christ, who shed His blood to renew the fallen image of my soul. It is clear that the dishonor offered to the image of Christ also pertains to the Prototype, that is, to Christ Himself, just as the honor offered to the image passes on to Him. Therefore it befits us, the faithful servants of Christ, to die for the veneration of our Lord."

At another time Saint Germanus himself said to the emperor:

"If I am Jonah, throw me into the sea, for without an Ecumenical Council I have no right to legislate anything new concerning the faith."

When the holy patriarch saw that he could do nothing to turn the emperor from the heresy, he then laid his omophorion in the sanctuary, upon the Holy Table, and left his rank. The emperor, greatly angered at Saint Germanus for his bold words, sent armed soldiers as if to battle, who subjected the saint to blows and with dishonor expelled him from the patriarchal house. Saint Germanus then withdrew to a monastery, where he spent the remaining days of his life among the monks in silence, and peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. He was patriarch for 14 years and 6 months.[3155]

After the expulsion of the most holy Patriarch Germanus, the emperor elevated the aforementioned Bishop Anastasius[9] in his place. Together with the emperor, he cast the holy icons out of the churches and upheld the iconoclast heresy. The prophecy of St. Germanus concerning him was fulfilled as follows.

When the impious Leo the Isaurian died, his son Constantine Copronymus succeeded him on the throne, but Leo's son-in-law Artavasdus deposed him. Patriarch Anastasius assisted Artavasdus in this and crowned Artavasdus and his son Nicephorus as rulers. After 3 years, Copronymus gathered a great army and took Constantinople. Constantine blinded his son-in-law Artavasdus and his sons, his nephews, and put to death many of Artavasdus's supporters, men of high rank. As for Patriarch Anastasius, Constantine ordered him to be stripped and beaten before all the people at a place called the "dippin," and then, setting him backward on a donkey, to be led in mockery through the city. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of St. Germanus, who had foretold to Anastasius that he would be led to the dippin amid a great gathering of people. The impious Emperor Copronymus even wished to depose Anastasius from the patriarchal throne, but, finding no one more zealous than Anastasius in dishonoring the holy icons, he left him on the patriarchal throne, where he remained, "the abomination of desolation" in the holy place (Mt. 24:15), for 24 years. At the end of his life he was afflicted with a disease called "kordaspos," so that the God-hating mouth which had blasphemed the holy icons and his teacher became a filthy passage through which natural pus flowed. Anastasius died of this disease.

Thus Anastasius died a terrible death, while St. Germanus, together with the holy hierarchs, inherited blessed life in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

9. Anastasius occupied the patriarchal throne from 730 to 753.

Commemoration of our Holy Father Sabinus, Bishop of Cyprus

Память святого отца нашего Савина, епископа кипрского

This Venerable Father was from the land of Phoenicia[10] and was born in the city of Lycia, where St. Epiphanius was baptized and embraced monastic life. When God glorified Epiphanius, the people of Lycia sent to him a man renowned among them, so that he might be appointed bishop of their city. At that time Sabinus came with this man to Epiphanius and, renouncing the world, remained with him and became a monk. After this he went with Epiphanius into the wilderness and stayed there with him for five years. He wrote the Life of the Venerable Father, describing his all-night vigils of prayer, his diligent prostrations to the ground, and the miracles which the Lord wrought through him. When St. Epiphanius was bishop on the island of Cyprus,[11] he wished to ordain Sabinus to the rank of presbyter, but Sabinus would not consent. Then the Venerable Father led him into the church and said to him:

"Stand here and remain motionless."

He stood, and his feet seemed as though nailed to the ground, and St. Epiphanius ordained him presbyter. After the death of Epiphanius, Sabinus succeeded him, occupying the episcopal see in the same city of Constantia,[12] where Epiphanius had also been bishop. Having performed many memorable miracles, defended his church against heretics, and led a pious life, St. Sabinus departed unto the Lord.[13]

* * *

10. Phoenicia lay along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea between Palestine and the ancient Syrian state. The beginnings of Christianity in Phoenicia are traced to the time of the Apostles.
11. The island of Cyprus lies in the Mediterranean Sea, near the shores of ancient Phoenicia. Christianity was planted there by the Holy Apostle Paul on his first missionary journey.
12. The city of Salamis, where St. Epiphanius was bishop, was also called Constantia of Cyprus. It lies right on the sea, on the eastern shore of the island.
13. St. Savinus reposed around the middle of the 5th century.

Commemoration of our Holy Father Polybius, Bishop of Rhinocorura

Память святого отца нашего Полувия, епископа Ринокирского

Our Venerable Father Polybius was a disciple of St. Epiphanius. He accompanied his teacher when he was sailing by ship, returning from the city of Constantinople. At that time St. Epiphanius said to him:

"Child Polybius! Behold, I am already departing from this life. Fulfill my command: go to Egypt, for even after my death I shall care for you."

And when St. Epiphanius died, Polybius, not waiting for his burial, since his body had not been buried for ten days, set out for Egypt in accordance with his testament. There the governor of the city of Rhinocorura[14] met him and asked him:

"Where are you coming from?"

"From Cyprus," Polybius replied, "for I was a disciple of Epiphanius, Archbishop of Cyprus, who has already departed unto the Lord."

The governor of Rhinocorura was deeply grieved at the death of the Venerable Father and, inviting St. Polybius to his home, appointed him bishop in his city. For his virtuous and blameless life, St. Polybius was granted the gift of working miracles. Thus, by his prayer he brought rain down from heaven and thereby increased the yield of the fields. Having attained a great old age, he departed unto the Lord.[15]

* * *

Life of our Holy Father Epiphanius, Archbishop of Cyprus

Житие святого отца нашего Епифания, архиепископа Кипрского

St. Epiphanius, who was of Jewish descent, was born in Phoenicia:[16] on the bank of the River Eleutherus, which flows from the

14. The city of Rhinocorura was situated in the mountainous part of the Thebaid Desert, in Upper (southern) Egypt.

15. St. Polyvius reposed in the 5th century.

16. *Phoenicia*: a country along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, to the northwest of Palestine; its inhabitants were famed as seafarers and merchants.

mountains of Lebanon into the Phoenician Sea,[17] three stadia[18] from the city of Nicea, stood the village of Besanduk. Here St. Epiphanius's parents lived, earning their livelihood by farming; besides their son, they had a daughter, Callitropia, who was younger than he. When the boy was ten years old, his father died, leaving his wife with the heavy burden of raising the children: the orphaned family had barely enough to live on, while the children were still very young. Their mother was forced to provide for them by the labor of her own hands. Several years passed in this way. It happened that the widow had a very stubborn and unruly donkey. One day the mother said to Epiphanius:

"My son, take the donkey, lead it to the market in the city, sell it there, and buy us food."

"You know," Epiphanius replied to his mother, "that the donkey is unruly, and when the buyers at the market notice this, they will beat me."

"Go, my son; may the God of our fathers tame the donkey," his mother said to him. Then the boy, obeying his mother's command, led the donkey into the city to sell it. The first man to come to buy it was also a Jew. Recognizing his fellow countryman in the seller, he said to him:

"My son, you and I believe in one God, who loves righteousness, and we ought not to wrong one another, lest we anger our God and afterward complain against one another. So let us set a fair price for the donkey."

Epiphanius answered him:

"I would not wish to sell you this donkey, for it is still untrained, and besides, it is stubborn and unruly. It is only because of hunger and because we have nothing with which to buy food that my mother decided to sell it. But now I hear from you that it is sinful to harm one's neighbor for the sake of gain, and I fear that God may punish me."

Amazed at the boy's good sense and upright character, the Jew gave him three pennies[19] and said:

17. That is, the Mediterranean.
18. A *poprishche* was equal to approximately 690 sazhens.
19. A *penyaz* was the sixth part of a drachma.

"My son, take this, buy bread for your mother, and return home with the donkey. If it becomes docile, keep it with you; otherwise drive it away, lest it kill someone."

Epiphanius set out for home and, on the way, near his village, met a Christian named Cleovius, who wished to buy the donkey. But the honest boy refused to sell it. While they were talking, the donkey became stubborn and began snorting and kicking; then, throwing Epiphanius off its back, it ran from the road. The boy fell so hard that he could not rise, and lay weeping bitterly: his bruised thigh hurt him severely. Cleovius came up to him, felt his thigh, and made the sign of the cross over it three times. At once Epiphanius recovered and stood up. Then Cleovius turned to the donkey and said:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified, I command you to stop; and because you sought to kill your master, you yourself shall not move from this place."

At once the donkey fell down and died. Astonished by what had happened, the boy asked Cleovius:

"Who is this crucified Jesus Christ, father, that such miracles are performed in His name?"

"The Son of God, whom the Jews crucified," Cleovius replied. Epiphanius was afraid to reveal to him his Jewish origin and went home, thinking of Christ crucified and desiring to believe in Him. When he reached his mother, he told her all that had happened. Meanwhile, she, having nothing with which to feed her children, sold her field, and told Epiphanius to go to the city and learn some craft, so that in time he might provide for himself, her, and his sister. Just as Epiphanius was setting out for the city, a wealthy Jewish teacher of the Law named Tryphon came from the city to Besanduk. He knew Epiphanius's parents well and owned some estates in their village. Learning that Epiphanius's mother had been widowed and seeing her in poverty, he said to her:

"Give me your son, and I will adopt him. If you agree, from this day onward let him be regarded as my son, and you and your daughter shall be provided for from my household."

With the greatest joy, the widow gave her son to the unexpected benefactor to be raised. Epiphanius lived in Tryphon's house as a son, being instructed in the Jewish books. The quick understanding and rare intelligence of the well-behaved pupil made him beloved by his tutor. Tryphon even wished to give his only daughter to him in marriage. But by the will of God she died. Soon her parents died as well, and Epiphanius's mother also. Left sole heir to all Tryphon's property, Epiphanius took his sister Callitropia into his care, instilling in her the good counsel of his adoptive father and teacher.

One day Epiphanius set out for his native village to inspect the property he had inherited from Tryphon. By God's providence, he met along the way a monk named Lucian, who copied books and sold them to provide for himself and the poor. Just as Epiphanius met the monk, a beggar seized Lucian by the feet, saying:

"Have mercy on me, man of God: I have not eaten bread for three days, and now I do not know what I can find to sustain myself."

Blessed Lucian, having nothing in his hands, took off his garment and gave it to the beggar, saying:

"Go into the city, sell this clothing, and buy yourself bread." Epiphanius, who had seen all this, marveled at such mercy from the monk he had met; and, as if coming into an ecstatic state, he noticed a shining white garment descending upon the monk and covering him. In terror he quickly dismounted from his horse, and, falling on his knees before the monk, said, bowing to him:

"I beg you, tell me, who are you?"

"First tell me what faith you are of, and then I will tell you about myself," answered Lucian. Epiphanius said:

"I am a Jew."

Then his interlocutor, a clairvoyant elder, noticing in the Jew he had met the working of the saving grace of God, addressed him with the following words:

"How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me, a Christian, who I am? For there is very little in common between Jews and Christians. Now that you have learned that I am a Christian, you ought not to continue speaking with me any longer."

"And what, Father, prevents me from being a Christian?" asked Epiphanius, and he received from the follower of Christ this answer:

"Only this prevents you: that you do not wish it, since every good deed is preceded by the will. If you truly desired it, you would be a Christian."

These words moved Epiphanius: abandoning his original intention to visit his native land in his home village, he returned to his house in the city, first urging his companion to come with him as well. Having brought him to his home, he showed him all his property.

"Here is my property, Father," the host said to his guest. "I wish to be a Christian and to take the monastic habit, but I have a young sister. What would you say to me about her?"

"My child," answered the Christian, "you can indeed be a Christian while having both earthly wealth and a sister. Neither the one nor the other contradicts the holy Christian faith. But you cannot take up the monastic life. First of all, receive holy baptism together with your sister. Then give her in marriage, with a sufficient dowry, to a Christian. Afterwards, distribute what remains to you to the poor. And then you can be a true monk."

"All this, Father," said Epiphanius, "I will carry out in fact according to your commandment; only do not delay in counting us among the community of Christians."

"About this," said Lucian, "the bishop must be informed: without him the sacrament of baptism cannot be performed. So I will go to him. You, meanwhile, remain steadfast in your intention and zeal toward Christ our God. I will return to you soon."

Lucian went to the local bishop. Epiphanius, coming into the room of his sister, said to her:

"I wish to be a Christian and to be clothed in the monastic order."

"Whatever you wish," the sister answered her brother, "that I wish too, and whatever you do, that I will do."

Hearing of Epiphanius' desire to be baptized, the bishop rejoiced greatly and said to the good messenger:

"Go, teach the youth and his sister the holy faith and instruct them in the law of Christ. And when the Lord's day comes and we enter the

church, then bring them to God, the merciful Lover of mankind, that we may join them to Him by holy baptism."

When Lucian returned to Epiphanius, the latter and his sister bowed down to the ground before the elder, begging him with tears:

"We beg you, Father, make us Christians quickly."

Lucian, raising them up, began to teach them Christian piety. This instruction, accompanied by prayer, continued almost without interruption, both by day and by night, until the Lord's day. On Sunday Lucian brought Epiphanius and Callitropia to the bishop. Falling prostrate before the bishop as before Christ Himself, they asked him for holy enlightenment. Raising them up and conversing with them kindly, he admitted them to the catechumenate. Then the bishop went into the church, with Lucian behind him, and the newly catechized followed. As Epiphanius stepped onto the first step of the church entrance, his sandal fell from his left foot.[20] When he then stepped barefoot onto the threshold, the sandal also fell from his right foot. Epiphanius did not turn back for his sandals but entered the church barefoot, so great was the zeal with which he went toward God. Looking at Epiphanius in the church, the bishop saw a crown upon his head and his face glorified. The bishop and Lucian led Epiphanius and his sister into the baptismal font and baptized them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Lucian was the godfather of Epiphanius, and the holy virgin Veronica was the godmother of Callitropia. At the Divine Liturgy the newly baptized partook of the Mysteries of Christ. Afterwards, by the bishop's command, they dined with him and remained at the episcopal residence for eight days. Then Epiphanius brought his sister, Lucian and Veronica to his house; here, taking a thousand gold coins, he handed them, together with his sister, to Veronica as the head of Christ's virgin nuns, and dismissed both women. Finally, having distributed the money from the sale of all his property to the needy, and keeping for himself only 400 gold coins for the purchase of Divine books, the newly baptized went out of the city with Lucian to the mon-

20. Sandals were a kind of footwear. They consisted of a sole of leather or reed, fastened to the foot by a strap.

astery founded by the elder. In it ten monks labored, diligently occupied with copying books, and by this they supported themselves.

Epiphanius, twenty-six years old, received the monastic habit and was placed under the direction of Hilarion, the first monk after Lucian, who, though young in years, was perfect in virtues and adorned with great gifts of wonder-working. Observing his teacher, the new monk began to imitate his ascetic labors. Not only did he learn from Hilarion, at Lucian's direction, to read and write in Greek, but he was also trained by him in the ascetic and God-pleasing life of monasticism. With the help of Christ's grace, Epiphanius advanced from strength to strength. After the death of the Venerable Lucian, his director became abbot (hegumen) and began to lead an even stricter life. He seemed not a man but one of the Angels who always serve God. At Hilarion's table there was little bread, with a moderate amount of salt and water. Even this he ate either every other day, or every two days, or every three days, and sometimes he ate nothing for a whole week. Epiphanius, seeing such fasting, strove to imitate him, and afterwards throughout his whole life kept to the fasting rule he had received from the great faster Hilarion. The Lord rewarded His servant with the gift of wonder-working. The beginning of his miracles was as follows. The monastery was surrounded by a waterless district, and the brethren went for water five *poprishch* away, and that only at night, because of the unbearable heat of the sun by day. It happened once, on an exceedingly hot day, that some passing travelers came to the monastery to quench their terrible thirst. But the monks could not do this, for at that time not a single drop of water was to be found in the monastery. The travelers were already expecting their death. Epiphanius, pitying them, stretched out his hand toward a vessel of wine they had with them, and, touching it, said to the brethren:

"Believe, brethren, that He who once changed water into wine is able now to change wine into water (Jn. 2:1–11)."

And immediately at Epiphanius' word the wine was changed into water. The rejoiced travelers not only drank themselves but also watered their cattle. After this the water again became wine. All involuntarily marveled at the miracle, and from that time began to hold Epi-

phanius in special esteem for the holiness of his life. He, however, unable to bear the honor of the brethren, secretly left the monastery and hid himself in the desert of Spanidrion, feeding on the grains growing there.

Some time later, forty Saracens[21] who were wandering through that desert, seeing Epiphanius in monastic garb, began to mock him. Among the robbers one was one-eyed, and he was the most distinguished for savagery and inhumanity. Drawing his sword, he wished to strike Epiphanius.

But no sooner had the robber raised his arm to strike than his eye regained its sight. In astonishment he threw the sword to the ground, showing his healed eye to his companions. The eyewitnesses of such a miracle forcibly took Epiphanius with them, saying:

"You are our god; go with us and protect us from the misfortunes that befall us."

For three months the saint went with them. Restraining them from all evil deeds and not allowing them to commit any lawlessness before his eyes, he all this time instructed them in the knowledge of the true God, instilling in them the saving fear of God.

"If you do not abandon your evil deeds," he said to them, "you will not prosper on earth and will perish from the punishing, righteous wrath of the Lord."

However, the meek monk could not for long be the leader of bold robbers. The unceasing admonitions and restraints of an Angel in the flesh became, after three months, completely unbearable to the demons in human form. And whereas at their first meeting with the wonder-working monk they had begged him to go with them, now, on the contrary, they implored the saint to withdraw from them to his former place. Having led him there, they built him a hut. Then they parted from him, with the exception of one who had believed in Christ and had become a worthy disciple of the venerable man. For a year and a half the Christ-loving teacher instructed the repentant robber in the Divine books and guided him in the ascetic life. Then the teacher went with his

21. Saracens were the inhabitants of Arabia. Originally this name denoted a nomadic, brigand tribe, but later Christian writers extended the name to all Muslims in general.

disciple to the monastery of St. Hilarion and asked him to baptize the new catechumen. The great hegumen performed this sacrament over him, naming him John. John did not leave his teacher and wrote down his life up to his own death, which came before the repose of the venerable man.

On the return journey from the monastery to the desert cell, St. Epiphanius and his newly baptized disciple John met a demon-possessed youth who wandered naked through the desert. Taking pity on him, the saint, after prayer to the Lord God, cast the demon out of him. The demon, leaving his former victim, cried out:

"O Epiphanius, you are driving me out of my place, in which I have lived for twenty-two years, and I will drag you to Persia, where, against your will, you will stand before the king."

With this, the demon departed. The young man was completely healed, and, falling down at the feet of his healer, he gave thanks to him. Having taught the one who had been healed to offer thanks to God, the saint sent him home. Meanwhile the expelled demon, coming into Persia[22], entered the daughter of the king and began to torment her sorely. As he did so he cried out:

"If Epiphanius does not come here, I will not leave this maiden. Epiphanius, a native of Phoenicia, come here, and I will come out of the king's daughter."

The king, having heard of the land of Phoenicia, sent his servants there to seek out Epiphanius. But they, inquiring after him in all the cities and villages of Phoenicia, could learn nothing, and were nearly killed by the natives, who took them for spies. When they returned to the king empty-handed, the devil who was in the maiden continued to cry out loudly:

"Epiphanius lives in the desert called Spanidrion; bring him here."

Then the king, summoning thirty of his courtiers, said to them:

"Taking off your Persian garments and putting on Greek ones, go to Phoenicia and seek out the desert place called Spanidrion. There you

22. Persia occupies the western part of the Iranian plateau.

will find a certain man named Epiphanius. Taking him with you, bring him to me."

Having changed their clothing, the envoys set out and reached the said desert. For a long time they searched there for Epiphanius. At last, by the directions of a certain man, they came by night to his cell, at the time when the saint, as was his custom, was performing the night prayers with his disciple. They knocked violently at his door. But the ascetic of Christ, unwilling to interrupt his rule of prayer, stood in prayer, not at all frightened by the knocking and as though not noticing it. The Persians, coming to a terrible rage, at last resolved to break open the cell door. One of them raised his weapon to strike the door, and suddenly his raised hand became stiff as wood and withered. The rest, from fear, involuntarily withdrew some distance from the cell and waited for the coming of day. At dawn Epiphanius, having already performed his night and morning prayers, opened the door and came out. Seeing the venerable man, the one who had suffered fell prostrate before him and said:

"Have mercy on me, servant of the immortal God."

"What do you ask of a sinful man?" asked the humble servant of God.

"I came to this place healthy," he replied, "and now my hand has withered."

"As you came here healthy," said the Venerable, "so be healthy."

With these words he touched the withered hand, and at once it became healthy, like the other. Seeing such a miracle, the companions of the one who had been healed drew near to the saint and, bowing down, disclosed to him the purpose of their coming: they begged him to go to the king to heal his daughter. The Venerable, perceiving that the spirit expelled by him from the young man had entered the daughter of the Persian king, armed himself against the demon with prayer, and, trusting in God, set out with his disciple on the camels of the Persian men. After thirty-five days the travelers reached Persia and stopped in the city of Urion. Three of the Persians went to the king to announce the arrival of Epiphanius. The king at once commanded that he be brought before him. The Venerable came to him as to a plain man, not as to a

king. The earthly ruler greeted the faithful servant of the Heavenly King, rising from his throne. The saint spoke with him about the true God, Christ our Savior, and about His invincible power that casts out every demonic race. After the conversation the wonderworker was brought the demon-possessed daughter of the king. Having prayed to God for the suffering girl, the saint made the sign of the Cross over her three times. Scarcely had he finished it than the demon came out of the maiden, who thereafter was completely healthy. Rejoicing at the healing of his daughter, the king bowed down to the Venerable.

One of the Persian magi[23], who had seen the miracle, cried out to the Venerable:

"O beloved magus, who have come here to correct our teaching, remain here with us and teach us, and all of us, the Persian magi, will listen to you."

In answer to the words of the magus, the saint looked upon him sternly and said to him in anger:

"O enemy of the truth! May your lying lips, which call me, the servant of my Lord Jesus Christ, a magus, be stopped."

And at once the magus was struck dumb. All were involuntarily horrified. The one who had become mute fell at the feet of the servant of the Most High God and with prostrations begged him to loose his tongue. After suitable admonition the merciful righteous man healed the one who had been punished.

"I have sinned against you, servant of God," cried the one who had been healed, "forgive me."

Meanwhile the grateful king ordered that a great quantity of gold, silver and precious stones be brought to the wonderful healer as a gift. The monk, who was free of covetousness, took nothing for himself.

"We do not seek," he said to the king, "these temporal riches, hoping in the future life for the better, eternal ones promised us by our Lord Christ. As for you, keep what is yours; you love possessions, and you

23. In antiquity the name "magi" (wise men) denoted learned people who possessed wide knowledge, especially of the hidden forces of nature and of the heavenly luminaries. They observed natural phenomena, interpreted dreams and foretold the future; for the most part they were at the same time priests, and enjoyed great respect at royal courts and among the people.

ruin your soul for their sake, since, being a lover of gold, you seize what belongs to others and do not give to those in need."

He also refused the king's invitation to dine with him.

"One loaf of bran bread and a little salt is enough for me to strengthen my infirm body," said the great faster in reply to the king's summons. When the king, despite the saint's refusal, ordered that he and John be led to a separate room where a table was laid with costly dishes, the strict ascetic tasted nothing but the bread.

For ten days the true follower of Christ remained in the palace, instructing the king in the holy Christian faith. But the seeds of Christian preaching fell upon a hardened heart and a mind blinded by false belief. At his last meeting with the unbelieving king, the saint Epiphanius delivered an address before him on righteous judgments, on mercy, on the magi as servants of demons, and on the impropriety of his waging war against Christian kings:

"If you go to war against them, you will be an enemy of Christ Himself, who was crucified, and you will perish in a terrible manner," concluded the righteous man his sermon, as he was escorted from the royal palace by the sovereign himself. Upon leaving it, the servant of the Living God saw a dead man being carried out for burial. Bidding those carrying him to stop, Saint Epiphanius, looking up to heaven, said:

"Son of God, who raised Lazarus from the dead when he had been four days in the tomb (Jn. 11:39–44), raise up this dead man too, to the glory of Thy most holy Name."

Having prayed, Saint Epiphanius touched the dead man, and he at once came to life. Those standing around were struck with terror and took the wonderworker for one of the gods. The humble monk, calling himself a servant of God, preached to them about the true God, glorified in the Holy Trinity. Since his listeners were not sheep of Christ, he hastened to return to his own country. The king wished to send with him a guard of soldiers as far as the borders of Persia. But the fearless warrior of Christ refused.

"I have God to protect me," he said to the king, "and His warriors, the holy Angels."

Then the king, bidding farewell to the hermit, dismissed him with the words:

"Go in peace, Epiphanius, glory of the Greeks; remember also us who dwell in Persia."

And the God-protected saint went to his desert cell, which the Saracens had built for him. Having come into it, he again gave himself to silence.

Around the settlement, for a great distance, there was no water. The servant of God, having prayed fervently to the Lord God, brought forth a spring of water from the dry earth, as Moses once did from the rock in the wilderness (Num. 20:11). Then the hermit, with the help of his disciple, laid out a small garden, planted edible herbs in it, and watered them from the miraculous spring. But wild animals that came into the garden devoured them. Once, seeing these unwelcome visitors in the garden, the Venerable addressed them as though they were men, with such words:

"Do not harm a poor and sinful man who has settled here to mourn his sins; I already have few of these herbs, given to me by God for my sustenance."

And the animals, as if understanding, departed in shame and no longer caused harm to the saint. Throughout all Phoenicia the fame of the holy ascetic of the Spanidrion desert spread abroad. It again brought to him Saracens, who wished to receive a blessing from him, and they built three more cells for the numerous disciples who gathered around him. Soon a whole monastery formed here, numbering 50 brethren. Among them was the son of the Roman eparch[24], Aetius Callistus. He received the monastic habit from Epiphanius for the following reason. Being demon-possessed in his youth, he once saw Epiphanius in a dream, who said to him:

"Do you wish, Callistus, that I drive the unclean spirit away from you?"

24. An *eparch* was the governor of a province.

"Who are you, my lord, who can drive away from me the fierce tormentor?" asked the youth of the one who had appeared to him. He answered:

"I am Epiphanius, who lives in Palestinian Phoenicia, in the desert monastery called Spanidrion. If I drive the evil spirit away from you, will you come to me and live with me in my monastery?"

"Lord," replied the sick youth, "only drive the tormentor out of me, and I will at once come to live with you."

"Take care, child," Epiphanius warned Callistus, "do not break your promise."

Awaking, the demoniac felt himself completely healthy and told his parents of his miraculous healing. After three months Callistus made this request to them:

"Let me go to Palestinian Phoenicia to find the lord Epiphanius, that I may remain with him; I am afraid lest the tormentor, the devil, return to me."

His parents at once let their son go to the Venerable with servants and with a multitude of gold and silver. Coming to his healer, the one who had been healed received the monastic habit from his hands and gave him the gold and silver he had brought with him for the building of the monastery; his servants he sent back to his parents.

At that time another ascetic of Christ, Venerable Hilarion the Great, who had his monastery in the desert near Gaza's Maiumas, was famed throughout all of Palestine. St. Epiphanius once visited him together with his disciple John. The abbot and brethren received the guests kindly and kept them with them for several days. During this time the devil, taking on the likeness of Epiphanius, went to his monastery as though returning from Hilarion the Great. A certain careless and negligent brother, who had gone out of the monastery without need, saw the transfigured demon. Taking him for the real Epiphanius, he bowed to him, and at once the demon entered into him and began to torment him. The brethren, seeing the possessed man, were perplexed as to how this affliction had come upon a monk hitherto in health, and they grieved for him. What was incomprehensible to the brethren who were with him,

their abbot, who had been away, foresaw in his spirit with his gift of insight.

"Father," Epiphanius said then to Hilarion, "a wolf has climbed into my flock and troubled my sheep. I am going to drive him out."

Having said this, he took leave of the great elder and the brethren. Returning in haste to the monastery, by his presence alone he made the devil come out of the one who had been his victim in deceit. The one who had been healed told him how he had become possessed. The saint, after hearing his account, taught the brethren to guard themselves against the snares of the devil.

Not far from Epiphanius's monastery, beside the road that ran through the desert, there lived a fierce lion, which had destroyed many travelers, so that passersby went only in very large crowds. Gathering once, they came to the monastery to the Venerable Father and told him of the bloodthirstiness of the beast which had slain many. Having heard them, the Venerable Father said to them:

"Let us go, children, in the name of the Lord, and look at that lion."

And they all went. As they approached the lion's lair, fear fell upon them all, and they all wished to run back. But the saint said:

"Show me its place."

They showed him, standing at a distance. Then the Venerable Father went to the beast, calling out:

"Where is the lion's dwelling?"

At once the lion, hearing a human voice, leapt out of its den; but seeing the face of the saint, it fell dead. Those standing at a distance, noticing the lion come out, fled in fear, expecting that it would tear Epiphanius apart. But the servant of God cried out to them in a loud voice:

"Do not be afraid, children: come and look at the corpse of the beast." After long hesitation they dared to come to the saint, and seeing the dead lion lying at his feet, they were greatly amazed and glorified God.

Along with the gift of working miracles and many other gifts, the Lord rewarded His faithful servant with the great gift of knowing and interpreting Holy Scripture. Reading it to the brethren, he explained it clearly and so that all could understand. A Greek philosopher heard of

his learning and his lofty mind. Coming from Edessa[25] to the monastery to the saint, the philosopher disputed with him on the basis of the books of the Hellenic sages: he extolled Greek polytheism, while Epiphanius proved from the teaching of Holy Scripture the truth of the Christian faith in the One God, glorified in the Holy Trinity. For a whole year the Greek scholar remained in the monastery of the Christian sage, arguing with him and observing the angel-like life of the saint and his disciples. Seeing moreover the miracles performed by Epiphanius, the philosopher little by little came to know the truth of Christ. At last the following miracle struck him especially and finally converted him to Christianity. Sixty men brought into the monastery a demoniac bound with fetters[26]. The Venerable Father said to the philosopher:

"Listen, philosopher, who disputes with the sinful Epiphanius: either you cast this cruel demon out of this man by calling upon your gods, so that I may believe in them; or I will call upon my God, the crucified Jesus Christ, and cast out the demon, and then you shall turn to our Christian faith."

The philosopher was silent, finding no answer. Then the saint, invoking the name of God, rebuked the demon and cast it out of the creature of God. After this miracle the philosopher fell at the feet of the wonderworker, asking for baptism and confessing the One true God, Christ crucified. The Venerable Father sent the newly converted man to Hilarion, who baptized him with the name Epiphanius. The new convert then took the monastic vow, became a presbyter and the superior of monks.

Daily there came to the Venerable Father from various places many brethren and laymen. To avoid these numerous and unwelcome in-

25. Edessa, the present Urfa, a city in northern Mesopotamia on the Euphrates River, was from 137 B.C. the chief city of the newly formed Osroene or Edessene kingdom; in A.D. 217 it was made a Roman colony in 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 especially promoted by Ibas, the presbyter and teacher of the Edessene school. In 641 Edessa was conquered by the Arab caliphs; in 1098 Count Baldwin seized it and made it the chief city of the Principality of Edessa; in 1144 it was conquered by the Turks, and from that time it passed from hand to hand until in 1637 it finally fell under Turkish rule.

26. *Verigi* (*verigi*): chains, fetters.

truders upon his holy solitude, Epiphanius resolved to withdraw into the land of Egypt. Knowing well that the brethren would not let him go from among them, he called them and said:

"I wish to go and visit the great elder Hilarion."

The brethren, understanding the intention of their teacher, fell prostrate before him with lamentation and begged him not to leave them. The elder promised not to depart from them and remained in his cell. But after ten days, together with his disciple John, he secretly left the monastery and set out for Jerusalem[27]. Here he bowed before the Life-giving Wood of the Cross of the Lord, and he prayed also at the other Jerusalem holy places. Then he went to Joppa[28], where there was a seaport, and boarded a ship sailing for Alexandria[29]. On his arrival in that city he was met by the Jewish teacher of the law, Aquila, who wished to dispute with him about the faith on the basis of Holy Scripture. The dispute lasted two days. At last the Jew, vanquished by the Christian, wished to be baptized. The Venerable Father brought him to Archbishop Athanasius. The hierarch received both with joy: the Jew as one who had turned to Christ, and Epiphanius as one who had set him on the right path. Some time later Epiphanius went from Alexandria with his disciple to the Thebaid[30]. Here they were met by Paphnutius, a former disciple of Antony the Great[31].

27. *Jerusalem*, from the Hebrew: "abode of peace," the most ancient and most famous city of Palestine. It lies at the source of the Kidron stream, not far from the Jordan and the Dead Sea, on the slopes of three spurs of the Judean mountains, Akra, Zion and Moriah. The existence of Jerusalem is traced back to the times of Abraham, it being supposed that it is the city of Salute where Melchizedek was king and high priest (Gen. 14:18). This city, known as the center of the historical events of the chosen Hebrew people in the Old and New Testaments, is immeasurably dear to every Christian as the place of the sufferings and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the cradle of the Christian Church, from which the word of the Gospel spread throughout the whole universe.

28. Joppa (the present Jaffa) was one of the most ancient Asiatic cities, on the northwestern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It was a Jewish harbor already in the reign of Solomon.

29. Alexandria was an important port city of Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. on a cape projecting into the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, somewhat south of the present city of the same name; it was once the center of learning and the first trading city in the world; at the beginning of the 4th century it became the center of Christianity and the residence of the patriarch.

30. The region of the city of Thebes, famous in antiquity; this name was also applied generally to all of Upper (southern) Egypt, after the name of its chief city. The desert located here was the beloved dwelling place of Eastern hermits of the 4th and 5th centuries.

"Bless us, Father," said the Venerable Father to him.

To this he answered:

"Blessed are you by the Lord."

After prayer they sat down and conversed: Epiphanius questioned him about the life of Antony, and he told him about it.

"I wish, Father," he said to him after this account, "to live in the Desert of Nitria[32]."

"Go," answered Epiphanius's interlocutor, "and take delight in conversations with the holy fathers who live in Nitria, and gather from them the spiritual food with which you will feed the rational sheep on the island of Cyprus[33]."

Paphnutius's words were a prophecy of Epiphanius's future episcopate on the island of Cyprus. Having offered a prayer, the interlocutors took leave of one another and each went his own way. On approaching the city of Leonitopolis, Epiphanius heard that near the city there was a monastery where a monk named Hierax lived, a man pious in appearance, who in reality was a heretic, since he taught erroneously about our body. In his opinion it would not rise again, but God would give another body in the future life instead of it. For it is written: "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19).

He also said that children would be imperfect in that age. Epiphanius had heard of him already in Palestine and desired to see him. Likewise Hierax had heard of the Venerable Father. On coming to this monastery, the saint saw a multitude of people listening to Hierax's teaching: everyone considered him virtuous, as a great faster who ate

31. St. Anthony the Great, the first founder of the monastic life, a native Egyptian, labored on the eastern bank of the Nile River, near the Thebaid. There, wearing a hair shirt and nourishing himself only on herbs and roots, he lived for twenty years in constant labor and prayer in obscurity, contending by the grace of God against the spirit of seduction, who troubled him with temptations and fear. At last, the sanctity of his life and his miracles drew many ascetics into the desert to Anthony; they settled near him and took as their model the rules given by Anthony, which was the beginning of the monastic life. St. Anthony reposed in the year 366, at the age of 105. His memory is celebrated on January 17.

32. The reference is to hermits who lived in the Nitrian Desert, adjoining Mount Nitria, located in the northwestern part of Egypt.

33. The island of Cyprus lies at the northeastern end of the Mediterranean Sea.

no oil and drank no wine. Seeing two wandering monks, Hierax asked them:

"Where are you from?"

"From Palestine," the travelers answered. Then, asking their names, he grew troubled: Epiphanius, who was famed in Egypt for his holiness and wisdom, was unwelcome to him. Paying no further attention to Epiphanius, he continued to teach the people. When the heretic in his preaching reached the resurrection of the dead and began to teach that human bodies would not rise, Epiphanius, unable to bear his error, addressed him with a word of rebuke.

"Let your mouth be stopped," he said, "so that you may learn not to revile our hope."

And at once the one who was in error became mute and was made motionless. The witnesses of such a miracle were struck with great terror. And the wonderworker began to teach about the resurrection of the dead, assuring them that they would rise in the same, but only altered, body in which they had lived in this world. After some hours of his preaching the saint said to the one who had been punished:

"Learn the true faith and teach it to others."

And the mute at once began to speak, confessing his error and promising to repent. The Venerable Father sufficiently instructed him in the right faith, and then went to Upper Thebaid. In it there was a desert place called Vuvulie. Settling there, the saint remained for seven years. But even this desert did not save him from visitors. Among them was a native philosopher named Eudaemon, who came to dispute with the saint about the faith; the philosopher was accompanied by his son, who had one crooked eye. After a long dispute the Venerable Father, looking at the philosopher's son, said to the father:

"Why do you not concern yourself about your son, so as to free him from his bodily defect?"

"If in the whole world," answered the one questioned, laughing, "Eudaemon's son alone were one-eyed, then indeed I should have to care for him. But since one-eyed people are numerous on earth, let him remain so."

"But if in truth in the whole world your son alone had a crooked eye, and all other people on earth saw with both eyes, then what would you do for his healing?" Epiphanius went on questioning Eudaemon.

"Nothing else," the philosopher said in reply, "except that I would say to myself: there is no more unfortunate man in the whole world than my son."

"Do not take lightly what I have said," said the saint, "but give me your son for healing, and you will see the glory of God." Then, taking the boy, he made the sign of the Cross three times over his eye, and healed him. Seeing such a miracle, the philosopher and his son believed in Christ. After being sufficiently instructed in the right faith, Eudaemon, together with all his household, received Holy Baptism from the local bishop.

The same renown of St. Epiphanius, which drew to him a multitude of people, gave rise among the bishops of Egypt to a desire to make the Venerable Father, by force, the hierarch of some local city. But the saint discerned with the spirit the intention of the bishops, and said to his disciple:

"Let us return, child, to our homeland."

And they both set out for Phoenicia. On the way they stopped at the monastery of the great Hilarion, but did not find the elder there: the numerous visitors to that monastery had moved him to withdraw to a desert place, located within the bounds of the Cypriot city of Paphos[34]. The brethren, who were weeping for their father who had left them, seeing St. Epiphanius in their midst, were comforted in their grief; for forty days he consoled them. Then he went to his own monastery of Spanidrion, where all rejoiced at his return. That year there was a famine in Phoenicia owing to drought. Learning of the return of the great wonderworker, a multitude of people came to him at the monastery, earnestly entreating him to beseech God for rain, that the earth might yield its fruit.

34. In antiquity there were two cities on the island of Cyprus bearing the name of Paphos: *Old Paphos*, on its western shore, ten stadia from the sea, and *New Paphos* (the present Baffo), a Phoenician colony, 15 versts to the northwest of the old city. Ruins of both cities survive. It is not known in the vicinity of which of them St. Epiphanius lived.

"Why do you trouble me?" said the Venerable Father to them. "I am a sinful man."

But they besought him long and without ceasing. At last the saint, shutting himself in his cell, set himself to the desired prayer. And suddenly the sky, until then perfectly clear, was covered with thunderclouds, from which for three days there poured a heavy and unceasing rain over all of Phoenicia. Then the people began to beg the servant of God to stop the rain. By the saint's prayer it ceased, and that year there was great abundance of the fruits of the earth.

The more the renown of the Venerable Father increased, drawing to him daily innumerable crowds of visitors, the more he pondered how to depart again from Phoenicia. His intention soon turned into resolve. In Lycia[35], the place of St. Epiphanius's baptism, a bishop had died, and the hierarchs of the neighboring cities gathered to elect a new bishop; in doing so they remembered St. Epiphanius. Among those present at the council was a young but perfect monk in life, chaste and virtuous, Polybius, who knew the Venerable Father. The bishops commanded him to ride with all speed to the monastery of Spanidrion and to make careful secret inquiry: had Epiphanius in truth returned from Egypt, and was he in his own monastery?

"Do not disclose the commission to anyone, not even to Epiphanius himself," the fathers of the council said to Polybius. The latter found the saint in the monastery and greeted him.

"Why have you come here, my son?" asked the saint of Polybius. The latter answered:

"I have come to visit your holiness."

"You have come, child," the seer replied to him, "to observe my insignificance, whether I am here. Do not conceal from me what you have been commanded, for it is a sin to speak falsely: tell the truth, for God is in our midst. Be truly a servant of the truth; and Epiphanius the sinner wanders from place to place, groaning and fearing the multitude of his sins. But listen, Polybius: stay here, and send the horse back to the

35. Lycia was, in all likelihood, the chief city of the mountainous region of the same name on the southern coast of Asia Minor.

bishops. Let them seek whomever they know as a worthy man for the episcopate; as for me, I shall remain unknown to them."

Polybius obeyed the clairvoyant: having sent back the horse and the servant, he himself remained with the Venerable Father. At nightfall, Epiphanius, together with his constant disciple John and the newly arrived Polybius, left the monastery secretly from all. First he visited Jerusalem to venerate the Life-giving Wood of the Cross of the Lord and the other holy places in Jerusalem and its environs. After a three-day stay in the city sacred to Christians, St. Epiphanius said to both his disciples:

"I have heard, children, that our great father Hilarion now dwells in the land of Cyprus, not far from the city of Paphos; so let us go to him and receive his blessing."

Having said this, he went with them to Caesarea Philippi[36], located in Palestine, to embark there on a ship sailing to the island of Cyprus. Having landed on the Cypriot shore, he went into the Paphian desert to the great ascetic Hilarion. At their meeting after a long separation, both hermits were filled with great joy. Seeing Hilarion's sorrow over his not inconsiderable visitors and his intention to move to another place, Epiphanius, after two months, resolved to leave his hospitable host. On parting, Hilarion asked his guest:

"Where do you wish to go, Epiphanius?"

"I shall go to Ascalon and to Gaza[37] and farther, until I find somewhere in the desert a quiet place."

In reply to this, St. Epiphanius heard from the seer such counsel:

36. Caesarea Philippi, or Paneas, is a city in the far northeast of Palestine, at the sources of the Jordan. It is named Philippi after Philip, the son of Herod, who received it as his portion, and it is distinguished from Caesarea of Palestine, which lies on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

37. Ascalon and Gaza were among the principal Philistine cities on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

"Go, child, to the city of Salamis[38], which is on the island of Cyprus. And there in this city you will have a good dwelling."

Epiphanius did not want even to hear these prophetic words, which contained a prediction that he would be archbishop of the named city. Then the saintly foreteller repeated his wish to him, saying:

"I tell you, child, that you should go to that city and live in it. Do not, therefore, gainsay me, lest a calamity befall you at sea."

Taking leave of Hilarion, Epiphanius with his disciples went to the seaport. There stood two ships: one sailing to Ascalon, the other to Salamis. The Venerable Father set sail on the first. Some hours later a great storm unexpectedly arose on the sea. Powerful waves threatened every moment to smash the ship and sink it in the depths of the sea. All despaired of their lives. Such calamity lasted three days. At last, on the fourth day, the waves cast the ship ashore at the city of Salamis. Disembarking, the travelers, exhausted from long fear and severe hunger, lay down upon the ground as though dead. A three-day halt was required both for the rest of the weary sailors and for the repair of the damaged ship. Only on the fourth day was the ship ready to sail. The Venerable Father, too, intended to continue the sea journey. But God judged otherwise.

Just at this time, in the city, the election of an archbishop was taking place. The bishops gathered for this purpose prayed to God for several days that He would point out to them a man worthy of so great a dignity. Among them was the aged and far-seeing Cytherian[39] hierarch Pappius, who had been a bishop for fifty years and had endured many sufferings for the name of Christ together with the Bishop of Salamis, Gelasius. To this Confessor of Christ, revered by all the Cypriot bishops as a father, it had been revealed by God that St. Epiphanius had ar-

38. Salamis was the largest and most fortified of the cities of Cyprus; it lay on its eastern shore. It had an excellent harbor capable of holding an entire fleet. Salamis began to decline under Trajan (A.D. 98–117), during the revolt of the Jews, who destroyed a considerable part of it. The earthquake which followed under Constantine the Great (A.D. 306–337) completely ruined it, destroying almost the entire population. It was restored by Constantius (A.D. 337–361), who gave it his own name, "Constantia." Its ruins are located near Famagusta.

39. Cythera, or Kythira, also Citera, was the chief city on the southern shore of the island of the same name, the southernmost of the Ionian Islands in the Mediterranean Sea.

rived in Salamis, and that he was to be ordained bishop of the city. It was then autumn, and the time of the grape harvest had come.

"Let us go into the city, children," said Epiphanius to his disciples, "and buy ourselves bunches of grapes for the road."

When they came to the vendor of grapes in the marketplace, and Epiphanius, taking two large clusters, asked him:

"What do you want for them?" — at that moment he noticed with astonishment four bishops approaching him. Among them was the aged Pappius, supported by two deacons; he recognized the Venerable Father by the Holy Spirit as he looked upon him, and said to him:

"Abba Epiphanius, leave the grapes and come with us into the holy church."

The one invited, remembering the words of David: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 121:1), left the grapes and went with the bishops. When the Venerable Father entered the church, the whole council of bishops greeted him with the words:

"God has sent you to us, Abba; may you be archbishop of this city and of the whole island of Cyprus."

The saint, however, calling himself sinful and unworthy, refused to bear so great a dignity. But the bishops, not heeding his entreaties, began to advance him successively through the degrees of the priesthood. The one being ordained wept bitterly, considering the burden of the episcopate unbearable for himself. Seeing the tears of the grieving candidate, Pappius said to him:

"It behooves us, child, to keep silent about the revelation that was made to us concerning you; but since I see you grieving and weeping, I must declare to you what God was pleased to reveal to us. Here, these holy fathers, the assembled bishops, laid upon my unworthiness the choice of the archbishop, saying to me, sinner that I am: 'Pray diligently to God, for we believe that God will point out to you a man worthy of the archbishopric.' And I, shutting myself in my bedchamber, prayed about this to the Lord and Savior; and suddenly a light shone around me like lightning, and I heard a voice saying to me, sinner that I am: 'Pappius, Pappius, listen!' Being afraid, I said: 'What dost thou

command, my Lord?' And the voice said to me quietly: 'Arise and go to the marketplace, and there you will see a monk buying bunches of grapes, like the prophet Elisha in face and head, and having with him two disciples. Taking him, consecrate him archbishop; and the name of that monk is Epiphanius.' And so I arose and did what I had been commanded. You, child, do not resist the will of God: 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers' (Acts 20:28)."

After Pappius's address, Epiphanius bowed down to the earth before him, and, submitting to the will of the Lord, accepted consecration as bishop. After this the rejoicing bishops dispersed to their homes. The newly installed archpastor began to shepherd the verbal flock of Christ entrusted to him in the spiritual pasture, not only by his teaching word but also by the example of his virtuous life.

At the beginning of the archpastoral labors of St. Epiphanius, a certain noble Roman named Eugnomon was cast into prison for a debt of one hundred gold coins owed to Draco, a citizen of Salamis. There was no one to deliver the prisoner, for since he was far from his homeland of Rome[40], no one was willing to stand surety for him. Learning of this, and moved with compassion for the debtor, the hierarch went to the wealthy and miserly pagan Draco to ask him to free Eugnomon from his bonds. The hierarch's request provoked great anger in the idolater.

"Stranger in our city!" he replied with malice. "If you want me to release your debtor to you, then go and bring me a hundred gold coins."

The Blessed Epiphanius gave him one hundred gold coins from the church's treasury, and thus delivered the debtor both from his bonds and from his debt. Concerning the gold that had been given away, the proud and malicious deacon Carinus began to murmur against the hierarch, stirring up murmuring against him among the other clergy as well.

"Look at this stranger," he said to them. "He wants to plunder everything that is in the church, and we will be guilty of squandering the church's treasure."

40. Rome is the chief city of Italy, situated on both banks of the Tiber River where it empties into the sea.

Carinus, who had been a wealthy man, sought by this means a pretext to drive St. Epiphanius from the archiepiscopal throne so that he might sit upon it himself. All the clergy, prejudiced by him against the archpastor's merciful act, said to Epiphanius:

"Is the episcopal honor you have received not enough for you? But you also squander the church's property like a wanderer and a stranger who came here poor and naked. Therefore, either give the church back the hundred gold coins, or depart from here to where you came from."

The saint endured in silence. Freed from his bonds, Eugnomon went to Rome, sold all his property, and returned to the hierarch with a great quantity of gold. Placing everything he had received from the sale into the hands of Epiphanius, he gave himself over to the service of God and His archpastor, and lived with Epiphanius until his death. The hierarch, taking one hundred gold coins from the gold that had been brought to him, gave them to Carinus, saying:

"Here is the church's gold, borrowed for the release of the debtor."

Carinus took it. Meanwhile the saint distributed the rest of the gold to those in need. But Carinus, gathering the clergy together, boasted before them with pride.

"Behold," he said to them, "the gold squandered by Epiphanius, which I demanded back from him."

But the clergy began to revile Carinus, who had drawn them into the sin of murmuring and the insulting of the hierarch, and they angrily ordered him to return those gold coins to the hierarch:

"For the hierarch," they said, "has the authority to spend the church's wealth on works of mercy."

Carinus caused the servant of God many other troubles as well, but he bore all of them with meekness.

Once, when the hierarch was at his table, at which all the clergy were present, he was explaining some of the mysteries of Holy Scripture. A raven flew to the window and began to caw. And Carinus, laughing at the hierarch's teaching, said to the other clergy:

"Which of you knows what this raven is saying as it caws?"

Since all were listening attentively to the teaching, no one answered the deacon's question.

A second and a third time Carinus asked:

"Who would be so wise as to understand the speech of the raven?"

But still no one heeded his words, all continuing to listen to the God-inspired discourse of St. Epiphanius. At last the bold deacon asked the hierarch himself:

"If you are wise, then tell me what this raven is conversing about, and if you tell me, you may possess all my property."

The saint, looking at him, said:

"I know what the raven is saying: he says that from now on you will no longer serve as a deacon."

And at once, from the hierarch's word, terror came upon Carinus, and moreover some kind of sickness seized him, so that he could no longer sit at the table and was led home by his servants.

On the following morning he died. All the clergy were filled with great fear, and from that hour they submitted with awe to and honored Christ's hierarch Epiphanius. The God-fearing and childless widow of the punished man brought to the bishop for the church the property that remained after her husband, and dedicated herself to the service of God. One of her hands was in complete paralysis, which had come upon her ten years earlier. Making the sign of the Cross over the widow's diseased hand, which was powerless even to hold anything, St. Epiphanius made it perfectly healthy. Then he ordained the widow a deaconess[41], as one chaste and worthy of church service. The great hierarch of God, St. Epiphanius, also had the grace from the Lord to see, during the offering of the unbloody sacrifice, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the offered Holy Gifts, and he usually did not finish the prayer of the anaphora until he was granted to behold the descent of the Holy Spirit. Once, while reciting the prayer of the anaphora, the

41. A deaconess was a church servant, chosen from widows or elderly unmarried women, in the early Christian Church. The service of deaconesses was expressed first of all in certain church duties in relation to women. Such were, for example: preparing women for baptism, teaching them the proper responses to the questions of the one baptizing, assisting the bishop in administering this sacrament to them, anointing parts of the body with the exception of the forehead, instructing them in proper conduct after baptism, overseeing their orderly standing in church, and being present at the conversations of the bishops, presbyters and deacons with them. Furthermore, the care of the poor and the sick, who needed charity and attention, was entrusted to the deaconesses.

celebrating hierarch did not see the sign. He repeated it twice from the very beginning, but the vision did not come; then the saint, with tears, implored God to show the cause of so sorrowful an occurrence. Looking at the deacon standing on the left who held the fan, he noticed that the man's face was black and his forehead covered with leprosy[42]. Taking the fan from him, the saint said to him meekly:

"Child, do not receive the Communion of the Divine Gifts today, but go to your house."

After he had left the sanctuary, the Venerable Father saw the grace of the Holy Spirit descend upon the offered gifts. After the Liturgy, the hierarch, summoning the deacon who had been sent away, asked him whether he had any particular sin upon his conscience. The deacon revealed that during the past night he had been intimate with his wife. Then the saint, gathering all his clergy together, said:

"O children, who have been deemed worthy of the altar service, remove the boots of the fleshly passions of the unreasoning beasts; do not enter the Divine sanctuary bound by lustful desires. Listen to the holy Apostle, who says: 'Those who have wives should be as though they had none' (1 Cor. 7:29)."

From that time on, the hierarch of Christ Epiphanius ordained as deacons and presbyters only pious monks and blameless widowers, by no means admitting married men. And his Church was adorned, like a beautiful bride, with pure ministers.

Up to this point the life of the Venerable Epiphanius has been described by his disciple John, who reposed in the rank of presbyter. The rest of the hierarch's life was written by another of his disciples, Polyvius. He begins thus:

"Glory to God, who gives life and glorifies those who glorify Him, as He glorified His servant Epiphanius with miraculous grace. I too have been deemed worthy in part to be the chronicler of his wondrous deeds.

42. Leprosy is one of the most contagious, dreadful and, for the most part, fatal diseases. It is commonly distinguished into three kinds: white, black, and red or elephantiasis. The last is the most contagious. These names correspond to three different colors of its spots on the body, which precede the appearance on it of putrid sores.

The Blessed Presbyter John, disciple of our holy father Epiphanius, when he fell sick unto death, summoned me to himself and said:

"Child Polyvius!"

"What do you bid me, Father?" I asked him. To this John replied:

"Since our father Epiphanius forbids the committing to writing of the miracles wrought by God through his holiness, take these sheets of paper, on which I have secretly recorded until this day everything I have seen accomplished by him. Write also what you shall see from now on, for God says that 'years of life shall be added to you' (Prov. 9:11), and you shall remain for your whole life in his hierarchal service. I am departing on the path that is inevitable for all earthly beings. See that you do not grow lazy in writing, for I have been moved by God to write this... Go and ask our father to come to me," he added afterward.

I went and summoned the hierarch of God. Coming to the sick man, he said:

"You have grown slothful, John, in praying to God for the sinner Epiphanius."

"It is more fitting for you, Father," the sufferer replied, "now to offer the prayer on behalf of me, your servant."

After the hierarch's prayer over the sick man, he said to the saint:

"Come closer to me, Father."

The hierarch approached.

"Place your hands upon my eyes, Father, and kiss me with the final kiss, for I am now departing," said the dying man.

And as soon as the hierarch laid his hands upon his eyes and kissed him, he yielded up his spirit to the Lord. After bitter weeping for his beloved disciple, the teacher-bishop arranged an honorable burial for him.

After this the Venerable Father conceived the intention of building a new church in place of the former small and very dilapidated one. He turned to God for help, and during his prayer he heard a voice from on high promising help and commanding him to begin without hesitation the work he had conceived. The unfailing word of the Lord was not slow to be fulfilled. The son of the aforementioned Greek Draco had long been ill. The father, summoning the most skillful physicians for his

son, gained no benefit from this, and at last he himself fell sick. The saint, coming to his house, healed by prayer first the son and then the father. Then Draco, believing and being baptized together with his whole household, gave five thousand gold coins for the building of a church. And there was built, to the glory of God, a large stone church, and a beautiful one.

Another citizen of the same city, the wealthy pagan Sinisius, had an only son, thirteen years old, Eustorgius, who died: an illness had contorted his neck and in this manner strangled him. A great lamentation arose in the house of the Greek rich man. Hearing it, a neighbor, the Christian Hermias, said to the mother of the dead boy:

"Madam, if the great Epiphanius came here, he would raise your son."

She, trusting the words of her neighbor, asked him to bring Epiphanius to them. Hermias summoned the hierarch of God into their house. At the entrance of the desired guest, the mistress of the house fell at his feet, saying:

"Great healer of Christ, show your healing skill upon our child and raise him from the dead. If you do this, we shall at once, with our whole household, come to your Christ."

"If you believe in the Crucified One," the hierarch said to her, "you will see your son alive."

"I have nothing else in my mind," she answered, "than to believe in Him: shall I see my child alive?"

Then the saint, approaching the bed of the dead youth, rubbed his neck with his right hand, and with a bright gaze turned upon him, softly said:

"Eustorgius!"

The youth at once opened his eyes and sat up on the bed. At this greatest of miracles, all who were in the house were struck with amazement and terror. And the father of the one who had been raised, together with him, his wife, and all his household, was baptized in the name of Christ, and gave the saint three thousand gold coins. But the wonderworker said to him:

"I do not require this; rather, take it to the builders of the church."

And the newly built church was splendidly adorned with the gold of Sinisius, and received as its presbyter Polyvius, the saint's disciple.

Once there came to the island of Cyprus from Jerusalem a certain deacon, who told the saint about the Bishop of Jerusalem, John, as a lover of silver who despised the poor. John had once been a companion of Epiphanius in the monastery of the great Hilarion. Epiphanius had written to his acquaintance a letter of admonition concerning merciful treatment of the poor. But the lover of silver did not heed the admonitions of God's servant. After some years the Archbishop of Cyprus said to his disciple Polyvius:

"Let us go, child, to Jerusalem to venerate the Precious Cross and the Lord's Tomb, and having venerated them, let us return."

And they sailed from Cyprus to Caesarea Philippi, and from there went on to Jerusalem. After venerating the holy places there, they presented themselves to Bishop John, who rejoiced greatly at meeting Epiphanius. The hierarch of Cyprus said to him:

"Give me, brother, a place for lodging, for I wish to stay here for some time."

The Bishop of Jerusalem granted his guest's request. Having given him a fine house, he invited him every day to his table. Seeing the multitude of silver vessels brought in with the food and drink on the one hand, and hearing on the other the murmuring of the many poor against John's stinginess, the saint considered how to bring him to mercy. And so one day he said to his wealthy host:

"Give me, Father John, these silver vessels for a while. Men of honor have come to me from Cyprus, and I want to set them out so as to show off before them your kindness and your silver, in the house you have given me for my rest. This will be to your glory, for when the men who came return home, they will begin to tell the other men of standing how great a love you have shown me, and how great is the fame, honor, and wealth of your house. So give me all this silver for only a short time. I shall soon return it to you with thanks."

John brought him a great number of various silver vessels. Then Epiphanius asked:

"Father, do you have still more?"

"That is enough from you," answered the covetous lover of glory, "and this will do."

"No," said Epiphanius, "but give me everything you have that is most precious and finest, so that the guests may marvel and there may be the greatest glory for you."

John brought him the best vessels, saying:

"Take whatever you wish, Father Epiphanius."

The saint took from him about 1500 litras[43] of silver and carried it to his quarters. At that time a silver merchant named Asterius arrived in Jerusalem from Rome on business. The venerable man sold to the merchant, at its proper price, the silver that the local bishop had given him. Having bought it, Asterius went away to his own place. But God's servant, day and night, distributed to the poor the money received from the sale, down to the last mite. After some days John said to Epiphanius:

"Father, return to me the silver that I gave you."

"Be patient, Father," answered the Archbishop of Cyprus, "I shall return everything to you. I want to entertain guests at my house once more."

After several more days had passed, the Bishop of Jerusalem, in the church where the saving Tree of the Lord's Cross is kept, again reminded the venerable man about the return of the silver.

"Give me back," he said to him, "the silver that you took from me."

"I have told you, Father," answered Epiphanius quietly, "I shall give back everything; only be patient a little."

After such an answer John, filled with fury, seized Epiphanius by his garment, and gripping it, said with a threat:

"You shall not leave here, nor sit, nor rest, until you return my silver. O wicked and deceitful man! Give back what you took, give back to the Church what is the Church's."

Epiphanius was not disturbed by the conduct of the angry man; he remained meek as before. The indignant Bishop of Jerusalem, meanwhile, went on troubling the venerable man for about two hours. All

43. A *litra* was a unit of weight equal to 72 zolotniks. A silver litra was worth up to 42 rubles, and a gold litra up to 506 rubles.

present in the church, hearing his cruel words addressed to God's servant, were astonished. And the one who was reviled, seeing the unrestrained wrath and fury of the one reviling him, breathed upon his face, and at once John was struck blind. Involuntarily terrified by the miraculous punishment, along with all who stood by, John fell prostrate before the saint, begging him to pray to God for the restoration of his sight.

"Go and venerate the precious Tree of the Lord's Cross," answered God's servant to his request, "and you will receive your sight."

But the one who had been punished did not leave Epiphanius, but kept on begging him without ceasing. Then the great hierarch, opening his God-wise lips, for a long time instructed the lover of silver about love of the poor and almsgiving. Then, by prayer and the laying on of his hands, he opened the man's right eye. Half-healed, the man asked the wonderworker to make the left eye see as well. But the saint answered him:

"This is not my doing, child, but God's. Since God closed the eye, God will also open it, so that you may come to your senses."

After the punishment John amended his life, becoming merciful to the poor and righteous in all his deeds.

On his return from Jerusalem to his diocese, Epiphanius met two jesters who wished to mock him in the following way. Seeing the hierarch from afar, one of them feigned death. The other, as the saint drew near, said to him:

"Father, visit the dead man and cover his naked body with some garment."

The saint, looking at the one who had feigned death, turned toward the east to offer prayer for the departed. Having prayed, he took off his own garment, covered the corpse with it, and went on his way.

After he had gone, the living man said to the seeming corpse:

"Get up, brother, that simpleton has already gone."

But the other did not answer. Calling to him a second time and shaking him, he found that he was in truth dead. Full of terror, the jester ran after the God-appointed archpastor. Overtaking the great wonderworker, he fell at his feet, asking forgiveness for his sin and

begging him to take off the garment and the bonds of death from the one he had punished.

"Go, child," answered the saint, "and bury your dead man, for he died before you began asking me for a garment to cover him."

When the Bishop of Cyprus arrived in his cathedral city, envoys came to him from Rome with a request to heal Proclisia, daughter of the emperor Theodosius the Great[44] and sister of Arcadius and Honorius[3192], who had been given in marriage to a certain distinguished patrician, from a long-standing and incurable illness. News of the arrival of the emperor's envoys reached a local honored and very wealthy pagan named Faustinian, who harbored strong enmity toward Saint Epiphanius. Faustinian invited them to his house and entertained them daily. Throughout their stay with him he almost constantly reviled the saint.

"Why do you believe in this seducer as in God?" he said to them. "Why do you heed his vain words? He says nothing but false words, and he is devoted to very evil customs."

But it happened that Saint Epiphanius, accompanied by the Romans, and Faustinian were together at a church under construction. Before their eyes, while they stood in the church being built, a carpenter who slipped fell from above to the ground and struck the venerable man's enemy with his feet. To the amazement of all, the one who had fallen was not harmed at all and at once got up; but Faustinian, struck, fell dead. Epiphanius, approaching him and taking him by the hand, said:

"Rise, child, in the name of the Lord, and go home healthy."

At once the dead man came to life, stood up, and went home. Faustinian's wife, learning of her husband's death and his unexpected revival, brought his healer 1000 gold coins.

"Give this not to me," said the venerable man to her, "but to the building of the church, and you will have treasure in heaven."

44. Theodosius the Great reigned from 389 to 395 in the East, and from 392 to 395 also in the West of the Greco-Roman Empire. He dealt the final blow to paganism: having become sole ruler in 392, Theodosius issued a law by which the worship of the gods was recognized as a crime equal to the offense against majesty.

Then God's servant went to Rome. There, by prayer and the sign of the Cross, he healed Proclisia, raised her newborn son, and baptized him together with the two imperial sons, Honorius and Arcadius. Afterward the great wonderworker was invited to Constantinople by the emperor Theodosius the Great himself, who suffered from an incurable and unbearable disease of the feet. Saint Epiphanius healed him in a single hour by the sign of the Cross, and for this he enjoyed the special favor of Theodosius.

In one year there was a great famine on the island of Cyprus. The poor and needy perished in multitudes from it. But the miserly rich man Faustinian, with his many granaries filled with wheat, barley, and other grain, was selling bread at a very high price.

"Good friend," the saint said to him once, "give me wheat from your granaries to feed the poor, and I shall be your debtor."

“Pray to your Jesus, in whom you believe,” answered the hard-hearted pagan with an evil smile, “that He may give you wheat to feed your poor friends.”

But what was said in mockery became reality. Saint Epiphanius had the pious custom of visiting the tomb of the holy martyrs every night and there praying to God for the granting of whatever was needed; he reinforced his prayer by asking the holy martyrs to intercede before

the Lord, and always received what he asked. And now, according to his custom, Saint Epiphanius went at night to the tomb of the holy martyrs, where with tears he besought the merciful God to deliver the perishing from famine. During his prayer he heard a voice saying to him:

“Epiphanius! Go without fear to the temple of Zeus,[45] and its doors will open before you; within you will find gold and silver. Take it, buy millet, barley, and other grain from Faustinian, and feed the poor.”

It should be noted that this temple, called “the Fortress of Zeus,” had been locked ever since the Christian rulers who had conquered the country closed and sealed all the idol temples by imperial authority, so that the abominable demonic sacrifices might no longer be performed in

45. This temple was called Dieva from its dedication to the pagan god Dius, that is, Zeus.

them. Among the people there circulated a rumor, held by the pagans as a firm belief, that no one could approach or touch the aforementioned temple: such a person, they said, would meet sudden death on the spot. And everyone went far around the temple, all the more because the demons terrified people with apparitions and even killed those Christians over whom, by God's permission, they had the same power as over their own pagan worshippers.

Obedient to God's command, St. Epiphanius at once went to the temple, whose doors immediately opened before him; there he found a great quantity of gold and silver. With this wealth, wondrously acquired, he began to buy bread from Faustinian. The avaricious rich man gladly sold St. Epiphanius all the bread stores in his house, which, through the merciful bishop's almsgiving, found their way into the homes of the poor and needy. Thus the hungry had food, while the rich man Faustinian's house was deprived of it, and famine came upon it. Ashamed to ask the Venerable Father for food for his household, the rich man sent his friend Longinus with gold and eleven ships to Calabria.[46] But on the return journey, the ships, laden with bread, were suddenly wrecked by a violent storm, a hundred stadia from the city. Learning of his misfortune, Faustinian, in great sorrow, blasphemed the Most High and His servant.

"Look," he said, "at the harm this Christian sorcerer is doing me! Not only has he, by his delusion, taken the food from my house on land, but he has also destroyed my bread at sea, sinking my ships through demons."

Meanwhile, the tossing sea cast the sunken grain upon the shore of Salamis. The poor gathered it up. Thus were the words of the Psalm fulfilled: "The young lions suffer want and hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing" (Ps. 33:11).

Nearly dying of hunger, the wife of the chastened rich man sent gold to the saint, asking him to sell bread for her household; but the Venerable Father sent the gold back to her, saying:

46. Calabria is the ancient name of the island of Poros in the Saronic Gulf.

"Now take from me freely as much as you need, and repay me when the harvest comes."

The rich man himself, enraged against the saint, persuaded the evil-minded deacon Rufinus to murder the Hierarch, promising to use his wealth and connections to help raise him to the episcopal throne. But God preserved His servant from the plots of the wicked man. Rufinus prepared a sharp knife and fixed it point upward in the upper episcopal seat, which stood in the church; then he covered the seat with its customary cloth. He did this so that the Hierarch, sitting on the seat at the appointed time during the service, might receive a mortal stab wound. But when the time came for the bishop, according to the order of the service, to sit upon the high place, St. Epiphanius approached it and said to Deacon Rufinus:

"Take the covering from the seat, my son."

But Rufinus did not obey, although the Hierarch repeated his command three times. Then St. Epiphanius removed the covering himself, whereupon the knife fell and pierced the deacon's right foot with its point.

Perceiving the deacon's treacherous designs, St. Epiphanius said:

"Give up your plots, my son, lest a greater misfortune befall you; now leave the church, for you are unworthy to partake of the Mysteries of God."

The deacon went home, fell ill, and died on the third day. Soon afterward Faustinian was accused before the emperor of blaspheming against him, and the emperor cast him into a prison in Constantinople. The Hierarch, who loved his enemies, wished to intercede with the sovereign for the prisoner's release. But the latter, in anger, forbade the saint to intercede for him in any way. The Hierarch fell silent and, a short while later, mourned Faustinian's unexpected death in prison. After her husband's death, Faustinian's wife gave all her wealth to the church and, according to her desire, was appointed a deaconess by the saint.

Among the eighty monks who lived in the episcopal household of St. Epiphanius was Deacon Sabinus, distinguished by his virtuous life, intellect, and skill in composing eloquent books. Among other things, he

wrote the life of St. Epiphanius; in his account he tells of the saint's prayerful vigils through the night, his kneeling in prayer, and his miracles. In view of this hierodeacon's rare qualities, the archpastor appointed him judge in spiritual matters. One day a rich man, who spoke the truth, and a poor man, who gave false testimony, appeared before him for judgment. Taking pity on the poor man, the judge defended him. During the trial the Hierarch came secretly and, hiding himself in a concealed place, came out as soon as he heard the judge acquit the unjust poor man.

"My child," said the archbishop to the judge, "go and write books, and ponder the words of Scripture, that you may learn to judge righteously; for it is written: 'You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; you shall not show partiality to the poor, nor defer to the person of the great; in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor'" (Lev. 19:15).

From that time St. Epiphanius himself always judged all who came to him.

Having great care for his flock, he overcame heretics both by words and by miracles. He struck the heretical bishop Aetius[47] dumb, and the latter died on the sixth day; many of his followers, seeing this miracle, entered the Orthodox Church, falling at the Wonderworker's feet. Moreover, the champion of the true faith wrote to the emperor about all the heretics who refused to repent. The emperor gave him authority to expel them from Cyprus. Through all this, the rational flock of the good shepherd was safe from ravening wolves.

Having borne the heavy burden of the episcopate for many years and reached a great age, St. Epiphanius drew near to his blessed end. Not long before it, he had occasion to travel to Constantinople for the following reason. Eudoxia, the wife of Emperor Arcadius, who ruled in the East after his father Theodosius the Great, having agreed with Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria,[48] to the exile of John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, induced Epiphanius by her deceitful letters

47. Aetius or Aëtius, a deacon of Antioch, died in 370; after Arius he stood at the head of the Arians, who denied the consubstantiality of the Son of God with God the Father and openly maintained, therefore, the inequality of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity with the First.

48. Theophilus occupied the patriarchal throne from 386 to 412.

to come to Constantinople for a council. In them Theophilus slandered John, claiming that he was a heretic who shared the opinions of Origen.[3197] In his simplicity, the saint believed them and set out for Constantinople. When he met the emperor, the latter received his blessing and asked him how old he was.

"At sixty years of age," St. Epiphanius replied, "I received the episcopal rank; I have been a bishop for 55 years and three months. Thus I am 115 years and three months old."

The emperor honored his venerable gray hair and his holy countenance. The empress Eudoxia, however, summoned the saint to her and said to him:

"Father Epiphanius, you know that the whole Roman Empire is in our hands; and today I will give you all ecclesiastical authority if you will heed me, heal the sorrow of my heart, and do what I have in mind."

"Speak, my daughter," replied the Hierarch. "To the best of our ability, we shall endeavor to do what will be for the salvation of your soul."

Then the empress, thinking to bend the saint to her purpose by guile, began to speak to him of St. Chrysostom:

"This John has become unworthy to govern the Church and bear so great a rank, since he has risen up against the emperor and does not render us the honor due to us. Besides, many say of him that he has long been a heretic. For this reason we have decided to assemble a council and, having deposed him from his rank, to appoint another in his place, one able to govern the church well, so that henceforth our empire may be at peace."

As she spoke, the empress trembled with great anger.

"There is no need," she continued, "to burden many fathers by summoning them here to a council. Let your holiness, Father, decree that he be expelled from the Church and appoint another in his place, whoever God indicates to you. I will see to it that you are obeyed."

"My daughter," the Hierarch replied, "hear your father without anger! If John, as you say, is a heretic, and does not repent of his heresy, he will be unworthy of the patriarchal rank, and we shall deal with him

as you command. But if you wish to expel him for the one offense of having reviled you, Epiphanius will not give his consent to it. For it is fitting that rulers be not mindful of offenses, but be good, meek, and forgiving of insults against themselves, since you also have a King in heaven above you and desire forgiveness from Him for your sins. 'Be therefore merciful, even as your Father is merciful'" (Lk. 6:36).

After these words of his, the anger of the proud empress grew still greater. All in tears from her intense agitation, she said angrily:

"If you hinder John's expulsion, I will open the idol temples and bring it about that many, turning away from God, will begin to worship idols, and the last state will be worse than the first."

Epiphanius, astonished at her great anger, said:

"I am free of the blame for that."

Having said this, he left the imperial palace. Throughout the city, a rumor spread that Epiphanius had conferred with the empress concerning John's deposition and had agreed with her. The rumor reached the one whom it most nearly concerned. The Hierarch of Constantinople immediately wrote the following to Epiphanius:

Brother Epiphanius, I have heard that you gave counsel concerning my exile. Know, then, that you will never again see your throne.

St. Epiphanius replied:

"Passion-bearer John, when you are wronged, overcome. But you too shall not reach the place to which you are being sent into exile."

And the prophecy of both came to pass.

Seeing the desire to condemn St. John unjustly, St. Epiphanius did not wish to take part in such a lawless trial. Secretly boarding a ship with his attendants, he returned home. During the voyage across the sea, sensing the exhaustion of old age and foreseeing his approaching departure to God, he began to speak with his disciples in this way:

"My children, keep my commandments, and the love of God will abide with you. You know in how many sorrows my life has passed. I did not count them as sorrows, but always rejoiced in them for God's sake, and God did not forsake me but preserved me from every hostile calamity: 'to them that love God, all things work together for good' (Rom. 8:28). Once, my beloved, when I lived in the desert and prayed

to Christ God for deliverance from the snares of the adversary, a multitude of demons suddenly came upon me by God's permission. They struck me to the ground, seized me by the feet and dragged me across the earth; some of them also beat me. They did this to me for ten days, and then they vanished. From that hour I never saw them again all my life. Only evil men, heretics, have caused me trouble. Be attentive, O my children, and listen to the words of Epiphanius, a sinner. Do not desire possessions, and many possessions shall be added to you. Do not nurse hatred toward any man, and you will be beloved of God. Do not slander your brother, and the envy of the devil will not possess you. Flee from heresies as from poisonous serpents, of which I wrote to you in the book *Panarion*.[3198] Turn away and keep yourselves from worldly lusts, which inflame both body and mind. Know that they are a satanic stratagem, for even if the flesh of the careless does not rise up in battle, the mind still dreams of evil. But if our mind is sober and mindful of God, then we can easily overcome the enemy."

After these and very many other spiritual admonitions to his disciples, the Venerable Father foretold to Polyvius that he would soon become bishop of the city of Rhinocorura, which lies in Upper Thebaid. To the boatmen he foretold a very swift storm, and he commanded them not to be afraid but to hope in God. To one of them he said:

"Do not tempt, lest you be tempted."

The saint said all this at eleven o'clock of the day. After sunset a great storm arose, lasting two days and bringing all the voyagers into great fear. The saint, on his deathbed, prayed to God for the preservation of the ship and all who were in it. On the third day he commanded his disciples to kindle coals, place incense upon them, and pray to God. After praying himself, he embraced and kissed them all and spoke these last words:

"Be saved, my children, for Epiphanius will no longer be with you in this life."

Having said these words, he committed his spirit into the hands of God.[49] His death united sorrow with joy. His disciples and the boat-

49. The saint died in April 403, and was buried on May 12.

men, weeping bitterly for the departed, were gladdened by the sudden and complete cessation of the storm upon the sea. Meanwhile, the boatman to whom the saint had said, "Do not tempt, lest you be tempted," out of curiosity wished to learn whether Epiphanius was circumcised or not. When he began to uncover the honorable body of the saint, the departed wonderworker lifted his right foot and struck the face of the curious man so violently that he fell far from the body and died. Fear seized everyone, and his fellow boatmen, pitying the one who had been punished, laid him at the feet of Epiphanius. No sooner did his body touch theirs than the dead boatman came to life. And there was still greater terror upon all. Arriving at Salamis, the saint's disciples announced his repose in the city. Immediately multitudes gathered from everywhere with weeping and lamentation. Taking the honorable body of their father, his orphaned children carried it into the church he had built. Beside the saint's coffin many wonders were performed upon the sick afflicted with every infirmity. Among others, three blind men received their sight. On the tenth day, hierarchs, priests, abbots and countless people gathered from the whole island and with honor buried the honorable remains of St. Epiphanius in that same church, remembering the labors, miracles and God-inspired teaching of the departed archpastor, and glorifying in the Trinity the One God, to Whom be glory unto ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Let us, the faithful, duly praise the wondrous pair, the hierarchs Germanus and divine Epiphanius; for they consumed the tongues of the impious, having set forth most wise dogmas for all who ever sing in Orthodox manner the great mystery of piety.

* * *

NOTES

3148. *Monothelitism*, or the heresy of one will, arose at the beginning of the 7th century under the influence of the desire of Byzantine rulers to reconcile with Christianity the widely spread *monophysite* heresy, which taught of *one* divine nature in the Lord Jesus Christ, since the dissensions between the Orthodox and the Monophysites were a

calamity not only for the Church but also for the state. Monophysite bishops, chiefly Cyrus, bishop of Phasis in Colchis, suggested to the Emperor Heraclius (611–641) the thought that union between them and the Orthodox could be effected if the Orthodox Church acknowledged in Jesus Christ a single will and a single action. In 633, through the efforts of the emperor and of Cyrus, appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, union was achieved between the Egyptian Monothelites and the Orthodox; almost all the Eastern and Greek bishops, headed by the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Sergius, joined this union. Against this unlawful agreement there openly came forward the beloved disciple of the Alexandrian Patriarch John the Merciful, the monk Sophronius, proving that the doctrine of one will is also Monophysitism, or the acknowledgment in Jesus Christ of only one (divine) nature, for if the nature is one, then, naturally, the will is also one. Having become Patriarch of Jerusalem in 634, he defended Orthodoxy with even greater zeal: he convened a council in Jerusalem, at which he condemned Monothelitism. Desiring to put an end to the dissensions, Emperor Heraclius in 638 issued, composed by Patriarch Sergius, an "Exposition of Faith" (*ekthesis*), which contained the Orthodox teaching on the two natures in Jesus Christ and forbade speaking of His wills, although at the same time it added that the Orthodox faith required the acknowledgment of one will. After the issuing of the "Exposition of Faith," the ardent defender of Orthodoxy was the Constantinopolitan monk Maximus the Confessor (whose memory is January 21), who with success acted against the Monothelites in North Africa and Rome. Heraclius' successor, Constans II, wishing to destroy the *ekthesis*, which had aroused the dissension even more, in 648 issued a *typos*, a pattern of faith, which forbade speaking of either one will or two wills, requiring belief in accordance with the five Ecumenical Councils that had been held. But the *typos* did not put an end to the disputes. At last Emperor Constantine Pogonatus convened at Constantinople the sixth (Trullan) Ecumenical Council, at which Monothelitism was condemned as a heresy and it was determined that in Jesus Christ two actions and two wills must be confessed, the human will being in all things subject to the divine will, without being annihilated thereby. – Remnants of the Monothelites have survived to the present day in the form of the Maronites. At first they found refuge (from 680) in the Lebanon mountains; during the Crusades (1182) the teaching of the Monothelites penetrated to the West, to Europe, but thanks to the activity of the popes it did not gain many followers, although it existed until 1736, when Jewish Monothelites joined the Catholic Church. In the East, in Syria, it exists to this day.

3155. St. Herman died in 740, aged 96, and was buried in the monastery of Chora, on the northern side of Constantinople. St. Herman is known as a church writer: "his writings are renowned throughout the whole world," attests of him the 7th Ecumenical Council, which entered him in the diptychs of saints. The works of St. Herman are diverse in their composition. There remain after him: an explanation of the most difficult passages of Holy Scripture, a work on the righteous recompense beyond the grave; at the 7th Ecumenical Council his three epistles on the veneration of icons were read; there also remains from him "a fair number," as the ancient biographer of St. Herman says, "of edifying words for the pious": words on the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple, on her Dormition, on the Annunciation, on the Dedication of the church and the placing

of the belt of the Most Holy Theotokos. Important for its wealth of historical information is his work on the heresies from the time of the Apostles and on the church councils down to the reign of Leo the Iconoclast. St. Herman left many works relating to the Divine Service; of these the explanation of the Liturgy is especially important; other works of this kind are hymns composed by the patriarch in praise of the saints and in glorification of the wonderful deeds of grace.

3192. Arcadius, Eastern Roman emperor, son of Theodosius the Great, received after his father's death (395) 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 bring the weak-willed emperor under their influence. Thus, at the beginning of his reign the state was governed by Rufinus, who increased the already enormous weight of taxes, multiplied fines, and thereby struck terror into the empire. After Rufinus's death his place was taken by the eunuch Eutropius, and when the Empress Eudoxia obtained his execution (399), Arcadius submitted wholly to the influence of his consort, who was known for her hostile attitude toward St. John Chrysostom, then Patriarch of Constantinople. During the reign of Emperor Arcadius, missionaries provided with his letters preached Christianity in those places of the provinces where pagans still remained.

Honorius, brother of Arcadius, was Western Roman emperor. At the beginning of his reign the government was headed by Stilicho, a shrewd politician and famous commander, who on more than one occasion repulsed 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 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 plunder by his troops. After Alaric's death his brother-in-law Ataulf concluded a peace with Honorius, after which the Visigoths withdrew beyond the Alps. Under Honorius, in 411, a council was convened against the schismatic Donatists, who had separated from the Church because it had received those apostates who repented during the persecutions; for in their view the Church ceases to be holy if sinners are found among its members. By order of Honorius all the remaining pagan temples were destroyed, and the pagans themselves were removed from state offices.

3197. Origen, the famous Christian teacher of the Church of Alexandria (died 254), was a wonder of his age by the greatness of his mind and the depth of his learning. Many of the most eminent Fathers of the Church treated the theological labors and merits of Origen with deep respect; but later, even during his lifetime, at two local Alexandrian councils and, after his death, at the local Council of Constantinople of 543, he was condemned as a heretic. Without presenting his unorthodox opinions as irrefutable truths, Origen nevertheless thought wrongly about many truths of the Christian Church's teaching, which is why some considered his firmness in the chief Christian dogmas doubtful. Developing the unorthodox teaching on the pre-existence of souls, he thought wrongly about Christ, supposing that God created a definite number of spiritual beings of equal dignity, capable of comprehending the Divinity and of becoming like Him; one of these created spirits, with such a fiery love, hastened toward the Divinity that it became inseparably united with the Divine Word, or became His created bearer;

according to Origen, this is that human soul through which God the Word could become incarnate on earth, since, by his *mistaken* opinion, the immediate incarnation of the Divinity is unthinkable. Holding the heretical view of the incarnation of God the Word and of the creation of the world and of man, Origen also understood the death of Christ in an unorthodox sense, representing it as something spiritually repeated in the spiritual world and having there an effect on the liberation of the Angels, and attributing to the work of salvation too much activity of the ordinary powers with which our nature is endowed. Origen also thought wrongly in some points of his teaching on the resurrection and the future life, for example that the devil may be saved; and in his interpretation of Holy Scripture he understood far too much in a mystical sense, thereby destroying the historical sense of Scripture.

3198. His work *Panarion* (the apothecary, a chest of medicines) presents an exposition and refutation of twenty pre-Christian and eighty Christian heresies. To the exposure of heresies is devoted another work of Epiphanius, entitled *Ancoratus* (the Anchor), in which the Orthodox teaching on the Trinity, the Incarnation, the resurrection of the dead and the future life is set forth, chiefly against the heretics Arians, Semi-Arians, Pneumatomachi, and Apollinarians. To St. Epiphanius also belong the following works: a) *On Stones*, explaining the twelve stones on the breastplate of the Jewish high priest; b) *On the Twenty-Two Prophets of the Old Testament and the Three of the New Testament, and on the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy Disciples of Christ*, containing many valuable oral church-historical traditions; c) *Book on Weights and Measures (Biblical)*, containing, besides information on Biblical measurement, certain indications about the Greek translations of the Bible; d) a note to the book *Physiologus* (observations on the properties of Biblical animals); and e) perhaps twelve sermons, the authenticity of which is disputed.

The works of St. John Chrysostom had already in the fourth and fifth centuries acquired great renown throughout the whole Christian world: they were kept as treasures in the imperial palaces and were written in golden letters. Many of his works have not come down to our time; nevertheless, more of his works have survived than of any other Father and Teacher of the Church. According to the Greek Horologion, the works of John Chrysostom that have come down to our time number as many as 1447, and his letters as many as 244. Most of all, sermons and church homilies have survived from John Chrysostom. The sermons of St. John strike one by their orderliness, depth of thought, and variety of content. "I do not speak of others," wrote St. Isidore of Chrysostom; "Libanius himself, so well known for his eloquence, marveled at the language of the famous John, the elegance of his thoughts, and the force of his proofs." The best of St. John Chrysostom's sermons are justly considered to be his homilies to the people of Antioch on the statues, the word on Eutropius, the word "on behalf of the poor," the word after his removal from the capital and on his return to the capital, and his panegyrics on the Apostle Paul. In his sermons the Golden-Mouthed Teacher offered instruction on nearly all particular matters of Christian life. Moreover, throughout the whole course of his public ministry he explained Holy Scripture in his homilies, chiefly of the New Testament. Each of Chrysostom's explanatory homilies consists of two parts: in one he occupies himself with the exposition of the texts of the word of God, in the other he offers

moral instruction. Strictly dogmatic writings of St. John Chrysostom are few, and all of them breathe his solicitude for the moral correction of the faithful. Among writings of the latter kind should be noted the book to Stagirius, in which is resolved the question why suffering befalls even the righteous, despite the existence of God's Providence? Also deserving of attention are the six words on the Incomprehensible, spoken in refutation of the heretics Anomeans, who sought on the basis of their own speculations to clarify the relation of God the Father to God the Son, and taught that the Son of God is a created being and was made by the Father out of nothing. Besides this, John Chrysostom's book on the Holy Spirit is remarkable for its teaching on the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. In his work against the Jews and pagans the divinity of the Christian teaching is proved by the fulfillment of prophecies and by the effects of the Christian preaching on the hearts of men; and in the eight words against the Jews it is shown that the Jewish rites have been abrogated, and that therefore to perform them now means to act contrary to the will of God. St. John Chrysostom is also famous for having established a special order of the Liturgy, which still bears his name. St. Proclus, a disciple of Chrysostom and afterward one of his successors on the Constantinopolitan see, writes thus about this institution of the saint: "St. Basil the Great, dealing with people as with the sick, presented the Liturgy in an abridged form. Some time later, our father, golden-tongued John, on the one hand as a good shepherd zealously caring for the salvation of the sheep, and on the other, looking upon the weakness of human nature, resolved to tear up by the root every pretext of Satan. Therefore he, omitting much, established the celebration of the Liturgy in its most abridged form." The Liturgy abridged by John did not at first have all the chants that it has now, but these did not change the essential order of the Liturgy. In general, Epiphanius was a very learned man, who, according to the testimony of Jerome, knew Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, and Latin, and was "the most excellent shepherd in his knowledge." The Seventh Ecumenical Council calls him not only a Father of the Church but also her teacher.



THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF MAY

May 13

13 мая

New Calendar May 13 · Old Calendar May 26 (civil dates)

Martyrdom of the Holy Martyr Glykeria, and with Her Laodicius, the Prison Guard

Страдание святой мученицы Гликерии и с нею Лаодикия, стража темничного

In the first year of the reign of the impious Roman emperor Antoninus[1], when Savinus was governor of Greece, the Christians living in the Thracian city of Trajanopolis would gather daily in their church. There they prayed fervently to God, asking for peace and for an increase in the number of believers, since at that time there were few God-fearing Christians, and even these suffered grievously on account of the persecutions. The persecutions had been raised against the Christians because the emperor Antoninus, being a pagan, offered sacrifices to unclean idols, and throughout the empire he had sent out a decree commanding that all who would not offer sacrifice to the pagan gods be put to death. When this imperial command reached Thrace, the governor Savinus went with this order to the city of Trajanopolis and appointed a day on which the citizens were to take part in a festival in honor of the god Zeus[2]. This festival was called *lampadophoria*[3], that is, the bearing of lamps, and it was to begin three days after Savinus arrived in Trajanopolis.

In this city there lived a Christian maiden named Glykeria, the daughter of Macarius, who had formerly been a Roman proconsul[4].

1. Antoninus Pius ruled the Roman Empire from 138 to 161 A.D.
2. Dius or Zeus was the supreme god of the ancient Greek religion, regarded as the progenitor of the other gods.

Glykeria had moved here from Rome together with her parents, and was then orphaned. Here she came to believe in Christ and joined the Christians; she visited the house of God daily with them and prayed there fervently, both to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His Most Pure Mother, for whom she had a particularly strong love as the Mother of the Son of God. Imitating Her immaculate virginity, Glykeria betrothed herself to the Lord Jesus Christ as His bride. She often instructed the Christians, speaking thus:

"Brethren, sisters, fathers, and all others who take the place of my earthly mother! Hear me: call to mind what King we serve, the image of what King we bear upon us, and with what sign we guard ourselves. Let us therefore strive in every way to keep also the commandments of this King, that we may receive eternal salvation, which will be given only to those who honorably and courageously fulfill all the duties of the Christian calling."

The Christians answered her:

"We are all ready, even now, to lay down our souls for our Lord."

To this Glykeria said to them:

"I beg you, pray to the Lord for me, that He may strengthen me for the ascetic struggle together with you, that He may also grant me to suffer for His name. Pray to the Lord for me, that He may number me too among the company of His incorrupt brides, who abide in His heavenly bridal chamber."

And the Christians prayed for her.

Meanwhile, three days after Savinus' arrival in Trajanopolis, the impious pagan festival began. The pagan citizens who lived in that city gathered together, and with lit candles all hastened to the temple of Zeus. Seeing this, the blessed maiden Glykeria burned with zeal for Christ, her Lord and God; making the sign of the Cross upon herself, she went quickly to the temple of Zeus and, standing before the assembly of pagans, said loudly to the governor:

3. Lampadophoria or lampadodromia among the ancient Greeks was properly a race with torches. Chiefly young men took part in these races. The races were held for prizes, which were won by the youths who ran a certain distance carrying a lit torch or lamp. Lampadophoria were joined to various religious festivals and celebrations, usually in honor of the gods of light and fire (Prometheus, Pan), and also of the supreme god Zeus.

"Honorable governor! Behold, I wish to begin the offering of sacrifices to the true God. By my birth I am more illustrious than all the inhabitants of this city, for my father held the honorable office of *anphipatos* of the glorious city of Rome. Therefore it is fitting that I should be the first to offer sacrifice to God."

The governor said to her:

"But where is your lamp, by means of which you would kindle your sacrifice?"

The holy Glykeria answered him:

"My lamp is traced upon my forehead; it is unquenchable, and it illumines every sacrifice offered to the true God."

However, the governor did not understand what Glykeria had said. Therefore, turning to her, he said:

"Very well. Come forward and offer your sacrifice before everyone."

But the saint said:

"The eternal God does not require that lamps which give off smoke be kindled before Him. Therefore, command that everyone's lamps be extinguished, so that this abominable smoke may not be seen. Then you will see my pure sacrifice, which I intend to offer to my God."

The governor commanded that all the lamps be put out.

At this time the holy Glykeria, standing in an elevated place so that she was visible to all the people, uncovered her forehead and showed to everyone the sign of the Cross of Christ inscribed upon it; then she said aloud to those standing near:

"Do you see now the most bright lamp shining upon my forehead?"

Then, lifting her eyes to heaven and raising her hands, she said:

"Almighty God, glorified by Thy servants, who appeared in the Babylonian furnace to Thy three youths and delivered them from the fire (Dan. 3), who shut the mouths of the lions (Dan. 6), who made Thy servant Daniel victorious, who destroyed the idol Bel[5], slew the dragon[6], and shattered the demonic image in the plain of Dura! (Dan.

5. Bel or Baal was the supreme deity of the Babylonians, the god of the sun and of light in general. In his honor a large temple was built in Babylon, having the form of a high four-sided tower. Here, on the lower floor, was a bed and a golden table, on which the priests daily set the food intended for Bel. The Babylonians regarded Bel as a living god who eats and drinks. But this deception was exposed by the prophet Daniel (Dan. 14:1–22).

3) Thou, Jesus Christ, Most Pure God, Holy Lamb! I beseech Thee, come and help me, Thy humble handmaiden, to shatter this idol made by human hands, and destroy these abominable and vain demonic sacrifices."

While the saint was praying thus to God, suddenly there was a clap of thunder, and the idol of Zeus fell to the ground and broke into small pieces (for it had been made of stone).

The governor and the priests, seeing this, were inflamed with rage and commanded the people to stone the saint. However, the stones thrown at the saint did not touch her, but fell around her and, forming as it were a fortress round the saint, protected her from the pagans. The impious pagans, not recognizing the power of God, called the saint a sorceress. But she said to them:

"The power of Christ, working through me, exposes your error; and the help of my God will turn to nothing all the tortures you devise against me."

After this the governor commanded that the saint be bound and led away to prison. To the prison guards he gave orders to keep close watch over the saint, saying to them:

"See that she does not escape from the prison by her sorcery. Then she will say that her God delivered her, and through this she may beguile many."

But the holy maiden said to the governor:

"Mad, impious, and senseless man! Do you not understand that I am bound by the commandments of my Lord God and fastened to His law? I cannot free myself from these bonds, which are pleasing to me; therefore I cannot flee from the ascetic struggle of martyrdom, which I of my own will undertake for Christ, my Savior."

After the saint had spoken these words, she was sent to prison.

While the holy Glykeria was in prison, the priest of God Philocrates came to her, wishing to visit the prisoner of Christ. The saint said to him:

6. The Dragon, which enjoyed great veneration from the Babylonians and had a golden cast image in the same tower as Bel, was struck and reduced to dust by the prophet Daniel (see Dan. 14:23–27).

"Sign me with the sign of the Cross; adorn me with this sign as with a kind of anointing, and pray for me, that I may please my God and King, whom you serve; pray for me, that I, being protected by the sign of the Honorable Cross, may overcome the malice of the devil."

The presbyter, signing Glykeria with the honorable cross, said:

"May the sign of Christ help you; may Christ Himself, anointing you with His grace, be your spiritual peace, that you may courageously endure your struggle."

Having strengthened Glykeria in the Lord and given her peace, Philocrates went out of the prison.

In the morning of the following day the governor Savinus arrived at the imperial court, intending to torture the holy Glykeria here. Calling her before his tribunal, he said to her:

"Are you now willing, Glykeria, to offer sacrifice to the great god Zeus, whom our emperor himself worships and to whom he offers sacrifices?"

The saint answered:

"How can I worship him or offer sacrifice to him, after your god fell to the ground and broke into pieces, being unable to help himself? I know only one God, who lives in the heavens, who helped me to shatter your unclean idol. It is to this God that one should worship, offer sacrifices, and give pleasure."

The governor again said:

"Offer sacrifice, if you do not wish to undergo torments."

But the saint answered:

"My God will torment me if I obey you."

The governor said:

"So you want to die?"

The martyr answered:

"I want to heal the ailments of my soul by the sufferings of my body."

Then the governor commanded that the saint be hung by her hair on the torture tree and her body scraped with iron claws until she died.

When the saint was hung up and tortured, she felt no pain whatever from the torments, and she said to the governor:

"Impious man, full of all malice, servant of the devil! All the torments to which you subject me are nothing to me, for I feel no pain at all. Near me is my Lord and God, Jesus Christ, who helps me. Prepare for me still greater torments, for I feel no pain at all from these."

While the saint was saying this, the servants who were torturing her grew weary. The governor, seeing that the torments he had devised for Glykeria had been overcome by the saint, commanded that Glykeria be taken down from the torture tree and that she be struck in the face.

While being struck, the saint said:

"My God is my light, and Christ is my strength. He will shelter His servant with His goodness."

Then, looking up to heaven, the saint said:

"I beseech Thee, O Lord, enlighten my face and help me to bear these blows with courage. Strengthen me, O Lord, for Thou art the true God, who enrichest with the treasures of the Holy Spirit all who fearlessly confess Thy most holy name before the tormentors. Thou art the Lord who helpest all who please Thee on earth; Thou art the Guardian of Thy saints, through whom I too have come to know Thee, the true God, and have loved my Creator. Hear me now, Thy humble servant, who strives for Thy name, and help me to be delivered from the snares of the devil and the lips of the serpent."

While the saint was speaking these words, the tormentors mercilessly beat her about the mouth. But suddenly there appeared among them an Angel of the Lord, who so terrified the tormentors that they all fell to the ground as though dead. The governor, who had not seen the Angels, said to the saint:

"Tell me, Glykeria: why do you not obey the command of the emperor?"

The saint answered:

"Which emperor must I obey?" The governor said:

"The Roman sovereign, who has commanded us to observe this ancient law, handed down to us by our fathers, which bids us worship our gods."

But the saint said:

"I obey the Almighty God and submit to His law. I keep His law, and therefore I offer up myself as a sacrifice, just as in ancient times Abraham offered to God his son Isaac (Gen. 22:1–19), for which Abraham was well-pleasing to the true God; for this sacrifice God bestowed upon him a blessing and told him that he would be the father of many nations."

The governor said:

"Now at last do what I command you, if you do not wish to perish by a cruel death, like a deluded woman."

But the martyr answered:

"Christ, the Leader of us Christians and our first Champion, strengthens for the contest not only men but also women; and He rewards with a bright crown those who valiantly fight against your father, the devil."

After this the governor ordered the martyr to be led away to prison, and commanded that she be starved there with hunger and thirst for many days.

The saint went into the prison with joy, glorifying God. When she had entered the inner chamber of the prison and the doors had been shut behind her, she began to glorify the Lord in these words: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord and God of our fathers! Blessed art Thou, O God, known to Thy saints who faithfully keep Thy commandments, who didst reveal Thyself to the holy Apostle Peter as he went out from Rome[7], who didst put to shame his adversary Simon the sorcerer[8], who

7. This refers to the following episode from the life of St. Apostle Peter, related in his Life (under 29 June). At Rome, shortly before his death, the Roman authorities sought him in order to put him to death. At the urgent request of the Roman Christians, Peter resolved to escape the pursuit of his enemies, and to this end secretly left Rome by night. When Peter was already near the city gates, the Lord appeared to him. Peter bowed before Him and said: "Lord, whither goest Thou?" The Lord answered Peter: "I go to Rome to be crucified a second time." From these words of the Lord, Peter understood that the Lord was calling him to suffering, and he returned to Rome. There he suffered shortly afterwards.

8. Simon Magus was a Jew contemporary with the Apostle Peter; he came from Samaria, then studied philosophy and magic in Alexandria, and became renowned as a sorcerer possessed of magical power. Simon Magus repeatedly placed obstacles in the way of the preaching activity of the Apostle Peter, but was always defeated by him. The history of the struggle of the Apostle Peter with Simon Magus may be read in Acts 8:9–25 and in the narrative of the life of St. Apostle Peter (under 29 June).

didst help David, to whom Thou didst subdue Goliath beneath his feet (1 Kgdms. 17:4–51). Thou, most honorable and most pure God, hear me and come to my aid, Thy servant. Deliver me from the snares of the enemy and from the temptation of this impious governor."

Three days after this, the governor said to the tribune: "Take my signet ring and set my seal upon the chamber of the prison in which that sorceress is confined."

The tribune went at once, sealed the door of the prison, and commanded the prison guards to watch carefully that no one should give the martyr either food or drink. But the Angels of God brought food and drink to the holy martyr and strengthened the Bride of Christ.

Some days afterward the governor, intending to go to the city of Heraclea, came to the prison to see the martyr, since he wished to take her with him. Seeing his seal on the prison door, he supposed that Glykeria had already died of hunger and thirst, since many days had passed since she had been shut up in the prison. But when he opened the door and saw the saint alive, freed from her bonds, and also saw the dishes standing before Glykeria (in them were pure bread and milk, and there was water in a cup), the governor was greatly astonished at all this, for the wretch did not understand that God Himself had nourished His servant. Then the governor commanded that the martyr be brought out of the prison and led after him to the city of Heraclea[9]. The saint, for all this, gave thanks to the Lord, saying: "O Lord God! Thou who teachest us the knowledge of Thy truth, who providest for Thy faithful servants, who didst send food to Daniel when he was in the den[3209], who didst send food also to the prophet Elijah (3 Kgdms. 17:2–6) when he dwelt beside the brook, who turnest the erring to the truth and enlightenest the blind! I thank Thee that Thou hast remembered me also, Thy humble servant, and in time of famine hast fed me with Thy bountiful hand from Thy unnumbered treasures."

Speaking such words, the saint went on toward the city of Heraclea. The governor, having arrived there beforehand, was already offering sacrifice in the temple dedicated to the god Zeus.

9. In antiquity about 20 cities bore the name Heraclia; in this case, Heraclia is meant, which was situated in Thrace near the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara).

Meanwhile the Christians who dwelt in the city of Heraclea, learning that Glykeria, who had suffered for Christ at Trajanopolis, was coming to them, went out to meet her with their honorable bishop Dometius. Having gone out of the city three stadia and seeing the saint, they glorified her loudly for her sufferings for Christ; and the bishop, in the hearing of all, offered a prayer to God, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, unfailing Light, Enlightener of all who dwell in darkness, Leader of those who go astray, who didst lead Moses through the sea as though on dry land, and didst drown Pharaoh in the sea (Ex. 14), we beseech Thee: be Leader also to Thy servant, help her to confess Thy honorable and all-holy name courageously to the end!"

Meanwhile the saint, in chains, was brought into the city by the soldiers who accompanied her.

Early on the following morning the governor determined to have the martyr burned if she did not offer sacrifice to the gods. Summoning her before his tribunal, he said to her:

"Have you not resolved, Glykeria, to offer sacrifice to our gods?"

The saint answered:

"In the law given to us by the true God it is written: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God' (Deut. 6:16). Cease, then, to persuade me. I have already said that I have wholly joined myself to and wholly serve Christ, my God and Lord, and renounce the devil whom you serve. But if I am united with Christ, if I have betrothed myself to Christ, do you suppose that I will ever renounce Christ, my God, and choose death instead of eternal life? You may do with me whatever pleases you; but I despise and will continue to despise all the vain goods of earth, since I desire to acquire and obtain the goods of heaven."

After the saint had finished speaking, the governor ordered her to be cast into a fiery furnace.

When the furnace had been heated, the saint signed herself with the sign of the Cross and said:

"Lord God Almighty! I bless Thee and glorify Thy holy name, because Thou hast granted me this very day and hour for eternal joy, and because Thou hast recorded my confession before Angels and men. I

beseech Thee: fulfill the desire of my soul; show to this impious and abominable governor that Thou art indeed my Helper."

While she was speaking these words, the saint was cast into the furnace. But immediately dew descended from heaven and quenched the flame of the furnace. The saint, standing in the midst of the furnace like a pure lamb,

sang these words: "Holy art Thou, O God! Blessed art Thou, who hast sent help from heaven to me, Thy humble servant; let all understand that every creature is subject to Thee; let all understand that by Thy will the flame of this furnace has lost its power." Having said this, the saint came out of the furnace unharmed. The governor, thinking that Glykeria had received no harm from the fire through her sorcery, commanded that the skin be stripped from her head. When the governor's servants proceeded to carry out his command, the holy martyr called upon God, saying: "Lord God, Creator of light! Thou who hast willed that righteousness should flourish amid these torments, show to the impious governor Savinus that everyone who firmly trusts in Thee and hopes in Thy strength will never be afraid of torments for Thy name, but even desires a still greater martyr's contest, that he may receive a more glorious martyr's crown. I praise and thank Thee that Thou hast laid open the inner being of my soul after the skin had been stripped from my head, so that I, illumined by Thy light, can now say of myself: 'Open Thou mine eyes, and I shall behold the wondrous things of Thy law' (Ps. 118:18)."

The governor, seeing that these words of the saint were a reproach to him, commanded that she be led back to prison and, bound hand and foot, be laid naked upon a sharp stone.

When midnight came, an Angel of the Lord descended into the prison. Illuminating the prison, he released the saint from her fetters and healed her, restoring again on her head the skin the tormentors had stripped away, so that no wounds at all were visible on the saint's face, and she was whole and had a blooming countenance.

On the following morning the governor commanded that the saint be brought again before him for interrogation. When the prison guard Laodicius, opening the door of the prison, saw that the saint had been

freed from her fetters, he was filled with fear and terror; not supposing that this was Glykeria, he resolved to kill himself, since he thought that Glykeria had escaped from the prison (the guard wished to do this because he greatly feared punishment from the governor). But the saint said to him:

"Do not do yourself any harm, for it is I, Glykeria."

The guard, however, in his fright, said:

"Have mercy on me, save me, that I may not die of fear, for I believe in the God who helps you."

The saint said to him:

"Follow Christ, and you will be saved."

The guard, going out of the prison, put on the chains with which the martyr had been bound and, carrying them upon himself, went to the governor.

When the governor saw him, he said:

"What have you done, Laodicius? Where is the prisoner entrusted to your watch?" Laodicius answered:

"Here she stands before you. Tonight she was illumined by the light of God and healed by an Angel sent from God, who freed her from her chains; these chains I put upon myself. At the same time she regained the original beauty of her face and was completely healed of her wounds by the Angel. Seeing all these wonders of God, I have come to believe in God, and I desire to share in the death of Glykeria."

Then the governor, filled with anger, said:

"Let this accursed man be beheaded, and then we shall see whether Christ comes to his aid!"

When the time for the sword drew near, Laodicius, lifting his eyes to heaven, cried out loudly:

"God and Lord of the Christians! Number me in Thy kingdom with Thy holy servant Glykeria."

The holy Glykeria prayed to God for him, saying: "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who healed mortal sicknesses and freed man, taken captive by sin, from the bonds of Hades, free also Thy servant Laodicius from the power of the devil; help him to bring to completion the struggle of his confession, and receive his soul in peace."

Laodicius, hearing the prayer of Glykeria, said: "Amen."

After this he was beheaded; and the Christians, taking his honorable body secretly, buried it with honor.

Meanwhile the governor, turning to Glykeria, said to her:

"We know that your father was a Roman anphipatos, and we know also that your mother was of equally noble birth; but who helps you we do not know. Tell us this yourself."

The holy woman answered:

"Christ helps me, the Savior of the world and the Source of all joy, who sent me food in prison, freed me from my chains, and restored the beauty of my face, which you had trampled."

After this the governor ordered the holy woman to be given to the beasts to be devoured.

The holy woman went to the beasts with gladness and joy, as if to some feast. When she came to the place from which the beasts are released, she stopped. Immediately a large lioness, roaring fiercely, was let loose upon Glykeria; but coming up to the saint, she lay down quietly at her feet and began to lick them. The saint, lifting her eyes to heaven, said: "I thank Thee, almighty God, God of our fathers, God of mercy! I thank Thee, who hast tamed the fury of the beast to show all men Thy divine power! I thank Thee that Thou hast made light for me even the most cruel tortures. Hear me, O God, and render to this evil governor according to his deeds; but do not deprive me of the crown of Thy grace together with Thy other saints."

After the saint had prayed thus, a voice was heard from heaven saying: "I have heard thy prayer! Come to Me in peace! Behold, the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven are opened to thee!"

Soon another lioness was let loose, which, coming up to the saint, bit her, yet the body of the saint was not torn by the lioness. Thus the saint yielded up her soul into the hands of God.[10] The beasts immediately returned to their dens. At that same hour the eparch was seized by a grievous sickness: he swelled all over with dropsy and became greatly bloated, so that he died in the street, for he could not be carried

10. The death of the holy martyr took place about 177.

into the house. Bishop Dometius took the much-suffering body of the holy martyr Glyceria and buried it in a beautiful place near Heraclea. Afterwards from the honorable relics of the holy Glyceria there flowed a healing myrrh,[11] which cured many diverse ailments, to the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God glorified in the Trinity, to whom is offered honor, glory and worship, now and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Loving the Virgin and Theotokos Mary, thou didst keep thy virginity incorrupt; and zealous in love for the Lord, thou didst suffer manfully even unto death. Wherefore Christ God crowns thee, O Virgin Martyr, with a double crown.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Alexander

Страдание святого мученика Александра

In the reign of the impious Roman emperor Maximian, a cruel persecution of the Christians was raised throughout all the lands of the Roman Empire. One of the centurions, a zealous servant of the pagan gods, by the emperor's command built a shrine to his impure god Zeus[12] not far from Rome, at a distance of about one stadion from it. At the same time it was ordered that all Christians should offer sacrifices to the pagan gods, and also gather for the renovation of the temple of Zeus. The imperial messengers rode everywhere and proclaimed aloud:

"Hear, friends of the gods! Early on the following day you must assemble together with the emperor in the temple of the god Zeus."

11. An eyewitness of the flowing of myrrh from the tomb of the holy martyr Glykeria was, among others, the Emperor Maurice (reigned 582 to 602). During his reign the following miracle took place at the tomb of the holy martyr: the Bishop of Heraclia wished to replace the copper vessel into which the holy myrrh flowed with a silver one, for which purpose he bought one in Constantinople. But when this vessel was placed at the holy tomb, the myrrh ceased to flow. After fervent prayers and the replacement of the vessel by the old one, it flowed again. It turned out that the silver vessel had previously belonged to a man who practiced sorcery and had used it for works of impiety.

12. The Emperor Maximian reigned from 285 to 305.

All the pagans who heard these proclamations of the imperial heralds made ready for the morning, intending to go to the shrine of Zeus. In the morning many of the pagans, having made purchases in the city, set out for the shrine, partly to worship and offer sacrifice to Zeus, and partly to sell what they had bought.

At this time a noble and wealthy man named Tiberian, by rank a tribune,[13] who had many soldiers under his command, entrusted to him by the voivode Phylax, called these soldiers to him and said:

"Hear me, brothers! Do you know the imperial command that bids us to be today together with the emperor in the temple of Zeus? Be ready, then."

While he was saying this, it was reported to him that the emperor had already arrived at that temple. Immediately all hastened to the shrine, to be present with the emperor. But one of those soldiers, named Alexander, who from childhood had been instructed in Christian piety and who feared God, said to the tribune:

"You would do well to say that we must go and worship the true God who dwells in heaven; those whom you call gods are not gods, but demons."

Tiberian said to him:

"Today we shall offer sacrifices not to all the gods, but only to the one Zeus, although we have many gods whom the emperor himself and we all honor."

The blessed Alexander answered:

"Zeus, whom you call a god, is like all the other deceitful demons, who lead their worshippers to perdition, enticing them to vile and lawless deeds, by which even your gods, as you call them, were defiled. For sometimes they, inflamed by carnal desire, beguiled women and committed vile deeds with them, defiling not only the earth but also the sea and the air.[14] But who has ever heard or seen that a god engaged in fornication? Our God, however, is a God invisible to carnal eyes, but

13. A tribune was the commander of a tribe, or regiment.

14. St. Alexander here has in view the coarse and filthy tales of Greek mythology about the exploits of the gods. According to the view of the ancient Greeks, their gods possessed the same faults as men.

known by faith alone; the All-Pure, Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Our God does not demand from us those sacrifices which you offer to your impure demons; instead of those sacrifices He demands from us a pure and bloodless sacrifice."

Having heard Alexander, Tiberian said:

"Give up your madness, Alexander! Do not blaspheme our gods, our benefactors, lest the emperor, hearing of this, be angered with me for allowing such a blasphemer to remain in my regiment!"

Having said this, Tiberian went to the emperor, and Alexander went to his house.

When the time of the sacrifice came, the emperor began to offer sacrifice to his abominable god Zeus in that temple. At this time Tiberian told the emperor that one of his soldiers, named Alexander, was not obeying the imperial command, was not offering sacrifice to the god Zeus, but reviled and blasphemed the gods. Immediately the emperor ordered that he be sent for and brought before him in iron fetters.

At this time it was the sixth hour of the day.[15] Alexander was lying on his bed at this time, given over to sleep. Suddenly an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream vision and said: "Alexander! Take courage and be strong, for you are destined to suffer much for the name of Jesus Christ. Behold, great torments are already prepared for you; behold, soldiers are already coming after you to seize you. But do not fear them; let not your heart be afraid of them, for I have been sent to help you. Rise, then, and pray to God, and I shall be with you throughout your struggle."

Rising from his bed, Alexander began to sing the psalm of David: “He that dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall say to the Lord: My refuge and my protection, my God, in whom I trust” (Ps. 90:1–2), and the rest of that psalm to the end. Then, going out of his house, Alexander met the soldiers who were coming after him; these soldiers were his comrades in the regiment. When they saw the holy Alexander, they all fell to the

15. By our reckoning, 12 o'clock noon.

ground from fear, for the saint's face shone like lightning. But the saint said to them:

"Rise, brothers! What have you been frightened of?"

The soldiers said:

"It seemed to us that you were surrounded by the power of God; therefore we fell to the ground from fear."

But the saint said to them:

"Hear me, brothers! The God of heaven and earth has visited His servant; but do not be troubled. Do what you have been commanded, for you have been sent to take me bound and bring me before the emperor for interrogation."

The soldiers said in reply:

"We agreed to say nothing to you. How then did you learn of this? Tell us."

The saint answered:

"I must not say much to you, since I hasten with eagerness to the struggle prepared for me by the King of heaven. I must go from Rome as far as Byzantium."

Having said this, the saint knelt and prayed to the Lord in these words: "Lord, God of our fathers, praised and blessed forever! I ask and beseech Thee, now, do not separate me from the company of Thy righteous ones; do not reject me as I come to Thee, since Thou hast revealed to me Thy holy and awesome name. Thou, Lord, art my Helper and my Protector; send me Thine Angel, that he may help me and teach me what to answer before the tormentor."

After the saint had finished his prayer, the soldiers laid hands on him and bound him with iron chains; then they led him to the Emperor Maximian. The saint's mother, whose name was Pimenia, did not yet know that her son Alexander had been taken to the emperor for questioning. The saint was strong in body, tall, handsome of face, and young, for he was only in his eighteenth year. When the saint was brought before the emperor for questioning, Maximian asked him:

"Are you the very one who dared to insult me? Are you the one who disobeys his ruler and refuses to bow down to my great god Zeus?"

The saint answered him:

"I worship my God, who dwells in heaven, and His Only-begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I know no other god, nor will I confess one. Therefore, do not ask me about another god. I do not fear your authority in the least, nor am I afraid; I fear neither your threats nor the torments to which you will subject me."

Hearing this, Maximian was greatly angered and said:

"What can the God you confess do?"

The saint answered:

"My God is an invisible and almighty God, so that there is nothing impossible for my God."

Maximian said in reply:

"Can he be a god who was crucified by men and died, being put to death?" The saint answered:

"Be silent, Satan, for you dare not with your foul lips speak the most pure and most holy name of my Lord Jesus Christ, Who willingly endured both crucifixion and death! O fool! If you call Him crucified and put to death, why do you not also speak of how He rose from the dead and gave life to many who were dead?"

Maximian said:

"I wish to spare your youth, for I see that you are very young." But the saint answered:

"Rather, take pity on yourself and strive to free yourself from the snare into which the devil has drawn you. As for me, I fear no torments, for God is my Helper."

Maximian said:

"I have already said that I would like to spare you. Come, then, and offer sacrifice; then you will remain always in the royal palace and will even hold the foremost place here."

The saint answered:

"To which god do you command me to bow down?"

Maximian answered:

"Bow down and offer sacrifice to the great god Zeus."

The saint raised his hands to heaven and began to pray thus: "Lord Jesus Christ! Forsake not me, Thy humble servant; help me, a sinner and an unworthy man."

As he prayed thus, he lifted his eyes to heaven and saw that the heavens were opened; and he saw the Son of God sitting at the right hand of the Father. At this vision the saint was filled with great spiritual joy. Then he asked Maximian again:

"To which god do you wish me to offer sacrifice?"

Maximian said:

"Offer sacrifice to the great god Zeus."

The saint answered:

"Do you not know that the one you call a god was once a man, and a lewd and wicked man at that? For once, inflamed with carnal passion for a woman, he took the form of a bull and by his sorcery deceived and defiled her?[16]"

Hearing this, Maximian laughed and said:

"This proves the power of our gods, for they appear to men in whatever form they themselves desire."

The saint said to him:

"Wretched man! You praise the foul and wicked deeds of your gods, because you yourself are like them in your unclean deeds, for you refuse to know the true God, Who bestowed upon you both honor and kingdom."

Maximian said:

"My gods gave me royal authority."

The saint said:

"I marvel at you: though you consider yourself wise, you destroy yourself, for you believe in demons and serve mute and lifeless idols, having forsaken the living and immortal God. Why do you follow Satan, your father? Rather, turn from darkness to light, lest you perish forever in the fiery Gehenna."

Then Maximian, filled with anger, handed Alexander over to the tribune Tiberius, commanding him to torture the saint. At the same time Maximian ordered Tiberian to torture not Alexander alone, but all Christians in general; for this purpose he sent the tribune into Thrace, commanding him to persecute Christians everywhere. Maximian

16. In this case St. Alexander again has in view the tales of Greek mythology about the exploits of the gods.

ordered Alexander to be led along with him as far as Byzantium. When St. Alexander heard this, he said to the emperor:

"I thank you, torturer, for wishing to make my name known in many lands. May the Lord and my God grant me to endure every affliction and torment for this holy Name throughout all the ends of the earth."

Maximian ordered the saint to be taken from his presence. The tribune Tiberius took charge of him, and the next morning ordered the saint to be hung upon the rack and his body torn with iron hooks. During the torture Alexander did not utter a single groan, but lifted his eyes to heaven and offered thanksgiving to God. Then, having taken the saint down from the rack, the tribune Tiberian ordered him to be bound with iron chains and charged his soldiers to lead him into Thrace.

While St. Alexander was being led by the soldiers into Thrace, an Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to his mother, Pimenia, and said to her: "Awake, rise from your bed, take your servants and beasts, and follow your son into Thrace; your son is being taken there to suffer for the name of Christ. And after his death, commit his honored body to burial."

The blessed Pimenia awoke and did not grieve or weep, but, on the contrary, was filled with great spiritual joy concerning her son. She rose at once, prepared all that was needed for the journey, and hastened along the same road her son had taken. Pimenia caught up with Alexander in the city of Cathargene.

Entering the city, she saw her son standing before Tiberian, who was judging him. Then, seeing Alexander being subjected to tortures and torments, and greatly rejoicing in the contest of her beloved son, Pimenia cried aloud, saying:

"May God Most High, the Good Shepherd, help you, my son!"

When Tiberian heard her voice, he asked:

"Whose voice is that?"

But no one could say where the voice came from, for the crowd standing around that place was very great. Then Tiberian said to the martyr:

"Wretched man, offer sacrifice to the gods!"

But the saint answered:

"I am willing to offer to God a sacrifice of praise."

The torturer said in reply:

"Did you not tell me that your God requires no sacrifices for Himself?" The saint answered:

"Indeed, my God does not require the sacrifices you offer to your idols, but He requires a sacrifice in righteousness and holiness, for He is a holy and righteous God."

Then Tiberian ordered the saint's body to be scorched with torches, saying:

"Let us see whether his God will come to save him from my hands."

As the saint was being scorched, he lifted his eyes to heaven and said: "Glory to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, Who sent Thine Archangel Michael to Babylon and delivered the three youths from the fire of the furnace (Dan. 3); do Thou, O Lord, deliver me also from this grievous torment and put the torturer to shame, that with David the psalmist I may say: 'We went through fire and water, and Thou broughtest us out into freedom' (Ps. 65:12)."

Tiberian, seeing that the fire did the martyr no harm at all, was greatly ashamed and ordered the soldiers to bind Alexander and lead him onward. When the saint's mother saw that her son had been led away from the torturer by the soldiers, she entreated them to allow her to see her son. The soldiers did not hinder her. When the holy martyr saw his mother, he said:

"You have done well, my lady, to come here. Accompany me to the very place where I shall finish my contest,[17] as the Lord has revealed to me."

Some of the soldiers said then:

"Blessed are you, Alexander, for great is your faith, and great is the God of the Christians. See how many torments you have already endured, and yet you have not weakened in your confession at all."

17. That is, to the city of Byzantium.

Thus they spoke as they journeyed, in obedience to Tiberian's command.

When the travelers came to a spring that happened to flow beside the road, they stopped and began to eat. At the same time they urged Alexander to eat with them, especially since he had not eaten bread or drunk water for fourteen days. But the saint, making prayer his food, knelt down and began to sing the psalm: "I lift up mine eyes unto the mountains, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 120:1–2). Then he began to pray thus: "Lord Jesus Christ, keep me, Thy lamb, blameless, that mine enemy may not rejoice over me, for I have known Thy most holy name. Put me not to shame, O Master, before the torturer, but send me Thy holy Angel and Thy right hand to help me, and be my Defender, Helper, and Protector."

When the saint had finished his prayer, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "Fear not, Alexander! The Lord has heard your prayer, and I have been sent by God to help you."

While the Angel spoke these words, the soldiers heard someone speaking to Alexander, but they could not see who it was; therefore they were greatly afraid and, in terror and dread, fell face down upon the earth. The blessed Alexander said to them:

"What did you see, brethren, that you were so frightened?"

They said:

"We heard the voice of your God speaking to you; therefore we were afraid and fell to the ground in terror."

While the soldiers were saying these words to the saint, Tiberian approached that place, accompanied by the city's dignitaries. Tiberian asked the dignitaries:

– What is this place called?

They said to him:

– It is called the Place of Judgment.

Tiberian said to this:

– If it is the Place of Judgment, then judgment should be pronounced here. Bring me the Christian Alexander.

When the Saint stood before Tiberian, the latter said to him:

– Do you still persist in your madness, and still refuse to bow down to our gods? I see that your heart is hardened; yet I feel great pity for you, and therefore I wish to turn you to the worship of the gods, the lords of the whole universe.

The Martyr answered:

– Impious one, blinded in mind, son of the devil, who serves his father, Satan. How can you pity me and show mercy to me, when Satan, your father, is merciful to no one? On the contrary, he wishes to draw everyone into the fiery Gehenna and to destroy them together with himself.

Tiberian said:

– O wicked and unrepentant one! How dare you speak to me like this? Am I your equal, that you utter such insolence to me? Is it not because I spare you that you dishonor me? Yet you ought rather to honor and respect me all the more for my goodness and mercy, and not revile me with abusive words!

The Saint answered:

– Truly you are like your father, Satan, for you have a heart hardened like some stone. Do you not understand that this place is called the Place of Judgment? This plainly shows that the righteous judgment of God will soon overtake you, the God who will judge all, the living and the dead, and who will render to each according to his deeds. Then you will know that I have told you the truth. God will judge you for tormenting me without mercy. He knows how cruelly and undeservedly you torture me. But know that these sufferings will bring me glory, while for you they prepare eternal perdition.

Hearing such words, Tiberian was kindled with still greater fury, and he commanded that iron spikes be spread upon the ground and the Martyr be dragged over them. The Saint, however, remained silent throughout this cruel torment, as though he felt no pain at all. Seeing that the torments did not achieve their purpose, Tiberian became even more enraged and commanded four soldiers to beat the Saint with knotted cudgels. During the beating, the Saint, enduring the blows, said to Tiberian:

– O impious one! These are the only torments you have devised for me. Add others, heavier ones, for I feel no pain at all from these, because Christ, my God, helps me.

Tiberian said to this:

– I will cut your body into pieces, throw them into the fire, and scatter the ashes, so that not even a memory of you will remain on earth. Then I shall see whether Christ will come to your aid and save you from my hands.

The Saint answered:

– My Christ will destroy you at once. Your body will be broken into pieces, and your bones will be scattered over the earth; you will no longer see Rome, just as you will not see the face of your impious emperor, for the Lord will blot out the memory of you from the earth. All this will be your punishment, because you have not known the true God, and, wretch that you are, you have not honored Him who gave you this honor and this power. But had you known God, you could have won for yourself eternal life in heaven; but now, having forsaken the true God, you have loved your father, Satan, with your heart; together with him you will be cast into the fiery Gehenna. As for me, I shall always glorify my Lord and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will deliver me from your hands and grant me His grace in His eternal kingdom.

Hearing such words, the tormentor changed countenance from anger and fury. Nevertheless, he ordered the torments to cease.

Meanwhile, the day drew toward evening. When night came, Tiberian made his lodging in that place. Falling asleep, he saw in a dream an Angel of God, who appeared to him in a terrible form with a sword in his hands. The Angel said to him: "Impious one! Behold, I have come to you, for you have delivered the servant of God Alexander to cruel torments. Know that I could strike you down with this sword. But I shall wait a little longer. When you awake, go quickly through Illyricum to Byzantium, for the time of the repose of the servant of God Alexander is drawing near."

Tiberian awoke in fear. He trembled throughout his body from terror. Summoning his counselors who accompanied him, he related to them his vision. They said to him:

– We have long wished to tell you not to torment that man so cruelly and unjustly. But we did not dare to do so. We have heard that the God of the Christians is great, and that He condemns to eternal torment in unquenchable fire those who torment His servants.

After these words, Tiberian fell into still greater fear and dread, and at once he ordered his soldiers to lead the Martyr forward. He himself walked behind him. Tiberian passed by many cities, but he did not enter or stop in them, since, in accordance with the Angel's command, he was in great haste to reach Byzantium. Yet the dream did not leave his mind for many days; therefore Tiberian was in great fear and did not dare to inflict further torments on Saint Alexander. When Tiberian was passing through Illyricum and approached the city of Sardica, the governor and the city notables came out to meet him; but Tiberian did not enter the city, and passed by it. The Christians who were in that city, hearing that the tribune Tiberian, coming from Rome, was leading a Martyr with him, went out of the city, not to meet the tribune, but in order to see the Martyr. Seeing that the Martyr walked apart, the Christians approached him and, falling at his feet, said:

– Pray to God for us, O Martyr of Christ!

He said to them:

– Pray for me also, brethren, that I may complete my struggle for Christ Jesus to the end, and be counted worthy to receive from His holy right hand the crown promised to me.

Then the Martyr was led by the soldiers further on the way. Passing the city of Clisura, the travelers drew near to a place called the Host of Vonomasius, forty stadia from Philippopolis, where they halted. By this time Tiberian had already begun to forget the terrible vision he had had concerning the Martyr Alexander. He summoned the Saint to interrogation and asked him:

– Alexander, do you still persist in your madness until now? Do you not wish to offer sacrifice to our merciful gods, Zeus and Asclepius[18], who rule the universe?

The Saint answered:

18. Asclepius was considered by the ancient Greeks to be the god of healing.

– Son of Satan, blinded in mind! What more do you wish to hear from me? For I have told you that I will not offer sacrifice to demons.

Tiberian said:

– No, I am not persuading you to offer sacrifice to demons; I ask only that you offer sacrifice to Zeus and Asclepius, our great gods.

The Saint answered:

– Madman! Do you not understand that your Zeus and Asclepius are demons? Tiberian said:

– No, they are my gods. And I shall see to it that your name is reviled throughout the whole earth for such a great insult to me and to my gods.

The Saint answered:

– I myself desire that the name of Christ be glorified through me throughout the whole earth.

Then Tiberian said to the soldiers standing before him:

– Take him away from my presence, for I cannot endure his insults. Lead him to Philippopolis and confine him there in prison; keep him in prison until I come to that city.

The Martyr, in accordance with Tiberian's command, was brought by the soldiers to Philippopolis and confined there in prison.

Meanwhile, the citizens of that city, learning that Tiberian would soon arrive in their city, went out to meet him. Having entered the city, Tiberian prepared to offer sacrifice to Zeus and Asclepius. The Christians who lived in that city, learning that the holy Martyr Alexander was held in prison in their city, came to the prison and began to entreat the jailer to let them in, that they might see the Martyr of Christ. The jailer did not hinder them, for he himself feared God. Having entered the prison and seeing that the Saint was in chains, the Christians fell at his feet and kissed his bonds, saying: "Bless us, Passion-bearer of Christ, bless also our fatherland, for we are Christians; we live in this city, always possessed by great fear, for the governor of this city constantly seeks us out, in order to turn us away from Christ by torments. Yet until now he has not been able to turn us from confessing the name of Christ. By the grace of God there are many of us here; among us Christians are even the most glorious and distinguished citizens of this place.

We hope that the power of Christ will overcome the impious Hellenic faith, and that in the end our whole city will with one voice glorify the name of Christ. But you, Passion-bearer of Christ, endure your struggle for Christ to the end."

Meanwhile Tiberian, offering his abominable sacrifice to the idols, remembered Alexander, who was held in prison, and said to the notables of the city:

– You should know that I have with me a Christian, delivered to me for trial; I have compelled him by various tortures to worship our gods, but I have not succeeded at all in this. He answers my questions very rudely, and constantly reviles both me and our gods. Let him be brought here. Perhaps he will be ashamed before all of you present here, and will offer sacrifice to the gods.

Alexander was brought at once. Tiberian, seated beside the governor, said to the Martyr:

– Tell me, Alexander: do you still refuse until now to offer sacrifices to our gods? Behold, all the Christians who live in this city have already bowed down to Zeus and Asclepius; only you alone resist us.

The Saint answered:

"You lie, wretch, as does your father, Satan: not one of the Christians here has yet carried out your impious command. As for me, you shall hear nothing from me beyond what I have already told you, namely that I am a Christian, and that I will not offer sacrifice to your vile demons. And now again, before all who are gathered here, I declare aloud that I am a servant of the Heavenly God, and that I will never renounce Christ, my God."

Tiberian, ashamed, said to the soldiers: "Bind him in iron fetters and lead him before me; I shall follow after you in a short while."

And the saint was led onward on his way.

Coming to a spring called Sirmium, the martyr washed his face and hands. Then, turning toward the east, he began to pray, saying: "I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that in Philippopolis Thou didst vouchsafe me to confess Thy most holy Name."

The soldiers, however, did not let him finish his prayer, but compelled him to continue on his way.

When they arrived at the place called Polchishchnoye (where pagan festivals used to be held), Tiberian caught up with the travelers. Calling Alexander to him, Tiberian said:

"Do you not know, Alexander, that before the governor I spoke to you gently, exhorting you to offer sacrifice to our gods? But in the presence of so distinguished a company you scorned my request. In that case, at least now carry out my command, and I will free you from torments."

The saint answered:

"What I said to you before the governor I will say in every place. Therefore, you son of Satan, seduced by the devil, do not think that you will ever turn me away from confessing the Name of Christ."

Then Tiberian ordered the soldiers to drive four stakes into the ground, and, stretching the martyr out toward the four sides, commanded that he be tied to those stakes and given two hundred blows. The martyr, receiving the wounds in silence, prayed to the Lord his God. At that moment a voice was heard from heaven, saying: "Take courage, Alexander, and do not fear the torments, for they are temporal and quickly passing. I am always with you."

Hearing the voice from heaven, Tiberian was greatly afraid, immediately commanded that the torments be stopped, and then set out on his further journey. Arriving at the town called Karasura, which lay between Philippopolis and Beroea, Tiberian entered it; the soldiers with Tiberian, however, did not enter the town but halted in the shade of the trees near it. It was the sixth hour of the day. Since it was very hot, the saint said to the soldiers:

"Brethren, I am very thirsty."

But they answered him:

"We ourselves are very thirsty too, but where shall we get water here?" The saint said to them:

"Wait here a little, for God can give us water even in this place."

Saying this, the saint bent his knees and prayed to the Lord in such words: "Lord Jesus Christ, who once led water out of the rock in the wilderness for thirsting Israel (Ex. 17:1–7), look now with mercy upon Thy servant and grant us water in this place, that I and all those who

are with me may quench our thirst. Through this Thy holy Name will be glorified."

When the saint had prayed thus, suddenly the earth parted and under an oak there welled up a spring of pure and cool water. Seeing such a miracle, the soldiers said:

"Truly great is the Christian God, who fulfills the petitions of His faithful servants."

Then the martyr and those soldiers drank of the water from the spring and glorified Christ God.

Having then traveled a considerable distance, the soldiers came to a river called Arzon. Since all were weary from the long journey, they stopped here to rest. Alexander also sat down to rest. Here Tiberian caught up with the soldiers, and seeing that the martyr was sitting, he said to the soldiers in anger:

"Why do you wretches allow that impious man to sit?"

Then, rising, they went on toward the city of Beroea.

As they drew near to this city, its citizens met Tiberian with honor. There were very many Christians in this city, more than half; but, fearing torments from the pagans, they secretly kept the confession of the Name of Christ. Seeing the martyr of Christ walking apart from the tribune, they came up to him and said:

"Rejoice, Passion-bearer of Christ! Take courage and be strong, for the impious tormentors will never overcome the almighty power of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

Meanwhile Tiberian, calling the martyr to him, said:

"Listen to me, Alexander, as to your own father: offer sacrifice to our gods together with me now. If you do this, I promise you before all who are present here that I will set you free, and if you wish, you may take the place of commander in my regiment; if you do not wish to be commander of the regiment, you may go wherever you wish."

The saint, smiling, said to him:

"Oh, if only you knew how bitter to me is the consolation with which you comfort me! For these words of yours inflict great torment on my soul. But God will help me not to heed your counsel. I have told

you many times before, and now I say it again and will repeat it once more: I am a Christian, and I will not offer sacrifice to your demons."

Tiberian then went on from there. The martyr followed him, bound with iron fetters. They came to another place, situated on the bank of the same river Arzon. This place was fourteen stadia from Beroea. Here there were many inns and hostels. Tiberian spent the night here, awaiting the martyr, whom many Christians had accompanied from the city of Beroea.

When the soldiers arrived with the martyr at the place where Tiberian was, the martyr asked Tiberian's permission to pray to his God for a short time. Tiberian allowed him. The saint, seeing a large walnut tree nearby, went up to it, and standing beneath its branches, knelt down and prayed to God in such words: "Lord Jesus Christ! Send Thy holy Angel and take my soul, for I can no longer endure the torments, since my body has grown weak."

Tiberian, seeing that the martyr was praying, said to the soldiers:

"I marvel where Alexander learned magic prayers. He grew up before my very eyes. I myself enrolled him in the rank of soldier, and I could never have supposed that he knew sorcery."

Then, calling Alexander to him, he said:

"Alexander, offer sacrifice to the gods!"

The saint answered:

"Truly you are darkened in mind, for you again desire to hear from me what I have already told you many times."

After these words of the saint, Tiberian ordered his servants to pour boiling oil on the martyr's back. But an Angel of the Lord, appearing invisibly near the martyr, broke the vessel in which the oil was; the oil then poured out upon the tormentor's servants and severely scalded them. Tiberian, seeing that the oil had scalded not the martyr but his servants, became greatly enraged and ordered four soldiers to stretch the martyr out beneath the walnut tree and beat him mercilessly with clubs. The beating continued until the soldiers were exhausted. When the tormentors ceased beating him, St. Alexander said: "O Lord my Master! Bless this tree and give it healing power, for I have suffered beneath it for Thy holy Name."

From that time the fruit and leaves of the tree possessed healing power and cured believers of many diverse diseases and infirmities.

Then the soldiers again led the martyr on the way, going before Tiberian. When they had passed Adrianople, they drew near to a place called Vurtodexion. Here the saint met his blessed mother Pimenia, who had come here before the martyr. Seeing her beloved son, she fell at his feet, weeping and sobbing. Then, rising, she kissed him. And the saint said to her:

"Do not weep, mother, for I trust in my Lord that in the morning of the next day He will help me to finish my struggle."

Here Tiberian caught up with the soldiers. Since the day was already drawing toward evening, Tiberian stopped here for the night and gave himself to sleep. At the eighth hour of the night[19] he rose from his bed and came to a river called Zionkel, where there was an inn. The sun had already risen. Having rested here a little from the journey, Tiberian said to the martyr:

"I have already subjected you to many torments, and yet you would not turn to honoring my gods. Know now that I will put you to death today, if you do not carry out my command."

Having said this, Tiberian departed from that place. Approaching Byzantium and coming to the city of Drizipera, situated on the river Erigon, Tiberian resolved to pass final judgment on the martyr here, and said to him:

"Here is your death before you, Alexander. Tell me: will you offer sacrifice to our gods, or not? I will put you to death here and cast your body into the river, to be devoured by the fish."

The saint answered him:

"I would be very grateful to you if you did what you say; then I would sooner be delivered from your hands. But I will in no case offer sacrifice to your vile gods, even if you were to destroy me with thousands of deaths."

Then the tyrant condemned Alexander to death and handed him over to the soldiers, commanding them to cut off his head and cast his

19. By our reckoning, at 2 o'clock at night.

body into the river. He then went on his way, while the soldiers remained there to carry out Tiberian's order. A very great crowd gathered there, wishing to see the death of Christ's martyr; there were also not a few Christians among them. The holy martyr, turning to the executioner, asked him to delay the beheading for a little while and to allow him to pray; at the same time the martyr asked for water. One of the people who had come to witness the spectacle took a vessel, drew water from the river, and brought it to the martyr. The saint, washing his face and hands with the water, turned toward the east; then, signing himself with the honorable sign of the Cross, he began to pray, saying: "Glory to Thee, O God of our fathers! Glory to Thee, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! Glory to Thee, before whom all creation trembles and to whom all bow down, for Thou art the Creator of heaven and earth! Before Thee, the God of all, the invisible and incorruptible God, the Seraphim stand in fear, not daring to look upon Thee, and cry out unceasingly: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Sabaoth; the whole earth is full of His glory!' (Is. 6:3). Thee the sun blesses as it circles the heavens; the earth blesses Thee, and all that is upon it, men and animals; every breath of life sings Thy praise, for Thou art the true God, the True, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, abiding forever. Remember those who fear Thee, O Master, and those who offer thanksgiving to Thy all-holy name. Do not despise me, Thy servant, humble and unworthy, O Lord who lovest mankind."

Then, turning to the Christians, the saint said:

"Brethren and fathers! Remember my labors, for I did not shrink from suffering for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He might be merciful to me and to all other Christians. Know that the long road which I traveled from Rome to this place, bound everywhere with chains and weighed down with fetters, driven with blows and tormented in every way, this hard road I traveled not by my own strength, but by the help of our Lord Jesus Christ. By the power of the Lord Jesus Christ I have overcome both the tyrant Tiberian and his helper, the devil. Now I depart from here to stand before my Master. But you, pray for me, that I may obtain mercy from the Lord."

Then the saint asked the executioner to wait a little longer, and, kneeling, began to pray to God in these words: "Lord Jesus Christ! Hear Thy servant who suffers for Thy holy name! Send grace upon my body; so order that wherever it is laid, it may bring healing to the sick everywhere, to the glory of Thy most holy name."

Immediately a voice was heard from heaven, promising to fulfill the martyr's request.

Then the martyr said to the soldiers:

"Brethren! Carry out quickly what you have been commanded!" The executioner, named Celestine, said to the saint:

"Martyr of Christ! Pray to your God, that He may not count this against me as a sin, for I have been commanded to kill you."

The saint said to him:

"Do this not of your own will, but at the command of others. The one who commanded will bear the sin upon himself; you, do quickly what you have been ordered, for I am hastening to depart to my Lord."

Celestine bound the saint's eyes with a clean cloth and, drawing the sword from its scabbard, was about to strike the martyr. But, seeing the holy Angels who had come to take the martyr's soul, he was greatly frightened and stood not knowing what to do. The saint, expecting that his head would soon be cut off, said to the executioner:

"Do, brother, what you have been commanded."

But the executioner answered:

"I am afraid, servant of God, for I see certain wondrous men standing near you."

Then the saint called upon God, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ! Grant that I may complete my struggle at this hour!"

After this the Angels withdrew from the saint a short distance. Then the executioner Celestine cut off the honorable head of the martyr, and at once his holy soul was taken up to heaven by Angelic hands; the Angels bore it up to heaven, singing praises to God. That Angelic voice was heard by all the Christians who stood near that place.

Thus the holy martyr of Christ, Alexander, completed the course of his suffering[20], and his honorable body was cast by Tiberian's soldiers

into the river, according to the command of the tyrant. But, by God's providence, the honorable body of the martyr was drawn out of the water onto the shore by four dogs. The dogs licked the holy body and, sitting near it, guarded it from birds of prey and beasts. When the martyr's mother, the blessed Pimenia, came to that place, she took the much-suffering body of her beloved son, anointed it with fragrant spices, wrapped it in a clean shroud, and buried it with honor by the river Erigon. From the tomb of the martyr, abundant healings were given to all who came with faith.

Soon the holy martyr appeared to his mother in a vision, comforted her, and told her that she too would soon depart to the Face of God. With her this holy martyr now stands before the throne of God's glory in the host of the other holy martyrs, prays for us to the Lord who loves mankind, and glorifies the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, glorified and praised by all creation, visible and invisible, now and always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Pausicacius, Bishop of Sinada

Память преподобного отца нашего Павсикакие, епископа Синадского

The homeland of the blessed Pausicacius was the city of Apamea[21], and he was born of noble, well-born parents, diligent in true Christian piety. During his upbringing, while still in his youth, he devoted himself to strict fasting, prayer, and other harsh ascetic labors, for which reason he afterward took up the monastic life. Nourishing himself only on a small amount of bread and water, and having attained through prayer the gift of healing, he cured both bodily and spiritual infirmities. Thus, entering into battle with demons, he cast them out of the possessed at a distance, restored sight to the blind, straightened the

20. The death of St. Martyr Alexander took place at the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century.

21. The city of Apamea was situated in south-western Syria on the river Orontes. In antiquity this city was the principal city of the Syrian region of Apamene, and received its name from Apama, the wife of Seleucus I, ruler of Syria.

bent, and performed other wondrous miracles. When word of this spread, he became known also to the Archbishop of Constantinople, the blessed Cyriacus[22], who, having conferred episcopal ordination upon him, appointed him bishop of the church of Sinada[23].

Having become bishop, the holy Pausicacius at once, with the sling[24] of his word, drove the church wolves[25] out of his flock, and, like diseased members of the body, he cut them down with his sword of speech and cast them out, so that they might do no harm even to the healthy members. Caring so zealously for his flock and thereby helping it toward salvation, the Venerable Father made a journey to the city of Constantinople and there healed the Emperor Maurice of the infirmity with which he was then afflicted, for which the Emperor, with a golden seal, sent him in his city a reward he had earned in the amount of one litra[26] of gold. When the Venerable Father was returning from Constantinople to Sinada, then, being at Silon[27], he by prayer brought a spring of water out of the earth, and his companions quenched their thirst. Having lived thus piously and pleasing to God, and having accomplished the salvation of many, the holy Pausicacius left this life and passed to the Lord whom he loved[28].

* * *

Memory of St. George the Confessor

Память святого Георгия исповедника

The holy martyr and confessor of Christ, George, was born in the city of Constantinople. For venerating the honorable icons and honoring them, he was seized by the iconoclasts and brought before the impious emperor Theophilus[29]. The latter, now with threats,

22. Cyriacus was Patriarch of Constantinople from 592 to 606.
23. Synnada, or Synades, was a city in the north of Phrygia; now it is ruins near Eskipara–Gassaf.
24. A sling was a hand instrument for hurling stones. "The sling of the word" means the power of the word.
25. By the name "wolves of the Church" are meant heretics and freethinkers, as well as people who lead a shameful way of life and are obstinate in their depravity.
26. A litra was a unit of weight equal to 72 zolotniks (1 zolotnik ≈ 4.265 grams).
27. Silon, or Solon according to the Greek Prologue, is of unknown location.
28. The Venerable Pausicacius died in 606.

now with persuasion, began to compel him to renounce Christ and the veneration of the holy icons, but the saint would not agree to this. Indignant at the vile and false words of the tyrant, he said to him: “It befits every true Christian to venerate the honorable icons and to honor them, since the honor paid to them passes on to the prototype.”

For such words, they tied a rope around St. George's neck and dragged him through the streets of the city as a criminal, then cast him into prison, and finally, taking away and plundering all his possessions, sent him into exile together with his wife Irene and his children; there, having endured many afflictions, he joyfully departed to the Lord[30].

* * *

NOTES

3209. Once, in the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, Daniel killed, without sword and without staff, a serpent which the Babylonians revered as a god. Then the Babylonians rose up greatly against Daniel and obtained from the king permission to cast Daniel into a pit. In this pit there were seven lions, which were given no food, so that they would devour Daniel. At this time there was in Judea the prophet Habakkuk. He cooked food and carried it into the field to give to the inhabitants. But an Angel appeared to him and said: "Take the dinner which you have to Babylon, to Daniel in the lions' den." "Lord," answered Habakkuk, "I have not seen Babylon and do not know where the pit is." Then the Angel took Habakkuk by the hair of his head and set him at the top of the pit in Babylon. Habakkuk cried out: "Daniel, Daniel! Take the dinner which God has sent you." Daniel answered: "Thou hast remembered me, O God, and hast not forsaken those who love Thee." Then Daniel rose and ate the dinner brought by Habakkuk (Dan. 14:29–42).

29. The Byzantine Emperor Theophilus, son and successor of the Emperor Michael II, having from childhood been deeply imbued with a strong aversion to icons under the influence of his tutor John the Grammarian, cruelly persecuted the venerators of icons, although he did not put them to death. He reigned from 829 to 842.

30. The time of St. George's death is unknown. In any case he died still under Theophilus, hence at the end of the first half of the 9th century.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF MAY

May 14

14 мая

New Calendar May 14 · Old Calendar May 27 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Isidore

Страдание святого мученика Исидора

In the first year of the reign of Emperor Decius[1], a royal decree was issued throughout all the provinces and lands of the Roman Empire, ordering the soldiers to be counted and gathered into regiments. On this account, the ships of the voivode Numerius came to the island of Chios[2] to gather there all the young men intended for military service.

At that time St. Isidore dwelt on the island of Chios. He was from the city of Alexandria, strong in body and courageous in spirit, and a Christian in faith. He led a God-pleasing life, ever striving in fasting and good works; he was alien to the vain pursuits and impure pleasures of this world, and likewise shunned the impure deeds of the pagans. For his bravery and courage, Isidore was enrolled among the soldiers and assigned to the regiment of Numerius.

Soon a new order came from the emperor: all Christians were to be compelled to worship the Roman gods, and those who did not worship them were to be forced to do so by tortures. Special orders were given to keep watch over the soldiers; if a Christian was found among them, he was to be compelled to worship and offer sacrifices to the idols, according to the ancient Roman custom.

At that time a centurion named Julius approached the voivode Numerius and reported to him that the blessed Isidore was a Christian. The voivode immediately ordered the saint to be seized. When the saint was brought before the tribunal of Numerian, he asked him:

1. Decius reigned from 249 to 251.
2. The island of Chios is situated in the Mediterranean Sea (in its northern part).

"What is your name?"

"I am called Isidore," said the saint.

The voivode said:

"Is it you who disobey the order of our emperor Decius and refuse to offer sacrifices to the gods?"

St. Isidore answered:

"Who are your gods, that I, a Christian, should offer sacrifice to them? Are they not deaf, blind idols, devoid of all feeling?"

The voivode answered:

"O wicked and impious blasphemer! Truly you deserve great torments and death!"

The saint said:

"Indeed, I deserve to suffer for the name of my God. For the sake of His most holy name I am ready to endure every torment and death itself, that my Master may deem me worthy to share the lot of the holy martyrs who suffered for His holy name before me. But I believe and firmly hope that all who believe in Him and put their trust in His holy name shall never die, as our Lord Jesus Christ Himself said: 'He that believeth in me' (Jn. 6:47), 'though he were dead, yet shall he live' (Jn. 11:25)."

"Will you offer sacrifice to the gods, Isidore," said Numerian, "if you wish to remain alive, or not?"

The saint answered:

"Even if you put me to death, you have no power over my soul. Therefore, torment me as you will, for I have as my Helper the true and living God and Lord Jesus Christ, Who is with me even now and will be with me after my death, and I shall be with Him. I will not cease to confess His most holy name as long as the breath of life remains in my body."

The voivode said:

"Offer sacrifice just once, obeying the royal command, and afterward do as you wish."

But the saint answered:

"Do not think, impious man, that you will beguile me with your deceit. Can he who has once denied Christ, his God, be called His faithful

servant? 'He that is unfaithful in that which is least is unfaithful also in much' (Lk. 16:10). I will not even allow myself to entertain in my thoughts anything displeasing to the Lord."

The voivode said:

"I am advising you for your own good, Isidore. So listen to me. If you will not listen, I shall deliver you to cruel torments and torture you until you confess the greatness of our gods."

Then the voivode ordered his soldiers to stretch out the saint and have four soldiers beat him without mercy.

While the torturers were beating the saint, those in the crowd around him said:

"Submit, Isidore, to the emperor's will, if you do not wish to end your life amid torments."

But the saint answered:

"I obey the will and command of my God, the King of heaven, Who abides forever. This God I confess and honor; I will not deny Him, and I shall not be rejected by Him on the day of judgment."

After the beating, the torturer for a long time tried to entice the saint to idolatry, by kindness and by threats, but entirely without success; he heard only the martyr's rebukes and reproaches, directed both at himself and at his gods. At last, filled with rage, he said:

"I shall order your foul tongue to be cut into pieces."

The saint answered:

"Even if you cut out my tongue, you cannot take from my mouth the confession of the name of Christ."

At the torturer's command, the saint's tongue was cut out. Yet even after his tongue had been cut out, the saint spoke quite clearly, glorifying Christ, the true God; but the voivode fell to the ground in fear and became mute. When he was lifted from the ground, he could not utter a single word and expressed his thoughts only by gestures. Then he asked for paper and wrote on it:

"I order Isidore, who disobeys the royal decree, to be beheaded with the sword."

When these words were read to the martyr, he cried out joyfully, saying:

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast not deprived me of Thy grace! I glorify Thee, my Master, my life, my breath! I sing praises to Thee, O Lord, my strength, the enlightenment of my mind! I glorify Thee, Who gavest me a tongue with which I ceaselessly praise Thy greatness!"

The executioner took the martyr and led him to the place of execution. St. Isidore went joyfully and hastily, hastening like a lamb to his slaughter. Then, gazing up to heaven with a radiant face and joyful eyes, the saint said:

"Holy Master! I glorify Thee, for in Thy mercy Thou wilt now receive me into Thy dwellings and places of rest."

When he came to the place where the martyr's head was to be struck off, the saint asked the executioner's permission to pray. Then, after praying for a sufficient time, he bowed his honorable head beneath the sword[3], and thus was beheaded for confessing the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who bowed His most pure head upon the Cross for us sinners.

After the beheading, the honorable body of the holy martyr was cast by the torturers away without burial, to be devoured by dogs and wild beasts. But one of the saint's friends, named Ammonius, a secret Christian, took the body of the holy martyr, dug a grave with the other faithful brethren, and laid the honorable body of Isidore in the earth as a precious treasure. This Christian himself also proved an imitator of Isidore's valiant struggle; while sailing across the Strait of the Hellespont, he received the crown of martyrdom at Cyzicus[4]. The honorable relics of St. Isidore were later taken from the earth by a pious woman named Myrope, who had come there from the city of Ephesus. She anointed the honorable relics with precious ointments, wrapped them in a clean shroud, and laid them in a place of honor. When the persecution of Christians had ceased, a church was erected in honor of the holy martyr Isidore, where manifold healings of the sick were bestowed through the holy relics of the martyr of Christ, to the glory of

3. The repose of St. Martyr Isidore took place in the year 250.
4. Cyzicus was situated on the peninsula of Arctonnesus in the Propontis (Sea of Marmara).

Christ our God, Who is glorified forever with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst appear as a great governor of the universe, O saint, through thy prayers to God; therefore today we sing thy praises, O God-wise martyr, most glorious Isidore.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Serapion the Sindonite

Житие преподобного отца нашего Серапиона Синдонита

In Egypt there lived an elder named Serapion, surnamed "the Sindonite"[5], because he covered his naked body with only a cloak.

From his youth he led the monastic life; he owned no property, not even a cell; he had no dwelling place, and lived like a bird of the heavens. Never did he enter a house to rest there or lie down upon a bed. He wore only a small cloak and possessed nothing but a small Gospel book. Serapion went from place to place and spent the night wherever night overtook him. In the morning, when he rose from sleep, he did not remain in the same place, but continued on his way, as though bodiless; therefore many called him "dispassionate." Many times he was seen near the village where he had stopped. They saw him sitting beside the road and weeping, and asked him:

"Why are you weeping, elder?"

He answered those who questioned him:

"My Master entrusted His wealth to me. But I lost it, and now He wishes to punish me."

The saint spoke in parable, calling God his Master and his own soul the wealth: a soul created in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of the Son of God.

5. The name "Sindonite" was given to the Venerable Serapion because he wore only one *sindon*, a coarse linen garment.

Those who heard this answer did not understand what he meant, and thought the elder was speaking of gold; so each gave him whatever he could—one bread, another vegetables—and said:

“Take at least this, brother; do not grieve over the wealth you lost, for God may restore it to you.”

The elder answered:

“Amen! Amen!”

When Serapion came to Alexandria, he met a beggar who was completely naked and shivering with cold. The elder began to think to himself:

“How can it be that I, who consider myself a faster and a faithful keeper of Christ’s commandments, am clothed, while this beggar, in whose image is Christ Himself, suffers from the cold? How can I fail to take pity on him? Truly, if I do not cover his nakedness and allow him to die of cold, I shall be condemned on the day of judgment as a murderer.”

Then Serapion took off his cloak and gave it to the beggar, while he himself sat naked nearby, holding only the Holy Gospel against his breast, from which he was never parted.

It happened that a certain man who knew the elder passed by. Seeing Serapion naked, the passer-by asked him:

"Father Serapion! Who stripped you of your clothing?"

Serapion, pointing to the Holy Gospel, answered:

"This has stripped me."

Then the Blessed One met a certain man who was being led to prison for debt. Feeling pity for him, but having nothing with which he could help him, the Venerable Serapion sold the Gospel that he carried with him and gave the money he received, paying the man's debt. Then Serapion came to the hut in which he sometimes stayed. His disciple, seeing him naked, asked him:

"Where is your cloak, honored father?"

The elder answered:

"I have sent it to a place where, in its stead, we shall find something many times better."

The disciple said again:

"And where is the small Gospel?"

The elder answered:

"Child, it said to me every day: *Sell what you have and give to the poor* (Mt. 19:21), so that I might acquire it on the Day of Judgment. I listened to it and did as it advised me. I sold it and gave the money to one in need, that I might win for myself the mercy of our God, Jesus Christ, because I listened to His Holy Gospel."

Some time later, one of his acquaintances gave the Venerable Father an old, worn cloak, so that he might cover his bodily nakedness with it.

This man, who possessed nothing, once came to Greece and stayed in Athens for three days. He was very hungry, but could obtain no morsel of bread from anyone, since no one gave him anything, and he had no means to buy bread. Fulfilling the words of Christ, he never carried with him coins, a purse for money, or clothing (Mt. 10:9–10), except for the worn cloak with which he covered his nakedness. On the fourth day of his stay in Athens, Serapion was sorely afflicted by hunger. Standing on an elevated place in the city, he began to weep and cry aloud:

"Men of Athens! Help me!"

Philosophers and city magistrates approached him and asked him:

"From where have you come, elder? And what is your sorrow?"

He answered:

"I am by birth an Egyptian. When I left my native land, I at once fell into three debts. I still have two creditors, from whom there is nothing to take from me, but the third creditor does not leave me, and up to now he torments me, demanding his debt from me."

The philosophers asked him:

"Who are these creditors of yours, and who torments you? Tell us, and we will help you."

Then the elder said to them:

"From my youth fleshly lust, love of money, and passion for gluttony have troubled me. From two of these I have already been delivered, and they no longer trouble me, for I feel no fleshly desire, and I have no property or wealth. But the craving for food does not leave me. Already it is the fourth day since I had anything in my mouth; therefore the

craving for food does not leave me, troubling me and demanding its customary debt."

Some of the philosophers thought that he was deceiving them, and they gave him a gold coin, but they watched him from a distance to see what he would do.

The elder, taking the coin, hurried to the bread merchants and, laying the coin before them, took one loaf and went away from there, and never again did he appear in that city. Then the philosophers became convinced that this elder was indeed a virtuous man. Approaching the bread sellers, they gave them money corresponding to the value of the bread bought by the elder, and they kept the gold coin for themselves.

The Blessed Serapion, coming to Lacedaemon[6] and learning that one of the local city governors was a Manichaean[7] yet at the same time led a virtuous life, went to him and sold himself to him as a slave. After two years, by the grace of God, Serapion persuaded him to renounce his heresy, so that he joined the Holy Orthodox Church together with his whole household. Then everyone there loved the elder not as a faithful slave but as a true father, and they greatly honored him, rejoicing at their deliverance from heresy and glorifying God. The elder, having lived there as long as he considered necessary for the salvation of those people's souls, and having returned to them the money he had received from them, departed from there, according to his custom, going about many lands and cities.

It is also related of this elder that when he was still a youth, he sold himself to a Greek mime-player for twenty silver coins, and keeping that money, he lived with that Greek until he converted him and his

6. Laconia, or Lacedaemonia, was a south-eastern region of the Peloponnesus. It bordered on Argolis and Arcadia to the north, on the Myrtoan Sea to the east, on the Laconian or Gytheatic Gulf to the south, and on Messenia to the west.

7. Manichaeism was a heretical teaching representing a mixture of Christian doctrine with the principles of the religion of Zoroaster. Its founder was Manes, a Persian magus. Manes taught that from eternity there exist two independent kingdoms, of good and of evil, which are in constant struggle with one another. Man too, according to the teaching of Manes, is composed of a mixture of two elements, light and darkness, and has, as it were, two souls, a good and an evil one, which struggle constantly with each other. In their lives the Manichaeans were very abstemious: they preached celibacy and constant fasting. Manichaeism was fairly widely spread in the third and fourth centuries.

whole household to Christ God. This came about because the mime-player saw that his slave spent all his days in fasting, taking bread and water only in the evening and even then in small quantity, and at night he always rose from his bed and prayed to God with tears. Seeing all this, the mime-player was moved to compunction, and, believing in Christ, the true God, he was baptized, and after him his wife and his whole household were also baptized. After this, that Greek said to Serapion:

"Go, brother, for we wish to free you from your slavery, as you have freed us from the slavery of the devil."

He said to them:

"Since my God has granted you salvation, I will reveal to you my secret: I was not a slave but a free Egyptian. But seeing that you were going astray and were near to perdition, I took pity on you, and for this reason I sold myself to you as a slave, so that with God's help I might set you on the path of salvation. But since you are now set on that path, take back your silver; I will go and care for the salvation of other people."

But they entreated him for a long time, saying:

"We are ready to honor you as our father and master; therefore be our master from now on, and we will be your slaves. Only do not leave us!"

Still they could in no way persuade him to remain in that place. Moreover, they did not wish to take back the silver coins from the elder, and they said to him:

"Honored father, distribute this to the poor; for us it is enough that you have directed us onto the path of salvation."

But the man of God answered them:

"You yourselves may distribute what belongs to you; but I cannot distribute to the poor silver that is not mine."

They again began to entreat him to visit them at least a year later. After that the Venerable Father departed from there to another country.

Once, meeting a ship sailing from Alexandria to Rome, Serapion boarded it, wishing to come to Rome. The sailors, however, when they

had put out from the shore, did not ask the elder whether he had paid the due sum for the passage. Each thought that another of them had received money and goods from the elder; and although they saw that he was in a very poor cloak, they supposed that he had money to pay the fare.

When the sailors had put out from the shore about five hundred stadia, they sat down to their evening meal. Not seeing the elder eat, they thought he was fasting that day. Seeing the same thing on the second and third days, and not understanding why the elder did not eat, they supposed that he had caught a chill at sea and suffered from the sea wind. Seeing that the elder did not eat on the fourth and fifth days either, they asked him:

"Man! Why do you eat nothing?"

He answered them:

"I do not eat because I have nothing to eat."

After they had conferred among themselves about who had taken the man aboard and learned that he had not paid the fare, the sailors began to murmur against the Venerable Father, saying with anger:

"Why did you come on board with nothing in your possession? What will you eat here? With what will you pay us for the passage?"

The elder answered them:

"I have nothing with me except this poor ragged garment, as you yourselves see. If you do not wish to carry me with you, take me back and bring me to the place from which you took me."

But the sailors said to the elder:

"Even if you were to give us a hundred gold coins so that we would turn back for your sake alone, we would not agree to it, especially since a favorable wind is blowing now for us."

And so they allowed the elder to remain on the ship, feeding him for God's sake.

The Venerable Father, coming to Rome, visited the houses of all those citizens of whom he had heard that they led a pious life. Conversing with them, he received spiritual benefit for himself. For this purpose he wandered, gathering spiritual wealth, so that he might purchase heavenly blessings for himself in eternal rest. These blessings he re-

ceived by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom glory is offered unto ages of ages. Amen.[8]

* * *

Suffering of Holy Martyr Maximus

Страдание святого мученика Максима

The holy martyr of Christ Maximus, having zeal for God in his heart, once saw that the idolaters not only themselves surrendered to the worship of idols but also induced others to do so, compelling them to bow down before the pagan temple. After this he began to pray to God that He would bring to an end the persecution of Christians, and he himself baptized many unbelievers. Once, when the service of idols was being performed and all the pagans eagerly gathered and offered in sacrifice to their gods not only animals but also human beings, the holy martyr, unable to endure such a spectacle, entered into the midst of the idol-worshippers and publicly rebuked them, calling their idols wood and stone, powerless even to help themselves. Then the pagans seized him and first beat him severely, and afterwards stoned him. Thus the holy martyr died.[9]

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the commemoration of St. Isidore, Fool-for-Christ, Wonderworker of Rostov, who reposed in 1474.

On the same day is the commemoration of our Venerable Father Nikita, Recluse of the Kiev Caves, afterwards Bishop of Novgorod, who died in 1108.

8. The repose of St. Serapion took place in the fifth century.

9. According to the Menologion of the Emperor Basil, St. Maximus the Martyr reposed during the persecution of Decius on 14 May 250.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF MAY

May 15

15 мая

New Calendar May 15 · Old Calendar May 28 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Pachomius the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Пахомия Великого

Pachomius was born in Upper Egypt, in the Thebaid, in the vicinity of the city of Esna,[1] in the last decade of the third century.[2] His parents were zealous pagans. He became acquainted with Christians much later, during his brief military service. The seeds of a pure life showed themselves in him very early, even before he came to know Christ.

Once his parents entrusted Pachomius with carrying a pot of beef to some workmen. Having of necessity spent the night in that place, Pachomius met with temptation. One of the master's daughters, a very beautiful girl, tried to persuade him to sin with her. The chaste Pachomius answered her sternly: "It is impossible for me to commit this evil deed; are my eyes the eyes of a dog, that I should sin with my sister?"

He immediately went home. Afterwards he himself told this incident to the monks, urging them carefully to anticipate temptations and overcome them.

St. Pachomius was not a stranger to book learning. His subsequent activity proves this. Moreover, his parents were well-to-do people, and among the Egyptians a love of learning was widespread. Children were sent to school very early, at the age of five to eight. There they learned

1. Metaphrastes, and afterwards St. Demetrius of Rostov: Oxyrhynchus, renowned for the piety of its inhabitants, which contained within its bounds, according to the testimony of Rufinus, up to ten thousand virgin men and up to twenty thousand virgin women. But the account of the newly discovered documents directly indicates the name of this city: Esneh.
2. About 295 A.D.

to read and write, and the rules of morality were also taught to them: these rules were contained in the writing exercises themselves.

When Pachomius reached the age of twenty, he was enlisted into the army. At that time the Emperor Constantine was at war with a certain "tyrant," probably Maxentius, in the year 315. Pachomius set out with his comrades, newly enlisted soldiers. By evening they reached the city of Esna. Here Pachomius and his companions were left in a prison building under guard. Soon Christians came there with supplies of bread and all kinds of food, and earnestly asked the travelers to refresh their strength. When Pachomius afterwards asked why these people cared so for them, though they did not know them at all, he was told that they were Christians and that they acted thus for God's sake. This had a strong effect on Pachomius' impressionable soul.

On the next day Pachomius and his companions set out further, to the city of Antinoë.[3] Here very many young soldiers gave themselves over to all kinds of amusements and sensual pleasures. They wished to tempt Pachomius as well, but he rose above the temptation and insistently turned his comrades away from evil.

At this time the Emperor Constantine won a victory over his enemies and gave orders to disband the army. Together with the others, Pachomius was released from the necessity of taking part in the campaign. Now the time had come for him to become a Christian. He ardently desired to serve Christ God faithfully, to keep himself pure from every defilement of flesh and spirit, and to do good to his neighbors according to his strength. He had already made a vow of perfect fidelity to Christ while in confinement in the city of Esna, struck by the mercy of the Christians.

Released into freedom, St. Pachomius now goes to the secluded village of Shenesit (Chenoboskion). Here he is instructed in the truths of the Christian faith and receives holy baptism in the local church. Pachomius lived for a rather long time in the vicinity of the village of Shenesit. He settled here in an ancient temple of Serapis, by then already empty. It should be noted that with the wide spread of Chris-

3. A city on the right bank of the Nile, opposite Hermopolis, built by the emperor Hadrian in honour of his favourite Antinous.

tianity many pagan temples may have fallen into ruin. He obtained his livelihood by diligent labor, cultivating vegetables and a few palm trees. These vegetables and fruits were food also for those who came here by chance or on purpose, and for the poor who lived in Shenesit. Pachomius excelled here in love of neighbor. Many sought consolation from him. His fame spread beyond Shenesit. Already at this time the piety, love of neighbor, and discernment of Pachomius attracted many to live permanently with him. At this time zeal to please God moved very many to leave noisy cities and villages, and wherever some especially zealous ascetic appeared, lovers of the desert life flocked to him. We see that soon Pachomius begins to seek greater solitude, seeking for himself a guide in spiritual struggles. Perhaps it was precisely the experience of guiding his companions that awakened in Pachomius the need for a guide for himself as well. Living in the vicinity of Shenesit, Pachomius was of much use to the inhabitants of that village. When some terrible, contagious disease began to rage in the village, of which very many died, Pachomius served the sick and even supplied the inhabitants in large quantities with acacia branches, so that by burning them they could purify the air.

In the first years of his monastic life Pachomius still did not clearly distinguish the Orthodox teaching from heretical inventions, and did not fully know where the true Church of Christ was. The followers of the heretic Marcion tried to draw him to their side.[4] But he knew that there were also other teachings, different one from another, each striving to prove its truth. Troubled by this disagreement, he prayed to God with tears to reveal to him where the truth is. In ecstasy he heard a voice saying that the truth is kept in the church governed by Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria. Certainly Pachomius now with all his heart desired to know this truth and always to be wholly faithful to it.

The need for a guide prompted Pachomius to leave his dwelling in the vicinity of Shenesit. The motive for this was also a desire to devote himself wholly to God, to spiritual purification and perfection. Pachomi-

4. Marcion, a heretic of the 2nd century, taught that there exist in the world two independent principles: the good—the good God—and the evil—matter, which is under the dominion of the devil.

us also feared that his constant concern for the various needs of laymen, concern most becoming to priests and faithful laymen, might tempt weaker monks: following Pachomius' example, they might be drawn into serving the world and at the same time fail to keep themselves undefiled by the world. Pachomius left the vicinity of Shenesit, having lived there three years. On leaving, he asked an old monk to cultivate the vegetables and palms here for the sake of the poor who came there.

Pachomius then found the cell of the Elder Palamon, famed for his ascetic labors. This elder lived at some distance from cities and villages. He enjoyed respect throughout the whole surrounding country. Other monks also lived around him, following his counsels and imitating him in way of life. But very many soon left there, feeling that such a strict way of life was beyond their strength. When Pachomius knocked at the door of Abba Palamon, the elder asked:

"Why are you knocking?"

Pachomius replied that he too wished to be a monk.

The elder objected, urging him to go back and test himself, to see whether he could bear the strict way of life led by Palamon's disciples. He said to Pachomius:

"I must first tell you what the measure of monastic life is. Here it is. At all times we keep vigil half the night, meditating on the Word of God; very often we remain from evening until morning working with our hands, making ropes, to struggle against sleep and to supply ourselves with what is needed to sustain our body. What remains beyond our need we give to the poor. As for eating oil or anything cooked, or drinking wine, we do not know what that means. We fast every day until evening during the summer, and in winter we fast two days in a row or three. The rule of common prayers is sixty prayers by day and sixty by night, besides those prayers which we offer at every moment and whose number we do not know."

Abba Palamon urged Pachomius to test himself yet further, and only then to come to him again.

Pachomius firmly answered the elder:

"I have tested myself in everything for many days before coming to you."

Then Palamon opened the door, embraced Pachomius fraternally, and hastened to explain to him that he had said all this not out of vainglory but for his salvation, and that they do not tell such things to worldly people. Nevertheless Abba Palamon again expressed the wish that Pachomius return to his former dwelling, to test himself there still further.

But Pachomius objected:

"I have already tested my soul in everything and am confident that, with God's help and through your holy prayers, your heart will be at peace concerning me."

The elder answered him:

"Very well."

Pachomius was accepted at once. For several days Abba Palamon observed Pachomius with especial attention, to test him in prayer, in vigil, in fasting. When it was time to eat bread, the elder left Pachomius to eat alone.

After a three-month trial, Abba Palamon clothed Pachomius in the monastic garments, girded him with the monastic belt,[5] before which both ascetics prayed together the whole night. Now Palamon especially strove to accustom Pachomius to nightly vigil in prayer. In the evening they prepared material for manual labor, then prayed long and zealously, and finally set to work, striving not to lose the prayerful disposition of the spirit and not to yield to sleep.

When the feast of holy Pascha came, Palamon told Pachomius that on that day he would eat twice. In preparing the food, Pachomius poured a little oil into it. But Palamon would not allow such a relaxing of the fast even on the day of Pascha. With great grief he said: "My God was crucified for me, and I am going to eat oil, which gives strength to the body!"

5. That special monastic garments existed in the earliest time of monasticism we know already from the sayings of St. Anthony the Great. See the book of Archimandrite Palladius, *Newly Discovered Sayings of the Venerable Anthony the Great, from the Coptic Collection of Narratives about the Venerable* (Kazan, 1898), p. 30.

He wished at first to abstain from food entirely until the following day. The elder consented to take nourishment only when Pachomius threw away the salt that contained a little oil and handed him salt sprinkled with ashes. Pachomius asked forgiveness with great humility. Of course, they both partook of bread with salt. Tears flowed down the cheeks of the strict elder and the humble disciple, who desired in all things to imitate his beloved teacher.

Pachomius often withdrew into the mountains, and there he spent whole nights in fervent prayer. The place where he prayed in the summer heat, raising his hands to heaven and not permitting himself to lower them, was sometimes even covered with mud from the abundant sweat that fell from his body. Pachomius paid no attention to the fact that at times the thorns of the briar pierced his feet. Whatever discomforts of desert life he encountered, he bore them all with cheerfulness, looking constantly upon the sufferings which the Lord Jesus Christ endured for our salvation.

Strict with themselves in everything and at the same time humble, Palamon and Pachomius did not dare to ask God for signs, and never relied upon their own righteousness. From the last period of the life of Abba Palamon there is known the following incident, which shows how strict the teacher of Pachomius was with himself even when his strength had grown very weak from age and ascetic labors.

Once Palamon fell seriously ill. The brethren summoned an experienced physician. But the physician refused to treat the elder, saying that it was first of all necessary for him to improve his diet. The brethren began to persuade the elder to heed the physician. He agreed to take the food prescribed for the sick. When Palamon did not recover even after this, he began to say to the brethren with deep conviction:

"Do not think that health comes from perishable food: for strength and health come from Christ. Christ's martyrs allowed their limbs to be cut off, endured fire and every kind of torment, until at last they were beheaded. And I! I cannot bear a slight illness. I asked the physician to care for me; I made use of medicines; then, having consented to use them, I received no benefit from them. There remains for me only one thing: to begin my labors anew. This is the best medicine, and He by

whose path I walk will surely know my intention and will care for me more than I could do for myself."

Abba Palamon, with his former zeal and steadfastness, gave himself over to monastic labors, limiting all his needs. The merciful Lord for a time restored his health.

Once Pachomius was walking through the desert. At last he reached the ruins of the village of Tavennisi, a little south of Shenesit in the district of Tentyra[6]. Here Pachomius heard a voice: "Pachomius, Pachomius, labor and abide in this place; build for yourself a monastery, and many people will come to you to become monks beside you, and they will receive benefit for their souls."

Pachomius immediately went to Abba Palamon and told him of this. Then they both went to Tavennisi and built a monastery there, specifically a small monastic dwelling. Palamon went back to the place of his former labors. In doing so, he indicated that his death was near and foretold the future glory of Pachomius' monastery. The elder assured his beloved disciple that the Lord would send him strength and patience to govern the numerous brethren. After a long prayer, they parted. Some of Palamon's disciples, who had come to visit their teacher, accompanied him.

Some time passed, and Abba Palamon fell dangerously ill. His disciples sent for Pachomius. He hastened to the elder and remained with him to serve him until his death. At last the elder fell asleep in the death of the righteous at the tenth hour of the twenty-fifth day of the month Awib. His disciples spent the whole night reading and chanting psalms over the elder. In the morning they performed the customary prayer and then carried the body of the departed to a hill, at some distance from his cell; there they buried him, once again offering fervent supplication for the repose of the soul of the departed elder with the saints. All of them were now in great sorrow. Deprived of the counsel and consolation of the great elder Abba Palamon, they considered themselves orphans. Pachomius returned to his cell in Tavennisi, grieving for his departed teacher, and in his solitude he gave himself over to

6. The village of Tabennisi now no longer exists at all.

intensified labors of piety. Soon he himself became a guide to others on the way to salvation.

When Pachomius was living alone in Tavennisi, his elder brother John came to him. Pachomius received his brother with love. Many years had passed since the day of their separation, for Pachomius had not returned home after he was taken into the army. The pious conversation of Pachomius greatly affected John, and he remained in Tavennisi forever.

Both brothers now labored with their united strength. What they gained by diligent toil they gave to those in need. They led a very strict life. Clothed in coarse woolen garments, they went out to hot places, where they stood in prayer until morning, bending neither knees nor arms stretched toward heaven. They performed such all-night prayer very often, although their feet sometimes swelled from the strain, and mosquitoes bit their hands until they bled. If the ascetic brethren were overcome by sleep, they sat down in the same place where they performed their prayer, but did not permit themselves to lean against anything. Through the day they devoted themselves to physical labor until the heat of the scorching rays of the southern sun became unbearable.

For the sake of his future companions, Pachomius began to concern himself with the construction of a fence around the place where he labored with his brother. Pachomius wished the fence to enclose as much space as possible: he expected many other monks to come to him. But John, supposing that they would always remain just the two of them, looked unkindly upon this work. He even deliberately damaged the wall they were building. Pachomius once said to him on this account: "Enough of this madness!"

John became very angry and for a long time afterward could not calm himself, although Pachomius asked his forgiveness.

Toward evening of that day Pachomius came down from the wall and prayed for a long time. At that time he felt his fault before John even more keenly, and in the morning he asked John's forgiveness again with even greater humility. Of course, the ascetic brethren now began to love each other even more and to humble themselves one before another. John more and more advanced in the labors of piety and

self-mortification. Having soon attained high spiritual perfection, he died, mourned by his brother Pachomius.

Pachomius by this time was already a perfected ascetic. Therefore his temptations were also very strong, but by his prayer and patience he always succeeded in repelling the most terrible snares of the enemy.

Here is what happened to him. Sometimes, when he wished to kneel for prayer, a pit appeared before him through the working of demons; but Pachomius prayed without fear. Sometimes on the road demons surrounded him like an honorable guard and cried loudly: "Clear the way for the man of God."

The devil greatly desired to instill vainglory and pride in Pachomius; but he was completely insensible to this temptation. Then suddenly the devil caused Pachomius' cell to shake and tremble, as if it were about to fall; but Pachomius was not in the least disturbed by this, and with perfect calm repeated the words of the psalm: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Ps. 45:2–3).

Once demons appeared to Pachomius in the form of workmen who diligently tried to move a stone from its place with ropes, but without success. The prayer of Pachomius caused them to vanish. Many times, when Pachomius sat down to eat his scanty food, demons appeared to him in the form of naked women; but Pachomius closed his eyes and turned his heart from the vision, and the demons disappeared. The struggle with the dark powers of hell demanded from Pachomius a greater exertion of all his strength and sometimes greatly wearied him. Once the Lord sent him a new comforter in the person of the monk Apollo[7]. Coming to Pachomius, this pious, experienced, and kind monk said to him resolutely:

"Be courageous, Pachomius: do not fear any action on the part of spirits, for the help of God will give you victory over them."

This elder remained with Pachomius, to the great consolation of both. However, Elder Apollo soon died. Once, when Pachomius was

7. The Arabic *Life* gives it the name Amriaragabul. Another variant of this name is Hierakapolon.

gathering reeds for his handiwork, an Angel of the Lord appeared and said to him: "Pachomius, Pachomius, Pachomius! It is the will of God that you serve the human race and reconcile people with God."

When the Angel of the Lord had departed, Pachomius remained and gazed after him, saying: "This is the work of the Lord."

Having gathered some reeds, he went to his dwelling.

Shortly after the appearance of the Angel, three men came to the Venerable Pachomius: Pshentaisi, Surus, and Pshoi. They said to Pachomius: "We wish to become monks near you and to be servants of Christ."

Having been convinced of their sincere piety, Pachomius received them with love and joy and gave them the monastic garb.

These three monks gave themselves over with fervor and steadfastness to the most difficult labors, guided by the example and instruction of St. Pachomius. They were struck by his diligence. Abba Pachomius himself took care of everything: he himself cleaned and watered the garden, opened the door to visitors and conversed with them, and zealously served the sick. Concerning the new monks he said: "These are young plants that have not yet reached the measure of being able to serve others."

Freeing the new monks from all outward care, Pachomius urged them to apply themselves diligently to those works which lead directly to the purification of the heart and to the strengthening of the will in goodness. When the first disciples openly expressed to Pachomius their regret at his constant labors for them, he said to them with profound faith: "What man ties an animal to a machine[8] and neglects it until it falls and dies? When the Lord sees that I am weary, He will send us men who will help us in every good work."

To establish his first disciples in virtue, St. Pachomius laid down certain rules for them. Uniformity in food and clothing was recognized as necessary even in this small community.

The report of the piety and wisdom of St. Pachomius spread more and more throughout Egypt. Various people came to him, filled with a

8. Evidently a hydraulic machine, to which an animal is harnessed in order to make it turn a wheel that raises water.

thirst for the highest ascetic labors. Sometimes hermits, already having attained a high degree of spiritual perfection, also came to place themselves under the guidance of St. Pachomius. Thus there appeared five famous ascetics who had previously lived the life of hermits. They were: Abba Pechosius (or Pecusius), Abba Cornelius, Abba Paul, Abba Pachomius, and Abba John. Pachomius received them all with joy. Sometimes people came with an evil disposition of soul and with bad habits. Noticing that they could not be healed, but that they could corrupt other monks by their example, Pachomius dismissed them from his community. Many were drawn to St. Pachomius, and he was for them a constant guide and teacher.

Moved by love for his neighbors, St. Pachomius, with the help of his monks, built in the village nearest the monastery a church, so that the inhabitants of that village might approach the Communion of the Holy Mysteries more often and be edified by hearing the word of God. Because of the poverty of the inhabitants, St. Pachomius himself bore all the expenses for the celebration of the Eucharist. He himself, with the brethren, also read in this church. When a presbyter could not be found, Pachomius would come to the church and edify those present by reading the word of God. The monks in the church conducted themselves so reverently, and Pachomius fulfilled the duties of reader so zealously, that the visitors to this church gradually abandoned their sins, took care for the purification of their hearts, and became Christians not in name only. They looked upon Abba Pachomius not as a man, but as an Angel of God.

The number of monks in the Tabennisi community kept increasing. When it reached one hundred persons, Pachomius came to the thought that it was necessary to build a church also within the monastery itself. When the church was built, the brethren went, as before, on Saturday to the church located in the village, while on Sunday a presbyter came to the monastery and celebrated the Liturgy here. Afterwards the going out of the brethren into the village for taking part in the celebration of the Liturgy on Saturday ceased.

Among the monks of the Pachomian monastery no one held the rank of presbyter. Pachomius himself did not want to accept that rank. He

often said to the brethren: "It is good for us not to ask for such a thing, so that among the monks there may be neither envy, nor strife, nor disobedience, nor division, contrary to the will of God. Like a fire on the threshing floor, which, if one does not hasten to extinguish it, would destroy a whole year's labor, so is the thought of pride at its beginning. It is good that we submit firmly and calmly to the Church of God. And at all times, whomever we find ordained by bishops, he shall be sufficient for us for this work."

To the Venerable Pachomius there also came presbyters who wished to become monks. The holy abbot did not refuse to admit them into the monastery. Of course, they had to submit unconditionally in everything to the rules of monastic life and the customs of the community. In his service of the salvation of his neighbors, Pachomius would call upon their assistance if they proved to be consistently humble and obedient. Pachomius himself would on no account agree to become a priest, although his worth was highly valued by all.

The following incident from his life is known. Once St. Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria, was visiting his flock. He was everywhere solemnly met. Bishops, presbyters, and the people came out to meet him. Some bishops, presbyters, and a multitude of clerics accompanied him. Pachomius himself came out with his monks to meet the great hierarch. They sang psalms until the archbishop entered the monastery. At this time Serapion, Bishop of Tentyra, took Archbishop Athanasius by the hand and said to him:

"I beg your love to make Abba Pachomius, father of monks, a priest, so that he may govern all the monks of my district."

Hearing this, St. Pachomius instantly hid himself. The archbishop sat down. A numerous crowd surrounded him. St. Athanasius said loudly, addressing Bishop Serapion:

"I heard of the faith of Pachomius while I was still in Alexandria, before my consecration."

Then St. Athanasius stood up, offered a prayer, and said to the disciples of Pachomius:

"Greet your father and say to him: you have hidden yourself from me and escaped that which might arouse envy and rivalry; you have chosen

a virtue which will abide forever with Christ. May our Lord grant you according to your desire."

Certainly the humility of the Venerable Pachomius disposed the brethren of the Tabennisi community also to humility. Like their great abbot, they did not seek, and even feared, elevation. Neither the Greek nor the Coptic historians mention presbyters among them.

With the increase of monks in Tabennisi, it became possible to establish here a well-ordered community life and to subject all the actions of the monks to strict cenobitic rules. The Venerable Pachomius himself was both teacher and judge for the cenobites[9], and was both rule and model for the activity of each one.

Above all, the great Abba Pachomius himself was concerned for the welfare of each and all. He constantly urged the monks not to grow slack in prayer, not to cease calling upon the name of God, so that they might not be taken unawares by Satan without prayer. St. Pachomius made use of every opportunity to speak a word of edification to this or that brother. But, besides these private conversations, he usually gave three general discourses during the week: one on Saturday and two on Sunday. He commanded that the abbot of the monastery should always prepare and deliver three discourses a week. In addition to the three discourses of the abbot of the monastery, during the Saturday and Sunday gatherings of the monks, and obligatorily during the two weekly fasts, that is, on Wednesday and Friday, the heads of the houses delivered discourses to their monks.

Every evening the monks gathered for spiritual conversation, and in general they loved to edify one another with the lessons each drew from the reading of the word of God and from observations on the lives of this or that person. The monks loved to repeat the sayings of Holy Scripture and to meditate upon them. Therefore, even in their mutual conversations they could always edify one another with the thoughts and words of the Bible. We do not see idle conversations and gossip in Tabennisi. In the community there were many houses; each of them

9. Cenobia (from Greek κοινος, common, and βιος, life) are the common-life monasteries, in which the brethren are maintained at the monastery's expense and in return offer their labour for the common benefit of the monastery.

was managed by a special head, who had his own assistant, his second-in-command. This assistant replaced the head in case of his absence or illness.

St. Pachomius took care that every brother entering the monastery should be met by monks who were especially pious and wise. These gatekeeper-monks received each new brother, arranged for him, and during the three years of his probation, until he was clothed in the monastic garb, diligently edified him with their conversations, protecting him from every evil. Thus the novices in Tabennisi found experienced and constant guides, and could become pious in the very first years of their life in the monastery. St. Pachomius himself also attentively observed the novices. How he rejoiced at the progress and zeal of the young monks! How attentive he was to their needs! How he protected them from every temptation and trial from without, as well as from being carried away by any impure thoughts!

Much care was taken of the sick brethren in Tabennisi. Monks specially appointed to serve in the infirmary, with their head, had charge of them, and the Venerable Pachomius himself also took care of them.

Special monks served at the brotherly meal. They changed every three weeks. Constant diligence was required of these monks, all the more so since the brethren did not eat at one time. The monks who served at the meal, for three hours, prepared, distributed, and laid out the bread, various vegetables, and olives. On permitted days cheese, eggs, boiled vegetables, and soup of boiled grains were served at the meal. Each brother approached the table at the time he wished and took his portion. But this was only once a day: some ate at the sixth hour, others at the seventh, some at the eighth, some at the ninth, the tenth, the eleventh, and some in the evening, when the stars appeared in the sky. Some monks were so strict with themselves that they ate food only once every two days. In general the fast[10], according to the original rule, was not imposed on anyone against his will. Only the monks closer to him St. Pachomius induced to fast, that is, to abstain entirely from

10. Fasting, Greek νηστεια, means the complete abstention from food.

food, on Wednesdays and Fridays. But many monks imposed upon themselves a stricter fast.

With the great number of monks in the Tabennisi community, there were also many different offices and obediences. The performance of some of these offices was especially burdensome. All who undertook one or another "obedience" in the monastery, and especially the superiors, were very diligent. After some time, Venerable Pachomius would sometimes replace those who carried out a certain "obedience" by appointing others in their place. In doing this he wished to attain two aims. First, he sought that the newly appointed brother should reap spiritual fruit from his "obedience," so that he might receive from the Lord a reward for his zealous labor for the good of the brotherhood. St. Pachomius held the view that every "obedience" in the monastery, carried out with diligence, brings the monk a reward no less than that which a monk would receive if he fasted zealously, kept vigil and prayed to God. Second, Pachomius wished that zealous laborers might have some rest after their toil, even if only for a time. However, the brethren who were diligently occupied with their "obediences" were reluctant to accept the rest permitted by the great abbot. They were convinced that this world is not a place of rest but, on the contrary, a place of intense labor, constant struggle and self-sacrificing ascetic effort, and that only the one who labors here will receive true repose and endless blessedness in the life to come. And each continued with zeal at the work or trade he knew, or at whatever labor for the monastery, submitting exactly to the directives of the superior.

From every monk, whatever office he held in the monastery, complete submission to the superior and unconditional, exact observance of the rule were required. This was the chief distinction of the cenobitic life from the eremitic life in the strict sense of the word. Complete obedience was also the pledge of the spiritual perfection of the cenobites. In obedience lay the great moral advantage of the cenobitic life. Violation of the superior's directives or of the prescriptions of the rule, even if out of zeal for asceticism, could always lead to murmuring on the part of others and be the cause of all manner of disorder in the community. Therefore Pachomius severely punished violators of the duty of

obedience, whatever justification they offered for themselves. Such cases did occur in the Tabennisi community, though very rarely.

For the purchase of necessary goods and the sale of the monastery's handiwork, especially trustworthy monks, adorned with every virtue, were chosen, so that the world could not seduce them and so that they might serve as an edification to the world. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that they were not attached to acquisition, even if from such acquisitions the monastery might derive considerable benefit.

As the number of monks in Tabennisi grew more and more, the various economic institutions there had to multiply as well. The number of persons undertaking one or another "obedience" to satisfy the various needs of the monastery also had to increase. When the number of monks and monasteries in the cenobium of Pachomius grew, we see there a great many monks on whom various duties in the monastery were laid. We see here properly organized bakeries, first only at Tabennisi, and later in the monasteries of Pbow (the chief one) and Phnoum. In these bakeries the monks worked in the deepest silence, which contributed both to the success of the work and to the recollection of spirit. There was no conversation here. Even to ask for water or flour was not permitted: what was needed was requested by knocking on the kneading trough. During the work, passages of the word of God learned by heart were read aloud from memory.

At one time in the Tabennisi community there were 15 tailors, 7 smiths, 4 carpenters, 15 dyers, 20 tanners of hides, 12 camel drivers, 20 gardeners, 15 shoemakers, 12 monks preparing coverlets, 10 night watchmen and 10 copyists. The monks by their labor prepared for the community everything necessary, and only a few things had to be bought in the towns. The weaving of mats was especially widespread among the cenobites, and this was not only a good handiwork for the monks but could also strengthen the monastery's financial resources, and money was necessary here as well.

Money was kept, according to the commandment of St. Pachomius, in one place, at the disposal of the steward. This steward met all the brotherhood's needs. But the monks could not have money of their own. Among the monks there were many who had come to the monastery in

childhood with their parents. Having grown up, they did not know how to distinguish gold from silver and were completely indifferent to money.

The needs of the brethren were very modest. Non-acquisitiveness was so great that each had only one garment and one covering of sheepskin or goatskin. A monk specially appointed had to mend torn clothing, wash it, and then keep it in the store of worn clothing. When any of the monks wished to wash his garment, he took for himself one of these mended garments, and having washed his own, returned this garment to the monk in charge of them.

In the cenobium there were very many copyists. These experienced scribes diligently copied those books which were especially useful to the monks, at the superior's direction. They worked with success: the monastery's book collections grew, and each monk could find spiritual nourishment there.

In all dealings with the world the monks had to observe particular caution. On the road they were to repeat to themselves, and meditate upon, sayings of Holy Scripture known to them. They always set out on a journey in groups of several, at least two together. If on the way a woman wished to speak with them, the senior monk approached her and, lowering his eyes, conducted a brief conversation with great modesty. Meeting on the road a superior or a soldier, each monk dismounted from his donkey and prayed off to the side, yielding the way to the traveler.

In worldly houses the monks ordinarily did not partake of food. At the very most they ate only what was permitted by the monastic rule.

So that the world might not exert a harmful influence on the monks through written correspondence, letters to the monastery were received by the superior, and if he saw that a letter contained good thoughts, he passed it on to its addressee. No one in the monastery could recount what he had seen or heard in the world, unless it led to the common edification. Anything edifying could be communicated only with the superior's permission. In general, talkativeness was not encouraged among the monks.

Wayfarers were received in a special building. No one among the brethren could receive them in his cell. Even about the arrival of some relative no one could inform the monks: only the doorkeepers spoke of the arrival of wayfarers to whom it was due. In the guesthouse wayfarers were given the most cordial welcome. For women there was a dwelling separate from that of men. Even monks from elsewhere Venerable Pachomius did not lodge together with his own monks, nor did he permit them to be admitted even to the common meal, although he showed them every sign of brotherly love and allowed them to enter the church during common prayer, provided they were Orthodox and not heretics.

The fame of St. Pachomius spread more and more throughout Egypt. At last his own sister Mary, already enlightened by the Christian faith and remaining a virgin, learned of his great ascetic exploits. Greatly desiring to see her brother Pachomius, she set out for Tabennisi. Pachomius was informed of her arrival. Having renounced all earthly attachments and avoiding meetings with women, St. Pachomius refused his sister an interview, but at the same time, through the doorkeeping monk, he pointed out to her a new path of life. He told her that the present life is only a preparation for the life of the age to come, and that life withdrawn from the world, monastic life, can furnish every means to salvation. Pachomius promised his sister that, if she desired to live the monastic life, the monks would build a secluded dwelling for her. Then, he said, other women, settling with her, could devote themselves entirely to the pursuit of spiritual perfection. It was sorrowful for Mary to hear that her brother himself did not wish to converse with her. She wept. But Pachomius's words, conveyed to her through the doorkeeping monk, also contained much consolation. She consented to what Pachomius had urged upon her. Then Pachomius sent monks to build a dwelling for her near a village, at a considerable distance from the men's monastery, on the other side of the Nile.

After a short time a large number of women came to Mary to remain with her forever. The sister of Venerable Pachomius became a mother and elder to them. She guided them on the path to salvation until her own death.

For his part, Abba Pachomius with great zeal cared for this monastery. For the immediate guidance of the spiritual life in the women's community he appointed the elder Peter. Pachomius himself wrote a special book with the rules of monastic life, and the sisters of the community were to study and observe these rules diligently.

Of course, there could be cases when one of the monks needed to visit this or that sister. Such visits, when necessary, were permitted by Pachomius himself. Having received Pachomius' permission, the monk would come to the elder Peter, who had charge of the women's monastery. The elder would send for the mother of the nuns, for the nun whom the monk needed to see, and for a third nun besides; all would sit down, and then the conversation would begin, all the while bearing in mind, of course, that long and especially idle conversations are unseemly for those living the monastic life.

If any nun died, the sisters carried her to the place of their common prayers. The mother of the nuns clothed her in the burial shroud. Abba Peter reported the nun's death to Pachomius. The monks he appointed, who led a blameless life, went to the women's monastery. They stopped at the gates of the house of prayer and there sang sacred chants. At last the departed was buried, and the sisters accompanied her to the grave with singing, the mother going before and the elder following behind them. They dispersed after burying the departed in the earth and offering the final prayer over her. Sometimes the sisters were buried within the monastery itself, and sometimes they were carried to the nearest hill.

In yet another instance, the monks of the Tabennesiote common monastery gave great help to the women's monastery. When there arose a need to repair or to build anew some structure in the women's monastery, Pachomius sent for this purpose the most pious of the monks. They worked there under the unceasing supervision of the elder Peter. They could not remain in the women's monastery to take food, but returned on the same day to their own monastery.

The number of sisters in the women's community soon increased to four hundred. The ordinary food of the nuns, their fasts, their garments, with the exception of the head covering, all corresponded to the

customs accepted in the men's community. The nuns also labored for the benefit of the men's community: they prepared woolen garments for the monks. In turn they received from the steward of the men's community the supplies necessary for them.

One important incident from the life of the women's monastery is well known. One of the nuns once went outside the monastery enclosure. She met a lay tailor and, in surprise, asked him what had brought him to these parts. He replied that he would like to have work. The sister objected that they had their own tailors. The tailor withdrew. A witness to this conversation was another nun. Having once quarreled with that nun, she began to reproach her and kept recalling with reproach her conversation with the tailor. The young nun, agitated by the false accusation, wept bitterly. She imagined beyond measure the shame which, in her opinion, now awaited her in the monastery. Oppressed by grief, she secretly went to the river, threw herself into its waves, and drowned. Learning of this, another sister, who had allowed herself to reproach the unfortunate young nun without cause, fell into great despair and took her own life by strangling herself with a rope.

Venerable Pachomius soon learned of this. Deeply grieved by the incident, the elder forbade that they be commemorated in the prayers of the household, that the liturgy be celebrated for them, and that alms be given for them. Pachomius also dealt severely with all the sisters of the community. Inasmuch as they had not exerted due effort to find out who was innocent and who the slanderer, to reconcile and calm them, and had disregarded their condition and tranquillity, and perhaps had believed the calumny of one of the sisters, the elder excluded them from holy Communion for seven years.

Multitudes of people came to Pachomius from everywhere to submit themselves to him for good. The number of monks in Tabennisi had grown too large. It became very crowded. By the inspiration of God, St. Pachomius went to seek another place, suitable for the building of a new monastery. A very suitable place was found to the north of Tabennisi, not far distant from it. This place was called Pbow[11]. Here a new

11. The monastery of Pewou was situated somewhat to the north of Tabennisi, on the eastern bank of the Nile, in the Diospolis region.

monastery was established, very spacious, and soon it became the center of the entire community.

This monastery was enclosed by a wall. The bishop of the Diospolis region regarded the monks favorably. At his suggestion Venerable Pachomius also built a church here.

Now it became possible to admit into the community all who wished to settle here permanently. From the old monastery into the new one Pachomius transferred many monks, and specifically such as had well grown accustomed to the order of the community and could be experienced guides and serve as good examples for the new brethren. Here too were appointed their own superior, steward, and brethren to carry out the various obediences. All were to fulfill the rules of the community with zeal, remembering that they were laid down equally for beginners and for those in authority themselves.

Some time passed, and the two monasteries could no longer hold all who wished to labor here. Gradually seven more monasteries were established. The number of monks in the Tabennesiote community reached seven thousand. Naturally, some monasteries were more populous, others less. And this whole multitude of monks, dispersed among many monasteries, was one monastic brotherhood.

St. Pachomius often visited all the monasteries. He himself came to live in the monastery of Pbow, where the general administration of all the monasteries was concentrated. This monastery was the most populous. From here the monks of the other monasteries received the things they needed. To the steward of this monastery they gave an account of their labors. Here the monks of all the monasteries gathered twice a year, took part in prayers and in hearing instructions, and received the blessing of Venerable Pachomius for their ascetic labors. In the monastery of Pbow they also performed the baptism of catechumens during the holy Forty Days. Then the catechumens were brought here from all the monasteries. Thus there were among the monks some who had not yet received holy baptism but were preparing for it; these were catechumens. They were brought to Pbow for baptism, probably because there were priests there, while in the other monasteries there were no priests. Of course, this fellowship of all the monasteries was exceed-

ingly beneficial for the monks: it bound all the monks of the Pachomian monasteries together by the closest ties of spiritual love, it encouraged the faint-hearted, stirred zeal in the weakened, and for the diligent and advanced ascetics it was very important that they saw lofty examples of the ascetic life and learned to emulate them and to look humbly upon their own labors. But most important of all these journeys to Pbow was that they gave all the monks the opportunity to see the ordinary life of St. Pachomius and to hear his instructions. And during his journeys to inspect the monasteries, St. Pachomius taught the monks not only by word but also by example. He was ready to obey anyone, humbled himself before the lowly, and would gladly have received a lesson from the youngest member of the community. Here is one of many such instances.

Venerable Pachomius went to Tabennisi especially often. During these visits he did not give up his customary manual labor. By the direction of Abba Theodore, a special method of weaving mats was used here: the cords were not to be pulled tight; in this case both the labor was less and the mats came out better. When Pachomius was weaving his mat here, a boy who lived in the monastery and was performing his turn at this obedience that week frankly remarked to him that he was not weaving as Abba Theodore had directed. Pachomius listened to the lad's remark with gentle joy and asked him to teach him exactly how the work should be done. The boy showed Pachomius how they worked there. Abba Pachomius at once began weaving the mat exactly in that way.

Great fear was aroused among the Tabennesiotes by the barbarians living nearby, who made raids not only at that time but later as well, upon the villages and the monasteries, and caused them great harm: they plundered, despoiled, extorted ransom from the inhabitants, or led them off into slavery. The monks of the northern monasteries fled from them. In order that the northern monasteries might not be destroyed entirely and the monks not be utterly ruined, Venerable Pachomius sent a large number of monks to the northern monasteries. He himself remained in the monastery of Pbow, and he sent his beloved disciple Theodore with books for reading to the monks of the northern monas-

teries. In sending Theodore there, Pachomius comforted him with the hope of God's help. Pachomius made a vow: should the barbarians withdraw, he would send to the church plundered by them books, much wheat, and in general whatever that church lacked. On the following day the barbarians, utterly defeated by the imperial army, withdrew. This comforted the monks.

When the barbarians had not yet been struck down, they came upon a hermit and compelled him to pour them wine. But whenever he was about to pour it for them, they demanded that he first offer sacrifice to their gods. The monk would not consent. The barbarians threatened to kill him if he did not do as they required. The unhappy hermit lacked the courage to refuse to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, and he complied with the barbarians' demand. After this he poured wine for them, and they fell asleep from the intoxication. This gave the monk an opportunity to flee from them. But the hermit's heart was inconsolable. He was so overwhelmed by his grief that he could not even pray. Remembering the kindness and wisdom of Pachomius, this monk hastened to him, resolved to place himself entirely under the judgment of the great elder. With profound sorrow he declared to St. Pachomius that, having outwardly renounced Christ by offering sacrifice to false gods, he no longer saw any possibility of repentance and of receiving forgiveness of his sins; for this reason he had not prayed to God for a whole month.

Pachomius rebuked him as a father for having, as it were, cast into the fire the crown which an Angel had held above his head and was already about to place upon him. Seeing the sincere tears of the monk who had involuntarily betrayed Christ, Pachomius showed him the way to consolation. He advised him to pray as much as possible by night and by day, always to fast until evening, and never to eat anything cooked, except in cases of serious illness. In this way he might obtain mercy from God, receive forgiveness, and become once again a faithful servant of Christ. Pachomius's faith encouraged this monk: he ceased to despair and began sincerely, and in hope of God's mercy, to repent of his sin.

For a long time only Copts[12] lived in the community at Tabennisi. At last the fame of St. Pachomius reached the Greeks and the Romans as well. Some of them began to strive to enter the community under the guidance of the wise Abba Pachomius, and they became monks here. St. Pachomius cared for them diligently too: they were no less dear to him than the Copts.

One difficulty for Pachomius in dealing with the Greek monks (there were more of them than of the Romans) was his unfamiliarity with the Greek language. Likewise the other Coptic monks did not know this language. Even at no great distance from Alexandria[13] the language of everyday speech was not Greek but Coptic. Even ascetics who lived comparatively near Alexandria, such as St. Anthony the Great, born near Great Heracleopolis, and St. Poemen the Great, who spent his whole life in Lower Egypt, in Scete, Terenuthis and northern Diolcus, did not speak Greek; and it was all the more difficult to find a monk who knew Greek in the Thebaid[14]. In the care of the Greeks, the Venerable Pachomius was assisted by Theodore, formerly lector of the Alexandrian Church. Yet St. Pachomius himself also took care to learn the Greek language.

St. Pachomius taught the monks both by word and by example. His word acted all the more powerfully because the monks saw in him an example of every virtue. Pachomius's constant prayerful disposition, his profound humility, his severity toward himself, a severity that persisted even during illness, his love for all, his discernment and wisdom: all this drew the hearts of the brethren to him and caused everyone to submit without question to his word and to accept his counsel.

Pachomius's humility was exceedingly great, although he performed extraordinary feats and although both monks and laity, and even bishops, who sometimes sent monks to him that he might pronounce judgment upon them, paid him the greatest honor. St. Pachomius feared to condemn others even in thought. Although he was repeatedly granted

12. Copts: Egyptians (Christians).
13. Alexandria: the city famous for its learning, political importance and trade, founded in Egypt by the Greek emperor Alexander the Great about 333 B.C.
14. The Thebaid: a region in Upper Egypt.

visions and revelations from God, he spoke of them to the brethren only when he expected from his account some moral benefit for them.

Once the brethren asked him to recount one of his visions. His answer is remarkable. Unwilling to speak of the visions he had received, and wishing to warn against pride those monks whom the Lord had graced with special spiritual gifts, St. Pachomius said: "He who is full of sins will not receive the grace of spiritual visions. But if you desire to have a beautiful and remarkable vision, I will point you to one: when you see a man who is pious, humble of heart and pure, there is the most beautiful of visions: you see the invisible God in this visible man. Do not seek any other vision that would be preferable to this one."

The humble Pachomius would have no advantage over the brethren in anything. He called truly just that brother who did not give him a larger portion of food than the others. He desired to labor on an equal footing with the rest. He did not permit anyone to lighten his labor.

Once the great abba went out with the brethren to work. Each man with his companion was to take a certain quantity of bread. Pachomius's companion wished to carry it all himself. But Pachomius would not agree, saying that the superior must bear in everything the same labors as the brethren.

Exceedingly detached from possessions, Pachomius wore very poor clothing. It also served him as a covering in cold weather. In this garment he received the priests and monks who came to him.

One brother named Athanasius, who had charge of the monastery's clothing, asked St. Theodore to hand over to him for storage the abba's garment when he took it off, and to lay in its place another, new garment, suitable for the superior.

Theodore obeyed Athanasius and exchanged one garment for the other.

But then Pachomius looked for his former garment. Theodore pointed to the new one, but Pachomius insisted that his old garment be returned to him. To the elder's request, repeated three times, Theodore answered that this garment could no longer be found. Theodore, however, was deeply grieved that he had deprived the elder of the garment which served him as a covering in cold weather; he even wept over it.

Nor did Pachomius consider himself right in this matter. For a long time he asked the Lord's forgiveness because, while teaching others obedience, he himself had not shown obedience to the one who in the monastery had charge of the clothing. What great humility!

When Pachomius once fell ill, Theodore brought him to the place where the sick monks took their meals. A good broth had been prepared for him. He remarked to the brother who had prepared this dish:

"You do not know how to prepare food; give me a little water."

Pachomius poured the water given him into this dish. Then Theodore poured water over his hands before the meal began. In his turn Pachomius poured water over Theodore's feet.

After the meal a conversation arose between them. To Theodore's question why he had spoiled the food with water, Pachomius answered him:

"Brother, the one who prepared my food prepared it for me with great zeal, and such zeal among men does not last long. And I said to myself: now, this time, I shall eat well; but tomorrow will come, I shall be ill, and I shall again expect the brother to give me a good meal, and for this reason my heart will be in confusion. That is why I spoiled the good food set before me: so that another time, if he is careless and does not prepare it as well as before, this will be a matter of indifference to me."

Theodore asked the elder why he had poured water over his feet. St. Pachomius gave him a remarkable answer.

"I did this so that, if in the other world they should say to me: 'Theodore poured water over your hands,' I might be entitled to say: 'I myself washed his feet.'"

The sick Pachomius would not eat food with oil. At another time, during illness, he would not agree to cover himself with a better covering instead of a mat, nor to accept a handful of dates. What severity toward himself!

Pachomius treated the sick monks with especial love. Above all he cared for the salvation of the soul of a brother who had fallen ill. He urged the sick man to give thanks to God, awakened pious thoughts in him, warned him against attachment to earth and against being carried

away by impure thoughts, and taught him to ask forgiveness of God and to look boldly toward his future, placing his hope in the Lord. He always cared also for the body of the sick brother. The sick in the community were never compelled to strict fasting, although they were not prevented from fasting. Pachomius sometimes found it necessary to relax the fast, if he saw that the fast greatly exhausted the sick man's strength and did not allow him to recover.

Thus, one brother was ill during Great Lent. Nevertheless he would consent neither to eat anything cooked nor to drink wine. He did not wish to permit himself any relaxation, even if he were to die from excessive abstinence. The wise Abba Pachomius advised him, if he did not wish to abandon this fast altogether, to postpone his fasting until the time when his strength was fully restored, when he would be able to keep in strict fasting the same number of days as he ought to have fasted now.

Among the monks who served in the infirmary there were some who would not fulfil certain requests of the sick, which seemed to them impermissible whims for a monk. But St. Pachomius looked at this differently. He was ready to bring the sick man whatever consolation was possible.

On one occasion, for example, Pachomius himself fell gravely ill. In the infirmary he was advised to eat some boiled vegetables. At that time there lay in the infirmary a monk who was gravely ill, whose body was nothing but skin and bones, so wasted was he after a long sickness. When this monk asked the brethren of the infirmary to give him a little beef, they would not agree. The sick man then begged that he be carried to Abba Pachomius. The Great Abba was struck by the extreme emaciation of the monk and by the lack of prudent compassion in the infirmary brethren. He spoke to them sternly: "Madmen, where is the fear of God? For God has said: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' Do you not see that this brother is nearly dead? Why did you not give him what he asked of you? I now can neither eat nor drink. For there is a difference between illnesses, and one illness is more severe than another."

Pachomius could not restrain his tears at the sight of the gravely sick monk and at the heartless zeal of the others for the strict observance of the rule concerning food. Now the monks understood their wrong. They at once sent to buy a young goat and prepared a dish from it, which strengthened the weakened body of the sick brother and cheered his despondent soul.

Pachomius strove to arouse in his disciples hope in God. Here is one case confirming this.

One evening the brethren arrived to load a boat with reeds. Theodore feared that the stew[15] he had prepared would not be enough for everyone. Pachomius perceived his thoughts and warned him against excessive anxiety about food and cowardly fear concerning it, pointing to God's providential care for man. Hope did not put Pachomius to shame.

Once it happened that there was a shortage of wheat in the monastery. This greatly grieved and troubled the monks. Wishing to dispel their fears for the near future, Pachomius pointed them to two fine carpets given by a good man: in the last extremity they could be sold, and the money gained spent on buying wheat. Pachomius spent the whole night in fervent prayer.

The next morning the head of a certain town knocked at the gates of the monastery. When the doorkeeper opened to him, he said that he had vowed to give a certain quantity of bread to those in need, and that during that night he had learned in a dream that the brethren of this monastery were in need of bread; let someone receive the bread he had brought. When this was reported to Pachomius himself, he was very glad and told the town head that they were indeed in need of bread, but that they required a postponement in paying the money. The good Christian said: "I have brought this not for money, but for the sake of you being men of God. Send, then, brethren to take it in."

Pachomius, sincerely grateful to the good man who had given help to the monastery in its extreme need, gave him, as a blessing, some of the monastery's bread and vegetables. The town head received this

15. A kind of vegetable food.

with joy and departed content that he had given help to the servants of God. The brethren were astonished and gladdened by the unexpected gift of the monk-loving head.

Pachomius feared lest the monks should become attached to any beauty whatsoever on earth. He feared even that the harmony, elegance and beauty of the church might distract the monks. Saint Pachomius diligently warned his disciples against vainglory. He urged his monks to perform their ascetic labors in secret, for God's sake, and not for human praise. He counseled them not to set themselves apart outwardly from the brotherhood. Here are several cases showing how insistently he fought this enemy of ascetics.

One monk spent many nights in unbroken vigil in prayer, delighting in the hope of earning special esteem from men. Pachomius persuaded him to change his way of life, telling him to go to the refectory when the brethren were summoned there and to eat food with them, only not to the point of full satiety; to perform as many prayers as were prescribed for all the monks; and, after leaving his cell, to be pleasant to everyone and not to appear gloomy. Of course, one should not abandon one's ascetic labors either, for that would also be pleasing to Satan; but everything must be done for God, not giving the devil a place in one's heart. When this monk continued to act as before, fearing lest he appear weak and pitiful to the brethren, Pachomius again insistently advised him to lessen his labors. Many times he recalled to the vainglorious monk his former instructions, and at last he told him that he would come to a state of madness if he persisted in his attachment to outward labors for the esteem of others rather than for the mortification of the passions. But the monk did things his own way, and Pachomius' prediction was fulfilled. The vainglorious monk, more and more puffed up with pride on account of his outward piety, came to madness and to self-forgetfulness. He was even ready to kill Saint Theodore, when the abba sent him to divert this monk from his vainglorious and God-displeasing prayer. Fortunately his hands, stretched out with a stump of wood, grew numb, and he only shouted furiously at Theodore, calling him an enemy of God. For a long time he remained in this pitiful state.

At last he was healed of his madness and at the same time of his former stubborn pride.

Saint Pachomius once sat with some elders outside the cell, conversing with them about the word of God. At that time one brother was preparing a mat in front of the door of his cell. He worked with especial diligence, and that day he managed to weave two mats. He expected praise for himself from Abba Pachomius. Seeing his state of soul, Pachomius said to his companions: "Do you not see this unhappy brother? He has lost today's labor, for he has loved the glory of men more than the glory of God; he has wearied himself and deprived his soul of all success and profit."

Pachomius called this monk and sternly rebuked him for his thoughts. Then, softening his reproof, Pachomius told him to bring these two mats when the brethren gathered in the church, and to ask forgiveness and prayers of the monks. He was to do the same in the refectory at dinner. To heal his soul still further, Pachomius ordered him to sit constantly in his cell, to prepare two mats daily instead of one, to eat only bread and salt, to speak with no one except one brother who would bring him bread, and to pray fervently to God for forgiveness of his sin. This penance was aimed directly at the monk's chief passion: as punishment he had to do what he had formerly done out of vainglory. The penance constantly reminded him of the sin he had committed and was meant to arouse in his heart the most lively repentance. He prized Pachomius' praise; certainly he could not fail to understand that the great abba had not without reason punished him so severely, having first exposed him before everyone.

One more remarkable case. Once Saint Pachomius had occasion to visit a monastery where the monks were infected with heretical views. Here the monks passed on to Pachomius' disciples that their superior proposed that he and Pachomius together cross a river, to show which of them was right and which more pleasing to God. When the disciples told Pachomius of this, he was greatly saddened that his monks had listened to and carried such a message. Pachomius said to them sternly: "A heretic may cross a river over the surface of the water as one walks on dry land, by the permission of God and with the help of Satan, who

wishes to confirm him in his impious belief and to induce others to adopt this belief. Now go and say to these men: 'The servant of God Pachomius says: my labors and cares are directed not to crossing the river on foot, but to escaping the chastisements of God and passing through that fiery river, through which we all, men, must pass before the throne of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, the Gospel says: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."'"

Saint Pachomius saw in the heretics' proposal the snares of Satan, who wished by a miraculous display to shake the faith of the monks and to arouse vainglory in them. He urged his disciples never to incline to anything of the kind and not to yield to vainglory.

When in any ascetic there appeared at least one virtue not spoiled by vainglory, Saint Pachomius rejoiced at even this small progress of the brother and carefully nurtured his virtue, seeing in it a pledge of his salvation. Saint Pachomius did not wish the monks to give themselves to strict labors under compulsion, and not by their own inclination. The following case from the life of the coenobium eloquently bears witness to this.

Once, when Saint Pachomius, after visiting other monasteries, was returning to the monastery where he usually lived, the brethren came out to greet him. At their meeting one youth loudly declared to him that from the day Pachomius had left them, nothing had been prepared for them from either grain or vegetables. Saint Pachomius answered him gently and kindly:

"Do not grieve, my son; from now on I shall take up your affairs and see to your food."

Entering the monastery and offering prayer in the church, Pachomius went straight to the kitchen. The cooks were weaving mats. Pachomius asked the chief cook:

"From what time have you not prepared soup for the brethren?" It turned out that for two months he had not once prepared soup for them. Pachomius asked him:

"Why did you act thus, when the rule commands that soup be served to the brethren on all Saturdays and Sundays?"

The head cook replied that the brethren, out of love for ascetic labors, did not eat broth, being content with a small quantity of vegetables and oil; formerly the broth prepared with oil had been thrown out; now he had appointed one brother to bring olives, vegetables and vinegar to the refectory, while he himself and the others with him labored at making mats. During this time five hundred mats were prepared in the kitchen.

St. Pachomius was deeply grieved by the self-willed conduct of the monk in charge of the kitchen. Having ordered the mats made without authorization to be burned, St. Pachomius sternly remarked to this monk that by his excessive zeal he had shown disregard for the rules. Moreover, in this case the abstinence of the brethren was no longer a matter of free choice but a consequence of necessity: no one any longer had the opportunity to display his zeal, since all were fasting perforce.

"As for me," said St. Pachomius, "I would prefer to prepare dishes of various kinds, to cook every sort of fruit, and to set all this before the brethren, so that if they restrain their desires and of their own accord, for the sake of ascetic labor, abstain from eating it, they would accomplish a great and good deed before God. If at table one does not serve what the Rule permits, the infirm brethren could not sufficiently strengthen their failing powers; they might become entirely weakened. Moreover, among the brethren there are many novices, some of whom are very young and frail in body; they cannot equal the perfect in the labors of monastic life. It would be especially hard for them if they were deprived of the cooked food even on Saturdays, Sundays and feast days; they might fall into despondency from the austerity of life to which they are unaccustomed."

What a correct view of the matter! What prudent severity toward those who break the rules, what care for the preservation of order in the common life, what love for the infirm brethren is heard in this rebuke to the cook, who had broken the rules about food out of excessive zeal for abstinence!

St. Pachomius always bore in mind that extreme severity can drive some ascetics to despair. Toward novices, the inexperienced, he behaved with especial solicitude and tenderness, seeing in them "young

plants" that require care and support. Pachomius reproached his beloved disciple Theodore for his severity toward his brother Paphnutius. Only the love and wisdom of Pachomius kept Paphnutius in the monastery. Here is an instance of such foresight and love toward a monk of another monastery.

Not far from Tabennisi there was a small monastery that did not belong to the community. The superior of this monastery often came to St. Pachomius to hear his wise instructions, in order afterward to pass them on to his monks. One monk of this monastery insistently sought an office for which he was not worthy. The superior once answered his requests by saying that Pachomius had advised not to give him this office, because he was unworthy of it, although Pachomius had not said this. The self-willed monk almost forcibly drew his abba to St. Pachomius for an explanation. Pale and in deep thought, the superior followed his monk, troubled by his unbridled anger.

They found Pachomius building the monastery wall. Beside himself with anger, the monk cried out to Pachomius:

"Come down, that I may prove my sin, Pachomius, you liar!"

Most meek and patient, Pachomius made no answer to the rude monk. However, the monk continued his abuse. Pachomius understood his state of soul and answered calmly:

"Forgive me, I have sinned; and have you never sinned?"

The monk's anger subsided. Then Pachomius drew the superior of the monastery aside and learned from him what the matter was. The abba gave him this advice:

"Listen to me and fulfill his request, that his soul may be snatched from the hands of the enemy."

The superior of the monastery followed this counsel. Both he and his monk were comforted and calmed by Pachomius.

A few days later this monk repented of his rudeness toward Pachomius and went to him to ask forgiveness. He confessed that Pachomius was higher than what people said of him, and related to him the following: "God knows that if you had not been magnanimous toward me and had said one harsh word to me, I, a sinner, would have left monasticism

and again become a layman. Blessed be you, man of God, for the Lord has revived me through your magnanimity."

St. Pachomius often reminded the monks of the zeal they must have. He used every occasion to rouse in them zeal for ascetic labors, for weeping over sins, for spiritual progress.

Once, passing with his disciple Theodore near the tombs, Pachomius saw that several women were weeping inconsolably there. He said to Theodore:

"Do you not see these women shedding tears over the dead, whom they cannot raise? How much more should we, who are called monks, not weep over our souls, which have died through sin, and which Christ will raise up in His love for mankind! In any case, tears are praiseworthy when they are shed with a good intention."

The Venerable Pachomius and his monks rejoiced not only over their own salvation and well-being, but also over the salvation of their neighbors and their true welfare. False teachings trouble the faithful and produce unrest and divisions in the Church: St. Pachomius grieves over this. When the Orthodox triumph and heresy weakens, what joy fills the hearts of the Tabennisiotes, with the Venerable Pachomius at their head! When famine or some other public calamity befalls the land, the common sorrow of Egypt soon reaches the superior of Tabennisi, and here another's grief calls forth the most lively compassion.

Thus, once they told the Venerable Pachomius that there was a great famine in Egypt, to which was joined the almost inseparable companion of famine, the plague. It was already the second day that Pachomius had remained without food. But he so vividly felt the sufferings of many from hunger that until the next day he did not touch food at all, and he spoke with the greatest sympathy for those who suffered: "I cannot eat when my fellow members are hungry and have no bread."

And throughout the whole time the famine continued in Egypt, Pachomius was in great sorrow, gave himself to the strictest fast, and prayed for the cessation of the people's calamity.

Deeply sympathizing with all men, and especially with monks, St. Pachomius prayed zealously for all. He prayed that the Lord would help the monks fulfill their high vows and make each of them a pure temple

of the Holy Spirit. In praying for other people, he first of all prayed for those who do good, that the Lord would efface from their hearts every care for earthly things except what is necessary for life. The great abba also prayed for those still enslaved to sin or darkened by heresy, that the Lord would grant them repentance. He prayed for the tsars and for all rulers, that they might live in the love of God and of all men, that they might render judgment to the wronged, that they might not be captivated by perishable glory, that they might resemble those tsars who did the will of God and were pleasing to God, such as, for example, King David. Pachomius also prayed for the pastors, that the Lord would help them be faithful successors of the apostles, walk blamelessly in all the commandments of the Lord, be adorned with true knowledge, with firm apostolic faith, with purity and piety.

St. Pachomius, who prayed for the well-being of the world, gave help to all whenever it was possible. Many people turned to a good life under the influence of his holy life and his gentle rather than stern word. Many monks were saved under his immediate guidance. More than this: St. Pachomius, with God's assistance, gave people wondrous help in their bodily infirmities.

A certain presbyter Dionysius brought to the gates of the monastery a woman with an issue of blood, who had received help from no one, and who now received complete healing through touching the hem of St. Pachomius' garment. The Venerable Pachomius healed, through anointing with oil, a daughter brought to him by a certain man, and he told her father that she did not live in virginal purity and bade him charge her to be chaste. Another man brought to St. Pachomius his son, possessed by an unclean spirit. The youth was healed. And soon the great Abba healed yet another demoniac. There was also one more similar case of healing.

Once St. Pachomius prayed for a man possessed by an unclean spirit, but he heard a voice from above bidding him to cease his prayer for him, since this misfortune had befallen him for the benefit of his soul.

In the monastery of Pevou one brother was ill. For three days he had been struggling with his sickness. Coming to Pachomius, he asked with tears for prayers for his healing, pointing out that many laymen

receive healing. Pachomius answered him: "The faith of laymen gives healing to their bodies, and through the healing which God grants them they are disposed to do good. As for us, servants of Christ, our faith is the incorruptible repose which God gives us in the other world; without sickness, without sorrow, we would conduct ourselves contrary to the commandment."

This instruction of Pachomius comforted the sick monk.

After some time, when his illness still continued, he came to Pachomius accompanied by the brethren. All began to ask the great abba for prayers for the healing of this brother. Pachomius began to pray, but at once he heard a voice: "Do not pray for this brother, for the Lord has sent him this sickness to save him from the snares of the devil."

All the brethren then glorified the Lord, who cares for His servants and works out their salvation.

Although the Lord worked many healings through the hand of Pachomius, the great abbot always regarded the healing of the soul as higher and more necessary: the healing of the soul from the worship of idols, from falsehood, from fornication and impurity of every kind, and in general from every sin. In giving healing to the body, he always strove to heal the soul of the person as well.

Great were the fruits of the activity of St. Pachomius. Under his guidance the monks attain a high degree of perfection. Even the idle and those hardened in their vices are corrected and strive to attain the highest degree of perfection. Among the great ascetics it was difficult to distinguish oneself in any particular way. For this reason so few of the names of these monks have come down to us. Here are some outstanding ascetics.

An example of diligence, patience and detachment from the body we see in the gardener Jonah. For eighty-five years he spent his life in monastic labors. All the trees in the garden were planted by him, yet he never tasted their fruit. These fruits brought strength and consolation to the monks who came to Jonah. His clothing was the most beggarly, something like a leather covering barely concealing the body. He put on a garment of coarse wool only before receiving the Holy Mysteries, and then at once took it off again; this one garment sufficed him for his

whole life. He never ate any food prepared over fire. His usual food, consisting of bread and vinegar, he took only in the evening, and even then not to full satiety. He gave no thought at all to bodily comfort, and even during illness, even when he was close to death, he could not be persuaded to go to the infirmary: he considered himself unworthy to make use of the services of others. Working all day in the garden under the scorching rays of the sun, Jonah would stop this toilsome labor only toward evening. When night came, he went to his cell, sat in the middle of it on his stool, and until midnight twisted ropes, glorifying God with his lips and heart. Then he would sleep only for a short time, remaining on his stool, and he did not release the ropes from his hands. Bright in spirit, Abba Jonah would soon rise to give himself to prayer and then to set to work in the garden. At night, during prayer and handwork, he never lit a lamp. He accomplished many other deeds worthy of wonder. He died sitting on his stool, the ropes still in his hands. The brethren, wishing to bury him, could not straighten his legs, could not bend his arms to his body, and could not take off his usual leather garment to put on him a clean woolen robe. They buried him in the state in which he died, clothing him only in a woolen shroud. In the community of Pachomius there was one monk stricken with leprosy, named Athenodorus. This monk is a rare example of patience, long-suffering and diligence under constant, cruel illness. Living apart from others, like a leper, Athenodorus fed only on bread and salt, and even that only every second day, toward evening. Like all the monks of the community, he wove mats daily, although his hands, damaged by leprosy, were stained with blood from the work. During the day he never allowed himself to lie down to rest. Little by little he learned passages of Holy Scripture by heart. Before going to sleep he prayed for a long time, and at midnight he went to the common brotherly prayer. But most wondrous of all in him was his patient endurance of the illness. St. Pachomius often sent him to various monasteries, certain that the very sight of this monk would awaken pious zeal in many. Once a good monk came into his cell. He was deeply moved by the patience and sickly appearance of Abba Athenodorus. With brotherly love this monk urged him to stop toiling at the weaving of mats, since it caused his hands terrible pain.

The monk said that each of them would gladly labor in his place and that this would not burden them in the least; after all, they already served the sick and the wanderers for the sake of the Lord. But the patient Athenodorus, penetrated by the awareness of the importance of labor for every person, and especially for a monk, firmly told his well-wisher that it was impossible for him to stop working.

The compassionate brother advised him to at least rub his hands with oil, so that they might soften somewhat and cease to crack. Athinodorus followed this advice. But from the oil his hands became more tender; he felt still greater pain while working. Pachomius noticed that this brother was resorting to the help of oil. The abbot reproached Athinodorus in a brotherly way, saying that he must place no hope in oil but give himself entirely into the will of God, since this illness had befallen him not without the providence of God and not without benefit for him and for others. Athinodorus acknowledged himself at fault and asked Pachomius for forgiveness. He then wept over this fault for a whole year. So strict were the monks of the community of Pachomius with themselves. St. Pachomius knew toward whom one should be strict and to whom one should show indulgence.

Once two young men came to Pachomius. Both desired to become monks. One of them, Silvanus, a youth of sixteen or seventeen, had until then lived in carnal impurity. Pachomius received them with these thoughts: "I will make them monks, and if the youth who led a wicked life has repented, I will keep him; but if he has not repented, I will expel him."

Abba Pachomius spoke with Silvanus alone, and the youth frankly recounted his former sins. He promised to become another man and to sin no more. But a little time passed, and Silvanus gave himself over to his former sins. Abba Pachomius was already intending to expel him, so that his example would not corrupt someone in the monastery. The abbot called a pious monk and entrusted him with going, together with Silvanus and five other monks, to a monastery he indicated, and with waiting for him there.

On the following day he intended to announce to Silvanus here his decision to expel him from the community. But the grace of God

touched the youth's heart on the very night before that day, and he firmly resolved to change his way of life and correct his heart. Still during the night he rose from his bed, found the devout brother who was accompanying him to that monastery, sat beside him, and began to weep bitterly. When the brother asked the cause of these tears, Silvanus answered him: "I weep because I do not abide in the fear of God; if I feared the Lord, I would keep the words of our abba Pachomius, a man of God."

The good monk tried to console him. He gave the youth this counsel: "Until this day you have lived without the fear of God, but now commit your soul to all that he has commanded you, and you will acquire the fear of God if you keep it."

In the morning St. Pachomius came to that monastery with two monks. He secretly called Silvanus to himself and talked with him from morning until the seventh hour of the day. In this conversation he disclosed to the youth his spiritual condition, pointed out to him his great guilt, and declared that he could no longer keep him in the monastery. The words of the great abbot struck the youth with terror. He was already thinking of self-correction, of the purification of his heart, of spiritual rebirth, and now he hears that he is about to be cast out from among the monks whom he loved and respected with complete sincerity. With bitter tears Silvanus fell at the feet of Pachomius. Begging the elder for mercy, he said: "This time I will repent and do all that you command me, not for your sake alone, but for the sake of God, who dwells in you and who has revealed to you my impurity."

He asked the elder not to expel him from the monastery, promising not to break his word again. The sincerity of Silvanus's repentance was evident. Pachomius withdrew from him for a short time to a secluded place and prayed for him, that the Lord might give him steadfastness in fulfilling his promise. Then he called the pious monk Sanamon and entrusted him with the care of Silvanus, telling him about the youth's conduct and asking him to keep silent about it. Pachomius warned this monk that he would have much labor in correcting Silvanus, and handed the youth over to him only after the good ascetic had agreed to take careful care of his spiritual rebirth. Then Pachomius called Sil-

vanus and instructed him, urging him always to remain with this elder, to imitate his life, never to leave him, and to do nothing without permission. Silvanus promised to fulfill Pachomius's command. Pachomius told the superior of this monastery that under no circumstances was he to separate these two monks, but he disclosed nothing about Silvanus's former conduct. Now burning with love for God, Silvanus asked for help from above and promised to be fully ready to endure every sorrow and insult as something deserved; he promised to keep unceasing watch over his heart. Silvanus fulfilled his vow. He continually increased his ascetic labors. He ate only once a day and drank water without fully quenching his thirst. He prayed diligently and even spent the greater part of the night in prayer; when sleep overcame him, he sat on his mat, not allowing himself to lean against the wall. He did all this without any vainglory, with the greatest humility, having in view only the purification of his heart, the suppression of sinful inclinations, and the acquisition of perfect love for God. His humility extended so far that he chose the worst vegetables for his food and tried to obtain the poorest reed for weaving mats and baskets, considering himself the worst of all the monks.

In a short time Silvanus attained perfect purity of spirit. Pachomius himself rejoiced, seeing the spiritual progress of the young ascetic who had borne the fruits of repentance.

Once the brethren of the monastery where Silvanus lived were gathering reeds. Pachomius was with them on this occasion, edifying them with the word of God. At last he said to the monks:

"I wish to tell you of the miracle which the Lord has wrought among you. There is one among you who has turned and become a new man through a second birth, so that he has become perfect in purity of heart."

Pachomius indicated also that, with so high a degree of spiritual purity, this brother was wholly free of pride, and that there was none among the brethren who resembled him in purity and loftiness of soul. The monks were astonished to learn that Pachomius was speaking to them of Silvanus. All the brethren now began to show Silvanus the greatest respect. One after another they came to him to hear from him

a word of edification. They now called him by no other name than Abba Silvanus. But the humble monk said to them with great meekness: "Is it true that I am your abba?"

He labored with the utmost exertion of his strength to attain such a height. After this he did not live long. He died in peace with God and his conscience.

To Saint Pachomius the Lord also revealed the future destinies of monasticism. Once many brethren went with Pachomius to cut reeds. Some of the monks saw them off. Among them was Pachomius' beloved disciple, Saint Theodore. When it was time to push off from the shore, Pachomius said to Theodore: "Hasten to get into the boat."

Theodore, without asking the reason, at once carried out the elder's command, got into the boat, and did not even think of taking with him the book he had been reading in those days for edification. He was glad that the elder had given him the opportunity to show obedience, which does not ask where or why it is being led, like Abraham, who went out from his land at God's command, though he did not know where he was going. When the boat was already loaded with reeds, Pachomius saw something very terrible. It appeared to him that some of the monks were in the jaws of lions, others in the jaws of crocodiles, others amid fire, and some beneath a mountain against which the waves were pressing; they were trying to climb the mountain, but all their efforts proved futile. They all cried out: "Lord, help us!"

Seeing the monks in such difficulty, Pachomius threw to the ground the reeds he carried on his shoulders, stretched his hands toward heaven, and began to pray very loudly, asking the Lord for help for these unfortunate men. Seeing this, all the monks also threw down their burdens and began to pray. This intense prayer of a multitude of monks continued until evening. It was revealed to Pachomius that this vision pertained to the time when he would no longer be alive. In the evening at the meal Pachomius ate nothing. Saint Theodore, who had been sent during the gathering of reeds with one of the monks on some business, knew nothing of what had happened. Afterward he was informed of Pachomius' vision. Learning that the elder had eaten nothing, Theodore soaked bread, prepared also some other dish, and through

one of the brethren sent word to Pachomius that he wished to see him. Hearing that Theodore was calling him, Pachomius went to him at once. Thinking of the fate of many monks, the elder still continued to weep. He told Theodore too that he must weep before the Lord. At this time one of the brethren noticed that Theodore had still eaten nothing. Pachomius answered him: "What have you in common with him? Let him not eat, and let him weep."

The elder himself, so as not to grieve his beloved disciple any further, ate the food Theodore offered him, although his sorrow was still very great in his heart.

In the last years of his life Saint Pachomius had yet another vision concerning the fate of monasticism. Once, shut up in his cell, Pachomius prayed from the eleventh hour (by our reckoning, from five o'clock in the evening) until midnight. Suddenly a bright light illumined his room. He heard a voice: "The generation that will follow after you will lead such a life as will be pleasing to God, as in these days."

Afterward it was revealed to him how widely the monasteries would spread. But then, in rapture, he sees some very deep, steep, and gloomy ditch. In this ditch there walked an innumerable multitude of monks, not distinguishing one another and stumbling against one another. Some made terrible efforts to get out of this ditch. Some of them managed to reach halfway up its depth, but then fell headlong. Many cried out piteously for compassion. Some at last succeeded in reaching the very highest point of this abyss, to the very opening through which light illumined for Pachomius this terrible darkness; and then they offered great praise to God. Coming to himself, Pachomius understood that in this vision there was revealed to him the future state of the souls of monks who conduct themselves badly, whether through their own negligence or through the fault of poor leaders. Pachomius cried out to God with great sorrow, asking for His mercy upon the monasteries and the monks. He almost despaired for them. In answer to his cries to God he heard a voice: "Pachomius, do not forget that you are a man: everything depends on My mercy."

Prostrating himself on the ground, Pachomius implored God for mercy upon him. Then he was consoled by an appearance of Christ the

Savior Himself in the form of a man of youthful years, of ineffable beauty, with a crown of thorns on His head. Christ revealed to him that his disciples would look upon him as a lamp from which they could borrow light for themselves. Their conduct would accord with the rules. Their inner disposition would be good. Later monks would imitate them. But a time would come when faith would weaken and vices would grow stronger. Negligence and attachment to sensual goods would distinguish the monks of that time. Spiritual darkness would increase. They would struggle with one another for the possession of worldly goods. Genuine ascetics would be very few. They would have no leaders. They would have to rouse themselves to doing good and to turning away from evil. Indeed, their labors would be of little worth compared with the labors of the first monks. Nevertheless, they would receive a reward equal to that of the first, because they would have to suffer much from the hard conditions of monastic life in their own time. Pachomius was very glad when all this was revealed to him. For many days he remained without food. On the next day, when the brethren were gathering for prayer, the abba went with them to the church. Here, after prayer, he delivered a moving discourse to the assembled monks.

Present life, he said, passes swiftly, and death draws near to us. Death may overtake us suddenly, when we are not yet at all prepared. Man therefore must always diligently fulfill the commandments of God, neglecting not a single one. The thought of the blessedness of the righteous and of the torments of sinners must always be with us. Seeing the graves of our brethren, we cannot but think of the mortality of man, and of the fact that the present life contains nothing in which one might take pride or to which one might be attached. Saint Pachomius insistently warns the monks that it is precisely they, who have renounced the world, who will be more wretched than all others if they act contrary to their duty, if instead of serving God they serve the devil and sin. The great abba invites his disciples to labor diligently for their salvation, to do everything possible, and always to place their hope in God.

Greatly weakened by his labors, the Venerable Pachomius soon after the feast of Pascha was struck by a grievous illness, from which many

monks had already died. When this sickness attacked anyone, he began to feel a most intense fever, his eyes grew red, the color of his face changed, and a kind of suffocation appeared. In all the monasteries monks died one after another, and there were still more who were sick. When Pachomius fell ill, Theodore served him with filial love. The illness of the great abba lasted many days. He gradually grew weaker. The fever was extraordinary. For three days at a time the elder took no food at all, not even water. Yet he continued to converse with the brethren. Pachomius lay in the infirmary for some forty days. He was cared for on a level with all the other sick. He grew so weak that the heavy blanket was dreadfully burdensome to him. He asked Theodore to cover him with a lighter coverlet. Theodore at once brought a light and, moreover, new blanket and covered the elder with it. Pachomius noticed that a preference had been shown him, and judged this unjust. The elder feared that this might lead someone into temptation. Then Theodore removed this covering from him and clothed him with another, on a level with all the sick.

Having given the monks, and especially their superiors, many useful instructions, Saint Pachomius reposed on the fourteenth day of the month of Pashons[16], most probably in 348, at the age of 53.

The hand of Theodore closed the eyes of the great Pachomius. The brethren rushed to the holy remains, and with tears kissed the lips and the holy body of Abba Pachomius. They read prayers for his repose all that day and through the whole night. In the morning the Bloodless Sacrifice was offered for him. Then the brethren, singing, carried the body of Pachomius to the mountain and buried it according to custom. This was on the fifteenth day of the month of Pashons.

Returning to the monastery, the brethren said to one another with great sorrow:

"Truly, today we have been orphaned."

Troparion, Tone 8:

By the streams of thy tears thou didst cultivate the barren wilderness, and from the depths, with sighs, thou didst bring forth

a hundredfold fruit of thy labors; and thou wast a lamp for the universe, shining with miracles, O our Father Pachomius. Entreat Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou didst appear as a lamp shining in the farthest places, and thou didst make the desert into cities by the multitude of monks. Having crucified thyself, taking up thy cross upon thy shoulder, and wasting thy body with abstinence, thou dost ceaselessly intercede for us all.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Euphrosynus, Wonderworker of Pskov

Память преподобного отца нашего Евфросина, Псковского чудотворца

The holy martyr Eleazar[17] was a native of the great island of Russia, which lies between the north and the west, in the portion of Japheth, in the northern land, in the vicinity of the God-preserved great city of Pskov[18]. He was born and brought up in the village of Videlebye[19], which lies at a distance of thirty *poprishches*[20] from the city of Pskov. Who his parents were according to the flesh is not known; it is known only that he was born by a spiritual birth, and that he had God as his Father, Who begot him of water and the Spirit, and

16. The month Pashons corresponds to our May, beginning on the 26th of April. Therefore 14 Pashons is 9 May.
17. Such was the name he bore in the world: Euphrosynus.
18. The description of the district from which the Venerable Father came is set forth in such an involved manner that it is difficult to discover the meaning of the words. This district is called an island, probably because on its north lie the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga, joined by the river Neva; on the east flows the river Volkhov, joining Lake Ladoga and Lake Ilmen; and on the west lies Lake Peipus, joined to the Gulf of Finland by the river Narova, and further south, the continuation of Lake Peipus, Lake Pskov. The latter approaches Lake Ilmen on the south by the rivers Velikaya and Shelon. To the north of this district dwelt the alien tribes of the Votes and the Izhorians, and to the west the Chud, the Livs and the Lithuanians; the district itself was inhabited by Slavs, who, it is to be supposed, were called "the portion of Japheth."
19. Videlebye is a village in the Pskov district. It was also the birthplace of the Venerable Nicander of Pskov, whose memory is celebrated on 24 September.
20. *Poprishche* – a measure of distance of 690 sazhens.

that his mother was the Orthodox Church of the Fathers; for which reason he was brought up in the right faith and instruction. Upon reaching the proper age his parents gave him over to be taught the Divine Books, and he soon came to understand the Divine Scriptures so clearly that he could not only expound them in words but could also compose his own edifying writings. At the same time he studied the philosophical sciences, so that even the elders marvelled at his wisdom and spoke of him with praise. He never showed any inclination either to games or to spectacles, but above all loved the reading of the Divine Scriptures and the Church chants; and from his early years he gave himself to strict abstinence, refraining entirely from the eating of sweets. Seeing such abstinence in the youth, his parents said to him:

"Our son! Why dost thou weary thy body by so severe a manner of life, and by this cause us great sorrow?"

"My parents," the youth answered, "the Scripture says that food and drink do not bring us near to God (1 Cor. 8:8), but only fasting, prayer, bodily purity and abstinence: these are what bring us near to God."

After this the parents of Eleazar wished to join him in lawful marriage, but the prudent youth fled from his parents as a hart from the nets[21]. His parents searched for him everywhere for a long time with tears, and could nowhere find him, but the grace of God kept him. Soon his father died, and his mother remained a widow. Then merciful God, Who wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, placed in his heart a good thought: how he might arrange his salvation and withdraw from the world. This thought he immediately carried out. Going to the monastery of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, which stood on Snezhnaya Hill (so was the place called, on the bank of the river Velikaya, at a distance of three *poprishches* from the city of Pskov), he received the monastic tonsure from the abbot of that monastery, and at the same time he renounced for ever the thoughts that draw toward the world, and gave himself wholly to the vows of the monastic state. At his tonsure he was given the name Euphrosynus.

21. *Tenets* (*tenetami*) is the name given to a net for catching birds and beasts.

Having taken the monastic habit, Venerable Euphrosynus began to labour zealously in fasting, vigil, prayer and all-night standings in prayer; and at the same time he served the brethren diligently both in the kitchen and in the bakehouse and in all the other monastery labours, as was customary in the monastery; by which he won the affection of all the monks living in the community. Soon the word of the Venerable, because of so virtuous a life, began to spread everywhere. He learned of this with distress, since he shrank from the glory of men and considered it a sin and a shame for himself; and therefore he began to consider how to escape this glory, and, choosing for this a desert and silent life, to labour for God alone. He told his spiritual father of this intention, and the latter, seeing that he was flourishing in the virtues, blessed him and said to him: "Go in peace, my son! May the Lord be with thee; may He instruct thee and lead thee into that good activity to which He has called thee."

After this the blessed Euphrosynus, receiving the blessing of his spiritual father, went out of the monastery of the Most Pure One and began to go about many places, seeking one where he might give himself to the silent life in solitude. By the special providence of God he heard of the place on the bank of the river Tolva, which lies at a distance of twenty-five *poprishches* from the city of Pskov, and on which, by the grace of Christ, there now stands a monastery[22]. The owners of this place, through some pious men, began to invite him, not by their own will but rather by the will of the Lord, Who was pleased that His holy name should be glorified here also. In this place the Venerable settled into a quiet, solitary life, as the Divine prophet said: "Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten to escape from the windy storm and tempest" (Ps. 54:8–9). He set up a hut for himself here and with zeal gave himself to the monastic exploits, repelling the snares of the unseen enemy with fasting, vigil, prayer, all-night standing and prostrations. Once, during the summer heat, when the Venerable had gone out of the hut and lay down upon the earth to rest a little from his labours, he at once fell into a summer sleep; and at

22. The reference is to the Savior-Eleazar Monastery of the Great Hermitage in the Pskov Province, on the river Tolva, 30 versts from Pskov.

that time there appeared to him the universal teachers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, and they pointed out a place for the building of a church in their name in the locality where he was labouring. When he then awoke from his sleep, he saw no one, and such an extraordinary vision brought him into perplexity.

After this much time passed, and the mother of the Venerable learned from some people of the place of his dwelling. Taking with her everything necessary for the journey, she came to that place on the bank of the river Tolva where the Venerable lived. Coming up to his hut, she began to beg him, saying:

"Dear child of mine! Comfort the old age of thy mother, show me thy Angelic face, do not let me go down with sorrow into the grave, where our fathers also rest."

Through a crack the holy Euphrosynus saw his mother, and recognizing her, said to her:

"Do not grieve, mother of mine; go away from here and do not trouble thine old age. If thou desirest to see me here, thou shalt not see me in the next life. Go, then, to the monastery, and by labouring save thy soul."

Thus the mother of the Venerable did not attain the fulfilment of her desire. With sorrow she went away from him, entered one of the monasteries, and, passing her days in pious labours, remained in it until her death. The Venerable Euphrosynus, having lived his life valiantly and gloriously, reposed in the Lord[23].

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father Achillius, Bishop of Larissa

Память преподобного отца нашего Ахиллия, епископа Ларисийского

23. The Venerable Euphrosynus reposed on 15 May 1481, at the age of 95. His relics first rested in the Monastery of the Savior and Great Hermitage of Eleazar, which he had founded. Later this monastery was moved to a hill, and in it a new stone cathedral church was built in the name of the Three Hierarchs, and into it were translated the relics of the Venerable Father, which now rest under cover beside the wall behind the first kliros.

This Venerable lived in the reign of the emperor Constantine the Great and was born of pious parents. Having given himself to a pious and God-fearing life, and having studied the secular sciences and the higher philosophy, he adorned himself with every God-pleasing deed, for which reason he was appointed bishop of Upper Larissa in Thessaly[24] for the Christians dwelling throughout Hellas. Being present at the Ecumenical Council at Nicaea[25], he rebuked Arius and his adherents[26]. Then, returning again to Larissa, he destroyed many idol temples, cast out demons from the possessed, and performed a great multitude of other miracles. Besides this, he rebuilt church buildings and richly adorned them, after which he departed from this life in peace[27].

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of our holy father Isaiah, Bishop of Rostov, who reposed in 1090.

On the same day, the martyrdom of the holy right-believing Tsarevich Demetrius, Wonderworker of Moscow and all Russia, in 1591.

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Isaiah of the Kiev Caves, Wonderworker, who reposed in 1115.

24. Thessaly is a region of ancient Greece. Upper Thessaly is called Larissean after the city of Larissa, situated on the river Peneus.
25. The city of Nicaea was situated in Asia Minor, in the ancient Roman province of Bithynia, on the eastern shore of Lake Ascania.
26. The Menologion of the Emperor Basil states that the Venerable Achillius, in refuting the heretics at the First Ecumenical Council, aroused general astonishment.
27. The Venerable Achillius reposed about the year 330. From 978 his relics have been in Bulgaria, in the village of Agil, named after him.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF MAY

May 16

16 мая

New Calendar May 16 · Old Calendar May 29 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Theodore the Sanctified, Disciple of Pachomius

Житие преподобного отца нашего Феодора Освященного, ученика Пахомиева

St. Pachomius was already a widely known abbot when Theodore the Sanctified was still a boy. He learned of Pachomius while living in one of the monasteries and, with youthful fervor, was striving toward the highest perfection.

Theodore was the son of wealthy and noble parents.[1] In his twelfth year he went daily to school, at his father's wish. He was loved by his mother more than all her other children for his intelligence and piety. Once, on the feast of the Theophany, his parents prepared fine dishes, set out various wines, and spread carpets in all the rooms. The young Theodore, seeing the festive arrangement of the house and the sumptuous table, was struck with deep disquiet by a single thought. He said to himself: "If you eat these dishes, God will not grant you the blessings of the life to come." Greatly moved by this thought, the boy went off to a secluded place, knelt down, and with tears prayed to the Savior.

"I do not want," he said, "this perishable food, which leads to destruction; but I desire Thee alone, with those blessings which Thou hast prepared for the faithful in the other world."

For a long time he repeated these words with tears. Meanwhile his mother searched for him through the whole house. They were waiting for Theodore at the table, and no one began to eat. Having found him

1. He was born about the year 316.

and noticed the tears on his face, his mother said to him with tender love:

"You have been weeping, my son! Where were you? We were looking for you."

Theodore answered that nothing had happened to him. His mother called him to dinner, adding that if he did not eat, no one would sit down at the table. Theodore resolutely refused to partake of the festive food. He lived for some time longer in his parents' house, devoting himself to fasting, prayer and weeping. From these tears the young Theodore's eyes even became sore. During this time he continued to go to school. But then the school year came to an end. Not far from the village where Theodore's parents lived there was a monastery. Here each brother lived apart from the others, in his own cell. Theodore came there and began to live as a hermit. Soon everyone there came to love him for his intelligence, piety and humility.

In the monastery where the Venerable Theodore had settled, it was the custom to gather together each evening after supper for spiritual conversation. They spoke of whatever anyone had learned from Holy Scripture or heard, if it could serve for the common edification. These conversations could provide abundant nourishment for the soul and protected against idle talk or the indulgence of evil thoughts. During one such conversation, a monk who had recently visited the monastery of Pachomius recalled an explanation of a passage of Holy Scripture that he had heard from Pachomius. This monk recounted with rapture the order of the Tabennisi community, how lovingly he had been received there, and above all about Pachomius himself. As usual, the young Theodore, who always kept silent himself, listened with particular attention. After such an enthusiastic account of Pachomius, Theodore was inflamed with a desire to see the great abbot. Left alone, he prayed with great fervor. Here is the content of the young ascetic's prayer:

"O God, Lord, Creator of every thing! If Thou hearest me and grantest me that for which I ask Thee; if Thou give me the possibility of seeing Thy servant Pachomius: then I will serve Thee all the days of my life and will not turn aside from Thee until the day of my death. Thy will be done, but make me worthy to see Thy servant!"

He could not fall asleep the whole night, absorbed in thoughts of meeting the great teacher of monks. Until morning he rose more than once and implored the Lord with tears to make him worthy to see Pachomius. Then he went to the cell of the brother who had been in Tabennisi, and asked him to be sure to tell him in more detail about the life of Pachomius and the rules he had given the monks. The brother acquainted him fully with what he knew of Pachomius, his life and his rules. From that time Theodore prayed to God even more earnestly that He would vouchsafe him to see Pachomius. Theodore hoped through Pachomius to know God and His holy will better.

At this time Theodore fell ill. His parents brought him food. Theodore refused it. But then his illness grew worse. His parents took him home from the monastery. He did not notice this, being for some time unconscious from the illness. When he came to himself, he was greatly grieved to find himself again in his parents' house. His parents, convinced of the firmness of his resolve, returned him to the monastery. Now the monks themselves zealously cared for the young ascetic until his recovery.

Four more months passed, and Theodore did not cease his prayer for a meeting with Pachomius. At this time Abba Pechosh (or Pecusius), a monk of the monastery of Pachomius, came to the monastery where Theodore lived. He had been assigned to serve the monks during his stay there. His humility, his prayerful disposition, and his whole conduct aroused the wonder and respect of all the monks, and their hearts were involuntarily drawn to Pechosh. Of course Theodore also made his acquaintance. He saw that through this abba it would be easiest for him to fulfill his desire. And he asked Pechosh to help him in this. Pechosh, however, did not dare to take Theodore with him, fearing the anger of the youth's parents. Theodore was firm in his purpose. When Abba Pechosh and some monks got into a boat to set off for the monastery of Pachomius, Theodore followed after them on foot. Still unnoticed, he walked along the bank of the Nile not far from the boat. At last some of the monks noticed him. They pointed him out to Abba Pechosh, recalling that it was precisely he who had asked the abba to take him along in the boat. At last they arrived at Tabennisi.

Seeing the walls of the monastery, Theodore thanked the Lord for the fulfillment of his desire and in joy kissed those walls. Seeing Pachomius himself, he greeted the great elder with tears of rapturous joy. Pachomius pointed him to the Lord, who would fulfill every desire of his pious heart, because he had left the world for the Lord's sake. Theodore remained in Tabennisi, ready to observe all the rules of monastic life and to submit in everything to the will of his superiors. He was only fourteen years old. It was already the fifth year since the founding of the Pachomian community.

According to the account of Bishop Ammon, Theodore's arrival at Tabennisi had been foretold with precision by Pachomius himself.

Having settled in Tabennisi, Theodore began to show the greatest zeal in pleasing God. The young ascetic was blessed in that the instruction and private conversations of Pachomius pointed him to the sure path to attaining monastic perfection, and the whole order of life in the community did not allow his zeal to weaken.

Once, in a conversation with the brethren, the Venerable Pachomius expressed the thought: "If a man possessed true knowledge, he would sin neither against God nor against his neighbor." Theodore's soul was inflamed with the desire to acquire this true knowledge. At the same time he grieved greatly, thinking that it would be difficult for him to attain his desire. He earnestly asked God to grant him true knowledge, humbly acknowledging his unworthiness and his powerlessness to know the truth.

"Lord," he said in prayer, "Lord, to Whom I have fled! Give me knowledge, as Thou hast promised to those who love Thee, so that I may do all that can please Thee."

Theodore often even wept at being far from true knowledge. Pachomius, in the depths of his heart, rejoiced at these tears of the youth and encouraged his striving to acquire true knowledge. On meeting him he more than once said to Theodore:

"Strive to acquire true knowledge."

Once at night he called Theodore when the moon was shining brightly. Turning the youth's thought, by this wondrous sky with its

luminaries, to the invisible Creator of all things, Abba Pachomius said to Theodore:

"Fear Him all the days of your life; know that it is He who created us and all creatures, and that we are in His hand. When you have the fear of God and think that God sees you at every moment, take care not to sin against Him, and thus sure help will be sent to you from Him. Give Him glory every day."

Abundant tears confirmed the sincerity of their conversation. They concluded their exchange of thoughts about God and about pleasing Him with prayer.

They held similar conversations more than once. For Theodore, a youth extremely receptive, burning with holy zeal to please God, every word of St. Pachomius had great significance: in his soul not only were pious feelings and aspirations strengthened, but spiritual wisdom was developed as well. Pachomius, by his conversations and especially by his close association with Theodore, intentionally or unintentionally was preparing Theodore for future service to the monks as their guide in the spiritual life.

How attentive the Venerable Pachomius was to every deed and even to every word of Theodore, how firmly he led the young ascetic toward the highest perfection!

Once Theodore met a brother with a carpet on his shoulders, returning from some monastery obedience. Theodore asked him where he was coming from. Pachomius heard this question. Calling Theodore to him, he said:

"Theodore, see that you are master of your heart at every moment. Do not ask a brother: where are you coming from? This may become a habit. What need is there to speak so? For this word serves neither for consolation nor for salvation."

Theodore often recalled this admonition of his teacher and attached great importance to it: he knew that faithfulness in small things leads to faithfulness in great ones, and that it is required by the commandment of the Savior.

Once Theodore began to complain to Pachomius that his head ached severely. Pachomius told him that a believer ought not speak to anyone

of his bodily infirmities, except in those cases where an illness cannot be hidden from others; and even such illnesses must be borne with due patience. For both voluntary and involuntary sufferings constitute, as it were, a martyrdom. In general, one must mortify the body out of love for God. Venerable Theodore received this admonition of Pachomius with the deepest faith and from then on concealed from people the headache by which he had long suffered. He was to bear this pain for twenty more years, yet no one ever heard a complaint from him. Theodore was visited by other illnesses, more or less prolonged: for example, pain in the ears, fever, and an eye disease. He bore everything in silence and with a cheerful spirit. In general, no monk mortified himself as Theodore did, and he carefully concealed his ascetic labors from people. Each day he took food only late in the evening, and at times he fasted for two days in succession, eating only at the end of the second day. At times he took food but drank no water for two days in succession. He ate cooked food only in case of illness. He generally abstained from eating pleasant-tasting fruits. But if the brethren ate dates, he also ate them together with the monks, and he even took a fairly large quantity with him, yet afterwards ate no more than two. He loved to spend the nights in vigil. In a short time Venerable Theodore succeeded in acquiring many spiritual fruits.

Theodore attached himself with all his soul to his great elder, Venerable Pachomius, and to his fellow ascetics, the monks. All of them were kindred to him in spirit, and all of them also loved him. But the young ascetic was entirely free of attachment to those kindred according to the flesh: they hardly existed for Theodore, and they could not distract him from his love for Pachomius and the monks.

How much Theodore feared attachments to kin is shown by the following incident. It was already the tenth year since the day he had come to Tabennisi. His mother, who had long wished to see her son, came here with a letter from the bishop of the district of Esneh. The hierarch asked Pachomius to permit this woman a meeting with her son. Having read the bishop's letter, Pachomius told Theodore to go to meet his mother, since the mother very much desired this and the bish-

op asked for it. But Theodore did not dare to obey this command, and he said to St. Pachomius:

"I will ask you about one thing. Tell me: if I go to my mother, shall I not be found sinning before the Lord, since I have not obeyed the commandment written in the Gospel, for our Master said: 'He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me' (Mt. 10:37)?"

Pachomius said that he did not at all wish to compel him to violate the Gospel commandment of renouncing attachments to kin for the sake of perfect pleasing of God, but he proposed that he go to meet his mother because he knew of her tears and feared that Theodore himself would be grieved by his mother's sorrow. Pachomius, confessing that he himself was very glad at his disciple's exact fulfillment of the commandment of God, expressed the thought that the bishop too would rejoice at this, since it is precisely the bishops who teach what is contained in the Gospel. Some of the brethren, wishing to bring at least a small consolation to Theodore's mother, devised a common labor for the monks outside the monastery. Theodore also set out for this work. The mother was comforted by seeing, even from a distance, her son among the monks, an ascetic.

Once, when Theodore was outside the monastery on some obedience, his own brother Pafnutius appeared at the monastery. He expressed a desire to become a monk, but on the condition that he be together with Theodore. When Theodore returned to the monastery, he was told his brother's words. But the zealous monk thought it not good that his brother wished to be a monk as though only for his sake. Therefore he did not want even to see his brother. However, Pachomius persuaded him not to refuse his brother a meeting. After their mutual greeting, Theodore said to his brother:

"If you have come here for my sake, then return to where you came from; but if you have come for God's sake, why did you not agree to become a monk before I came to you?"

With these words Theodore at once left his brother. But Paphnutius went after him and, overtaking him, said to him with tears:

"How many days I have waited for your coming, and you, having appeared, say such a harsh word to me!"

Theodore answered him:

"If you have come for my sake, to become a monk now, you could leave the monastic life if I left it. But if you act thus out of the fear of God, whether I endure this life or not, you will remain in the monastery permanently."

Theodore led his brother into the monastery. Soon, having asked where Theodore's cell was, Pafnutius entered it and sat down. Seeing his brother in his cell, Theodore was greatly confused and said to him:

"Stay here; but I no longer wish to live here, lest we become like people who are related to one another according to the flesh. Allow me to live near you on an equal footing with all the brethren, for in this monastery there is no distinction; we are all servants of God and children of our abba."

The stern words of Theodore grieved his brother terribly. Pafnutius at once went to St. Pachomius and, with tears, asked to be released to return home, since for him such an unbrotherly manner from Theodore was unbearable. Then Pachomius summoned Theodore and said to him sternly:

"Why did you speak harshly to him? Do you not know that he is a young plant? Do you think that everyone who comes to become a monk will already have the fear of the Holy Spirit? For there are people who come in order to save their souls, and others come from other motives."

Pachomius pointed out to Theodore that the monks in any case ought to treat such people with complete patience, awaiting the time when they too will come to know the way of God and will abandon their carnal wisdom. Finally, Pachomius asked Theodore to be the guide of his brother in monastic life until he himself should acquire a true understanding of the obligations of a monk.

Being under the direct guidance of St. Pachomius and, with tireless zeal, fulfilling all his instructions, Theodore soon became a model for imitation for all the monks. Venerable Pachomius even sent many monks to him for guidance and consolation. With his wise, loving word, St. Theodore succeeded in comforting and calming many. One monk could not bear the stern rebukes of St. Pachomius. He was ready even to leave the brotherhood. Only St. Theodore found a way to calm him.

"You are not the only one who suffers," said Theodore. "I too am grieved in heart because of him, for he has often reproached me. Now let us stay together, to comfort one another, until we see whether he will cease reproaching us; and if not, we will go to another place."

These words calmed the monk's soul. Meanwhile Theodore told everything to Pachomius secretly from the others. A month later Theodore invited this brother to Pachomius. Pachomius, of course, met the two monks with great gentleness and paternal tenderness. Both were comforted: the monk, once grieved by Pachomius, was glad that the abba had changed his attitude toward him, and Theodore rejoiced at his calming and gave thanks to God, who had sent him the occasion to serve as an instrument of salvation for the grieving monk.

Here is one more instance bearing witness to the far-sighted love for the brethren that distinguished both Pachomius and Theodore. A young monk desired without fail to go to meet his parents. Pachomius greatly feared that he would not return to the monastery. Therefore the wise abba did not let him go alone, but gave Theodore to him as a companion.

"Agree with him in everything, so that he returns here with you," Pachomius said to Theodore.

The parents of the young monk met their son and his companion with love. They were served food in a separate room, permitted by monastic custom. The young monk asked Theodore to eat as well. At first he refused. But the brother said that if Theodore would not eat with him, he would not return to the monastery. Theodore remembered the commandment of Pachomius, stretched out his hand to the food, and ate a little. But in thus fulfilling the last commandment of Pachomius, Theodore also well remembered one of the first, a very important one. The abba had once told him that during his own monastic life he had not permitted any layman to see him eat. Consequently, according to the thought of Venerable Pachomius, a monk may not take food in a layman's house, except in a case of extreme necessity. This for a long time roused repentance in Theodore's soul, and he prayed God to forgive him the sin committed for the sake of not allowing the young monk

the possibility of remaining altogether in the world. So strict was Venerable Theodore toward himself.

St. Theodore's severity toward himself and his distrust of his own opinion were his distinguishing qualities. Here is one instance in which his severity toward himself was especially clear. A certain brother was eating a great deal of leek. Thinking that it was not good for a young monk to eat much leek, since it strengthens the body, Theodore gently reproved him. Afterwards Theodore began to reflect on whether he had acted rightly: perhaps the monk would have corrected himself. Nevertheless, Theodore's words made a very strong impression on the young monk: for the rest of his life, through twenty-nine years, he did not eat leek at all. Learning of this brother's abstinence, Theodore himself, until the end of his life, did not eat leek either, so that he might not stand before the Lord guilty of breaking the rule he had imposed on another.

By this quality of self-denial and of the most refined nobility, St. Theodore, as in all else, showed himself a true disciple of St. Pachomius.

It was not easy for St. Pachomius to govern a numerous brotherhood scattered across nine monasteries. He needed a helper. Theodore the Sanctified, the best of the great elder's disciples, could also be the best helper in the work of caring for the salvation of the monks. The *Life* of Pachomius relates that he received a revelation from on high confirming his decision to make Venerable Theodore his helper.

Theodore the Sanctified was distinguished not only by a virtuous life, but also by a special gift of speech and by his knowledge of Holy Scripture. Once St. Pachomius entrusted him with giving the brethren an instruction on a Sunday. Theodore, without any pride, took the place of Pachomius and delivered the instruction, regarding the elder's will as his law. Pachomius himself listened with deep attention to the living address of his disciple, taking his place among all the monks. But some of the monks did not like that Theodore, this young monk, was teaching them in place of Pachomius. A strong envy arose in them. They even left the assembly. When the instruction was over, Pachomius summoned the monks who had walked out and reproached them for not staying to hear Theodore's instruction out of their pride, even

though he had given the directive in their presence, and moreover he himself had listened attentively and with profit to his disciple's words. Pachomius assured them that they would receive no mercy from God unless they brought sincere repentance. Certainly the stern words of the elder brought many to their senses, and many accepted his counsel to cast envy and pride out of their hearts. Yet there were also some monks who, after the elder's rebuke, hated Theodore even more strongly, so that they could not look at him calmly. Theodore himself not only harbored no enmity toward them, but always treated them with particular care and love.

Soon St. Pachomius appointed Theodore builder at Tabennisi. The great elder himself settled in another monastery, at Pbow. He hoped that Theodore would govern in his spirit, and that his wise conversations and edifying example would be of great benefit to the monks.

The spiritual height that Theodore had reached at this time is seen from the testimony of Abba Cornelius, an experienced and zealous one of the first disciples of Pachomius. Cornelius, who regarded Venerable Pachomius as an Angel in the flesh, saw in Theodore the best of Pachomius's disciples, and said that he would wish to be placed in the future life right after Theodore.

Having become the superior at Tabennisi, St. Theodore often went to Pbow to seek counsel from Abba Pachomius or to hear his general instructions. Returning to his monks, he would pass on what he had heard from Pachomius. It was Abba Pachomius's custom, at the close of an instruction, to have the monks repeat what had been said. St. Theodore adopted this custom. For his part, he considered the labor of delivering instructions necessary for himself, feeling great sweetness in receiving and imparting the word of God to others.

Pachomius also sometimes came to Tabennisi and conversed there with everyone, or with someone individually, about the salvation of the soul. His wisdom, his virtues, especially his humility before all, even before the youngest members of the brotherhood, were all a source of edification for everyone. But Theodore especially prized these visits and laid up in his heart the lessons from the life or the words of the great elder.

Pachomius watched carefully over all of Theodore's actions, so as to give him good counsel at the right time. When Theodore did not look strictly enough to the observance of all the rules laid down by Pachomius, Pachomius pointed out to him that it was necessary to require of the monks a complete obedience, obedience even in small matters, because the violation of the smallest rule disturbs the order of monastic life and leads to the development in the monks of a spirit of disobedience.

When two monks allowed themselves to talk while working in the bakehouse, and Theodore paid no attention to this, Pachomius spoke to him sternly and insistently, saying that he must watch over the observance of the rules of outward conduct.

When Theodore, advancing more and more, at last attained a high degree of purity of heart and spiritual wisdom, Venerable Pachomius summoned him from Tabennisi to himself at Pbow, desiring that Theodore share with him the labors of governing all the monasteries, that he be as helper to him as Joshua the son of Nun was to Moses. Now Pachomius often gives Theodore very important commissions. He sends him in his place to oversee the spiritual state of the brethren and to heal their souls. Theodore had the right, in all the monasteries, to direct the reception of monks and the expulsion from the monastery of those who, being incorrigible, caused scandal in the brotherhood by their conduct. Explaining Holy Scripture, Pachomius seats Theodore beside himself. Now Theodore preaches even more often than before in place of Pachomius. His word has the most beneficial effect on the hearers. The love that Theodore, according to the testimony of the ancient biographer, had not only for every monk but for every person, gave him the ability both to penetrate the spiritual needs of the brethren and to help them with a wise and warm word. Pachomius, for his part, was for him an experienced counselor and a stern reprover: he desired that Theodore not stop at that level of moral purity and spiritual wisdom which he had reached so quickly, but that he advance more and more, so as to become wholly pure in spirit and no longer be able to lose that purity.

Venerable Theodore often instructed the monks. In doing so he frequently addressed them with speeches in which he reproved either

faults common to many or the faults and transgressions of individuals, without naming the guilty by name. It happened that they themselves brought repentance before the whole assembly and asked forgiveness of the brethren.

After the death of Venerable Pachomius and of his successor Abba Petronius, who lived only a short time after Pachomius, St. Theodore was a wise guide on the path to salvation for all the Tabennisiote monasteries, partly helping Abba Orsisius in governing them, and partly governing the monasteries in place of him, though in full unity with him, as it were as his co-ruler. Both by his life and by his word he brought great benefit to the monks, and he became famous also for his miracles. For his labors and his wisdom St. Athanasius the Great regarded him with particular esteem. He died some twenty years after the death of Venerable Pachomius.[2] The monks, with Abba Orsisius at their head, long mourned him. St. Athanasius sincerely shared their sorrow. To console the monks, the Hierarch of Alexandria sent them a large epistle, in which he spoke much and eloquently of the virtues and labors of Abba Theodore the Sanctified.

Troparion, Tone 1:

Thou didst appear as a dweller of the desert, an Angel in the flesh, and a Wonderworker, O God-bearing Father our Theodore; by fasting, vigil and prayer thou didst receive heavenly gifts, and thou healest the sick and the souls of those who come to thee in faith. Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him who crowned thee; glory to Him who through thee works healings for all.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Like the phoenix thou didst flourish in the house of God, and thou didst bring forth to the Lord the fruits of virtue through excellent fasting, O Venerable Father. Wherefore thou art glorified as one equal in standing to the bodiless.

* * *

2. Most probably in the year 368.

Memory of the Blessed Maiden Musa

Память блаженной отроковицы Музы

St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome,[3] related to his archdeacon Peter the following account of the blessed maiden Musa (on the word of Probus, Musa's brother):

"When Musa was still a young maiden, the Most Holy Theotokos, the Ever-Virgin Mary, appeared to her in a dream at night; many maidens of the same tender age as Musa accompanied the Mother of God. The Theotokos asked Musa:

'Do you not desire to live together with these maidens and always to follow Me?'

To this Musa replied:

'I very much desire it, my Lady.'

Then the Mother of God told Musa to refrain from childish games and from everything displeasing to God, since in thirty days Musa would come to Her and join the company of the other young virgins.

From that time Musa changed her life: giving up childish games and amusements, she wholly dedicated herself to a life pleasing to God.

Seeing such a change in the life of their daughter, Musa's parents were greatly astonished. When they asked her the reason for such a change, Musa told them that she had seen the Most Holy Theotokos in a dream; she told them of the commandment the Mother of God had given her; she also told them on what day she would depart from this life and join the host of the other virgins who accompanied the Mother of God.

When the twenty-fifth day after Musa's vision of the Mother of God arrived, the maiden fell into a grievous illness; she burned as though in a fire. On the thirtieth day, when the time of the blessed maiden's repose drew near, Musa again saw the Mother of God come to her, ac-

3. St. Gregory the Great (the Dialogist) was a celebrated teacher of the Western Church, who lived in the 6th century. Of his writings the following are especially notable: the "Dialogues on the Life of the Italian Fathers" (for this work, written in dialogical, that is, conversational form, St. Gregory received the surname Dialogist); the "Pastoral Rule," containing reflections on what a pastor should be and how he should fulfill his duties; the Rite of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts; homilies on the Gospel and on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, and others. His memory is celebrated by the Holy Church on 12 March.

companied by the same maidens. The Mother of God began to call Musa to Herself. The blessed maiden answered Her in a quiet voice:

"I am coming, my Lady, I am coming!"

With these words the blessed Musa committed her soul into the hands of the Most Holy Theotokos and, leaving this earthly life, dwelt in the eternal mansions with the other virgins who attended the Mother of God."[4]

When the archdeacon Peter had heard this story, he asked Holy Pope Gregory:

"I would like to know, honored vladyka, whether the souls of the righteous can be received into heaven before they are separated from the body?"

Holy Gregory answered:

"We cannot say of all righteous people without exception that their souls will be received into heaven; nor can we say whose souls will not be received into heaven. But it is probable that there are righteous people whose souls are, as it were, at some distance from the Kingdom of Heaven. The reason for this should be seen precisely in the fact that those people, during the course of their earthly life, did not attain a certain perfection in virtuous living. As for the souls of the righteous who lived pleasingly to God on earth, when they are freed from union with the flesh, they dwell in the heavenly mansions; this truth is clearer than the light of the sun, for our Lord Jesus Christ Himself says: 'For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together' (Mt. 24:28), that is, where our Lord Jesus Christ is, with the human flesh that He took upon Himself, there without any doubt the souls of the righteous will also be. And the holy Apostle Paul greatly desired 'to depart and be with Christ' (Phil. 1:23). He who believes that the Lord abides in heaven must believe also that Paul's soul abides in heaven with Christ. That same Apostle clearly testifies to all that the souls of the righteous, after separation from the body, will be established in the heavenly fatherland, for he says: 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house

4. The repose of the holy maiden Musa took place in the 5th century.

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (2 Cor. 5:1). To our God be glory, honor and worship, now and unto endless ages. Amen."

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the memory of our holy father George, Bishop of Mytilene, who was ordained bishop in the year 842.

On this same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Vitus, Modestus and Crescentia, who suffered in the reign of Diocletian.

On this same day the translation of the relics of Venerable Ephraim of Perekop, Wonderworker of Novgorod, who reposed on 26 September 1523, is also celebrated. The translation of the relics took place on 16 May 1545.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF MAY

May 17

17 мая

New Calendar May 17 · Old Calendar May 30 (civil dates)

Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Andronicus and of Junia, His Helpmate

Память святого Апостола Андроника и Иунии, помощницы его

The Holy Apostle Andronicus belongs to the company of the Seventy Apostles. He believed in Christ before the Holy Apostle Paul, to whom he was a kinsman, as the Apostle Paul testifies in his Epistle to the Romans, saying: "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me" (Rom. 16:7).

The Holy Andronicus was bishop of Pannonia,[1] yet he was not a preacher and teacher of only one city or of one country, but taught throughout the whole world. He journeyed through various lands, preaching everywhere the name of Christ and rooting out the seduction of the demons. His helper in all his preaching labors was the most glorious Junia. Andronicus, together with Junia, died to the world for Christ's sake, so that they might bring many to the knowledge of the true God. And indeed, Andronicus together with his Junia, by their preaching, destroyed many idol temples, and in their place established Christian churches, everywhere casting unclean spirits out of men and healing the infirmities of the weak and the sick. When the holy Andronicus and Junia, fulfilling the common debt of all people, underwent the end of mortal life, they were rewarded by the Lord with the crown

1. Namely, he was bishop of Sirmium in Pannonia. Pannonia was one of the significant southern Danubian regions of the Roman Empire; its boundaries were: on the west, the Alps; on the south, the river Sava; on the east and north, the river Danube. In the history of the Christian Church, Pannonia is notable as the place of the preaching activity of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Cyril and Methodius, the first teachers of the Slavs.

of apostleship and of the ascetic struggle of martyrdom, for they suffered much at the hands of the pagans. Their honorable relics were discovered together with the relics of many other holy martyrs in Eugenius.[2] Concerning these relics it was announced to Christians by a special revelation of God, as is related in detail in the account under the 22nd day of the month of February.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us praise the radiant star, the Apostle of Christ Andronicus, who by the light of divine wisdom enlightened the nations, and with him the wise Junia, who labored together with him in the preaching of the Gospel, crying out: Pray ceaselessly to Christ God for us all.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Solochon

Память святого мученика Солохона

The Holy Martyr Solochon lived in the times of the emperor Maximian,[3] was by birth an Egyptian, and by rank a Christian. He served as a soldier under the tribune Campanus, who had three thousand soldiers under his command. When, by the imperial command, Campanus with his regiment arrived from Egypt at Chalcedon,[4]

2. The repose of the holy Andronicus and Junia took place in the second half of the 1st century. Eugenius was the name of a district in Constantinople, notable for the fact that here many honorable relics were discovered in the reigns of the emperors Arcadius (from 396 to 408) and Honorius (from 396 to 423). Among the other relics, the relics of the holy Andronicus and Junia were also discovered. In the 12th century a church in honor of the Apostle Andronicus was built here by the emperor Andronicus I (reigned from 1183 to 1185). – The memory of St. Andronicus is also celebrated on July 30, together with the commemoration of the Apostles of the Seventy: Silas, Silvanus, Crescens and Epaenetus.

3. Maximian, Roman emperor, reigned from 284 to 305.

4. Chalcedon – or, more correctly, Calchedon – was originally a Megarian colony on the shore of the Sea of Marmara. Under the Christian emperors, Chalcedon was the capital of the Asia Minor province of Bithynia. In the history of the Christian Church, Chalcedon is notable as the place of the IV Ecumenical Council, convened in 451 by the emperor Marcian (reigned from 460 to 467) for the condemnation of the Monophysite heresy. (The Monophysite heresy was founded by Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, who taught that in Jesus Christ the human nature was wholly absorbed by the divine nature, and therefore in Him one should acknowledge only one, divine, nature.)

it was ordered that all the commanders, together with their soldiers, should offer sacrifices to the idols. Fulfilling the imperial order, Campanus proceeded to the sacrifice.

At the time when the soldiers of Campanus's regiment were offering sacrifices to the idols, the holy Solochon, together with two soldiers, Pamphir and Pamphalon, confessed himself a Christian and declared aloud that he would in no case renounce Christ, even if he were delivered to the most cruel torments, but promised to remain faithful to Christ until the end of his life. When after this the saints were delivered to various savage tortures and were cruelly beaten, Pamphamir and Pamphalon gave up their souls into the hands of God, while the holy Solochon continued to confess the name of Christ bravely and aloud. Learning of this, Campanus was greatly enraged and commanded his servants to open the martyr's mouth with a sword and to pour the idol-sacrificial blood into his mouth. But the martyr, by the strength of his teeth, broke the iron; then he tore his bonds asunder and stood free before the tormentor, glorifying the name of Christ and reproaching the impiety of Campanus. At that time a voice was heard from heaven, strengthening the saint in his sufferings and calling him to courage. Following this the saint was subjected to many other torments: the tormentors beat him without mercy, dragged him by the feet over tiles and sharp stones; then they hanged him by his right hand to a tree fastened to a house, and to his left foot they tied a large stone; in this position the saint hung from the sixth hour until the ninth hour; during this time the tormentors urged Solochon in every way to renounce Christ, but he did not fulfill their impious desire. When toward evening the saint was taken down from the tree of torment and set upon the ground, then, to the general astonishment, he could stand as one in health. At last, late in the evening, Campanus, in a rage, took a writing-stylus and with anger thrust it into the saint's ear, so that it passed through his whole head. When the soldiers had left the place of torment, Christians came there, took the honorable body of the holy martyr, which was very weakened by the tortures, placed it on a bed, and carried it into the house of a Christian widow. Here the saint ate a little bread and drank some water. Having somewhat recovered his

strength, he began to converse with the Christians who surrounded his bed, exhorting them to be steadfast and courageous in confessing the faith of Christ. Then, lifting his eyes to heaven and praying to God for a sufficient time, the saint gave up his spirit to Christ[5] our God, to Whom glory is offered forever. Amen.

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5. The repose of the holy martyrs Solochon, Pamphamir and Pamphalon took place in the late 3rd or early 4th century.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF MAY

May 18

18 мая

New Calendar May 18 · Old Calendar May 31 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Theodotus, together with the seven virgins: Phaina, Claudia, Matrona, Tekusa, Julia, Alexandra and Euphrasia

Страдание святого мученика Феодота и с ним семи дев: Фаины, Клавдии, Матроны, Текусы, Иулии, Александры и Евфрасии

Having experienced in myself the many benefits of the Holy Martyr Theodotus, says Nilus, the writer of the life of the holy martyr, I consider myself bound not only to praise his ascetic sufferings in word, but also to give thanks to him in deed. And although I can accomplish this perfectly neither in word nor in deed, nevertheless I shall endeavor to do what I am able, for it seems to me most necessary to commit to writing, for the information and spiritual benefit of the God-loving, the history of the life of the Holy Martyr Theodotus, together with the history of his sufferings. Some speak of him as having at first lived as the majority of other sinful people of this world live, for he too was concerned to obtain the goods of this world; they say that, having entered into lawful marriage, he bought an inn for the sake of gain from his estate. Yet his whole life is crowned and adorned by his martyric deed. Let them speak of him as they will; I, however, shall relate of him everything that I, who lived with him, saw with my own eyes, and I shall also set down the conversations with which I was granted to be honored by the saint.

Long before his martyric deed, the saint performed many good works. Thus he strove with all his might against carnal desires; although he remained in lawful wedlock, he waged war against his flesh, subduing it to the spirit, in accordance with the Apostolic word: "those

who have wives should be as though they had none" (1 Cor. 7:29). The saint advanced so far in this virtue that he could be a teacher of purity and chastity to many others. The saint abstained in every way from sensuality and all sinful impurity, and he enslaved his body to the spirit by fasting and abstinence. Considering fasting the beginning and foundation of every good deed, the saint armed himself with it as with a shield, preparing for spiritual battle. He regarded the mortification of the body as the obligation of every Christian; the thirst for riches and the acquisition of estates he overcame by zealously distributing all his wealth to the poor. Instructive in his life is the fact that, despite possessing the inn, he made abundant spiritual purchases and gained for God many human souls; the cause of this was that Saint Theodotus, under the guise of innkeeping, fulfilled the duty of an Apostle; by his God-inspired teachings and conversations he brought many pagans and Jews to Christ, and induced many sinners to repent of their sins. Saint Theodotus also had the gift of healing infirmities: by the laying on of his hands and by prayer he healed many bodily diseases, and by his word he healed the wounds of the soul.

The occasion of Saint Theodotus's suffering for the name of Christ was as follows. A certain governor named Theotecnus received authority over the province of Ancyra in Galatia[1]. This governor was a very cruel and impious man; he amused himself with the spectacle of blood and murder, and his impiety was so great that it is difficult to express in human words. Theotecnus, receiving the authority of governor from the emperor Diocletian[2], promised him that in a short time he would turn all the Christians living in Ancyra back to paganism.

And indeed, when Theotecnus arrived in Ancyra, the Christians fell into such great fear and trembling at the mere news of his arrival that they at once fled from that place; the settlement was emptied, and the deserts and mountains were populated with fugitives. Theotecnus sent out messengers one after another in his own name, who went about everywhere proclaiming the strict command of the emperor, which ordered that Christian churches be destroyed and razed to the ground,

1. Galatia – a region of Asia Minor.
2. Emperor Diocletian ruled the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.

and that all who confessed the name of Christ be bound in chains and thrown into prisons, where the Christians would remain awaiting cruel tortures; at the same time the property of the Christians was to be confiscated and plundered. At this time the Church of Christ was likened to a ship in great distress amid large waves, fearing to be sunk in the depths of the sea, for the impious pagans attacked the houses of Christians, plundered their property, dragged men and women, youths and maidens, shamelessly out of their homes, and led them either to the places of their impious sacrifices or to prison. It is difficult even to recount all the calamities which the Christians had to endure at that time. Many priests, from fear of torments, fled from their churches; the doors of the churches stood open; yet the fugitives themselves could find no place where they might hide from the pursuit of the pagans. When the property of the Christians had been plundered, a famine came, as grievous as the very torments of the pagans. Then many of the Christians who had hidden in the mountains and deserts, being unable to endure the torment of death by hunger, came to the pagans and gave themselves into their hands, hoping for mercy from them. It was hard then for all the fugitives who sought refuge in the deserts and mountains; especially hard here were those Christians who had formerly lived in abundance and plenty and had known no want; now such Christians had to gnaw the roots they found in the desert places and to feed on various wild herbs.

At this very time the blessed Theodotus labored greatly for the fulfillment of the commandments of the Lord, exposing himself without fear to many dangers; he kept the inn not with the aim of acquiring gold, as some say of him, but he acquired the inn in order to provide in it a refuge and rest for all the persecuted Christians. Moreover he took great care of the Christians who were in chains; he hid in his house the Christians who fled from the pagan tormentors; he also fed all the Christians who were hiding in the mountains and deserts; and the bodies of the holy martyrs, which the pagans had cast out to be eaten by dogs, beasts and birds, he buried secretly (it should be noted that the governor had commanded that those Christians who buried the bodies of their brethren be put to death; therefore the blessed Theodotus

would take them away and bury them secretly). Thus the house of Saint Theodotus was both an inn and at the same time a refuge for Christians, since Theodotus, who was regarded as an innkeeper, did not incur suspicion among the pagans that he was a Christian. And he was all things to all: a protector to the persecuted, a provider to the hungry, a physician to the sick, a firm support to the doubting, a teacher of faith and piety, a guide to a God-pleasing life, and an encourager to the martyric struggle.

At this time the impious governor Theotecnus commanded that every food and every drink sold in the marketplaces be sprinkled everywhere with the blood of sacrifices offered to idols. He did this against the Christians, intending to compel them, even against their will, to eat food defiled with blood offered to idols; as a result, in the Christian churches it was impossible to offer sacrifice to the true God, since in the whole city there was no bread or wine not defiled by the pagans. Learning of this, the holy Theodotus began to distribute to the faithful grain, wheat and wine, which he had bought in advance and had in abundance. Distributing food and drink everywhere and feeding many Christians in his own house, Theodotus likened his inn to the ark of Noah, which saved from the waters of the flood all who were within it (Gen. 7:1–24). For just as then, in the time of Noah, no one could be saved from the waters of the flood except those who were in the ark of Noah, so now in our city (says the writer of the life of Saint Theodotus), none of the Christians could preserve himself from defilement by the abominations of idol-offerings unless he came to the house of Theodotus. Thus the inn of Theodotus became a hospice, and a house of prayer, and a sanctuary for the priests of God, who here performed the unbloody Divine Sacrifice. Everyone fled to the house of Theodotus as to a ship in a time of flood. Such was the innkeeping of this blessed Theodotus, such was his purchase and acquisition. But enough of this. Let us relate also the other deeds of the holy martyr.

During this persecution raised against the Christians, it happened that a friend of Theodotus, named Victor, was seized by the pagans, and for the following reason: some of the priests of Artemis[3] slandered

Victor before the governor, saying that Victor had reviled their goddess, speaking in such a way that Apollo[4] had violated his own sister Artemis, born of the same womb, and defiled her in Delos before the altar[5], and remarking that the pagans ought to be ashamed of such gods of theirs, fornicators who permitted themselves to do such abominable deeds that chaste people cannot even bear to hear of them. Having seized Victor, so slandered, the governor commanded that he be cast into prison. Many pagans came to the prisoner, who with flattery urged him, speaking thus:

"Fulfill the command of the governor; then you will be honored with great honor, you will be a friend of the emperor, you will receive from him many different riches, and you will live in the imperial palaces. But if you do not obey the governor, consider what tortures await you; then your whole house and your property will be plundered, all your relatives will be destroyed, and your very body, after many cruel tortures, will be given over to a bitter death and cast out to be eaten by dogs."

These things, and many others, they said to Victor.

But Theodotus, the guardian of piety, coming by night into the prison to Victor, strengthened him for the coming struggle, speaking to him thus:

Under no circumstances, Victor, listen to those flattering words which the impious pagans speak to you; do not accept their crafty counsel, do not walk in their footsteps, do not forsake us, do not prefer uncleanness and impiety to chastity, and do not love untruth more than truth. Do not do this, O my friend! Do not do it, knowing that those impious men, by their crafty and flattering promises, seek to draw you into perdition. Did not the Jews beguile Judas the traitor with such promises? Did those thirty pieces of silver which he received from them profit him? He gained nothing else for himself with those thirty pieces of silver but the rope with which he hanged himself (Mt. 27:3–5). Nev-

3. Artemis or Diana – goddess of the hunt and patroness of forests.
4. Apollo – god of the sun, patron of the arts.
5. The reference is to the tales of Greek mythology concerning the exploits of the gods. It must be noted that the ancient Greek religion endowed its gods not only with various beneficent powers, art and knowledge, but also with failings proper to men of the lowest morality.

er think that you will receive anything good from the wicked, for their promises prepare eternal death."

With these and similar words Saint Theodotus strengthened Victor in piety. And Victor indeed endured his ordeal bravely for as long as he remembered the words with which Saint Theodotus had exhorted him. All who beheld the saint's suffering praised his glorious contest. When the very end of his martyric ordeal drew near, and the time had come for his departure from this world, Victor asked the tormentor to suspend his suffering for a while, so that he might have time to reflect within himself. Immediately the servants of the hegemon ceased the torment and led Victor to prison. But Victor died in prison from his wounds, leaving the outcome of his confession unknown.

After this, the blessed Theodotus set out for a village called "Malos," which lay fourteen stadia from the city. The saint went there because he had learned that here the holy martyr Valens, who had earlier suffered in Midikinai, had completed his martyric ordeal and had been cast into a river called the Galios. Theodotus went toward that village, but did not enter it; he halted near it, on the river, at a distance of two miles from the village. Having found the relics of the holy martyr, Theodotus buried them with honor. As he was returning from there, he met some Christians who, on seeing him, gave him heartfelt thanks as the benefactor of all Christians; they especially thanked him for one great kindness which the saint had shown them: when the altar of Artemis had been destroyed, these Christians had been handed over to the hegemon for torment, but Saint Theodotus ransomed them after much trouble, and at no small price. For this reason the Christians now bowed down to him, greeting him and offering him thanks. The saint, expressing his joy at meeting them, invited them to share a meal with him. Finding a high and beautiful place, they reclined on the grass; many fine trees grew in that place, there were many flowers, and the singing of birds could be heard everywhere. Before beginning the meal, the saint sent two of them to the village to fetch a priest, who would bless the table, eat with them, and then send them on their way with the customary prayers (it should be noted that Saint Theodotus was accustomed always to take food with a priest's blessing, and even, when

it was possible, in his presence). As the messengers approached that village, they saw a priest coming out of the church after the singing of the sixth hour; they did not know, however, that he was the presbyter of that village. Noticing that the dogs in that village were barking loudly at the travelers, the priest came up to them, drove off the dogs, greeted them, and then asked:

"Are you Christians? If you are Christians, come into my house, that we may rejoice together in love for Christ."

They answered him:

"Yes, we are Christians, and we are seeking Christians." The priest, smiling, said to himself:

"Phronton!" (such was his name). "See how your dreams of sleep are coming true!"

Then, turning to the travelers, he said:

"This night I saw in a dream two men very much like you; they said to me: 'We have brought a treasure into this region.' Since it seems to me that you resemble those men very much, tell me: what treasure have you brought with you?"

Those men answered:

"Indeed, we have with us a man, the blessed Theodotus, more precious than any treasure. If you wish, you may see him, but first show us the priest of this village."

He answered:

"I am the one you seek. Come, then, and let us bring the man of God into my house."

After this they all went to Saint Theodotus.

When the priest saw Theodotus, he greeted him with love; he greeted the other Christians as well, and then began to urge them all to come to his house. But Saint Theodotus would not go, saying:

"I am hastening to reach the city quickly, for a great contest has now come upon the Christians; therefore I must, to the best of my strength, serve my brethren who are in affliction and in great danger."

After this the priest offered a prayer, and then all proceeded to partake of the food. When the meal was over, Saint Theodotus said to the presbyter with a smile upon his face:

"How beautiful this place is, and how suitable it is for the burial of holy relics!"

The priest answered him:

"Be so kind as to bring honorable relics to us here."

Saint Theodotus answered:

"Only take the trouble, Father, to build a house of prayer on this spot, in which the holy relics may be placed, and before long martyric relics will be brought to you."

Then the saint took the ring from his hand and, giving the ring to the priest, said:

"May the Lord be witness between me and you that before long martyric relics will be brought here."

The saint spoke these words, prophetically foretelling the placing of his own relics here, for he strove with all his soul toward the martyric contest.

Soon afterward Saint Theodotus came to his city and to his house, and found everything here in great plunder and ruin, as though a great earthquake had occurred.

In that city there lived seven pious virgins, reared from their youth in piety and the fear of God, who kept chastity of body and soul and had betrothed themselves to the incorruptible and immortal Bridegroom, Christ the Son of God. Living a pious and God-pleasing life, these virgins had reached old age; the eldest of them was Tekusa, who was the aunt of Saint Theodotus. The hegemon seized these holy virgins and subjected them to many kinds of torment; but since the torments could not shake their faith, he gave them over to lustful youths for defilement, reviling them and mocking the Christian piety. When those virgins were being led away to be defiled, they sighed from the depths of their hearts, raised their eyes to heaven and lifted up their hands, and began to pray to God in these words:

"Lord Jesus Christ! Thou knowest with what care and zeal we have kept our virginity for as long as it was in our power; but now shameless youths have gained power over our bodies. Preserve us, therefore, pure, by whatever ways Thou Thyself knowest."

While the holy virgins were praying to God with tears in such words, one shameless youth drew the eldest of the virgins, Tekusa, toward himself, intending to defile her. She, seizing him by the feet, said to him with tears:

"My child! What pleasure can our bodies, worn out by old age, fasting, sickness and torments, give you, as you yourselves can see! I am already more than seventy years old. My other sisters are a little younger than I. It is not fitting for you, such young men, to touch bodies that are as though already dead, which you will soon see devoured by beasts and birds, since the hegemon has already almost condemned us to death. Do us no harm, and you will receive a reward for this from our God, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Speaking thus, Saint Tekusa took the veil from her head and, showing the youth the gray of her hair, said to him again:

"My child! Be ashamed, for you too have a mother, as I think, who has grown as old as I am, if she is still alive; but if she has died, then remember her and leave us, and you will receive a reward from our Lord Christ, for hope in Him is not vain."

Such words of Tekusa moved this youth and his companions to compunction; abandoning their carnal desire, those youths began to weep and withdrew from the holy virgins, doing them no harm.

When Theotecnus learned that those virgins had not been defiled, he gave up the thought of violating them by force and ordered them to become priestesses of the goddess Artemis, their duty being, according to the pagan custom, to wash the idols in the nearby lake.

The day came for the washing of the idols, a festival celebrated with great solemnity by the pagans. Placing the idols, each on a separate chariot, the pagans carried them publicly with singing and rejoicing toward the lake. By the hegemon's command the pagans also drove the holy virgins before the idols, each on a separate chariot; the virgins were stripped naked for the amusement and mockery of the pagans. All the citizens came out to this festival, to hear the sound of trumpets and cymbals and the singing of women who walked through the streets with bare heads and loosened hair. From the noise and tramping of the crowd, and from the blare of the trumpets, the whole earth seemed to

shake. Together with all the people walked the hegemon Theotecnus, offspring of the viper, servant of the devil. The pagans gazed at the naked virgins; some gave themselves up to laughter, others marveled at their patience and courage, and some, grieving over their bodies worn by wounds, wept in compassion and sorrowed in heart.

When these impious festivities were being celebrated under such circumstances, St. Theodotus was in very great sorrow on account of the holy virgins, for he feared that one of them, through the weakness of the female nature, might grow faint in the ordeal of suffering and lose hope in the help of the Lord Jesus Christ. Reflecting upon this, Theodotus began most earnestly to pray for the holy ascetics, asking God to strengthen the holy virgins in their struggle. For prayer, St. Theodotus shut himself in together with his kinsman Polychronius, with the young Theodotus, also a kinsman, and with other Christians, in the house of a poor Christian named Theocharis, which stood near the church in honor of the holy Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Prostrate upon the ground, Theodotus and the other Christians who prayed with him lay there, praying from the first hour of the day until the sixth, until the wife of Theocharis announced that the bodies of the honorable virgins had been cast into the lake.[6] Hearing such tidings, St. Theodotus raised himself somewhat from the ground; then, kneeling, he lifted his hands to heaven and, shedding many tears like drops of rain, prayed in these words:

"I thank Thee, O Master, that Thou hast heard the voice of my weeping and hast not made my tears in vain!"

Then he began to question the wife of Theocharis: in what manner the virgins had been drowned in the water, and at what place, whether near the shore or in the middle of the river. She said to him:

"I stood near that place together with other women, and I saw that the hegemon for a long time exhorted the virgins to serve the idols by washing them, and promised them many gifts. Yet the hegemon did not succeed in the least in his request, but was put to even greater shame by the reproachful words of St. Tecusa. The priests of Artemis and

6. The death of the holy virgin martyrs took place at the beginning of the 4th century.

Athena[7] offered them white garments and adorned wreaths, so that in these garments and wreaths they might perform the ablution of the idols. But the martyrs, taking those garments and wreaths, cast them upon the ground and began to trample them underfoot. Then the hegemon commanded that heavy stones be bound to the necks of the saints, and then, placing them in boats, commanded that they be carried to a deep place and cast into the water. They were thrown into the water about two stadia from the shore."

Hearing this, the saint consulted until evening with Polychronius and Theocharis as to how they might take the honorable bodies of the holy martyrs out of the water, in order to give them burial. At sunset there came to them a young Christian named Glycerius, who said that the hegemon had posted a guard of soldiers at the lake, and had commanded the guard to watch lest the bodies of the martyrs be taken from the lake. Hearing this, St. Theodotus was greatly grieved, for it was not easy for him now to take the bodies of the holy martyrs, partly because of the guard, and partly because of the heavy stones bound to the necks of the saints; these stones were so heavy that they could scarcely be carried in carts. In the evening Theodotus went to the nearby church of the holy Patriarchs, the entrance to which had been barred by pagans so that Christians could not pass into it. Coming to the church, the saint prostrated himself upon the ground before it and prayed for a long time. Then, rising, he went toward the entrance of the church; but seeing that the entrance was barred, he stopped and again stood here in prayer. Hearing somewhere off to the side a cry and noise, and thinking that the pagans were pursuing him, the saint immediately rose and went to the house of Theocharis. Here he fell asleep for a short time. In a dream there appeared to him his aunt, St. Tecusa, who said:

"You sleep, son Theodotus, and take no care at all for us. Do you not remember how I taught you when you were still a youth? Do you not remember how I guided you in the virtuous life, taking the place of father and mother for you? And when I was alive, you never offended me, but always honored me as a true mother. But now, after my death,

7. Athena or Minerva – goddess of wisdom.

you have forgotten me, though you ought to serve me to the end of your life. But I beg you, do not leave our bodies in the water, lest they become the prey of fishes, but make haste to take them out of the water, for you yourself, two days hence, will go forth to the martyr's struggle. Rise from your bed, go to the lake, but beware of the traitor."

Having said this, the saint left Theodotus.

Awakening, Theodotus told the other Christians who were in that house about his vision, and all began with tears to pray to the Lord, asking Him to help them find the bodies of the holy martyrs. The blessed Theodotus, meditating upon the vision, wondered what the last words spoken to him by Tecusa meant: "beware of the traitor." But afterward these words were fulfilled, as will be seen from the following account.

When morning came, Theodotus sent the aforementioned youth Glycerius together with Theocharis to learn more precisely about the soldiers standing near the river, for he thought they had gone away on account of the feast of the goddess Artemis, which the pagans were celebrating that day. The emissaries set out, but found that the soldiers had not yet left; returning, they reported this to the other Christians, and all spent that day in fasting and prayer. At evening, the Christians, not yet having taken food, set out for the lake, taking with them sharp sickles with which they could cut the ropes bound about the necks of the holy martyrs. It was very dark at that time, for on that night neither the moon nor the stars shone. When they all approached the place where the death sentences of evildoers and brigands were carried out (and that place was very dreadful, so that no one dared pass there after sunset; corpses, bones, and heads cut from bodies lay there, and some of the heads had been stuck upon stakes), they all fell into great fear, but were soon encouraged, for they heard a voice saying:

"Go forth with boldness, Theodotus!"

Hearing these words with reverence, all made the sign of the Cross upon themselves. And immediately there appeared in the air, from the eastern side, a most bright cross, sending forth fiery rays in all directions. Seeing this cross, all rejoiced and were filled with awe; and then, falling on their knees, all worshipped the holy Cross and prayed to the

Lord. Rising after prayer, all went toward the lake; but since at this time the vision of the cross had vanished, it again became so dark that no one could see another. At this time rain began to fall, as a result of which the road became slippery, which greatly hindered the way. Then all stood in prayer, asking God for help in such distress, and immediately a fiery lamp appeared, showing the way; at the same time there appeared to St. Theodotus two honorable men in white garments, having gray hair on their heads and beards, who said to him:

"Be bold, Theodotus, for our Lord and God Jesus Christ has written your name among the names of the martyrs, having heard your tearful prayer for the finding of the bodies of His holy brides. We have been sent by Him to help you; we belong to the company of those fathers before whose church you prayed last night. When you come to the lake, you will see here the martyr Sosander, armed, terrifying and driving away the soldiers who guard the lake; yet you ought not to lead with you a traitor."

Having said this, the saints became invisible.

St. Theodotus did not learn who was the traitor among those who went with him.

Following the lamp that had appeared, all came to the lake. At this time thunder arose, lightning flashed, a heavy rain fell, and a terrible storm began; the soldiers standing on the shore of the lake, greatly terrified, fled from there, and they were frightened not so much by the thunder, lightning, and storm as by a dreadful vision; for they saw a very large man, holding armor, a shield, and a spear in his hands; upon his head was a helmet; and about that man there went forth a bright radiance on all sides. This was the martyr Sosander. Terrified at such a vision, the soldiers fled, seized by great fear. Meanwhile the water in the lake was driven by the wind from one side of the lake to the other, so that the bottom of the lake was laid bare, and the bodies of the holy martyrs, lying on the bottom of the lake, appeared before the eyes of the Christians. Coming to the holy martyrs, the Christians cut with their sickles the ropes by which the stones had been fastened to the necks of the martyrs; then, taking up the honorable bodies, they placed them on chariots and carried them to the church of the holy Patriarchs,

where they buried them with honor. The names of those martyrs were as follows: Tecusa, Alexandra, Claudia, Faina, Euphrasia, Matrona, and Julia. These holy virgins suffered on the eighteenth day of the month of May.

Early the next day it became known in the city that the Christians had taken the bodies of the holy women martyrs out of the lake. Learning of this, the governor, the idol priests, and all the other pagan idolaters were filled with great fury, so that they dragged before the tribunal every Christian whom they happened to meet in the street. At this time many Christians were taken for interrogation and handed over to a cruel and tormenting death; they were torn apart by their tormentors as though by the teeth of beasts. When Saint Theodotus learned of this, he wished to give himself into the hands of the pagans, but his relatives restrained him from doing so. Polychronius, however, changed his clothes and, disguised in the garb of a farmer, came to the city square in order to learn what was happening in the city, but he was at once seized by the pagans and presented for interrogation before the governor. Polychronius endured many blows and wounds from the tormentors, but remained silent. When, however, he saw the sword raised above his head, he was greatly afraid and told the tormentors how the innkeeper Theodotus had drawn the bodies of the holy women martyrs out of the lake and buried them beside the church built in honor of the holy patriarchs. Learning of this, the pagans at once went to the place where the honorable bodies of the holy women martyrs had been buried, dug up their graves, and committed the bodies to the fire; after this the pagans set out to search for Theodotus, and this was made known to him in secret that same evening. At this time Saint Theodotus understood that Polychronius, his relative and friend, was the betrayer whom the holy patriarchs had commanded them to beware of. Resolving to give himself up to torments, Theodotus spoke thus to his relatives:

"Pray for me to the Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, that He may vouchsafe me the crown of martyrdom."

And all prayed with him through the whole night, and Saint Theodotus prayed in these words:

"Lord Jesus Christ, hope of those who despair, help me to accomplish my martyric struggle courageously, and receive my blood, which my tormentors will shed, as a sacrifice offered to Thee for all persecuted Christians. Lighten their suffering, still the fierce storm of persecution, that the faithful may abide in quiet and peace."

When the day came, the saint resolved to go to the tormentors and deliver himself into their hands. Learning of this, all his relatives wept and lamented, and embracing him, they said:

"May you receive salvation, light and adornment of the Church, honorable Theodotus! When your sufferings are ended, may you become a partaker of the heavenly light, may you be numbered with the host of Angels and Archangels, and may the glory of the Holy Spirit and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God the Father, shine upon you. May all these blessings be granted you for the struggle to which you are going forth. But know that for us, who remain in the midst of such calamities, your departure will bring much grief and tears."

While all wept, speaking such words, Saint Theodotus embraced and kissed each of them with a final kiss; then he commanded that his body, if it could be secretly taken from the tormentors, be given to the priest Fronton, who would come from the village of Malos with his ring.

Finally, Saint Theodotus signed himself with the sign of the Cross and courageously went out of his house.

On the way he met two of the senior citizens of that city. Wishing to show him their love and respect, they advised him to hide himself somewhere quickly, and said:

"The priests of Athena and Artemis, together with the other pagans, are slandering you to the governor, saying that you advise all Christians not to worship senseless stone and wood; they say many other things about you as well; and Polychronius has said of you that you secretly stole the bodies of the virgins. Hide yourself, Theodotus, while it is not yet too late, for it is madness to give yourself into the hands of the tormentors."

But the saint answered them:

"If you are my friends, and if you truly wish to show your love for me, do not hinder me on the way I am going; rather, go to the court and say to the elders there: 'Behold, Theodotus, whom the priests and the people are slandering, stands here before the doors.'"

Having said this, the saint went forward quickly, and standing in the midst of the court, with a joyful face he looked upon the instruments of torment; here were both a heated furnace and cauldrons of boiling water, and wheels, and many other instruments of torture. Gazing upon all this, the saint was not at all terrified in heart nor troubled in his thoughts, but continued to stand with a cheerful face, showing his courage to all. When the governor saw the saint, he said to him:

"You will suffer nothing from any of the instruments of torment here, if you offer sacrifices to the gods; then you will be free from all the crimes of which you are accused both by the priests and by our whole city; moreover, you will then be a friend to us and beloved of the emperor, who will bestow great honors upon you; only renounce Jesus, whom Pilate, who governed before us, crucified in Judea. Consider this, Theodotus! You seem to me a prudent man; and a prudent man ought in all things to act with circumspection and reason. Turn away from all madness; persuade the other Christians also to abandon their folly, and then you will be the chief of this whole city; you will then be the priest of our chief god Apollo, who bestows many blessings upon men, foretells the future, and heals infirmities with his remedies; if you serve this god, you will have the right to appoint the other priests for the service of all the remaining gods. Through you all appointments to all the most important offices will pass; you will be an intercessor before the judges; you will write letters to all peoples in the name of the emperor concerning various public needs; you will be very rich, and all your relatives will be held in great honor. If you need riches and property, I can give them to you, even now."

While the governor was saying this, a loud cry rose among the people, approving the governor's words and exhorting Theodotus to accept riches and honors from the governor. But Saint Theodotus answered the governor Theotecnus thus:

"First of all, I ask help from my Lord, Jesus Christ (whom you have called a mere man), that He may vouchsafe me to expose your error and to show the vanity of your gods; at the same time, in brief words I will tell you the mystery of the incarnation of my Lord and the wonders wrought by Him. O Theotecnus! I ought to speak to you of my faith and of my works; but I will expose before you all, to your shame, the deeds of your gods, of which it is shameful even to speak. He whom you call Zeus[8] and whom you consider a god, more glorious than all your other gods, gave himself over to such a vile carnal lust that he may be considered the beginning and the end of every evil. Your poet Orpheus[9] relates that Zeus killed his own father Saturn[10], and took to himself as wife his own mother Rhea, and begot of her a daughter, Persephone; but he did not stop there; he committed adultery also with his own daughter, and moreover had as his wife his sister Juno[11]; likewise Apollo defiled his sister Diana before the altar on the island of Delos. Equally, Mars[12] raged with carnal passion for Venus[13], Vulcan[14] for Minerva—brothers upon their own sisters. Do you not see, governor, how abominable are the lawless deeds of your gods? Does not your law punish all who commit such crimes? And you boast of such deeds of your lecherous gods and are not ashamed to worship parricides, incestuous persons, adulterers, defilers of children, sorcerers (all this your poets have written, praising the abominable deeds of your gods). But the deeds and wonders of our Lord Jesus Christ are pure and have not a single blemish. Concerning the mystery of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, all the holy prophets foretold, saying that in the last times God would come to men from heaven, would live with men as a

8. Dii or Zeus – the supreme god of the ancient Greek religion, regarded as the progenitor of the other gods.
9. Orpheus – one of the prominent figures of Greek mythology. Orpheus was considered the son of the Thracian king Oeagrus and the muse Calliope. His lyre, according to mythology, produced such wondrous sounds that wild beasts came out of their lairs and followed him. Orpheus was regarded as a skilled poet, the founder of ancient Greek poetry.
10. Saturn – god of the earth and of sowing.
11. Juno was regarded as the patroness of family life.
12. Mars – god of war.
13. Venus or Aphrodite – goddess of love and beauty.
14. Vulcan – god of fire and metals.

man, would work signs and unspeakable wonders, healing manifold infirmities and granting men the Kingdom of Heaven. And not only the incarnation of the Lord, but also His voluntary suffering for us, His death and burial, the same holy prophets foretold beforehand with great precision; witnesses of this are the Chaldeans and the wise Persian magi, who by a star found the place of His birth and came to Him with gifts to worship Him as God. The witnesses of His resurrection were the Roman soldiers who guarded His tomb. They themselves saw the Lord rise from the grave; this they reported to the high priests. But who can recount all the wonderful and glorious deeds which our Lord Jesus Christ performed during His earthly life? First of all, He turned water into wine; then, with five loaves and two fishes He fed five thousand people in the wilderness; He healed the sick, walked on the sea as on dry land; the nature of fire feared His power; to the man born blind He gave sight, He made the lame swift of foot; at His command the dead rose; He raised and restored to life Lazarus, who had been dead four days. All these most glorious and marvelous wonders clearly show to all that Jesus Christ was the true God, and not a mere man."

When the Saint, in such words, bore witness to the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, all the pagans standing near that place fell into great confusion and began to roar, as the sea roars in the wind. The priests tore out their hair, rent their garments and tore their garlands; and the people grew more and more agitated and angrily demanded of the hegemon why he permitted such a blasphemer, deserving of death, to speak so much, and did not hand him over to execution and torment?

Then the hegemon, growing still more angry, ordered the soldiers to strip the Saint, hang him naked upon the torture-tree, and tear his body with iron instruments; the hegemon himself rose from his place, intending to torment the Saint with his own hands. At this time a whole storm arose from the outcry of the people; the people shouted, demanded and commanded the hegemon's servants to begin the torment; the servants prepared the instruments of torture; and only the holy martyr continued to stand quietly, in no way disturbed in his soul and not terrified in his heart. Theodotus was so calm that it seemed the torment was being prepared not for him.

Afterward the Saint was hung upon the tree. When the soldiers began to tear the Saint's body without mercy with iron claws, he seemed to shine with a joyful face, for he had the Lord Jesus Christ as his helper. So the Saint was tormented for a long time. Already the servants had grown weary, and others replaced them. The martyr, however, remained unshaken in confessing the name of Christ, so that it seemed he suffered not in his own body but as if in another's; he directed all his thoughts to the Lord Jesus Christ, who helped him.

After some time the hegemon Theotecnus ordered the strongest vinegar mixed with salt to be poured upon the Saint's wounds, and then ordered candles to be used to scorch the venerable ribs of the martyr. The martyr, scorched by the fire and perceiving the stench rising from his body, which was being burned on all sides, began to turn his face away; noticing this, the hegemon at once approached him and said:

"Where now, Theodotus, are all your bold words? I see that you are being overcome by torments. But if you had not reviled our gods, and if you had bowed down to them, you would not be suffering so now. Did I not advise you, a man of humble origin who engaged in tavern-keeping, not to resist the command of the emperor, who holds in his hands the power over your life and death?"

To this the holy martyr replied:

"Do not think, hegemon, that your torments overcome me because you see that I have turned my face aside, so as not to smell the stench of my burning body. Rather command your servants to carry out what they have been ordered with greater zeal, for it seems to me that they are performing their duties far too lazily. And you yourself devise some still more cruel torments for me, that you may learn how great is the power of my Lord Jesus Christ, who strengthens me in the midst of these torments. Relying and trusting on the help of my God, I despise not only you but also your emperor, as the lowest of prisoners."

When the Saint spoke thus, the hegemon ordered the soldiers to strike the martyr on the mouth and to shatter his jaws and teeth. The Saint, enduring the blows, said to the hegemon:

"Even if you cut my tongue into pieces, you will in no way succeed in your undertakings, for God and our Lord Jesus Christ hears also His servants who are silent."

After the Saint had been tormented and torn by the soldiers for a sufficient time, so that all the hegemon's servants were exhausted, the hegemon ordered Theodotus to be taken down from the torture-tree and confined in a dungeon until the next torment.

The soldiers led the Saint Theodotus through the whole city to the dungeon. His whole body was covered with wounds, and through this Theodotus showed everyone his victory over the tormentor and over the devil. During the procession to the dungeon the Saint was accompanied by a very great crowd of people, who looked upon the martyr of Christ as some curious spectacle. The Saint, however, proclaimed aloud the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying:

"Behold how great and glorious is the power of Christ my Lord. You yourselves see that by His ordering, those who suffer for His holy name feel no pain from wounds and torments; you see that He makes the weak human flesh stronger than fire; you see that He gives such great courage and firmness to people of humble origin that they count as nothing the commands of the emperors and princes themselves. Our Master gives His grace to all who believe in Him, the lowly and the noble, slaves and free, barbarians and Greeks."

Then, pointing to his wounds, he spoke again:

"Believers must offer to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ such a sacrifice as He Himself suffered for us all."

When the Saint had said this, he was led into the dungeon and confined there in a cramped and narrow place.

Sixteen days after the Saint Theodotus had been confined in the dungeon, the hegemon ordered a tribunal to be prepared in the center of the city, at the place where spectacles were usually held. The holy martyr was brought out of the dungeon and presented at the tribunal. Seeing him, the hegemon said:

"Come nearer to us, Theodotus, for it seems to me that, having been sufficiently punished before, you have now laid aside all your pride and have changed for the better. Truly, you acted unwisely in bringing upon

yourself such great torments. We did not wish to torment you. But now, abandoning your obstinacy, know the power and might of our gods; then we will reward you with those gifts of which we spoke before. We promised you these gifts earlier, and we promise them now; you will receive them if you bow down to our gods; but if you do not bow down to the gods, you will at once see both the fire prepared for you, and the sharp iron instruments, and the mouths of beasts ready to tear you apart."

The holy martyr answered:

"O Theotecnus! Can you devise a torment that would overcome the power of my Lord Jesus Christ, who strengthens me in the midst of torments? But although my body has already been sufficiently wounded by the instruments of torture, as you yourself see, test my strength once more; give me over to new torments, and you will see that I will bear them bravely, as I bore the earlier ones."

Then the hegemon ordered the Saint to be hung again upon the torture-tree and his body to be torn with iron instruments, renewing his old wounds. During the torments the Saint loudly confessed the name of Christ. Then the tormentor ordered the soldiers to take the Saint down from the torture-tree and drag him over burning potsherds. Afterward the Saint was hung again upon the tree and again torn with iron instruments, so that not one unwounded place remained on the martyr's body: he was all as if one continuous wound; only his tongue remained whole, and with it he glorified God and reviled the tormentors and soldiers as feeble. Not knowing by what other torment to deliver the Saint, the hegemon issued an order condemning the Saint to death, which read as follows:

"We order Theodotus, the defender of the Galilean faith, the enemy of our gods, the opponent of the imperial decrees and my reviler, to be beheaded with the sword; and his body is to be given to the fire, so that the Christians cannot bury it."

The Saint was led outside the city, to a field, for beheading. A very great crowd followed him, both men and women, desiring to see his end. Arriving at the appointed place, the Saint began to pray to God in these words:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of heaven and earth, who forsakest not all who trust in Thy holy name! I thank Thee that Thou makest me worthy to be a citizen of the heavenly fatherland and a partaker of Thy Kingdom. I thank Thee that Thou didst help me to overcome the serpent and crush his head. I beseech Thee: grant relief to Thy faithful servants from the misfortunes that surround them; let the persecution raised against Thy Church by the impious pagans cease with my death. Grant peace to Thy Church and deliver it from the slanders of its enemies."

Finishing the prayer and saying "Amen," the Saint turned and saw the Christians weeping for him. Then the Saint said to them:

"Do not weep for me, brethren, but rather glorify the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who helped me to finish my struggle bravely and to overcome the enemy. I, for my part, will be in heaven and will pray to God for you with boldness."

Having said this, the martyr bowed his honorable head beneath the sword and was beheaded on the seventh day of the month of June.[15]

Meanwhile the hegemon's servants brought a great quantity of wood to that place, laid a pyre, and placed upon it the body of the martyr of Christ, intending to burn it by the hegemon's command. But suddenly, by God's providence, a great storm arose, and a light appeared around the martyr's body, shining like lightning, so that none of the soldiers dared to approach the wood and kindle it.

When the hegemon learned of this, he ordered the soldiers not to leave that place and to guard the martyr's body, lest the Christians steal it. Carrying out the hegemon's command, the soldiers made themselves a tent of willow branches and reeds and sat in that tent, guarding the martyr's body from the Christians.

Meanwhile, by the providence of God, it came about that the priest Fronton, who had upon his hand the ring of the martyr Theodotus, was passing by that place. He was going from his own village to a neighbor-

15. The death of St. Theodotus the martyr took place in 303 or 304. The memory of the holy martyr is also celebrated on June 7, the day of his death. His Life is placed under the 18th day of the month of May because his martyric exploit is closely bound up with the martyric death of the holy seven virgins commemorated on this day.

ing village and knew nothing of what had befallen St. Theodotus. Fronton was carrying on his donkey some very fine wine, prepared long before; he intended to sell this wine in the city, for he had his own vineyard and supported himself and his household from it. When Fronton came to the place where the tent of the soldiers stood and where the body of the martyr lay, the donkey stumbled and fell to the ground. Seeing this, the soldiers went to help Fronton and said to him:

"Where are you going, traveler? Night has already fallen. It would be better for you to stay with us, especially since there is pasture here for livestock."

The priest agreed to spend the night with them and went into their tent (it should be noted that the body of the martyr was covered with branches and hay). A fire had been kindled by the tent and food was already prepared. The soldiers invited Fronton to eat with them. Fronton, however, took their vessel, filled it with wine, and offered it to the soldiers to drink from. Having tasted the wine, the soldiers praised it, for the wine was indeed very good. Then the soldiers asked Fronton:

"How many years old is this wine?"

Fronton answered:

"It is already about five years old."

The soldiers drank the wine, not knowing that their guest was a Christian and moreover a priest. During the meal the soldiers conversed with Fronton about what had happened in recent days; they told him how seven virgins had been drowned because they would not wash the idols, how the tavern-keeper Theodotus had taken their bodies by night from the lake and given them burial, how the city authorities had sought him for this, how he himself came to the tribunal and gave himself over to torments, how he endured them bravely, as one possessing a body of iron. Then they said:

"Here lies the beheaded body of the one we are guarding by the order of the hegemon."

Hearing their words, the priest gave thanks to God, who had vouchsafed him to learn of the suffering and death of the holy martyr Theodotus. Then the priest began to consider how he might take the honorable body of the Christ-martyr from there. Filling the vessel to

the brim, he handed it to the soldiers and told them they could drink as much wine as they wished. When the soldiers, having become drunk, fell asleep, Fronton approached the honorable body of the Christ-martyr, uncovered it, and began to kiss it with tears; then, taking the ring from his own hand, he placed it upon the finger of the martyr with these words:

"O holy martyr of Christ, Theodotus! You have indeed fulfilled what I asked of you."

Then Fronton firmly tied the honorable body and head of the martyr to his donkey and sent the donkey alone back to his village. And the donkey went toward Fronton's village, bearing upon itself the honorable body of the martyr; Fronton, for his part, laid branches and hay again on the place where the body of the martyr had lain, and, going back into the tent, fell asleep.

Early the next morning Fronton rose very early and began, as if lamenting his donkey, saying:

"My animal has run away from here. Has someone not stolen it?"

The soldiers sympathized with Fronton, not knowing that the honorable body of the martyr had been taken from there, since they saw that the branches and hay lay in their place. Leaving the wine with them, the priest went out of their tent, as if to search for his donkey, but he never returned to them, for he went to his own village.

The donkey, however, by God's providence, came to that very place where St. Theodotus once conversed with Fronton and praised that place as very beautiful and suitable for the repose of the holy relics there; in this very place the Christ-martyr had advised Fronton to build a church and had promised to send the martyr's relics into it. Arriving at this place, the donkey stopped and did not move forward until its master Fronton came and took the honorable relics from it. Then Fronton summoned Christians there and buried the holy relics of the martyr with honor, and afterward built here a church in the name of the holy martyr Theodotus, to the glory of Christ our God.

All this I, the humble Nilus, have recorded (says the writer of the Life of the holy martyr Theodotus); I have written it for all beloved brethren in Christ with great attention and zeal, for I knew the history

of the life of the holy martyr and was imprisoned together with him. Read with faith and love, that you may receive one lot in the Kingdom of Heaven with the holy martyr Theodotus and with all the saints who labored for piety, and rejoice in the heavens in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom glory, honor, and worship are offered together with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou didst nobly struggle in suffering, together with thy fellow sufferers, O Theodotus, and didst receive the crowns of honor with the honorable virgin passion-bearers. Wherefore entreat Christ God unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Peter, Dionysius, Andrew, Saul, Christina, Heraclius, Paulinus, and Venedimus

Страдание святых мучеников Петра, Дионисия, Андрея, Савла, Христины, Ираклия, Павлина и Венедима

During the persecutions raised against the Christians by the pagans, the faithful soldiers of Christ laid down their souls for their Lord, so that the whole universe was reddened with martyric blood. At this time the Christian Peter, a handsome youth, strong in body and no less in spirit, was also seized by the pagans; he was taken in Lampsacus, a city on the Hellespont. When Peter was brought for interrogation before the hegemon Opitimin, the hegemon asked him:

"Are you a Christian?"

"Yes, I am a Christian," Peter answered. The hegemon said:

"You have before your eyes the decrees of our invincible emperors; now offer sacrifice to our great goddess Venus."

The youth answered:

"I marvel at you, hegemon, that you dare to urge me to bow down before a filthy and lewd woman who permitted herself to commit such abominable deeds that it is shameful even to speak of them. Do you not

now pursue and punish by law those who permit themselves to do such deeds as you ascribe to your goddess Venus? But if you consider your goddess a harlot, how can I bow down and offer sacrifice to a loathsome adulteress? No, I must worship the living and true God, the King of all ages, Christ my Lord; to Him alone it is fitting to offer the sacrifice of prayer, praise, and compunction."

Hearing such words, the hegemon ordered the soldiers to bind the youth to wheels and to tear his body with wooden and iron instruments, crushing his bones. But the servant of God Peter, the more fiercely he was tormented, the more firmly and steadfastly he was established in hope in the help of the Lord Jesus Christ, mocking the madness of the hegemon. Then Peter raised his eyes to heaven and began to pray thus:

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast given me such strength and firmness amid torments; grant me to bring my struggle to a courageous end and to conquer the impious foe."

Perceiving that nothing could be accomplished with torments against the courageous youth Peter, the hegemon ordered his head to be cut off with a sword.

At the same time Dionysius, who also confessed the Christian faith, was seized and cast into prison. When the hegemon was about to go from Lampsacus to Troas, a city lying near the Hellespontine region, two Christian soldiers, natives of Mesopotamia[16], named

Andrew and Paul; together with them was brought also the Christian Nicomachus, who cried out loudly and unceasingly:

"I am a Christian!"

The hegemon, seeing Nicomachus, who had professed himself a Christian in the hearing of all, asked Andrew and Paul:

"And what do you say?"

They answered:

"We too are Christians."

Then the hegemon said to Nicomachus:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods in accordance with the imperial command."

16. Mesopotamia – a stony and sandy country lying between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, extending from Armenia in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south.

Nicomachus answered:

"Do you not know that Christians do not offer sacrifices to demons?"

And immediately the hegemon ordered the soldiers to strip Nicomachus, hang him on the torture tree, and tear his body with iron instruments.

When Nicomachus was already not far from his death and had only a little more to endure in order to receive the martyr's crown (which was, as it were, already in his hands), he suddenly deprived himself of that glorious crown. Abandoning the good confession, he renounced Christ and cried out before everyone:

"I was never a Christian! I agree to offer sacrifice to the gods."

And immediately the soldiers ceased his torment and took him down from the torture tree.

When this wretched apostate had offered sacrifice to the idols and bowed down to them, a demon fell upon him and struck him violently against the ground, so that Nicomachus began to rage in fury, biting his tongue and bringing forth bloody foam, until he gave up his wretched soul.

While all this was happening, a maiden of sixteen years, named Christina, standing among the people, addressed the raging Nicomachus and said to him:

"O wretched and perishing man! Behold, for the sake of a single hour you have now won for yourself eternal and inexpressible torment."

Hearing this, the hegemon ordered that maiden to be seized and set before the tribunal; then he asked her:

"Are you a Christian woman?"

The maiden answered:

"Yes, I am a Christian woman, and now I weep and grieve over the perdition of the wretched man, who did not wish to endure a brief torment in order to gain for himself eternal rest."

The hegemon said to her:

"Behold, he has now found rest, since he has offered sacrifice to the gods; but lest you Christians revile him, our great goddesses Diana and Venus have deigned to take him from here. But I want you too to offer

sacrifice to these goddesses, if you do not wish to be dishonored and burned in the fire."

The saint answered him:

"My God is more important to me than you, and therefore I do not fear your threats. I hope in my God, and I believe that He will defend me and give me patience in all things."

Then the governor commanded that she be given over to two young debauchees, that they might defile and dishonor her. As for Andrew and Paul, he commanded that they be cast into prison, into the same division where Dionysius was.

Meanwhile those two shameless youths, taking the pure and holy maiden, led her in haste to their dwelling, intending to dishonor her; but no sooner had they brought her into their house than their carnal desire was extinguished, and they were unable to defile her until midnight. In the night, however, a bright youth appeared beside Christina, whose radiance illumined the whole house. The youths, seized with fear, fell to the ground as dead; coming to themselves, they threw themselves at the feet of St. Christina, entreating her to pray to her God on their behalf, that no punishment from Him might overtake them. She, raising them from the ground, said to them:

"Fear not. Know that the youth whom you saw is a holy Angel, sent to me by Christ, my God, to preserve my virginity, always ready to slay anyone who would touch me."

Thus the holy maiden Christina remained in purity, being protected by God Himself.

On the morning of the following day, the citizens of that city, stirred up by the idol-priests, came to the governor and began to demand that he hand over into their hands the Christians who were in prison. The governor brought Dionysius, Andrew and Paul out of the prison and said to them:

"You must offer sacrifice to the great goddess Diana."

But the saints answered:

"We know neither Diana nor any other demon from among those whom you worship; we know and worship only our God, the Lord Jesus Christ."

The people, hearing such an answer from the martyrs, began again with loud voice to demand of the governor that he deliver into their hands those Christians who blaspheme their gods. The governor commanded that the martyrs be beaten, and then ordered that they be given over to the people.

Then the crowd, tying ropes to the feet of the saints, dragged them with loud shouts outside the city, intending to stone them there.

When the holy martyrs were being stoned, St. Christina, learning of this, ran in haste to that place and, falling with tears upon the bodies of the saints who were being stoned, said:

"I wish to die with you on earth, that I may live with you also in heaven!"

Meanwhile it was reported to the governor that one Christian maiden, who had been given over to two youths for defilement, had been delivered from their hands by a certain bright youth; having fled from the house of those youths, she had come to the place where the Christians were being stoned and had thrown herself upon their bodies. Learning of this, the governor commanded that she be put to death by the sword.

Thus all the aforementioned holy martyrs, who struggled against the devil, the world and the governor Opitimin, were granted by the help of Christ our God to be victors over their enemies: Peter was put to death after manifold tortures, Dionysius, Andrew and Paul were stoned, and the holy maiden Christina was beheaded by the sword. All this took place in the city of Lampsacus, under the emperor Decius.[17]

The holy martyrs Heraclius, Paulinus and Venedimus were citizens of Athens. They preached in Athens with great boldness the name of Christ, and exhorted all the impious to abandon their vain idol-worship and to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. For their preaching they were seized and brought for examination before the prefect of Athens. At the examination they confessed the true God, the Creator of all creation, and called the idols insensible stones and wood, the work of human hands. For confessing the name of Christ these holy martyrs were subjected to various tortures

17. Decius reigned from 249 to 251.

and at last, together with their disciples, were cast into a fiery furnace, after which they died.[18] For their exploit they received from Christ our God, to Whom glory is offered unto ages, the incorruptible crowns. Amen.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Simeon, Isaac and Vakhtisy

Страдание святых мучеников Симеона, Исаака и Вахтисия

The holy martyrs of Christ Simeon, Isaac and Vakhtisy were natives of Persia and suffered in the reign of the impious king Sapor.[19] Because they were Christians, the idol-worshippers seized them and began to compel them to renounce Christ and to worship the sun and fire,[20] but they answered:

"We will not renounce the Creator of creation, and we will not worship the sun and fire."

Then the tormentors bound their hands and feet and beat them cruelly, and afterwards cast them into prison, where for seven days they took no food. After this they were brought out of the prison and endured various torments; at last their honorable heads were cut off with the sword. Thus the holy martyrs departed this life.

* * *

18. The year of death of the holy martyrs Heraclius, Paulinus and Venedimus is unknown. It probably took place in the 4th or 5th century.

19. Sapor II the Great reigned in Persia from 310 to 381. He is known for his successful wars with the Romans, and was a cruel persecutor of Christians.

20. The Persians revered as supreme god Mithra, or the sun. They also worshipped fire.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF MAY

May 19

19 мая

New Calendar May 19 · Old Calendar June 1 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Patricius, together with the three presbyters Acacius, Menander and Polyaenus

Страдание святого священномученика Патрикия и с ним трех пресвитеров: Акакия, Менандра и Полиена

The episcopal throne of St. Patricius was in the city of Prusa in Bithynia.[1] Once he began openly to denounce the errors of the pagans and to preach the Faith of Christ; his preaching turned many pagans to Christ. For this he was seized by the pagans together with three presbyters, Acacius, Menander and Polyaenus, and brought for interrogation before Julius, the governor of Bithynia, a most zealous servant of the idols. The latter, setting out at that time for the warm springs,[2] ordered the Christian bishop and his presbyters, bound in iron chains, to be led along with him. Having arrived at the springs and bathed in them, Julius offered sacrifices to his unclean god Asclepius[3] and to the vile goddess Soteria.[4] Then, seating himself in the judgment place and summoning St. Patricius with the presbyters, Julius said to him:

"Madman, who invokes Christ and believes empty fables! Look how great is the omnipotence of our gods. Look what healing power they have given these springs for our benefit. And first of all understand how

1. Of the Asia Minor region.
2. The governor Julius went to the warm springs for medicinal purposes. These springs did indeed possess healing properties, owing to the admixture of various mineral substances in their waters. Many such springs were known in antiquity in Italy and on the island of Sicily.
3. Asclepius or Aesculapius – a Graeco-Roman god considered the patron of the healing art.
4. *Soteria* (Greek) – savior; a general name for goddesses who healed diseases, according to the pagan view. This name was usually assigned to the goddesses Athena or Aphrodite.

great is the power and how great is the mercy of our father Asclepius! If you wish to escape bonds and torments and to live peacefully in your homeland, then fall down, bow to him with humble supplication, and offer him a sacrifice."

But St. Patricius answered him:

"How much evil you have uttered in your short speech, governor!"

The governor said to him angrily:

"What wrong have I said? In what can you accuse me, wretched man! You yourself must acknowledge what is evident of itself, without any deceit or cunning: do you not with your own eyes see the cures given by the warm springs through the power of our almighty gods?"

St. Patricius answered:

"Most radiant governor! If you wish to learn the truth about the origin, the outflow and the healing power of this spring of warm waters, I will declare it all to you, if you will deign to hear me with meekness."

To this the governor said:

"Although I do not expect to hear from you anything but a fable filled with inventions, nevertheless speak, that I may hear what you wish to say."

The saint answered:

"I wish to tell you not an invention but the truth."

The governor said:

"What other source of the power of the warm waters will you point to, besides the power of our gods?"

The saint replied:

“I am a Christian, and everyone who confesses this sacred truth of Christianity and worships the one true God can by his reason know the mysteries of God; therefore I too, though a sinner, confessing myself a slave of Christ, know and can tell you the truth concerning these waters.”

The governor said:

"Will you really be so bold and so unreasoning as to consider yourself wiser than our philosophers?"

The saint answered:

"'The wisdom of this world is foolishness before God, for it is written: He catches the wise in their craftiness' (1 Cor. 3:19). Christ our Lord, glorifying His Father, said: 'I glorify Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes' (Lk. 10:21). And the Apostle says that they did not understand the truth: 'for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory' (1 Cor. 2:8)."

The governor said to the saint:

"You speak incomprehensibly. Rather tell me, by whose power and by whose arrangement do these warm healing waters flow? As for me, I ascribe this to the providence of our gods, who willed in this way to render help to men."

Answering this, the hierarch of Christ Patricius said to the governor:

"Before I speak, command, governor, that the enclosure[5] be removed, so that all may hear my words."

By the governor's command the enclosure was removed, and the people filled the whole place around. Then the saint began to speak aloud as follows:

"Fire and water were created out of nothing by His Only-begotten Son, the same almighty and eternal God, who is the Creator of the human race. From fire He by His Word created light, the sun and the other luminaries, and appointed them to shine by day and by night: to such a degree did His almighty power extend, as far as it pleased Him. From water He formed the firmament of heaven, and upon water He established the earth. By His providence, which foresees all things, He arranged in heaven and on earth everything without which man, whom He also created, cannot live. Foreseeing, however, that the men He had created would provoke Him, God their Creator, and, abandoning the worship of the true God, would make for themselves lifeless idols and would worship them, He therefore prepared two places to which men would depart after their earthly life. The first place He illumined with eternal light and filled with abundant and ineffable blessings; the other

5. Ordinarily the place on which the governor sat and conducted the trial of Christians was enclosed, since in most cases the trial of Christians took place in the open air.

He filled with unbroken darkness, unquenchable fire and eternal torments. Into the bright place will pass those who, keeping His commandments, shall please Him; into the dark place will be cast those who by an ungodly life provoke their Creator and thereby earn for themselves punishment. Thus those who are settled in the bright place will live an immortal life in unceasing and endless joy, while those who are in the dark place will be tormented unceasingly for endless ages. Having separated fire from water and light from darkness, the Creator formed each of them separately and assigned each to its own place. Fire and water are found both above the heavenly firmament and beneath the earth; the water which is visible on the earth, gathered into its receptacles, is called the sea (Gen. 1:10), and that which is under the earth is called the abyss. From this abyss, for the benefit of the people who live on the earth, and in general for the benefit of all that lives, waters are sent up on high through the depths of the earth, as it were by means of water-pipes; coming to the surface of the earth, they form either springs, or wells, or rivers. Of the waters which in their course under the earth pass near the fire, those come out to the surface warm; those which flow far from the fire come out to the surface of the earth cold. That is why these waters are warm, since in their course they approach closely the underground fire; but in some places there are waters most cold, which freeze into ice, since they are at a great distance from the fire. Thus the underground fire is appointed for the torment of ungodly souls; and the water of the nether regions, turned into ice, is called Tartarus,[6] in which your gods and those who worship them will receive unending torment, as one of your poets sang, saying: 'The bounds (ultimate) of the earth and sea are nothing but extreme limits, where Iapetus and Saturn[7] (such are the names of these gods of yours) are delighted neither by the brilliance of the bright sun nor by the cool winds'; in other words, your gods, who dwell in darkness and

6. In speaking of Tartarus, St. Patricius adapts himself to the understanding of the pagans surrounding him and sets forth to them their own view of Tartarus. – Tartarus, according to the conception of ancient Greek mythology, was a dark abyss removed from the surface of the earth as far as the heaven is removed from the earth. According to the Greek conception, Tartarus was surrounded by a threefold layer of darkness and an iron wall; it served as the place of confinement of the gods who had been cast down.

in Tartarus, are neither illumined nor warmed by the light of the sun, and those who dwell in fire are not cooled by the wind. Tartarus under the earth is placed as far below all other abysses as heaven is above all the heights of the earth. And that fire is prepared under the earth for the ungodly is confirmed also by the boiling springs which come up from under the earth in Sicily.[8"9]

Having heard these words of the saint, the governor asked him:

"So your Christ is the Creator of all the things you have spoken of."

St. Patricius answered:

"Truly Christ, and no other, is the Creator of all creation; for it is written: 'All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made' (Jn. 1:3). And again: 'For all the gods of the nations are nothing, but the Lord made the heavens' (1 Chr. 16:26)."

The governor again asked the saint:

"Do you call Christ the Creator of the heavens?"

The saint answered:

"I call Christ the Creator of all creation, because it is written: 'When I behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast established' (Ps. 8:4)."

The governor said:

"And if I cast you into these hot waters, whose Creator you call Christ and not our gods, will Christ preserve you unharmed from their fire?"

The saint answered:

"I know the power of my Christ; I know that He can preserve me whole and unharmed from these waters, if He wills; and I myself would wish, by means of those waters, to be freed from this temporal life, that

7. Iapetus – one of the Titans, children of Uranus (heaven) and Gaea (earth). According to Greek mythology, Iapetus (together with Cronus) rose against the supreme god, Zeus, for which he was confined by the latter in Tartarus. – Saturn was an ancient Roman god considered the patron of the earth and of crops. According to the Greek conception, Saturn, like Iapetus, was cast down from heaven by Zeus and confined for a time in Tartarus.

8. Sicily – one of the large islands of the Mediterranean Sea, now forming part of the Kingdom of Italy.

9. The island of Sicily, owing to the greater number of fissures and hollows in the limestone mountains covering it, had many hot springs.

I might live forever with Christ. Nevertheless, may not my will but His holy will be done in me, without which not one hair falls from the human head, without which not one bird falls into a snare. But let all who hear my words now know that those who worship with you an insensible stone as a god await eternal torment in the underground unquenchable fire and in the nether Tartarus."

Hearing this, the governor fell into great wrath and at once ordered the saint, stripped, to be cast into that very place of the spring from which the boiling water gushes. The saint, as he was being cast in, called to God, saying:

"Lord Jesus Christ, help me, Thy servant!"

When the saint was thrown into the water, the drops of water splashed out of the spring were more scalding than fiery sparks, and, reaching those who stood around, inflicted severe burns on them. But St. Patricius remained unharmed in those waters, as in a cool place, and rejoicing, glorified Christ God.

Seeing this, the tormentors were kindled with still greater fury. The governor ordered the soldiers to take the saint out of the water and with an axe to cut off his head, together with the three presbyters.

Preparing for the beheading, the martyr and confessor of Christ raised his hands to heaven and said:

O God, King of all and Lord, who holdest in Thy power all creation, visible and invisible, who inclinest Thine ear to all who truly call upon Thee, who didst create these waters for the salvation of the righteous and for the punishment of the impious! Appear now to me, who am dying in witness to the confession of Thy faith!

When he had finished his prayer, the Saint bowed his holy head for the axe and died a martyr's death. Together with him were beheaded his three holy presbyters, Acacius, Menander and Polyaenus, and all of them together stood before Christ God in the glory of the saints. Holy Patricius and his servants were slain on the nineteenth day of the month of May,[10] and received the crown of victorious honor from Christ

10. The time of their death is not known with precision; it is supposed to have taken place in the middle of the 4th century.

Jesus, our Lord, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit belong honor and glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Radiant with the splendor of goodness in the priesthood, and adorned with the blood of martyrdom, standing before Christ together with thy fellow-sufferers Patricius, remember us, O noble sufferer.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Caluf the Egyptian

Страдание святого мученика Калуфа египтянина

The holy martyr of Christ, Caluf, suffered in the reign of Maximian.[11] He was a native of the Egyptian city of Thebes,[12] and, being seized for confessing his faith in Christ, was delivered to the governor. The latter ordered a large stone to be tied to his neck and him to be hung head downward, after which the executioners began to beat him; but the holy martyr said to them:

"I desire the blessedness of the life to come, and for its sake I patiently endure blows and sufferings."

After such torment the Saint was taken down from the tree and they tried to compel him to offer sacrifice to the idols, but he refused to do so. Then they cast him into the fire, where he ended his temporal life.

* * *

Repose of the Right-believing Prince John of Uglich, in Monasticism Ignatius, Wonderworker of Vologda

Преставление благоверного князя Иоанна Угличского, в иноках Игнатия, вологодского чудотворца

11. Here Maximian Hercules is meant, co-ruler of Diocletian, who with the title of Augustus governed Italy and Africa from 284 to 305.
12. The city of Thebes was in Upper Egypt and was situated on both banks of the Nile.

The holy right-believing Prince John was the son of the right-believing and Christ-loving Prince Andrew Vasilievich of Uglich[13] and the right-believing Princess Helen. He received holy Baptism in the city of Velikiye Luki,[14] and, having reached maturity, quickly learned to read. He possessed a meek and peaceable character, did not love childish games, and, observing moderation in all things, lived in his father's house until he was thirty years old. At this time the enemy of the human race, the hater of good, instilled into the Grand Prince John Vasilievich of Moscow[15] hatred for his own brother, the right-believing Prince Andrew Vasilievich of Uglich, and for his sons, this John and Demetrius; and he commanded that they be seized, laid in heavy fetters, carried to the city of Pereyaslavl,[16] and cast into prison. After this they were first transferred to Beloozero,[17] and then to the city of Vologda,[18] where, confined in fetters in a dungeon under strict guard, they lived for many years. The blessed Prince John Andreevich, distinguished by wisdom, consoled his brother, Prince Demetrius, and said to him:

"Brother! Do not grieve that we are confined in prison and suffer from these fetters. God has inspired our uncle, the sovereign Grand

13. The city of Uglich, now a district town of the Yaroslavl Province, is situated on the Volga River.

14. The city of Velikiye Luki, until the 15th century called simply Luki, without the adjective "Velikiye," belongs to the number of the most ancient Russian cities: it is mentioned in the Novgorod Chronicle under the year 1166. It is now a district town of the Pskov Province, situated on both banks of the Lovat River and on the island of Dyatlovka.

15. Grand Prince John III Vasilievich reigned in Moscow from 1462 to 1505. He suspected his brother Andrew of treason because the latter had not sent troops to his aid against the Tatars, and for this he confined him with his family in prison.

16. In the time of St. Prince John, there were two cities in north-eastern Rus' bearing the name of Pereyaslavl. One was situated in what is now the Vladimir Province and was called Pereyaslavl Zalessky; the other lay in what is now the Ryazan Province and, when the Ryazan Governorate was formed in 1778, was renamed Ryazan and made a provincial capital. The latter was founded around 1095 by the Murom Prince Konstantin Yaroslav Svyatoslavich, while Pereyaslavl Zalessky on its present site was founded in 1162 by the Suzdal Prince Yuri Vladimirovich Dolgoruky. It may be supposed that the place of confinement of Prince Andrew and his family was Pereyaslavl Ryazansky, since around 1513 a stockade surrounded by a wooden wall is mentioned there.

17. Belo-ozero, now Belozersk, a district town of the Novgorod Province. The princes, the brothers, were transferred to Belo-ozero after the death of their father, which followed on 7 October 1443. Their mother, Princess Elena, had died even earlier, in 1442.

Prince John Vasilievich, to act thus toward us, in order to benefit our souls, for by this He has made it impossible for us to concern ourselves with the vanity of this world. Let us therefore pray to the Lord God that He send us His mercy, that we may joyfully bear our sufferings for His name and be delivered from eternal torments."

Having thus obtained peace in sufferings and sorrow for his sins, the holy prince remained in prison and in fetters for thirty-two years, and at last, falling seriously ill, he felt the approach of his death. He summoned from the Savior Monastery of St. Demetrius[19] the Abbot Misail, and received from him monastic tonsure, being given the name Ignatius. Joy and gladness filled the soul of the blessed prince when he put on the Angelic Order. Having partaken of the pure Mysteries of Christ, he signed himself with the sign of the Cross and departed to the eternal mansions. This took place on the nineteenth day of May, in the year 1522.[20] After the death of the venerable prince there issued from his body a fragrance which filled the whole city. Then the inhabitants of the city prepared his body for burial, carried it to the monastery of the venerable Father Demetrius of Prilutsk, into the church of the All-Merciful Savior, and buried it beneath the sanctuary near St. Demetrius the Wonderworker; at this place the venerable ones, even to the present time, grant healing to those who come to them in faith.

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father John, Bishop of the Goths

Память преподобного отца нашего Иоанна епископа Готфского

Our holy father John lived in the land of the Goths[21] in the reign of the emperor Constantine.[22] He was born through the prayer of his

18. Vologda, now a provincial capital, lies on the river Sukhona, a tributary of the Northern Dvina.

19. This refers to the Spaso-Prilutsky Monastery, founded in 1371, five versts from Vologda, by the Venerable Demetrius, who was the first to introduce the common life into the Vologda region. The memory of the Venerable Demetrius is celebrated on 11 February.

20. The Venerable Prince reposed at the age of 45.

parents, as in ancient times the prophet Samuel was (1 Kgdms. 1:9–20), and, having from his youth devoted himself to monastic labors, became a dwelling of Christ. He made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and, having visited all the holy places during the course of three years, returned to his fatherland. At that time the emperor Constantine transferred the local bishop to Heraclea in Thrace,[23] and the Orthodox Christians of the Goths earnestly begged St. John to be their bishop. They escorted him to Iberia,[24] where he received episcopal ordination, and after this returned again to his native land. When disorders arose in his country, caused by the khagan,[25] who destroyed many innocent people by the sword, he barely found the opportunity to flee and arrived at Amastris,[26] where he lived for four years. Hearing of the death of the khagan, he said to those who were with him:

"In forty days I shall go to contend with him before Christ."

So indeed it came to pass. Forty days after this the holy John was instructing the people, guiding them to the salvation of their souls, and at that time he yielded up his spirit to the Lord.[27] Immediately, in accordance with his prediction, a ship arrived at the harbor, and then the most holy Bishop George of Amastris, having laid his body in a coffin, with candles and incense, accompanied by all the inhabitants of the city, escorted it to the ship. On the ship the body of the Saint was conveyed to his monastery of Parthenit,[28] and buried here in the burial place of the monks of the monastery. At this place, after the burial of

21. By the name of the Gothic Land is meant here the region then subject to the Goths, on the southern shore of the Crimean peninsula, known under the name of Tauroscythia. St. John's place of residence was the port of Parthenit at the foot of Mount Ayu-Dag.

23. The city of Heraclea in Thrace, otherwise Perinthus, stood on the shore of the Propontis, or Sea of Marmara. The Gothic bishop subscribed in 754 to the decision of the iconoclastic council, and for this Constantine Copronymus appointed him Metropolitan of Heraclea.

24. Iberia is the present-day Georgia. At that time it had not been infected with the iconoclastic heresy, which explains the circumstance that St. John was sent to that country for episcopal consecration.

25. The Khazars had placed a garrison in Doros, the principal city of St. John's diocese, and he persuaded the ruler of Gothia to expel the Khazars; but the Khazar khagan again seized the city, executed many, and handed John over to custody, from which, with the help of the Gothic Christians, he escaped overseas to Amastris.

26. The city of Amastris lay in the ancient Roman province of Paphlagonia in Asia Minor, on the shore of the Euxine, or Black Sea.

27. St. John reposed on 26 June at the end of the eighth century, around 790.

St. John, many miracles were and even to the present time are wrought. The venerable one also worked many miracles during his lifetime.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the commemoration of the Venerable Cornelius of Komel, Wonderworker of Vologda, who died in 1537 in the monastery of Komel founded by him (5 versts from the town of Gryazovets), where his holy relics repose.

✠

28. In the Prologue the place of burial of St. John is mistakenly named as Parthenon. The latter was situated near Chersonesus of the Crimea, whereas the monastery where the body of the saint was buried lay at the foot of Mount Ayu-Dag. Here St. John lived, and here he also built a large church in honour of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, which was renewed in 1425 by Damian, Metropolitan of all Gothia, and no longer exists today.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF MAY

May 20

20 мая

New Calendar May 20 · Old Calendar June 2 (civil dates)

Passion of St. Phalaleus the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Фалалея

In the reign of Numerian,[1] the governor Theodore raised persecution against the Church of God in the city of Aegeae,[2] and he subjected the faithful servants of Christ to various kinds of death. At that time the tormentors seized also a Christian youth named Phalaleus, handsome of face and of stature, fair-haired, about eighteen years of age, by profession a physician who treated all manner of diseases without payment. The youth was set before the impious tribunal in the temple of Hadrian.[3] Looking at him and marveling at his beauty, the governor said to those around him:

"Where did you take this handsome youth?"

Those present answered:

"As we were going to the city of Anazarbus,[4] we saw him ahead of us; but he, noticing us, quickly hid himself in a grove. We began to search for him diligently and only with difficulty found him sitting beneath a wild olive tree. Then we took him and brought him to you for judgment."

The governor said to the saint:

1. The Roman emperor Numerian reigned from 283 A.D. to 284 A.D.
2. Egeia, or Eg – a seaport town in Cilicia, a region of Asia Minor. Under the name Ayaskala it has survived to the present day.
3. That is, in a temple built in honor of the emperor Hadrian (reigned 117 A.D. to 138 A.D.). It should be noted that the ancient Romans had the custom of building temples in honor of their emperors, and also of setting up their statues in temples and in squares.
4. The city of Anazarbus was situated in Cilicia.

"Tell us, youth: what is your faith, from what city are you, who are your parents, and what is your name?"

The saint answered:

"I am a Christian; my name is Phalaleus, and I am a native of Lebanon.[5] My father, named Berukius, was a voivode; my mother's name is Romilia. I have also a brother who serves in the clergy, in the rank of subdeacon. I learned the healing art from the physician Macarius. When all the Christians who lived in Lebanon fled to the mountains and deserts because of persecution by the pagans, I was taken and brought before Tiberius, the governor of Edessa.[6] Being tormented by him, I confessed the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the true and all-good God, the Creator of all; and by the help of my Lord I was delivered from the hands of the tormentors and fled. Now, however, having been taken again, I am in your power. Do with me what you will, for it befits me to die for Christ, the heavenly God, my Savior."

The governor said:

"Do you hope, wretch, to escape my hands as you escaped the hands of Tiberius?"

The saint answered:

"I no longer wish to flee, for I believe in my Lord Jesus Christ and hope in Him, that He will not permit me to be put to shame, but will help me to endure the torments to the end."

Near the saint stood two executioners, Alexander and Asterius. The governor ordered them to bore through the martyr's shins with a drill, pass a rope through the holes, and hang him. But by God's providence their spiritual eyes were opened, and instead of the saint they bored into and hanged a tree. One of the believers, a disciple of St. Phalaleus named Timothy, who stood there and saw everything that was happening, nodded his head to the saint, saying:

"Do you see what they are doing?"

5. Lebanon – a mountain in Syria; it belongs to that mountain system which begins with Sinai, extends northward through Arabia, Palestine and Syria parallel to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and adjoins the Taurus. Lebanon forms the middle, highest part of this mountain system.

6. Edessa – a city in Macedonia.

The saint answered him:

"Be silent, brother; Christ is with me, helping me."

The governor, however, looking, saw not the martyr but a tree hanging, and said to the executioners:

"What have you done? I ordered you to hang a man, and you have hanged a tree?"

In anger, the governor, thinking they were mocking him, commanded that both be beaten without mercy. And they, under the blows, said:

"Blessed be the name of the Lord, for from now on we too become Christians, for we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and suffer for Him!"

Hearing such words, the governor at once ordered them beheaded with the sword, and they, dying in suffering, received crowns from Christ God together with the other holy martyrs.

To St. Phalaleus the governor said:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods and you will live, and you will enjoy the good things of this world."

The martyr answered:

"You will not persuade a servant of Christ to offer sacrifice to demons."

The governor, filled with fury, wished himself to bore the saint's shins, but at the moment he tried to rise from his seat he felt his strength fail and could not get up from his place. And all the pagans who were in the temple of Hadrian, seeing what had happened, cried out loudly, saying:

"Great is the Christian God, who works such miracles!"

The governor, filled with shame, began to beseech the martyr, saying:

"Pray for me to your God, Phalaleus, that I may be able to rise from my place, for truly great is your God."

When the saint had prayed, the governor rose; but seeing in this not a divine power but the sorcery of Phalaleus, he was greatly angered against the saint, gnashing his teeth. Then, seizing a drill, he began himself to bore the martyr's legs, but at once his hands withered. The governor again called out to the martyr, saying:

"I beg you again, Phalaleus, pray for me, that my hands may be healed."

The saint by his prayer granted healing to his hands. Then the governor said to those around him:

"Take this sorcerer out of my sight and drown him in the depths of the sea, so that he may perish."

The saint said to him:

"You began the inquiry about me; therefore you must also finish it."

The governor answered:

"Get away from me, sorcerer, and perish somewhere else; for I have not yet done you any harm, while you have already done me so much harm by your sorcery!"

The saint said:

"Do not think, tormentor, that I would be frightened by your threat and turn away from my God. Know that I will in no case offer sacrifice to your gods, nor bow down to the demons whom you serve."

At these words the governor's servants seized the saint, placed him in a boat, went with him to the very middle of the sea's depths, and there drowned him. And while he was being drowned, the saint offered such a prayer to God:

"O Lord my God! Do not let me die now, for I wish still to suffer for Your holy name, so that, accomplishing a yet greater feat of martyrdom, I may receive from You the incorruptible crown in eternal life."

The servants, returning after the drowning of the martyr, said to the governor:

"We have done what you commanded: we cast Phalaleus into the sea, and he sank before our eyes."

But while the servants were still saying this to the governor, St. Phalaleus came, clothed in white garments. The governor and all who were with him, seeing the saint, were greatly astonished. And the governor said to the saint:

"Behold, your sorcery has overcome even the sea!"

The saint answered him:

"Where now is the power and might of your gods? Where is your pride? Behold, my Lord, Jesus Christ, has destroyed your designs and

did not allow me to die, so that I might yet conquer the devil, your father."

The governor, enraged, said to those near him:

"See how this sorcerer has bewitched even the sea, and reviles us; if we let him go thus, he will destroy us all by his sorcery."

There was with the governor a certain sorcerer named Urvicius; he gave the governor counsel, saying:

"Command, lord, that he be given to the beasts to devour."

At once the governor, summoning the keeper who fed the beasts, ordered him to prepare a place for the spectacle, and said to the saint:

"Phalaleus, will you offer sacrifice to the gods, or do you wish your body to become food for the beasts?"

The holy martyr answered:

"Have you not yet come to know the power and majesty of the Lord and my God, Jesus Christ? I will declare to you in the words of the prophet: 'The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly. I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord' (Ps. 117:16–17)."

Then they led the saint into the square and gave him over to be torn by the beasts. But the beasts did not touch the saint. A fierce she-bear approached him, lay down at his feet, and began to lick them. Seeing this, the governor gnashed his teeth and roared like a lion with fury. Then he commanded that a hungry lion and also a lioness be let loose upon him; but these too, drawing near, fell at the martyr's feet and licked them. The governor, in fury, tore his garments, and the people began to cry out loudly, saying:

"Great is the Christian God! God of Phalaleus, have mercy upon us!"

Then they seized the sorcerer Urvicius and threw him to the beasts, and at once he was torn to pieces and devoured by them. The governor, rising from his seat, ordered the martyr to be slain with the sword.

The holy martyr was led to the place of beheading, a place especially prepared and called Edessa; after prayer he received his death on the twentieth day of the month of May,[7] to the honor and glory of our

7. The repose of St. Phalaleus followed in the year 284.

Lord Jesus Christ, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thou didst appear a fellow-sufferer of the martyrs and an excellent warrior and soldier of the King of glory; through trials and torments thou didst trample down the pride of the idol-worshippers. Wherefore we sing thy honored memory, wise Phalaleus.

* * *

Passion of St. Ascalon the Martyr

Страдание святого мученика Аскалона

When the governor Arrian was journeying from the city of Hermopolis[8] to the city of Antinoë,[9] there was brought before him on the way one of the Christians named Ascalon. Seeing him, the governor said:

"Who is this?"

One of the governor's counselors, named Apollonides, said:

"I think he is a Christian."

The governor said to Apollonides:

"Ask him who he is."

Apollonides asked the saint:

"Who are you?"

The saint answered:

"I am a Christian."

The governor said to him:

"Have you heard of the imperial edicts, sent out to all lands, which obligate Christians to offer sacrifices to the gods?"

The saint Ascalon answered:

8. Two towns in Egypt are known by the name of Hermopolis: one (Lesser Hermopolis) was situated in Lower Egypt, the other (Great Hermopolis) was situated in Middle Egypt. In this case the latter is meant.

9. The city of Antinoe was situated in Middle Egypt, opposite Great Hermopolis on the bank of the Nile facing it.

"Yes, I have heard of those impious edicts, issued to the ruin of many."

The governor said:

"How dare you so revile the emperors, calling their holy and saving edicts a ruin?"

The saint answered:

"Do with me what you will, for I do not have those edicts, since they are unlawfully issued not for benefit but for the destruction of men; for can there be any benefit from edicts that call to the worship of idols?"

The governor said:

"It is not enough for you to revile our emperors: you also call our gods idols. I swear to you by the gods themselves, that if you do not bow down to them and offer them sacrifices, you will be given over to the torments prepared for the disobedient."

The saint answered:

I do not fear your threat, but I fear Him who said: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt. 10:28). Therefore one must fear God, who can torment the whole man eternally, and not you, who torment only one body, and that not eternally but for a short time.

The Hegemon said:

– Listen to me and offer sacrifice to the immortal gods; for if you do not listen, both the place of torment and the tormentors are already prepared.

The Saint answered:

– We shall see which of us proves the stronger: whether you will persuade me by tortures to call the idols gods, or I shall persuade you to acknowledge Christ my Lord as the true God and Creator of all.

Enraged, the Hegemon commanded that the martyr be stripped, hung upon a tree, beaten, and scraped with iron implements. The Saint, however, as his body was mercilessly tortured and torn, so that pieces of it fell to the ground, remained silent, uttering no cry of pain and not a single sound.

The Hegemon said to him:

– Has your heart not softened, so as to offer sacrifice to the gods?

A certain rhetor[10] named Visamon, who stood there, said:

– Death has already drawn near to him, and he has fallen into a frenzy.

At once the Saint said to him boldly:

– I am not in a frenzy, and I will never turn away from God, my Creator.

Arrian said:

– Again you harden your heart. But this place, on the road, is not sufficiently suitable for you to be worthily tormented; let us go to the city, and there you will receive, for your disobedience, the torments you deserve.

Having said this, the Hegemon at once ordered the martyr to be untied and taken along with him. On the road near the city flowed a great river named Nile. The holy martyr Ascalon had already been brought to the city of Antinoe, for the Hegemon was proceeding slowly behind. The citizens of Antinoe, who had come out to meet the Hegemon, gathered around the Saint, lying naked and wounded on the ground on the riverbank (for from his wounds he could neither stand nor sit), and they grieved for him; and then, seeing the Hegemon arrive at the river and step into a boat, they prepared to meet and greet him. The holy martyr, hearing those who said that the Hegemon was crossing in a boat, gathered his strength, rose from the ground, and, raising his hands to heaven, cried out to the Lord, saying:

– My God, Jesus Christ, for whose sake I endure these sufferings and out of love for whom I stand naked to the shame of all! Hear me now, for the glorification of Thy holy Name, and stretch forth Thy almighty hand: stop this boat in which the impious judge is sitting in the middle of the river, and do not let him reach this shore until he confesses Thee as the one true God, Creator and Lord of all, and before all the people glorifies Thy Holy Name, which he hates.

When the Saint had prayed thus, suddenly the boat in which the Hegemon was sitting stopped in the middle of the river and could not

10. A teacher of rhetoric.

move at all. Seeing this, Arrian was amazed, and, recalling the words of the martyr who had promised to bring him to confess Christ as God, he said to his servants:

– What do you think of the fact that the ship has stopped on the sea? Has this not happened through the sorcery of that Christian?

Having said this, the Hegemon ordered another boat to be brought, and sat down in it; and the boat he had left at once drifted from its place, while the one he entered stood as if on dry land and could in no way move, although there were many rowers, the sails were set, and the wind was favorable. The Hegemon, seeing this, sent word to the martyr:

– Since you were frightened by the tortures with which I threatened you, for this reason you have by your sorcery made it so that I cannot cross the river and enter the city.

The martyr answered the messenger:

– As the Lord my God lives, the boat in which Arrian is sitting will not move until he confesses the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, as I said to him before.

The messenger said to him:

– Even if the Hegemon confesses the name of your God while in the middle of the river, as you wish, how will you, sitting on the shore, hear his voice, for the river, as you see, is very wide?

The martyr said to him:

– Let him write the confession of my Lord on a sheet of paper and send it to me, and at that very moment the boat will move from its place and come to the shore.

Returning, the messenger reported the martyr's words to the Hegemon. The Hegemon at once took a sheet of paper and wrote with his own hand the following words:

– There is one true God, whom Ascalon worships, and there is none other beside Him. He is the Creator and Lord of all.

Having written thus, the Hegemon sent the paper to Ascalon. The martyr, reading what was written, prayed to God, and at once the boat with the Hegemon moved and reached the shore.

Entering the city, the Hegemon sat in the judgment seat, and when the martyr was brought before him, he said to him:

– You raised all your God-hating sorcery against me to hold me on the river, but on dry land I shall show you the full force of my authority.

And at once he commanded the martyr to be stripped, hung upon a tree, and his ribs and belly to be burned until his whole body melted.

The Saint, scorched, remained silent.

Arrian said to him:

– As I see, you are already dead, Ascalon.

The Saint answered:

– Even if I die, nevertheless I shall live again.

The Hegemon said to his servants:

– We only weary ourselves by tormenting him; I see that he will sooner die than renounce his faith. Yet we will still do what we can.

Having said this, the Hegemon ordered a large stone to be tied to the Saint's feet and commanded that the Saint be thrown into the depths of the river. The soldiers, taking the Saint, led him to the river. And many people followed him, among whom were not a few Christians who had come to see the martyr's end. The Christians, bringing bread with them, begged the Saint to take some of it. He, however, would not, saying:

– I will not eat anything of this perishable food of this world, for I am prepared to go and receive that which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2:9). Strive also, brethren, to obtain the blessings prepared by God for His saints.

When the Saint had spoken thus, the soldiers seated him in a boat, and, pushing off from the shore, began to tie a large stone to his feet. He, turning to the Christians standing on the shore, said:

– My children, do not neglect my burial; yet today and on the following day do not search for my body; but on the third day come to the northern part of the city, and there you will find my body on the shore with a stone tied to it; bury me together with that stone.

And it was so. On the third day after the martyr was drowned, the Christians found his holy body just as he had told them, with the stone

tied to it, and buried it with honor, glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and worship now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Uncovering and Translation of the Honorable Relics of Alexis, Metropolitan of All Russia and Wonderworker

Обретение и перенесение честных мощей Алексия, митрополита всей России и чудотворца

In the days of the pious Grand Prince Basil Vasilyevich[11], Autocrat of All Russia, about 60 years after the repose of the holy Alexis, God, wondrous in His saints and glorifying them, the all-good God, thus revealed the priceless treasure, namely, the all-healing relics of this holy great Hierarch, Metropolitan Alexis.

Since the first church, built in this monastery[12] by St. Alexis himself in honor of the holy Archangel Michael, in memory of the miracle that occurred to him at Chonae, was of wood, it came about that the roof of this church, having fallen into decay through long age, collapsed during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy; by God's providence, however, all who were in the church at that time remained unharmed. Then the Grand Prince commanded that a stone church be built, and when trenches for the foundation of the new church were being dug inside the former wooden church, the relics of the great Hierarch St. Alexis were found uncorrupted, and even his vestments were found not decayed. Soon after this, a stone church was built in honor of the holy Archangel Michael, with a side chapel on the south side in honor of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos. This church had three steps up from the ground, but was smaller than the former wooden church, which, though more spacious, had been built with a single step, and its

11. Here the Grand Prince Basil Vasilyevich the Dark is meant. He reigned from 1425 until 1462.

12. By "this monastery" is meant the Chudov Monastery, founded in 1365 by St. Metropolitan Alexis within the Kremlin, on the site given to him by the Tatar tsaritsa Taidula, whom he had healed. It was named Chudov in memory of the miraculous healing by the hierarch of the latter from blindness.

floor had been laid directly on the earth. When the newly built church had been suitably adorned and consecrated, the all-healing relics of St. Alexis were brought into it and placed in the chapel of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Many years passed after this, and in the reign of the Grand Prince John Vasilyevich,[13] under the Most Reverend Metropolitan Gerontius,[14] through the efforts of Archimandrite Gennadius, the abbot of this monastery, a new church with a refectory began to be built in the name of the holy Metropolitan Alexis; but this church was not finished at that time, since Archimandrite Gennadius was consecrated Archbishop of Great Novgorod.[15] Some time after this, when, through the zeal of the same Archbishop Gennadius, the church and the refectory, as well as the other buildings, were completed and the church was adorned and consecrated, the honorable relics of St. Alexis were translated from the side-altar of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos and laid by the wall on the south side in the church built in his name. In 1534 the Grand Prince Basil Ivanovich[16] commanded that a silver reliquary be made for the relics of the Wonderworker Alexis, with an image of St. Alexis himself wrought in silver on its upper panel, and that it be adorned with gold, precious stones and pearls. The reliquary was completed only after the death of the Grand Prince, in 1535, and the body of St. Alexis was placed in it during the reign of his son, the Grand Prince John Vasilyevich,[17] on the day of the hierarch's repose, the 12th day of the month of February, from Thursday to Friday of the first week of Great Lent.

The reliquary with the relics of St. Alexis stood in the said place for about two hundred years, until 1686. Since the church and refectory

13. John III Vasilyevich was Grand Prince of Moscow from 1462 until 1505.
14. Metropolitan Gerontius occupied the Moscow see from 1473 until 1489.
15. This took place on 12 December 1484. Archbishop Gennadius took an active part in the struggle against the heresy of the Judaizers. In June 1504, "because of his infirmity," he renounced the governance of the eparchy, settled in the Chudov Monastery, and died there on 4 December 1505.
16. Basil IV Ivanovich, the successor of John III, was Grand Prince of Moscow from 1505 until 1533; consequently the year in which the Prince commanded the reliquary for the hierarch's relics to be made is erroneously given in the Prologue.
17. John IV Vasilyevich the Terrible was Tsar of Moscow from 1533 until 1584.

built by the Novgorod Archbishop Gennadius had fallen into disrepair, then in 1683, by the command of the pious Tsar and Grand Prince Theodore Alexeyevich,[18] autocrat of all Russia, and with the blessing of Joachim, Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, through the efforts and zeal of the then abbot of the monastery, Archimandrite Adrian, who shortly after this became Metropolitan of the royal city of Kazan[19] and afterwards, by the good pleasure of God, was raised to the dignity of Most Holy Patriarch of the reigning great city of Moscow and all Russia,[20] a new large refectory was built on a new site. It was almost entirely outside the bounds of the monastery, and only a small part of it, with one northern wall, extended into the monastery, together with the churches. The first of these was in honor of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, having formerly been a side-altar in the church of the holy Archangel Michael; the second, as we have already seen, stood next to the first and was in the name of the holy Metropolitan Alexis. Beside them were two vestibules, or refectories, built to accommodate those who came to the wonderworking relics to venerate them, pray, and hear the church services. On the same principle, between these two churches, a new church was built in the name of the holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called for the monks of the monastery, so that they might always, and especially in winter, hear the various church services separately from the outside visitors to the monastery churches. Besides this, on the western side of all these buildings, another refectory was built for the monks to take their food, so that they might be entirely separated from those who came to the monastery, vain worldly people, and might think only of God and care for their salvation, zealously occupying themselves with prayer, fasting and handiwork, for in this the whole monastic life consists. For this same purpose, various entrances to the churches from outside the monastery were also constructed: for men, a special entrance to the church of St. Alexis, and for women, likewise a special one to the church of the An-

18. Theodore III Alexeyevich reigned from 1676 until 1682.
19. Kazan is called a royal city, it must be supposed, because it was once the capital of the Kazan Tatar kingdom.
20. Patriarch Adrian, the last of the All-Russian patriarchs, governed the Russian Church from 1690 until 1700.

nunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, so that those who came to the most healing relics of the hierarch would enter these churches from outside the monastery and stand in them without mingling, each sex in its own church, men separately and women separately. For the monks who lived in this monastery, other entrances to these churches and refectories were built from within the monastery. This was so that the monks might lead a quiet life, free of worldly bustle, and also so that, according to the tradition of the holy fathers and the rule of the monastery, the monastery gates might always be kept closed, thereby preventing laymen from entering the monastery at unseasonable times, while the monks might leave it at any time. For in former times the rule of the monastery was that on three days of the week, namely Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the monks were in no way to be let out beyond the monastery walls; on the remaining four days they went out in case of some necessary need, and even then not on their own accord, but having first asked leave of the abbot or of the one who governed the monastery.

When the churches and refectories were entirely finished and adorned with fitting splendor, then by the hands of the pious Tsars and Grand Princes John Alexeyevich and Peter Alexeyevich, autocrats of all Great, Little and White Russia, and of their royal officials, accompanied by the Most Holy Patriarch of all Russia, Joachim, the bishops then present in Moscow, all the clergy and a multitude of people, the much-healing relics of the great hierarch, Metropolitan Alexis, were, with censing and fragrances, transferred from the old refectory church to the newly built one and laid in the prepared place between the two churches, of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos and of the hierarch Alexis. This took place on the 20th day of the month of May, 1686. The church in honor of the holy Metropolitan Alexis was consecrated by the Most Holy Patriarch Joachim himself, conciliarly, to the glory of the One God, glorified in the Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

Troparion, Tone 4:

O all-blessed Father Alexis, co-throned with the hierarchs, successors of the apostles, shepherd and teacher of all Russia, pray to the Lord of all to grant peace to thy flock, and salvation to souls, and great mercy.

Troparion, Tone 2:

As a treasure most rich, long hidden in the earth, thy honorable relics, O all-blessed Father, Hierarch Alexis, were found to be myrrh-streaming; receiving healing from them, we are enriched, and glorify Christ, saying: Glory to Him who glorifies His saints.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As an unsetting sun, thy honorable and incorrupt relics, hidden for many years, rose upon us from the tomb, O Hierarch Alexis; through thee we receive grace. For thou dost enrich this whole land and all things with wonders and goodness by the working of grace, so let us sing to thee: Rejoice, O Father, luminary of Russia.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the repose of St. Dovmont-Timothy, Prince of Moscow, in the year 1299.

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF MAY

May 21

21 мая

New Calendar May 21 · Old Calendar June 3 (civil dates)

Life of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine and of His Holy Mother Helena

Житие святого равноапостольного царя Константина и святой матери его Елены

While the pagan world, arming itself with fire and sword against Christianity, was intent at the close of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries on wiping the very name of Christians from the face of the earth[1], Divine Providence prepared for the Church of Christ, from among the persecuting emperors themselves, a royal protector in the person of Constantine. During his lifetime he received the title of Equal-to-the-Apostles, a title that became permanently attached to him in Christian history, and in universal history he is known as the Great.

Born in 274 to parents who were not Christians, though they were acquainted with Christianity and favored it, Constantine from childhood shunned pagan superstitions and drew near to Christ, the true God. The right hand of the Lord itself gradually prepared him, cleansing him in many ways, as a chosen vessel of the glory of God.

Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus, Caesar in the Western half of the Empire[2], was outwardly, officially, an idolater, but in his

1. By an edict of Emperor Diocletian, on February 23, 303, Christianity was to be eradicated, together with all its institutions and churches. The cruel persecution began with the military plunder and destruction of a Christian church in Nicomedia, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, where as many as 20,000 believers were burned at one time; thereafter the horrors of persecution spread over Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Italy. Concerning the cruelty of the persecutions, Lactantius ("On the Deaths of the Persecutors," XV and XVI) reports: "Though I had a hundred mouths and a tongue of iron, even then I could not number all the tortures endured by the faithful: ... iron grew dull and broke; the executioners grew weary and worked in shifts, one after another...."

soul he was far from pagan superstition. Inwardly he had renounced the service of many false gods and acknowledged the One true God; he worshipped Him alone, and dedicated his whole household, together with his children and servants, to the one King, God[3]. How far Constantius was from superstitious service of idols is shown by the following remarkable incident from his life. Constantius, who had refused to serve idols with sacrifices and incense, once wished to test the true dispositions of his courtiers. He pretended that he intended to perform the superstitious pagan rites, and said to his courtiers:

"Whoever wishes to enjoy my favor and love and to remain in honor, let him offer sacrifices to the idols; and whoever refuses this, let him withdraw from my sight and no longer expect my goodwill, for I cannot remain in fellowship with those who do not share my faith."

Taking the emperor's words at face value, the courtiers at once divided into two parties. Some, hypocritical men without genuine religious convictions and with a pliable conscience that could bend right or left, immediately declared their agreement with the emperor's proposal, though until then, from base calculation, they had followed his good example in rejecting idolatry. Others, who from sincere hearts had scorned pagan superstition and now remained faithful to their convictions as true servants of Christ, renounced earthly and perishable honors and began to withdraw from the imperial retinue. Seeing this, Constantius called back those who were leaving the imperial palace, the true Christians, and said to them:

"Since I see you serving your God faithfully, I wish to have you also as my servants, my friends and counselors, for I hope that you will be as faithful to me as you are to your God."

Turning to those who had inclined toward apostasy from Christianity and toward worship of idols, the emperor said:

"I cannot tolerate you at my court. If you do not keep faith with your God, how will you be faithful to me!"

2. For the convenience of governing the vast Roman Empire, Emperor Diocletian divided it into two halves. He ruled the Eastern half himself, residing in Nicomedia and having Caesar Galerius as his co-ruler; in the Western half he appointed Maximian emperor, with Caesar Constantius Chlorus as his co-ruler, who directly governed Gaul and Britain.

3. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book I, Chapter 17.

Having thus shamed them, he removed these hypocrites from his presence, and he drew the faithful servants of God near to himself and made them commanders in his domain[4]. Thus, while the persecution of Diocletian raged in all the other regions of the vast Roman Empire, in the domain of Constantius the Christians lived in peace and prosperity[5]. Yet, unable to disobey the will of Diocletian, the senior emperor, Constantius permitted only one thing: the destruction of some of the Christian churches[6].

Such was the father of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine, Constantius Chlorus. His favor toward the Christians and his preference for them over the pagans, and the conversion to Christ of his wife, the holy Helena, Constantine's mother, and of his daughter Constantia[7], Constantine's sister, from earliest childhood implanted in the soul of the latter a true love for God and His law, and laid a firm foundation for the education and strengthening of his moral character. This small seed sown in the child's soul grew afterward into a great tree.

Constantine was to spend the years of his youth not among his own family but at the court of Diocletian in Nicomedia, whither he was taken almost as a hostage, though an honored one, to guarantee his father Constantius's loyalty to the senior emperor Diocletian. Court life in the capital then displayed in miniature all the moral and religious corruption to which humanity can sink when enslaved by impure, passionate desires of the heart and given over to a "reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:28). Vain pomp and luxury, drunkenness and gluttony, unrestrained debauchery of thought and life, intrigues and conspiracies, malice against true worship of God and hypocritical, false reverence for imaginary gods: this was the dark picture in which Providence showed Constantine the nothingness and disgrace of paganism. At the same time, and therefore all the more strikingly, there stood out before Constantine's eyes the life of another society, the Christian community,

4. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book I, 16.
5. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book VIII, 13; *Life of Constantine*, Book I, 13.
6. Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, Chapter 15.
7. Constantine was the only son of Helena; Constantia was the daughter of Chlorus's other wife, Theodora, by whom Constantius had other children as well. Unfortunately, his contemporaries say nothing of St. Helena's influence upon Constantine during his childhood.

where elders and old women, youths and virgins, the simple and the learned, even children proved the truth of their faith, its purity and loftiness, not by words alone but by their deeds, by confessing it in virtuous lives and suffering for it even unto death. For at this time there blazed the most terrible persecution of the Church of Christ, surpassing all others in the malice of the persecutors, the variety of tortures, the number of martyrs, and above all in the triumph, the victorious triumph of the faith of Christ over all pagan snares. Constantine, placed by Providence at the very hearth of pagan malice, could not fail to see the vanity of all its efforts to overcome the invincible. He beheld with his own eyes the power of God made perfect in weakness and subduing all things to itself. In every Christian confessor, in every martyr's feat, Constantine saw an irrefutable witness to the truth of the faith of Christ, to its superiority over paganism, to its divine origin. Constantine preserved in his soul the pledge of good that had been sown in his childhood: he kept the purity and innocence of his heart and reverence for the law of God, although he moved in a morally corrupt environment. But this inner estrangement of Constantine from the corrupt court life, his inquisitive mind and spiritual steadfastness, covered by modesty, naturally aroused the malice of the courtiers around him; and his stately and handsome bearing, tall stature and outstanding physical strength, which drew the gaze of the people and won for him the love of the whole army, were the cause of envy in many, and especially in the Caesar Galerius. The latter plotted to destroy him and even formed a conspiracy to prevent Constantine from attaining the imperial dignity, to which he had a right by birth.

Constantine's life was endangered, but the hand of Providence saved its chosen one and granted him what unrestrained, treacherous envy wished to take from him. Constantine withdrew to Gaul, to his father, whom he found already on his deathbed, and who soon died.

After the death of Constantius Chlorus, the army that had been with him proclaimed Constantine, then in his thirty-second year, as emperor of Gaul and Britain (in 306), as the beloved son of the Caesar, who was respected by all. Under the living impression of the terrible persecutions of Christians in the East, Constantine, having inherited

power from his father, considered it his first task to confirm all his father's measures in favor of the Christians, and he proclaimed freedom of Christian worship in his domains. Thus the hour of the victory of the faith of Christ over pagan superstition drew near! But the coming of better times for the Church was preceded by a time of divine judgment upon her persecutors. The emperors Diocletian and Maximian, wearied by their own malice against the unshakable sufferers for the holy truth, resolved to seek rest by withdrawing from the imperial thrones; but their renunciation of power, instead of bringing peace to the fierce persecutors themselves, served as a further cause of public disorder. Galerius, who had come to power in the East in place of Diocletian and was displeased by Constantine's accession in the northwest, did not recognize him as emperor but recognized Severus, who ruled Italy and Africa; meanwhile Maxentius, son of Maximian, was proclaimed emperor in Italy. Supporting Severus, Galerius waged war against Maxentius, who sought protection from his father, and the latter again took up the government. Severus surrendered to Maximian and was put to death. Then Galerius proclaimed his general Licinius emperor, and the army proclaimed Caesar Maximian. Thus it came about that six emperors reigned at once in the Roman Empire, and all of them were at enmity with one another. Only the subjects of Constantine enjoyed peace and prosperity, for he was content with the domain inherited from his father and did not wish to take part in the mutual struggle of the other co-rulers; he devoted himself wholly to the governance of the land, guided by the inclination of his pure heart and sound mind, in submission to Divine Providence.

"I have separated myself," Constantine said of himself, "from the rulers who had been before me, because I saw the savagery of their morals[8]."

In his relations with the Christians he followed, after the example of his father, a policy of peace, for he valued them as diligent and faithful subjects. Constantine understood that Christianity was a great power, able to remake the world. Nevertheless he was not yet a Christian; for

8. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book II, 49.

all his profound respect for the servants of Christ, he could not with ease, and not without inner struggle, renounce the ancient pagan traditions. It was only the terrible and difficult circumstances that then arose which disposed him openly to bow before the majesty of the "Crucified God," who in a wondrous manner led him out of his state of wavering and confirmed him in the resolve to become a Christian.

After Galerius, who died (in 311) of a dreadfully cruel illness, and Maximian, ruler of Syria, who perished (in 313) a shameful death by suicide, Licinius remained the sole possessor of the Eastern half of the empire; he afterwards married the sister of Constantine. In the Western half, in the Italian region, after the renewed reign of Maximian, Maxentius again ascended the throne, contrary to the wish of the Roman people. Constantine acknowledged him as emperor in Rome and even sent him an embassy of peace. But Maxentius not only did not desire peaceful relations with Constantine, he did not even wish to call him emperor, desiring himself alone to be sole autocrat of all the lands and regions of the Roman domain. Having firmly seated himself upon the throne, he displayed in full measure his inherent treacherous cruelty and avarice, not only toward the Christians but also toward his fellow pagans. Having won over, at his accession, the men he needed with gifts and promises, he began to persecute and torment the honored senators, plundering their property, seizing their wives and daughters to satisfy his brutal passions and those of his favorites. He was very grievous and abhorrent to all Rome because of his cruelty and his vile life. The Romans, suffering under his heavy yoke, resolved to seek secretly the protection of Constantine, asking him to come and deliver them from this tormentor. Constantine first, on this occasion, sent a letter to Maxentius, amicably urging him to cease his acts of violence. But Maxentius not only did not heed his good counsel and did not amend, but became still more embittered. His obstinacy went so far that he began to prepare for war against Constantine.

Hearing of this, Constantine in 312 resolved to undertake a military campaign against the Roman emperor: he wished to snatch Rome from the hands of the wicked tyrant. But this campaign presented insurmountable difficulties. It was not easy even for the most daring com-

mander, beloved by his troops, to bring the army with the sword into the heart of Italy, to carry war onto the soil of great Rome, sacred to the peoples of that time; such an undertaking had to produce a stunning effect on the imperial army and a deep murmur of discontent. Constantine himself could not be free from a feeling of involuntary fear in undertaking this campaign, the more so as he had never himself seen Rome, which might appear to him a formidable giant. Moreover, Constantine knew that the army of his opponent was more numerous than his own, and that Maxentius firmly trusted in the help of his national gods, whom he sought to appease with lavish sacrifices, even by the slaying of boys and girls; that Maxentius protected himself and his troops by every kind of charm and sorcery, and had on his side great demonic power. To rely upon human strength and means alone was insufficient for Constantine, and there arose in him a sincere desire for help from on high. Reflecting on the unhappy state of the empire, which vainly sought protection from lifeless idols, on the help of God repeatedly manifested to his father and to himself, on those political upheavals which had taken place before his eyes, on the shameful destruction within a short time of three men who had shared supreme power in the empire with him, he judged it madness to cling in vain to gods that do not exist, and, after so many proofs, to remain in error.[9]

Amid such anxious reflections Constantine began to raise a prayer to the God of his father, began to ask Him to enlighten him concerning Himself, to grant him courage and to stretch forth His right hand over the task before him.[10] And this prayer of his, like the prayer of the jailer once (Acts 16), was heard: the Lord soon consoled him by a direct manifestation and showed him what he should do. Eusebius, a contemporary of the event, who heard of it personally from the emperor, relates:

"Once, after noon, when the sun had already begun to decline toward the west," said the emperor, "I saw with my own eyes a sign of the cross, formed of light and lying upon the sun, with the inscription: 'By this conquer.'"

9. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book I, 27.
10. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book I, 36; Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, 44.

This sight struck with terror both the emperor himself and the army that stood near him, for the cross, as an instrument of shameful execution, was considered by the pagans an evil omen. Constantine was in perplexity and said to himself: what does such an appearance mean? But while he pondered, night came. Then in a dream Christ appeared to him with the sign seen in the heavens and commanded him to make a standard like the one seen in the sky and to use it for protection when attacked by enemies.

Rising from sleep, Constantine told his friends the secret of his dream-vision, and then summoned skilled craftsmen and, describing to them the form of the wondrous standard, ordered a banner of gold and precious stones to be made after this pattern; he also commanded his soldiers to depict the cross on their shields and helmets. Struck by the wondrous vision, Constantine at the same time resolved to honor no other God than Christ, who had appeared to him; summoning to him the initiates into the Word of Christ, the Christian priests, he asked them: who is that God, and what is the meaning of the sign he had seen? Having heard their answer concerning the one God, concerning the mystery of the incarnation of His Only-begotten Son for the salvation of men, concerning the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, who conquered the power of death, and concerning the sign of the cross that had appeared to him, that it is a sign of victory, Constantine fully and consciously became a Christian in his soul. From that time he began diligently to study the Holy Scripture and always kept priests about him, although he had not yet received holy baptism.[11]

"Calling upon God of all things and, as helper and protector, upon His Christ, and also setting before his soldiers the banner of victory bearing the saving sign, Constantine went forth with all his army from the regions of Gaul on campaign against Maxentius in the Italian region."[12]

The campaign undertaken by Constantine to deliver Rome from the cruel tyrant did not bring the latter to his senses. The wicked Maxentius, having offered abundant sacrifices to the gods with solemn cere-

11. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book I, 28–32.
12. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book I, 37.

monies, and having heard the predictions of diviners who read the entrails of pregnant women, went out against Constantine with a numerous army; but he did not avert the just retribution for his impiety. Constantine, covered by the saving sign of the Cross, after three encounters with the enemy, approached the very eternal city and here inflicted a decisive defeat upon him. Maxentius, fleeing across the river Tiber, perished when the bridge collapsed, like the ancient Pharaoh, with his picked horsemen, in the watery deep. The victor entered Rome in triumph and was met by the people with great joy. Recognizing that this victory had been granted by divine help, Constantine raised the sacred standard in the most crowded place of the city, and then, when the grateful Romans erected a statue in honor of the new emperor, he commanded that a tall spear in the form of a cross be fixed in the hand of his image, and that this inscription be written: "By this saving sign I delivered your city from the yoke of the tyrant and restored to the Roman people and the senate their former splendor and renown."[13]

Having thus become sole ruler of the whole western half of the Roman Empire, Constantine the first of the Caesars, by edict (in the year 313), proclaimed full toleration of religion to the peoples under his rule: to the pagans he left the right to perform the rites of their worship, and to the Christians he granted freedom to worship the one true God. This edict was followed by a whole series of decrees[14] favorable to the Church of Christ: crucifixion was forbidden; the bloody spectacles in the circus were abolished; pagan sacrifices and incense-burning on festive days were brought to an end; the observance of the Lord's Day was established, with a prohibition on holding court proceedings on that day and a cessation of work for both free citizens and slaves; orphans and abandoned children, the poor and the infirm, who had been left without help or care under paganism, were taken under the protection of the crown; in all the cities there began feasts of the renewal and consecration of churches; everywhere were heard hymns of praise and prayers of thanksgiving to God; bishops gathered freely to deliberate on the needs of the Church. Constantine himself sometimes attended these as-

13. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book IX, 9; *Life of Constantine*, Book I, 40.
14. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book X, 5 and 6.

semblies, took an interest in questions touching the faith, and readily did all that was required for the good of the Christian society. He freed the clergy from all extraneous offices and from taxes, just as the pagan priests had been free from taxes, so that they might devote themselves wholly to the service of God; he not only restored to the Church the burial places and all the sites seized by the persecutors, but also bestowed for worship several spacious buildings called basilicas, in which judges had sat and which, by their internal arrangement, could easily be converted into churches; he granted to the pastors the right to decide disputes and mutual disagreements among Christians. Wearing on his helmet, as a visible sign of reverent honor paid to Christ God, the monogram "Christ"[15], Constantine gave his soldiers a prayer which they were to recite on Sundays, and which, being the expression of the emperor's own heartfelt faith, disposed all to acknowledge the one almighty Giver of good things and to seek His help in all undertakings[16].

The emperor's favor caused rapture among the Christians: their hearts were filled with great spiritual joy from tasting the sweetness of life under the new government. The contemporary Eusebius describes that time thus:

"Now a bright and clear day, not darkened by any cloud, has illumined the Church of Christ with the rays of heavenly light. We must confess that our happiness is greater than our merits; we are struck with the greatest astonishment at the grace of the Giver of such great gifts; we rightly marvel at Him and speak with the prophet: 'Come and see the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth' (Ps. 45:9). People of every age, both men and women, rejoicing with all the strength of their souls, offer up prayers and thanksgivings to God with mind and heart[17]."

But while the Christians in the West thus prospered under Constantine's rule, it was quite otherwise in the East, where Licinius reigned. Brought up at the court of Diocletian and a commander under

15. This monogram consisted of two letters, X and P, the first placed over the second.
16. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book IV, 19.
17. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book X, 1–3.

Galerius, he, having attained the dignity of Caesar, secretly hated the Christians. Having become related by marriage to Constantine, Licinius at first did not dare to oppose his powerful brother-in-law[18]; he even signed the edict (the Edict of Milan) on religious toleration issued by the latter. But soon after the death of the emperor Maximian, becoming the sole master of the whole East, he began to oppress and humiliate the Christians. Fearing to lose his imperial power and heeding the slanders of the representatives of idolatry, he closed and destroyed Christian churches on the pretext that prayers were offered in them for Constantine in disloyalty to himself, and he demanded of all, and especially of his troops, a pagan oath and the offering of sacrifices to idols; those who disobeyed his will he subjected to imprisonment and terrible tortures, bringing them to a martyr's death. At this time, among others, the valiant band of the Forty Martyrs suffered. Licinius, however, was cruel not only to the Christians: all the peoples subject to him suffered much from his greed and malice. His suspicion and cruelty are sufficiently attested by the fact alone that he put to death the wife and daughter of his former patron Diocletian and destroyed all the children of the emperors Maximian, Severus and Galerius. The Roman Empire, as Eusebius depicts it, divided into two halves, presented two opposites of day and night: the inhabitants of the East were enveloped in the darkness of night, while the inhabitants of the West were illumined by the light of the brightest day.

The relations of Licinius with Constantine could not be, and were not, friendly. Licinius showed in them treachery and duplicity; he assured Constantine of his friendship while secretly hating him, and sought to do him every kind of harm; his schemes did not succeed, and more than once quarrels broke out between them, ending in war. Constantine remained the victor, but, deceived by his brother-in-law's false assurances, he concluded peace with him. However, as time went on, the relations between the emperors took on an increasingly sharpened character. The oppressed subjects of Licinius and the Christians persecuted by him saw no end to their sufferings. Licinius at last ceased to

18. He married Constantine's sister in 313.

conceal his designs against Constantine and entered into open conflict. In 323 a cruel war broke out between them. This war was to decide once and for all the fate of Christianity in the Roman Empire, which embraced "the whole universe."

Both emperors gathered considerable forces and prepared for a decisive battle, each in accordance with his own faith: it seemed that a decrepit paganism had taken up arms against Christianity, which had appeared in the world to renew mankind. On the eve of the battle Licinius, surrounded by priests and diviners, gathered his picked soldiers and his best friends into a shady grove in which idols stood, performed a solemn sacrifice, and, addressing all who were present there, said:

"Friends! Here are our public gods, before whom we must stand in reverence, as our forefathers taught us. But the commander of the army hostile to us, rejecting the customs of our fathers, has adopted false opinions and glorifies some foreign, unknown God. By the shameful banner (the Cross) he disgraces his army; trusting in it, he raises his weapons not so much against us as against the gods. The matter itself will reveal who is right and who is in error: if we win, it will be clear that our gods are the true gods; but if the God of Constantine, whom we mock, a foreign god, prevails, then let Him be worshipped. But this is certain, that our gods will conquer; therefore let us boldly rush with weapons in our hands upon the godless!"[19]

Constantine, on the contrary, before the battle withdrew into his tent and there prepared himself for combat by prayer and fasting; in these decisive moments of his life he turned to his past, recalled in memory the events of his life, the dangers to which he had been exposed and which had passed by safely for him; he remembered the shameful ruin of the persecutors of Christianity and the valiant yet peaceful death of the disciples of Christ, and, seeing in all this the wondrous providence of the Most High, he committed himself and all his affairs to the highest heavenly guidance and intercession. The Christians fervently prayed for the emperor, their protector; the sacred banner rose among Constantine's regiments and inspired them with hope of

19. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book XI, 9.

heavenly help. His troops looked upon this victorious banner with reverence, while his enemies looked upon it with fear; in many cities of the kingdom of Licinius, in broad daylight, people saw apparitions of Constantine's troops marching triumphantly with this banner. Licinius himself urged his soldiers not to gaze at the enemy's standard, "for," he said, "it is terrible in its power and hostile to us."

The pagan priests and diviners predicted victory to Licinius, but God granted it to Constantine. Licinius repeatedly attacked the approaching enemy, but each time he suffered defeat and saved himself by flight; pretending to repent, he asked for peace, while secretly he gathered new levies and sought help from the barbarians. At last the naval victory of Crispus, the son of Constantine, near Byzantium, and the battle at Adrianople decisively settled the outcome of the war. Licinius submitted, and some time later was executed at Thessalonica, since, having surrendered to the victor, he had formed a conspiracy against Constantine. In 323 Constantine became the sole sovereign of the whole Roman Empire.

This victory over Licinius once more and so tangibly demonstrated to Constantine that earthly blessings and successes are granted to the worshippers of the true God. And thus, presenting himself as an obedient instrument in the hands of the Most High, he humbly gives glory to the one God for his successes:

"There will surely be no pride," he says in one of his edicts, "in boasting for one who recognizes that he has received benefits from the Supreme Being. God found my service fit and judged me worthy to carry out His will. Beginning from the British Sea, with the help of some supreme power, I drove before me all the terrors that I met, in order to call the human race, brought up under my influence, to the service of the most sacred law, and under the guidance of the Supreme Being to nurture the most blessed faith."

"I firmly believed," he adds, "that my whole soul, everything by which I breathe, everything that exists at all in the depths of my mind —I owe all of it to the great God."

Disposed thus in his soul, Constantine after his victory hastened to extend to the Christians of the Eastern Empire the same rights that

they had enjoyed in the West. In the East too he forbade offering sacrifices to idols in the name of the Emperor; he chose Christians above all for the governorship of provinces; he took care for the renewal and construction of churches; and he returned to the faithful the property taken from them during the persecutions.

"Whoever has lost property," ran one edict, "by fearlessly and undauntedly passing through the glorious and divine course of martyrdom, or by becoming a confessor and winning for himself eternal hopes, and whoever has lost them, being compelled to remove because he would not yield to persecutors who demanded the betrayal of the faith: we command that the estates of all such be restored."

In cases where no close relatives could be found, property taken from Christians was handed over to the local churches; private persons from whom the property of martyrs had been taken received compensation from the imperial treasury. Constantine's Christian feelings were expressed most fully and characteristically in his rescript to the provincial governors:

"Now," so he addresses God here, "I pray Thee, great God! Be merciful and gracious to Thy eastern peoples; and through me, Thy servant, grant healing to all the provincial rulers.... Under Thy guidance I began and completed the work of salvation; bearing Thy banner everywhere, I led the victorious army; and wherever some public necessity summoned me, I followed that sign of Thy power and went against the enemies. Therefore I have given Thee my soul, well tested in love and fear, for I sincerely love Thy name and stand in awe before the power which Thou hast shown by many proofs and by which Thou strengthenest my faith.... I wish Thy people to enjoy tranquility and freedom from care; I wish that, as the believers, those who go astray may also taste the pleasantness of peace and quiet, for such a restoration of fellowship may lead even them onto the path of truth. Let no one disturb another.... Men of sound judgment must know that only those will live holy and pure whom Thou Thyself shalt call to rest under Thy holy laws; and those who turn away may, if they wish, keep the lot of their false teaching... Let no one harm another; what one has learned and understood, let him use, if possible, for the benefit of his

neighbor; and when this is impossible, he must leave him, for it is one thing to take up the struggle for immortality of one's own free will, and another to be forced to it by execution... Removing conscience from everything contrary, let us all enjoy the lot of the good bestowed, that is, the good of peace."[20]

Having become sole ruler of the whole Roman Empire, and having proclaimed toleration of religion "throughout the whole world" (Lk. 2:1), Constantine, however, was not "lukewarm" (Rev. 3:15) in his imperial life. Having renounced paganism and become the head of the Christian society, he saw in Christianity the most important support of the empire, the principal pledge of the might and prosperity of the state, which, in his thought, was to pave the way for the free, non-violent establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, indicating and providing means for the education and perfecting of the human race in the spirit of Christ. Constantine, as an openly avowed protector of the Christians, was little loved in Rome, where many pagan customs and manners still remained. He himself did not love Rome with its Pantheon, where, so to speak mechanically, the pagan gods of all the conquered peoples had been gathered, and he rarely and reluctantly visited the old capital. And the Romans, grateful to the liberator for deliverance from the tyrant (Maxentius), did not understand and could not duly appreciate the emperor's activity; in him they saw a violator of their ancient national order, an enemy of their religion, closely bound up with the political greatness of Rome. Their dissatisfaction and murmuring, even conspiracies and sometimes open uprisings, were the reason why in Constantine's mind there arose and matured the thought of creating for himself a new capital, a Christian city, which would be connected in no way with paganism. Constantine was attracted by the position of Byzantium, an ancient small town on the shores of the Bosphorus, distinguished moreover by a naval victory over Licinius; he chose it and made it the new capital of the empire. He himself, with a solemn procession, marked out the boundaries of the new city over a wide extent and began to build it with magnificent edifices. Spacious

20. *History of the Orthodox Church*, ed. 1892, by Pobedonostsev, pp. 73–74.

palaces, aqueducts, baths and theaters adorned the capital; it was filled with treasures of art brought from Greece, Italy and Asia. But no temples dedicated to the pagan gods were built in it any longer, and instead of the Colosseum, where gladiators fought, a circus was built for horse races. The chief adornment of the new city was the churches dedicated to the true God, in whose construction the royal protector of the Christians himself took a living part. His solicitude extended this time not only to the splendor of the houses of prayer, but even, for example, to such trifles – for his high rank: with the construction of new churches in the capital a shortage of liturgical books was felt, and the emperor took care for their most speedy preparation; a special embassy was dispatched to Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, with the instruction that "excellent scribes should write fifty copies of the books on prepared parchments," and that these scrolls should be delivered to him, and "the reward of whomever was due for the labor he reserved to himself."[21]

By his same order, in the capital churches the liturgical books were to be kept in decently rich bindings.

Imbued with deep religious feeling, Constantine in the new capital also arranged his everyday life in accordance with the demands of piety and holiness. The palace itself was a clear reflection of his Christian disposition. "In the imperial halls there was established a likeness of the Church of God, and the emperor by his zeal for pious exercises gave an example to others; every day at fixed hours he shut himself in inaccessible chambers and there conversed alone with God, bending his knees in prayer, and asked for what he needed; and at times he invited his courtiers to take part in his prayers. With special reverence he kept the Lord's day and Friday, the day of the Lord Jesus' death on the cross; on these days he ceased his ordinary occupations and devoted himself to the service of God. Constantine's palace thus presented something quite different from the palaces of the former Roman Caesars: here was heard no idle talk and treacherous intrigue, there were no noisy, vain and often bloody entertainments; here were heard 'hymns of praise to God.' The emperor's companions were 'initiates of

21. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book III, 1.

the divine Word'—bishops and priests; the servants and guardians of the whole house were men adorned with purity of life and virtue; even the spearmen and bodyguards were guided by the example of the pious emperor. The Christian master of the palace stamped everything with a Christian seal. In the main hall, in a gilded recess of the ceiling, there was set up an image of the Cross made of precious stones in a golden setting. Over the door leading into the imperial chambers, 'in view of all,' there was fixed a painted picture made of wax. This picture represented the following: the face of the emperor, over his head a cross, and under his feet a dragon cast down into the abyss; and the meaning of this picture was this: Constantine, by the saving power of the Cross, had cast down into the abyss of perdition the dragon—the enemy of the human race—in the persons of the persecutors of Christianity, the pagan emperors. This picture reminded everyone that its owner was a worshipper of the true God, who by the crucifixion of His Son had bestowed new life upon mankind."

The new Christian capital, which received its name from its founder – the "city of Emperor Constantine," Constantinople – occupying a central place between the former capitals of the empire, Rome and Nicomedia, as Jerusalem once was "the city of King David," not belonging exclusively to any one tribe of Israel[22], by its fortunate geographical position and committed to the protection of the Mother of God, quickly flourished and eclipsed the glory and greatness not only of splendid Nicomedia but of mighty Rome itself. And just as in antiquity David, settled in Zion, was troubled that he "dwells in a house of cedar, while the Ark of the Covenant remains under skins" (2 Kgdms. 5:9–11, 7:2; 1 Chron. 17, and following), so now Constantine, settled in beautiful Byzantium, could not remain indifferent to the desecrated "cradle"[23] of Christianity – the place of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, of His sufferings, death and resurrection. Reverencing the sign of the Cross, he desired to glorify the "life-giving Tree on which the King

22. Mount Zion, with the fortress of Jebus (Jerusalem), rose on the border between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; taken by David from the Canaanite tribe of the Jebusites, it stood, as it were, outside the tribal division of the Promised Land.

23. "Our whole religion has its homeland in this country (Palestine) and in this city (Jerusalem)" — words of Blessed Jerome. Works, vol. II, p. 6.

and Lord was crucified." But, as a warrior who had also shed much blood, he considered himself unworthy to accomplish this in person. This pious intention of the emperor was carried into effect by his equal-in-honor mother, Empress Helena, whom he sent to Jerusalem, providing her with authority and rich gifts.

Helena, as Eusebius relates[24], this elderly woman with youthful swiftness hastened to the East, to offer due worship at the feet of the Lord – according to the word of the prophet, "Let us worship at His footstool" (Ps. 131:7).

In that holy land, marked by wondrous events, where everything recalls the "great mystery of godliness: God manifested in the flesh," the greatness of the humble soul of the royal elder was clearly revealed. There St. Helena did not clothe herself in the garments proper to her rank, but moved among the crowd of common people in the plainest dress, seeking to go unrecognized, and dispensed generous alms. Imitating the Lord Jesus, she carried her self-abasement so far that in her own house she gathered virgins, entertained them, and herself waited upon them at table as a simple slave.[25] The example of the Empress's sincere piety made a deep impression not only on those who believed in Christ, but also on unbelievers.

The sojourn of the Empress-mother in the "cradle of Christianity" was also marked by the fulfillment of the designs of her royal son. In Palestine all the places hallowed by the events of the Gospel had long since been laid waste. The pagans, out of hatred for Christianity, had sought to efface even the memory of them. The place most precious to the believing Christian heart, the cave of the Lord's Tomb, had been filled with rubbish and so hidden from reverent eyes. Moreover, as if in mockery of the "Crucified God" and His worshippers, a shrine to the "voluptuous demon of love" (Venus) had been built upon the hill heaped over the holy cave. At Helena's direction the idol shrines erected on places sacred to Christians were torn down, and holy churches were built in their stead. Thus beautiful churches were raised, at the Empress's desire and at her expense, at Bethlehem over the cave of the

24. Eusebius. *Life of Constantine*, Book III, 42.
25. Rufinus, *Church History*, Book I, p. 8.

Nativity of Christ, on the Mount of Olives, the place of the Lord's Ascension, and the churches adorned Gethsemane, the place of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, and the place where God appeared to Abraham at the oak of Mamre.

But the chief concern of the royal elder was to carry out the thought of her great son: to find the very Tree on which the Savior of the world had been crucified.

The place where the Cross of the Lord was hidden was unknown. In seeking it, the pious Helena employed on her part every means and her royal influence. After long and urgent inquiries and searches, the place was pointed out by a certain Judas, a Jew, an aged man, son of a Jewish teacher, who indicated it as lying beneath the pagan shrine built on the hill covering the cave of the Lord's Tomb. By the Empress's command the abominable Venus was cast down and her shrine immediately destroyed. Macarius, Hierarch of Jerusalem, offered prayer on the desecrated place, and they set about clearing the height. And pious zeal received a wondrous encouragement: the workers, digging the earth, the faithful, perceived the fragrance of sweet odor rising from beneath the ground. Zeal for the glory of the name of Christ moved the workers, in accordance with the desire of the blessed Helena, to carry the materials of the destroyed pagan temple and all the rubbish from beneath it as far as possible from the place of the burial of the Lord Jesus, so that nothing defiled by idol worship might touch the great Christian sanctuary. The cave of the Lord's Tomb was found and cleared. Near it, on the eastern side, three crosses were discovered, and beside them a board with an inscription and the honorable nails. But how was it to be known which of the three crosses was the Cross of the Savior? The general perplexity over this matter was resolved, by the providence of God, through a miraculous event: it happened that at that time a dead man was being carried past this place for burial. Bishop Macarius ordered the bearers of the corpse to stop. On the bishop's counsel they began to lay the found crosses, one at a time, upon the dead man, and when the Cross of Christ was laid upon him, the dead man rose. All, seeing this miracle, rejoiced and glorified the wondrous power of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord. The elder Empress with reverence

bowed before the honorable Tree and kissed it. And since, in the great throng of people, it was not possible, following the Empress's example, for each to pay the due reverence to the found cross individually, Bishop Macarius, satisfying the common desire to see the sanctuary at least from afar, piously raised it aloft, standing in an elevated place, and performed the elevation of the Cross of the Lord before the gaze of the multitude of the faithful, who at that time cried out loudly, "Lord, have mercy!" This was the first Elevation of the honorable and Life-giving Cross; it took place in 326. The Orthodox Church celebrates this event annually on September 14.[26] Many of the pagans and Jews were then converted to Christ; among those converted was that Judas who had pointed out the place where the holy Cross was kept.[27] The holy Cross was afterwards placed in a silver chest for preservation; on Great Friday it was brought out to Golgotha (in the church built soon after, where it was kept) for veneration. But Helena, leaving Jerusalem, took with her, as a gift to her son Constantine, a particle of the life-bearing Tree. After this the blessed Empress-mother lived but a short time, and died and was honorably buried.

Having received from his mother, the blessed Helena, the priceless treasure, a particle of the holy Cross, Constantine resolved to adorn the cave of the Lord's Tomb and to build beside it a church that would be "more splendid than all the churches existing anywhere." "The cave, as the head of all, according to the words of Eusebius, the Christ-loving generosity of the Emperor clothed with excellent columns and numerous adornments. From the cave there was an exit onto a spacious square under the open sky. This square was paved with gleaming stone and on three sides was enclosed by continuous porticoes." And with what striking attentiveness the Christian Emperor regarded the con-

26. On the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross — a fast day — the worship of the Orthodox Church is devoted to glorifying the Cross of the Lord and recalling the Savior's death on the Cross; at the All-night Vigil, after the Great Doxology, the Cross is solemnly carried by the clergy from the sanctuary to the middle of the church, and here it is venerated. The rite of the elevation of the Cross in cathedral churches, performed by the bishops with the repeated exclamation of the clergy, "Lord, have mercy," is distinguished by especial solemnity.

27. Judas, after his baptism — Cyriacus; he was afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem and suffered a martyr's death under Julian the Apostate. His memory is kept on 28 October.

struction of the church on the eastern side of the cave, the following lines from Constantine's letter to Hierarch Macarius of Jerusalem best convey: "As for the erection and elegant finishing of the church walls, know that I have entrusted the care of this to the governors of Palestine. I have taken care that through their agency there should be sent to you immediately both artists and craftsmen and everything necessary for the construction. As for the columns and marbles, whichever you judge most valuable and most useful, examine them thoroughly, and without the least delay write to me, so that from your letter I may see how many of what kinds of materials are required, and may procure them from everywhere. Furthermore, I wish to know what vault of the church pleases you, mosaic or finished otherwise. If mosaic, then the rest of it can be adorned with gold. Let your Reverence inform the said governors in the shortest time how many craftsmen and artists will be needed and what expenses. Strive also to report to me immediately not only about the marbles and columns, but also about the mosaic, which you judge the best."

Constantine, among other things, himself conceived that the church would be well adorned with twelve columns, by the number of the Apostles, upon the tops of which would stand vases cast of silver. It is not surprising, therefore, that this church presented a marvel of beauty and by its appearance delighted its contemporaries. The historian Eusebius, among other things, describes this monument of the pious zeal of the first Christian emperor thus: "The basilica (church) is an extraordinary building, of immeasurable height and of unusual breadth and length. Its interior is clad in multicolored marbles, and the outer appearance of the walls, gleaming with polished stones fitted closely one to another, presents a work exceedingly beautiful and in no way inferior to marble. The domed ceiling is adorned with wondrous carving, which, spreading like a great sea over the whole basilica with arches interlaced and everywhere gleaming with gold, lights the entire church as though with rays of light. The principal feature of the whole, the semicircle placed at the very edge of the basilica (on the eastern side), is crowned, by the number of the twelve Apostles, with twelve columns,

the tops of which are adorned with large vases cast of silver, a splendid offering to God from the Emperor himself."

But the pious Emperor did not limit his attitude toward Christianity to solicitude for its outward exaltation; the inner life of Christ's Church also concerned him. The Church, in Constantine's thought, was to serve as the chief support of the life of the state; religious unity was to be a mighty pledge of the empire's prosperity. The Church, shining with greatness and outward splendor, was by its inner peace to draw the pagan population to itself, gradually turning the whole state into one inwardly united organism, quickened by the one Spirit of Christ. Such unity and the well-being of the Church "gave the solicitous Emperor peaceful days and quiet nights"; in this he saw his own happiness and that of all the peoples of the world subject to him.

Not always, however, and not easily, did the great emperor enjoy these "peaceful days and tranquil nights." In his time the Church of Christ, already crowned with the victor's wreath of martyrdom and having obtained the right of civil existence, even with privileges above paganism, was disturbed by internal disorders which had arisen and matured in the grievous years of persecution. No sooner had Constantine come to the throne in Rome than he learned, with astonishment and sorrow, that an entire province of his empire was being torn by strife among the children of the One Father. Among the Christians in Africa a contest flared up over the consecration of Caecilian as Bishop of Carthage, a "traitor" [28]; his opponents chose Majorinus as bishop, and soon after Majorinus's death they raised in his place the chief instigator of their opposition, Donatus [29]. The adherents of the latter, the "Donatists," joining with the "Novatians" [30], maintained that they alone constituted the Church of Christ, and in a frenzy of fanaticism they did not hesitate to heap slanders upon their opponents, even to seize their

28. This name was applied by Christians during the persecutions to those who, out of fear, handed over to the pagans objects of their religious veneration. Caecilian was said to have handed the sacred books over to the persecutors; this accusation proved to be false.

29. Donatus was a presbyter in Carthage.

30. The Novatianists taught that those who had fallen during the persecutions, and in general those who sinned gravely, "unto death," should be received into communion with the Church not through repentance but through a repeated baptism.

churches by force; the matter often went so far as bloodshed between the warring parties. To reconcile them and to examine their mutual complaints, Constantine at first sent to Carthage his "beloved and esteemed" bishop Hosius [31], charging him at the same time to distribute financial aid to the suffering Christians there [32]; then, by an imperial command concerning the Donatists, two councils were convened, a smaller one in Rome and one of "many bishops from various places" at Arles [33]. The judgment pronounced upon the restless schismatics by these councils was finally confirmed at Milan in the year 316 under the personal presidency of Constantine, and the matter apparently was settled.

But the more the pious emperor became acquainted with the actual state of Christianity, the less it justified his ideal conception of the holy unity of the children of the Church of Christ. The affair of the Donatists, which disquieted Constantine at the first steps of his reign, was important not so much in its substance as on account of the passion of its combatants. In the year 323, after his victory over Licinius, having become sole ruler of the whole empire, Constantine went to the East, animated by the sincere desire to rebuild the entire state anew, on better and firmer foundations. In his plans he assigned the first place to the Christian Church, which, in his thought, was to unite spiritually the politically consolidated world empire. But there, in the East, he suffered a disappointment more bitter than in the West. He arrived at a time when the disputes aroused by the heresy of Arius [3377], left unchecked, had reached their utmost development. Eusebius describes this time thus: "not only did the presidents of the churches enter into controversy with one another, but the people too were divided; the course of events reached such an indecency that the Divine teaching was subjected to insulting mockery even in the pagan theatres." That time was

31. Hosius, a native of Spain, who held the episcopal office for more than sixty years, became famous in the Diocletianic persecution as a confessor for Christ. He was Bishop of Corduba. Emperor Constantine summoned him to his court and surrounded him with love and trust. In the Christian society of that time it was widely held that this beloved counsellor exercised a strong influence over Constantine (Socrates, *Church History*, I, 7).
32. Eusebius, *Church History*, X, 6.
33. Ibid., X, 5.

favorable to the activity of the blasphemers of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Licinius, Constantine's brother-in-law, then spending the last years of his reign, who had once signed with Constantine the Edict of Milan on religious toleration, regarded Christians in general with suspicion, as people unreliable in their attitude toward him; he hated them and even persecuted them cruelly. In their mutual dissensions, provoked by the Arian heresy, he could perceive a phenomenon desirable and useful for himself. These disputes, weakening the strength of the Church, could give him hope of support for his designs against his powerful brother-in-law. And Licinius's calculations were not in vain. Of Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, Constantine himself, for example, spoke thus: "he even sent spies to me and gave the tyrant (Licinius) almost armed assistance" [34].

On arriving at Nicomedia, Constantine was profoundly struck by the discords aroused by Arianism. Yet he did not at once grasp the importance of these events. Both he and the initiates of the Divine teaching who had come with him from the West received here a one-sided account of the affair of Arius from the Nicomedians, who saw in doctrinal questions not a matter of pious faith having vital significance, but a field of scholarly inquiry, and even of idle verbal dispute. Nevertheless Constantine did not leave the Arian affair unattended; at the outset he dispatched a lengthy conciliatory letter to Alexandria, with a persuasive request to Bishop Alexander and to Arius to end their mutual strife. In the emperor's opinion, the bishop too was not right, through his imprudence and sharp questionings, and Arius was at fault for breaking communion and refusing to submit to the bishop; he recommended that both take example from the philosophers, who, though they dispute among themselves, live together peacefully. Moreover, both stand on common ground: both acknowledge Divine Providence, and therefore it would be easy for them to be reconciled [35]...

Together with this letter Constantine sent to Alexandria his "beloved" bishop Hosius, who was to investigate the matter on the spot and to help bring about the pacification of the Alexandrians. Hosius ful-

34. *Theological Herald*, 1906, December, p. 694.
35. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, II, 64–72.

filled the emperor's commission. True, he did not reconcile the opponents; but from his inquiry into the disputes he drew the conviction that the heresy of Arius was not idle chatter but threatened to shake the foundations of the Christian faith and led to the denial of all Christianity. In the year 324 Hosius of Cordoba returned to the emperor and explained to him the serious danger of the Arian movement. Then Constantine resolved to convene an Ecumenical Council, which in his opinion was the only means to pacify the Church. In the emperor's thought, this Council, "waging war against the chief enemy" who then disturbed the peace of the Church, the blasphemous Arian heresy, was to examine other questions also and to give answers, that is, determinations concerning the ordering of the inner life of Christians [36].

By the authority of the Emperor it was determined that the Ecumenical Council should be held in the city of Nicaea [37]. Constantine did everything to ease the journey of the summoned bishops to the place of assembly, and he undertook the maintenance of those arriving at Nicaea at the state's expense. To Nicaea came hierarchs from Egypt and Palestine, from Syria and Mesopotamia, from Asia Minor, Greece, Persia and Armenia, and from the Goths beyond the Danube; from Rome, in place of the aged bishop, came two presbyters. Among the assembled hierarchs were: the aged Alexander of Alexandria, the first denouncer of Arius, who brought with him the archdeacon Athanasius, a valiant and skilful champion against the Arians (later the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria); St. Nicholas, hierarch of the Lycian city of Myra; and St. Spyridon the Wonderworker. In all, more than 2000 persons arrived for the Council (with the bishops were presbyters and deacons), and the hierarchs alone numbered 318.

The Council opened in June 325 in a spacious hall of the imperial palace. Benches stood around the room for the bishops, and in the

36. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, III, 17; V, 6.

middle stood a table on which lay the book of Holy Scripture, as a faithful witness of the truth. When all had gathered, Constantine appeared in all the majesty of his imperial dignity, but without armed guard, accompanied by courtiers who were Christians, clothed in the most splendid royal garments, gleaming with gold and precious stones. His appearance struck the assembly, and especially those present who, having come from distant lands, had never seen his royal face or imperial majesty; but he himself was confused at the sight of such a gathering of glorious pastors of the Church of Christ, among whom were austere ascetics and wonderworkers, confessors and martyrs with scorched hands and pierced eyes [38], who had suffered for the faith. Silent, with downcast gaze, he approached the golden chair prepared for him and stood waiting until the hierarchs invited him to sit. Then, having heard the welcoming and thankful speeches of Eustathius of Antioch and of the historian Eusebius of Caesarea, Constantine himself addressed the assembly with a speech in which he expressed his joy at seeing so great a gathering of fathers, and implored them to resolve the disputed questions in a spirit of peace. "God has helped me," he said, "to overthrow the impious power of the persecutors; but far more grievous to me than any war, any bloody battle, and far more ruinous is internal civil strife in the Church of God."

The Arians came to the Council and conducted themselves there boldly and confidently; they did not foresee that their cause was destined for complete and thorough defeat. On the contrary, they ex-

37. Nicaea, now Iznik — a poor village, then a vast and wealthy city — the chief city of the maritime region of Bithynia; it communicated with the sea by means of a lake and was equally accessible by sea and by land; there was a spacious imperial palace there, and there were many buildings where the bishops and clergy assembled for the council could freely be accommodated. Nicaea was only twenty miles from Nicomedia, the emperor's residence at the time, which thus offered him great convenience for taking part in the Council. In the choice of Nicaea as the place of the Council, the name itself — "victory" (in the Russian translation) — is said to have had an influence, as Eusebius hints. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, III, 6.

38. The number of the Fathers of the Council is not shown uniformly by the historians; Eusebius (*Life of Constantine*, III, 8), for example, counts up to 250; St. Athanasius of Alexandria in his writings, and the emperor himself, speak of up to 300. The figure 318 was named by St. Athanasius in one of his letters to the African Church; in its Greek notation — ΤΙΗ — it recalls the "Cross of Jesus," and so it was adopted into general use, so that the Council of Nicaea came to be called the Council of the 318 Fathers.

pected a happy outcome for their designs: they had on their side up to 17 bishops, at whose head stood the metropolitan of the capital, who had connections in the imperial palace. The Arians hoped that the Council, if it did not agree with their views, would at least not condemn them severely.

Arius stubbornly defended his teaching, bringing to bear the full force of his eloquence. But the unshaken and convinced devotion of the Council's Fathers to the true ecclesiastical teaching put to shame the false wisdom of the blasphemer. The defenders of Orthodoxy understood well what the essence of the Arian heresy consisted in, and with deep religious feeling and truly enlightened understanding they refuted it worthily. Among them the Alexandrian deacon Athanasius was distinguished by the particular power of his word and his precision in exposing the heretical vain speech: his word tore apart the heretic's sophistry as though it were light cobweb. The disputes were heated and prolonged. Constantine vainly used his influence to reconcile the disputants and bring the quarrel to an amicable resolution; the longer the debates went on, the more evident it became how far the Arians had strayed from the truth. The statement of faith proposed to the Council by Eusebius of Nicomedia, the leader of the Arians, which expressly set forth the thought that the "Son of God" is a "product," a "creature," and that "there was a time when He was not," was unanimously rejected by the Fathers of the Council as false and impious. The very scroll on which it was written was torn up.

Having thus irrevocably condemned Arianism, the Fathers of the Council resolved to give the faithful an exact confession of Orthodox teaching: a Creed. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, presented for their attention the "baptismal creed," which had long been in use in his Church and was composed almost exclusively of expressions taken from Holy Scripture. The Fathers received this creed with approval; but in order to remove with decisiveness any possibility of a heretical meaning being read into it, they judged it necessary to replace certain general expressions in it with others that would perfectly define the ecclesiastical truth. The Emperor, who was present at the Council, joined the Fathers in approving the Caesarean creed and declared his full agreement

with it. At the same time, however, Constantine proposed inserting into the creed a formula on which the leaders of the Church had already dwelt during the preliminary deliberations, to express the ecclesiastical thought concerning the Son of God and His relation to God the Father: the designation of Him as "consubstantial" with the Father. The word spoken by the Emperor was unanimously accepted by the Council and served as the defining basis of the teaching on the Person of the Lord Jesus, the central Christian dogma.

The "baptismal" creed was revised, and the Council set forth a new Nicene Creed, irrefragable for the whole Universal Church.

The concluding solemn assembly of the Fathers at Nicaea took place in the imperial palace on 25 August 325; it coincided with the twentieth anniversary of Constantine's reign.[39]

In dismissing the Fathers of the Council, Constantine, in a farewell address to them, begged them to keep peace among themselves.

"Beware," he said, "of bitter disputes among you. Let no one envy those who have shown exceptional wisdom; regard each one's distinction as the common possession of the whole Church. You who are higher and superior, do not look down haughtily on those lower than you: God alone knows who is the more excellent. Perfection is rarely found anywhere, and one must show forbearance toward the weaker brethren; peaceful concord is dearer than anything. In saving unbelievers, remember that not everyone can be converted by learned reasoning. Instruction must be adapted to the various dispositions of each, just as physicians apply their remedies to different diseases."

Thus was fulfilled the cherished desire of the pious Emperor, which he had confessed, even calling God Himself to witness on one occasion: the desire "to bring the teaching of all the peoples of his realm concerning the Divinity into one common order." This great thought, suggested to the Emperor by his holy religious feeling, the realization of which he had set for himself as the aim of his life with heartfelt longing, this thought of Constantine the Great, astonishing in the loftiness of its content and the breadth of its scope, was now introduced into the

39. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book II, 65.

common consciousness and became the possession of the whole Christian world. More than that: for the realization of this thought in Christian life, the pious Emperor also indicated the surest path, the Ecumenical Council. Walking along it, the sheep of Christ's pasture, both those already called and others not yet called, by the grace of God, unerringly enter the fold of the Heavenly Father for true life (Jn. 10:9). And this truly victorious triumph of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor was at that same time crowned by the joyful acquisition of an inestimable treasure: a particle of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord, brought to him as a gift from Jerusalem by his mother, the Empress Helena.

Constantine lived on for more than ten years after that and throughout all this time of his reign he held with unchanging fidelity to the Nicene Confession of Faith,[40] and zealously strove to establish the spirit of Christian piety in his realm, presenting in himself an example worthy of imitation. Possessing a solid general education and a theological one in particular, he conducted a wide correspondence with the primates of the Churches on questions of faith, piety and the ordering of Christian life, and often in his palace he spoke before assemblies of courtiers and the people, even with "God-worthy" teaching. His diligence was extraordinary and he did not tolerate idleness. Even in advanced age he did not consider it a burden to write out by his own hand extensive legislative acts.[41] Truthful and magnanimous by nature, and modest, he was not seduced by his imperial majesty nor by the noisy acclamations of the popular crowd, which even bored him. Standing at a high level of moral development, Constantine wished to raise all who came into contact with him to the same level. Thus once, to admonish a certain grasping courtier, he invited him to his presence, took him by the hand, and said:

"To what limits shall we extend our greed?"

Then, tracing with his spear a space the height of a man, he said:

"If you were to acquire all the riches of the world and gain mastery over all the elements of the earth, you would then make no use of any-

thing more than such a piece of earth, and even that you would scarcely be granted to receive!"

Another example: having listened to the flattering speech of a distinguished person (from among the clergy) who called the Emperor "blessed" and declared that "he had already been granted sovereign rule over all in this life, and in the future would reign together with the Son of God," Constantine answered the flatterer:

"You had better pray for the Emperor, that in the future life he too may be granted to be a servant of God."

The Emperor's charity flowed in a broad stream. According to a contemporary, "from morning till evening he sought whom he might benefit." He supplied beggars and people generally cast out into the street with money, food and suitable clothing. He cared for orphaned children in place of a father. Girls who had lost their parents he settled in marriage, supplying them with dowries from his treasury. He performed especially many acts of charity on the day of Pascha. In his new capital Constantine introduced the custom that on the Paschal night tall wax columns were lit along all its streets, "like fiery lamps," so that the mysterious night became brighter than day itself. And as soon as morning came, Constantine extended his right hand to all the needy and distributed gifts to them. With the same generosity the Emperor dispensed alms on occasion of his family's joyful events, for example the marriages of his sons. On these occasions sumptuous feasts and dinners were arranged for the invited guests, and the merrymaking was then carried out of the palace even into the street, the Emperor kindly receiving the women's circle dances. But in the Emperor's presence complete decorum was always and in everything observed, and nothing immodest or scandalous was permitted.

The last years, and especially the final days, of the life of the Emperor Constantine and his death were a worthy completion of his Christian and pious disposition. Long before his death Constantine began to

40. The Arian heresy did not wholly die out even after the Council. The Arians, with their crafty shiftiness, sometimes gained the confidence of the emperor and, abusing his magnanimity and peaceableness, from time to time made improper attacks upon the Orthodox; St. Athanasius the Great in particular suffered much from them.

41. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book IV, 66; IV.

prepare for it. In his new capital he built a church in the name of the Holy Apostles. This church was adorned, among other things, with twelve reliquaries in honor of the Apostolic choir, and in the midst of these reliquaries a tomb was set up. At first it remained unclear why a tomb had been constructed here, but later this became clear and it turned out that the pious Emperor had built this tomb for himself. The thought of death became for Constantine an object of intense reflection as soon as he began to feel the decline of his physical strength.

In 337 Constantine celebrated Pascha for the last time, solemnly, in Constantinople, and soon fell ill. Foreseeing his approaching end, he wholly devoted himself to holy exercises: often kneeling, he fervently poured out hot prayers before God; and on the advice of physicians he moved at that time to the city of Eleonopolis, to take the cure there in warm baths.

But Constantine had not yet been baptized by this time! This may seem a most strange thing to us in our own day, but in the ancient Church many received baptism in mature years, or even in old age: some from a profound reverence for the great mystery, for which they considered lengthy preparation necessary; others, however, not without a desire to live first according to their sinful pleasure and only thereafter to be born anew to a new spiritual life (God is their Judge!). Constantine, who from his youth had borne Christ in his heart and had long since become a Christian in his soul, put off his baptism through a humble awareness of his sinfulness, desiring by the struggle of his whole life to prepare himself for it. Moreover, in his soul he cherished a sincere desire to be baptized in the waters of the River Jordan.

Finding no relief at Eleonopolis and feeling his bodily strength fail utterly, Constantine crossed over to Nicomedia, where he summoned the bishops and asked them to vouchsafe him holy Baptism.

Before his Baptism, the dying emperor spoke as follows:

"The longed-for time has come, for which I have long yearned and prayed, as the time of salvation. It is time for us, too, to receive the seal of immortality and partake of saving grace. I had thought to do this in the waters of the River Jordan, where the Savior Himself was baptized

as an example for us; but God, Who knows what is profitable, vouchsafes this to me here."

Having received holy Baptism, Constantine "rejoiced in spirit, and his heart was full of living joy. Clothed at his Baptism in a white garment, bright as the light, he wore it until his death. He lay down upon a bed covered with white coverings, and would no longer even touch the purple robe, that emblem of kingship, for he was now a 'servant of God.' Having 'raised his voice,' the emperor concluded his final prayer of thanksgiving in these words:

"Now I know myself to be truly blessed, for I have an unwavering faith that I have partaken of the divine light and have been vouchsafed immortal life."

The great and Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine reposed, having bequeathed his kingdom to his three sons, on the very day of Pentecost in the year 337, in the thirty-second year of his reign, at the age of sixty-five. His body was carried with great solemnity to the city of Constantinople, which he had founded, and, according to his testament, laid in the Church of the Holy Apostles, in a tomb he had prepared for himself. Now he lives in everlasting life in the eternal Kingdom of Christ our God, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 8:

Having seen the image of Thy Cross in heaven, and, like Paul, having received thy calling not from men, Thy Apostle among kings, O Lord, laid the ruling city in Thy hand: ever preserve it in peace, through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Today Constantine and his mother Helen reveal the all-honorable Wood of the Cross, the shame of all the Jews and the weapon against adversaries for the faithful kings; for it appeared for our sake as a great sign, and terrible in battle.

* * *

Commemoration of the holy Right-believing Prince Constantine and his sons, Michael and Theodore, Wonderworkers of Murom

Память святого благоверного князя Константина и чад его: Михаила и Феодора, муромских чудотворцев

This holy Right-believing Grand Prince Constantine Sviatoslavich was descended from the line of Grand Prince Vladimir, who baptized the Russian land with holy Baptism. In 1192[42], together with his sons, Princes Michael and Theodore, he came from the renowned city of Shev to the land of Ryazan, to the city of Murom. At that time pagans lived in this city, not yet enlightened by knowledge of the true God.[43] Long before the holy Prince Constantine, his kinsman, the son of Grand Prince Vladimir, the Right-believing Prince Gleb, to whom the city of Murom had been assigned as a possession, had made great efforts to take it and persuade its inhabitants to receive holy Baptism. But he could not accomplish this, and lived two stadia away from it[44] for two years; then Sviatopolk, by deceit, summoned him to his father, and on the way he was killed.[45] And this holy Right-believing Prince Constantine, with his sons and the army that accompanied him, engaged the people of Murom in battle beneath the city itself. A very great battle ensued, in which the Right-believing Prince Michael was

42. Constantine-Yaroslav Svyatoslavich was the younger son of Svyatoslav Yaroslavich, first Prince of Chernigov and then Grand Prince of Kiev (1073–1077), grandson of Yaroslav the Great and great-grandson of St. Vladimir. By the decision of the princes at the Lyubech princely congress in 1097, Murom was confirmed to Constantine-Yaroslav. After St. Gleb, he was the first Prince of Murom and the progenitor of the subsequent house of the princes of Murom and Ryazan. St. Constantine reigned in Murom from 1096 until his death, which followed in 1129. The indication in the Prologue of the year 1192 (1092?) as the year of the holy prince's arrival in Murom must be considered erroneous.

43. Murom — the centre of the northern Rostov-Suzdal region, now an insignificant district town of Vladimir Province — in ancient times belonged to settlements of Finnic tribes, such as the Muroma, the Merya and the Mordvins; although the town was inhabited by pagan aliens, the Monastery of the Savior, which exists to the present day, was already there. It is mentioned in the Laurentian Chronicle under the year 1096. There is reason to think that it was founded through the labours of the bishops of Chernigov, since Murom belonged to the appanage of the princes of Chernigov.

44. *Poprishche* — a measure of distance of 690 sazhens. It is thought that, meeting resistance from the men of Murom, St. Gleb settled on the river Ishnya, twelve versts from Murom.

45. The repose of the holy prince Gleb took place in 1015. His memory is celebrated on 6 September.

slain. After this he again fought the inhabitants of the city, and, having defeated them, took possession of Murom and began to rule there.

First of all, in the old, upland part of the city, he built its first church, in honor of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, and buried there his slain son, the Right-believing Prince Michael. Then he converted the pagan townspeople to the Christian faith and baptized them with holy Baptism. Giving thanks to God for the success of this work, the holy prince later built many other churches[46] and established an episcopal see in his city. Having thereafter passed his life in true faith and in all purity, and ever proving himself a protector of the poor and orphans, he soon departed to the Lord. His death brought great sorrow upon the people. All mourned him as a father and buried him by the Church of the Annunciation which he had built, near his sons, the Right-believing Princes Michael and Theodore.

In later times, a kinsman of the holy Prince Constantine, the Right-believing Prince George Yaroslavich, restored the original Church of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos,[47] and from that time the Lord glorified the holy princes, Constantine and his sons, for miracles began to take place at their tombs.

Many years after this, in 1553, the Right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince of all Russia, John Vasilyevich, on his campaign against the impious Tatars, toward the city of Kazan, stopped in the city of Murom and remained there for two weeks. Having prayed at the tombs of the holy wonderworkers, he vowed to build a monastery if he returned victorious from the campaign. With God's help he took the renowned city of Kazan, and, returning to his royal city of Moscow, ordered a stone church to be built at the tombs of the holy wonderworkers. When trenches were being dug for this church, the relics of the holy princes were found whole and entirely unharmed. Once the church had been completed, a special place was made in a niche in its wall, and their holy relics were laid there. The Right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince John Vasilyevich, Autocrat of all Russia, then ordered Gury, Bishop of Ryazan, to consecrate the newly built church, and sent various church

46. Thus, he built a church in the name of Saints Boris and Gleb.
47. The renewal of the Annunciation church by Yury Yaroslavich dates from 1351.

furnishings for its consecration. The church was consecrated, a monastery was established beside it, and the event was celebrated with solemnity. At that time many miracles took place at the tombs of the holy princes, and they continue to this day, to the glory of Christ God.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Today Constantine rejoices with gladness[48]*, standing before the throne of the Holy Trinity and beholding his homeland, radiant with spiritual anointing*[49]*; Michael and Theodore, his sons, followed him, and all three together pray for our souls.*

Kontakion, Tone 8:

To the noble commander and right-believing Prince Constantine, together with his two sons, his homeland, boasting, cries out, having him as its leader and defender; for through them it was delivered from the delusion and filth of idolatry. Therefore we cry to him thus: Rejoice, most blessed Prince Constantine.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the commemoration of the Venerable Cassian the Greek, Wonderworker of Uglich, who reposed on October 2, 1504.

NOTES

3377. Arius blasphemously taught that Jesus Christ is not the eternal and beginningless God, that He is not consubstantial with the Father, and is His creature — there was a time when He was not. Arius received his theological education at Antioch in the school of the martyr Lucian; becoming a presbyter in Alexandria, he attracted general attention there both by his intellectual gifts and by his strictly abstinent life. Proud of his intellect and learning, Arius did not heed the admonitions and exhortations of his bishop, Alexander; nor did he submit to the council convened by the bishop, which condemned him. Moreover, by beguiling the clergy and people with his eloquence, he sought to scatter the tares of his false teaching beyond the bounds of his local church. Having a not inconsiderable number of adherents, he sent a delegation with a complaint to many

48. That is, joyfully triumphs.
49. That is, confessing the Orthodox faith in Christ and labouring in Christian piety.

bishops of the Eastern churches. There he found supporters, at the head of whom stood Eusebius of Nicomedia, previously acquainted with Arius from Lucian's school — "a learned man," who was also a relative of the imperial family and therefore an influential person. Eusebius, Bishop of the capital (this was still while Emperor Licinius was alive, whose residence was Nicomedia), did not acknowledge the authority of the judgment of the Alexandrian bishop. In a letter to Arius he replied: "Thinking excellently, may you wish that all think so, for it is clear to everyone that what was created did not exist until it was brought into being; and what was brought into being has a beginning." The Bishop of Alexandria thus found himself in a grievous position; about the year 318 Alexander resolved upon an extreme measure: he convened a council of one hundred bishops, excommunicated Arius and his adherents from the Church, expelled the blasphemer from Alexandria, and announced this in an encyclical letter to all the churches (see *Theological Herald*, December 1906: A. A. Spassky, p. 584). This measure only further inflamed the Arian disputes and spread their flame throughout the East. The case of Arius now lost its local character and acquired a general ecclesiastical significance.



THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF MAY

May 22

22 мая

New Calendar May 22 · Old Calendar June 4 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Basiliscus

Страдание святого мученика Василиска

After the slaying of the holy martyrs Eutropius and Cleonicus, together with whom the holy Basiliscus also endured many sufferings (although the latter remained alive, he was held in prison), and after the death of the governor Asclepiodotus, there arrived in the region of Pontus another governor, named Agrippa, sent by the tormentors Maximian and Maximinus, with orders to continue the persecution and to put to death those who believed in Christ. Even before his arrival in the city of Amasia, the holy Basiliscus, who was imprisoned there, prayed to God with tears in these words: "Lord Jesus Christ, remember me and do not forget me until the last moment of my sufferings, but help me to receive the crown of martyrdom quickly, that I may not be separated from those holy men who were taken together with me, and who suffered and received the crown of martyrdom before me."

At midnight the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said: "I remember you and will not forget you, and your name is written (in the list of martyrs) ahead of those who were taken with you. Do not grieve that you will suffer after them, for you will go before many; and I will make your memory glorious throughout the whole world. Now go, take a last farewell of your mother, brothers and relatives, and when you return, you will at once receive the crown of martyrdom and will be buried in Comana[1]. Do not fear the torments to which you will be subjected, for I am with you, and the malice of men cannot destroy your soul."

1. This city was at a distance of 4 days' journey from Amasia.

Awakening, the holy Basiliscus was filled with joy and gave thanks to God. Then he saw that the doors of the prison were open. When dawn began to break, he said to the soldiers guarding him and to the chief jailer:

"Grant me freedom for four days, that I may take leave of my mother and my brothers, who live in the village of Kumiali; and when I return, I will go to my true Father, the Lord Jesus Christ."

The soldiers and the jailer answered him thus:

– "Let your God, whom you serve constantly, be witness that we would release you from prison completely, were it not that we fear the governor, whose arrival we expect in the near future."

The saint replied to them:

"I do not wish to be released completely, but, as I have said, I will only go to take leave of my mother, brothers and relatives, for thus my Lord has commanded me to do."

"We fear," the soldiers insisted, "that soon after your departure they will demand you from us, for, as we have heard, the governor is to arrive in the city today, and all the prisoners are recorded in the court register."

To this the holy Basiliscus said:

"It is the will of my God that I go to my native village; therefore, if you agree, let some of you go with me and return together with me again."

Then the soldiers yielded to his request, and several of them gathered and went with Basiliscus to his village.

The saint was met with great joy by his brothers (he had three brothers) and by his mother, and the soldiers were received into their house with great honor.

On the following morning the saint gathered all his kinsmen and instructed them at length concerning what serves for the benefit of the soul, and also taught them the truths of the Christian teaching; he taught them much also about how only by the path of sorrows is it possible for us to enter the Kingdom of Christ.

Thus comforting everyone and kissing his relatives for the last time, the saint said:

"Brethren, fathers and children in Christ! Abide in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and in no case depart from Him, for the world and all that it contains is only a shadow, quickly passing away; but the Lord abides forever. I beg you to pray for me to the Lord of us all, God, that He may grant me strength to accomplish the ascetic struggle and the sufferings, as did the holy Theodore Tiro, and Eutropius, and Cleonicus, who were seized together with me. Beware, men, women, brothers, sisters and children; I am departing from you, and you will not see me again in this temporal life."

When the saint had finished these words, a loud weeping and lamentation arose, and everyone began to beseech the saint:

"When you have completed your holy life, pray for us and for all Christians to the Lord, that the persecution raised by the tormentors against the Orthodox faith may cease and the service of idols may be destroyed; and may the grace of Christ shine throughout the whole earth."

After that, the holy Basiliscus set out on the road with the soldiers, to return to his prison bonds.

At this time the governor Agrippa arrived in the city of Amasia, and, having summoned all the most honorable citizens, he entered with them a pagan temple called Petason[2], and afterward another, called Serapion[3], and offered sacrifice to his impure gods. On the following morning the governor came to the place of judgment and inquired there about the prisoners held in bonds, and above all he asked about Basiliscus, for he had heard of him and wished to bring him to his court at the very beginning.

The city prefect went to the prison, wishing to bring Basiliscus before the governor, but, not finding him there, he seized the jailer and, binding him, brought him before the court. The governor, subjecting him to torture, asked:

2. Evidently what is meant here is a temple in honor of the Egypto-Hellenistic deity Ptah (Ptah), god of the dead.

3. Serapion — a temple in honor of Serapis, an Egypto-Hellenistic deity corresponding to the ancient Greek Zeus. Both Serapis and the god Ptah (mentioned above) were gods of the properly Egyptian religion. But during the period of enthusiasm for Eastern religions (2nd century B.C.), the Greeks showed great reverence for these deities and built numerous temples in their honor.

"How did you dare to release from prison the enemy of our gods, who was confined there, and the transgressor of the imperial commands?"

"It is now the second day," answered the jailer, "since the time Basiliscus went with the soldiers to his village."

"I will order you to be put to death," the governor cried out, filled with fury, "if you do not produce before me that man who blasphemed our gods!"

"On the fourth day I will produce him before you," answered the jailer.

And at once the governor sent with that jailer a magistrianus[4], a man evil and fierce of temper, together with soldiers, and gave him this charge in these words:

"Only then will I believe that you are a man zealous for our gods, when you seize that blasphemer and bring him to me. Direct him to Comana, for I myself am going there."

The magistrianus, leaving the governor, had made copper boots with many sharp oblong iron nails inside, and, taking with him the jailer and the soldiers, set out for the native village of Basiliscus, carrying on a donkey heavy iron chains prepared for the martyr.

"I too went," says the narrator of the subsequent events, the holy Eusignius[5], "following after them, in hope of seeing the sufferings and death of the holy Basiliscus. Having reached that village, they seized the martyr, who was already coming out of the house on the way to the city of Amasia, in order to return to his prison, and bound him with double chains; they also fastened an iron chain about his neck, and put on his feet the copper boots with nails inside, so that the nails pierced the saint's feet down to the bones, and blood flowed abundantly from his wounded feet; and the tormentors struck the martyr of Christ severely while they led him toward the city of Comana. His mother,

4. Magistrianus — an assistant to the governor of the province, who had at his disposal a certain number of soldiers, with whom he was usually sent by the governor into the province on various commissions.

5. St. Eusignius, the holy martyr who wrote the life and exploits of the holy martyr Basiliscus, served for 60 years as a soldier under three Roman emperors: Diocletian (284–305), Maximian (305–311), and Constantine the Great.

brothers and kinsmen accompanied him with weeping. At parting his mother said to him:"

"My beloved son! May Christ, whom you have loved, be your helper in this martyric struggle. Your life here will be of short duration, but in the age to come eternal life awaits you; you now endure grievous torments, but you will receive a glorious crown from Christ God; wicked men torment you on earth, but the Angels of peace will receive you in heaven; as a robber they judge you, but that same robber who was crucified with Christ will receive you into Paradise; mortal kings, subject to corruption, take your life from you, but the Eternal God will restore life to you and number you among the Angelic Powers. And remember us, dear son, on this path to the Lord along which you are walking!"

Having said this, the mother returned to her house, praying to the Lord about her son, that He would strengthen him to endure the torments with courage.

The saint, however, looking back and seeing following after him his three brothers, as well as relatives and many of the people who wept for him, begged them with these words to return to their homes:

"Do not weep for me, but rather pray to the Lord that He may give me strength to vanquish the devil and to put to shame his servants."

Then he kissed each of them, and, exhorting all to return, he said to them:

"We shall see one another again on the day of the resurrection and of life everlasting."

But those who accompanied the saint did not want to return, and followed after him with weeping.

And again the saint exhorted them with these words:

"Why do you trouble my heart with your weeping and tears? Oh, if only it were granted to me to die many times for our Lord Jesus Christ! I beg you, return and pray to God for me!"

But since they still did not want to return even after this, the magistrianus said to them:

"I swear by the health of my emperors that, if you do not return, I will bind you all and lead you to the governor."

But when they did not heed his words either, the magistrianus with the soldiers began to beat them, and could scarcely drive them away from the saint.

Thus led onward, the saint courageously bore the weight of the iron fetters and valiantly endured the pain in his feet, pierced in many places by the sharp nails with which the copper boots were studded, and his path was stained with blood. He himself joyfully sang:

"Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear" (Ps. 26:3), for Thou, Christ the Lord, art with me.

The saint spoke many other things, addressing the Lord in song and prayer. The magistrianus and those with him, seeing the martyr walking lightly, although his feet were shod in boots with nails, greatly marvelled; but the Lord was with the holy martyr, easing his sufferings.

When they reached a village called Dakozaria, the magistrianus and the soldiers wished to rest, because it was hot and noon had come. The mistress of that village, a widow named Troyana, seeing the magistrianus arriving with the soldiers, asked them to enter her house and take food; there were about forty of them in all. When they had entered, she arranged everything for them. So they ate, drank and made merry, while the holy Martyr Basiliscus, with his hands bound behind him, was tied to a dry oak that grew near the gate of her house. A great crowd gathered about the saint, men and women and children as well. Seeing him held in heavy fetters and tied in the heat of the sun, and seeing the blood flowing from his feet, they were moved to pity and expressed their sympathy to him. The saint, however, prayed to God, crying: "Lord, visit me as Thou didst visit Joseph in prison (Gen. 41), Daniel in the lions' den (Dan. 6), and the three youths in the Babylonian furnace (Dan. 3). And as Thou didst show mercy to Susanna (Dan. 13), who suffered affliction from the wicked elders, didst bring Peter out of prison (Acts 5:17–20), and didst protect Thecla from outrage, so also upon me, Thy humble and unworthy servant, show Thy wondrous mercy and display Thy wonders to the glory of Thy most holy name!"

When the saint had finished his prayer, suddenly there was an earthquake, and a voice was heard from on high, saying: "Fear not, for I am with thee!"

And at once the copper boots that were on the martyr's feet melted away suddenly, like wax before fire; the fetters fell from the saint, and the dry oak put forth green shoots, spreading over the saint its many thick branches and covering him with shade over a wide area round about. And in the place where the saint stood, and where the ground had been reddened with his blood, a spring of water gushed forth.

After this the saint gave thanks to God in these words: "Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal Word and Son of the incomprehensible and ineffable Father, who didst deign to descend to earth and become man, that Thou mightest redeem us from the ancient tormentor, the devil, and deliver us from all his wicked snares, who didst raise us up to heaven and trample him underfoot and condemn him to dwell in the abyss, who hast given us new life: with what lips shall I glorify Thee, with what words shall I recount to Thee my feelings, how shall I sing of Thee and proclaim Thy great deeds and power, which Thou hast now displayed upon me, Thy servant, as formerly upon Thy saints, Eutropius and Cleonicus, when they were tormented by the command of the governor Asclepiodotus! For who am I, unworthy, that Thou hast shown upon me so great and marvellous a mercy? The very earth, which has beheld Thy power, has trembled!"

The magistrianus and the soldiers, frightened by the earthquake, fled from that house, and seeing the wonders that had occurred, were greatly perplexed. Some of them said that it only seemed so; others considered it sorcery; and the people standing around the saint marvelled in terror and glorified the power of Christ God. And many believed in Christ, saying: "Behold, this holy man has been sent here by God to sanctify our place."

They brought to the saint a paralytic who lay on his bed; when the martyr of Christ touched him, the paralytic immediately rose up as a healthy man, took up his bed, and went to his house, glorifying God. They brought also lepers, and he healed them too by touching them; all who suffered from hydrophobia and fever attacks, and all who were af-

flicted with other diseases or possessed by unclean spirits, all the saint healed by his word. All who saw these wonders glorified the true God and believed in Him, and the inhabitants of that village were filled with great joy. The mistress of that village, Troyana, also believed in Christ together with her son Troinus, and asked to be baptized. "I, the sinful Eusignius," says the narrator, "seeing all that had happened, glorified the Lord with all my heart." On that same day, in the evening, a herd of oxen, coming from pasture to the village and passing along the road where the holy martyr of Christ stood, fell on their knees before the saint, as if glorifying the great works of God.

Then the magistrianus and the soldiers repented of the cruelties they had inflicted upon the saint, for terror seized them when they saw the wondrous signs wrought by the Lord through the prayers of the saint. On the following day the magistrianus said to the martyr gently:

"If it pleases you, Lord Basiliscus, let us set out on our way, lest for your sake we incur punishment from the governor."

"Good, let us go on our way," answered the saint, "for I wish to die for my Lord."

When they had all departed from that village, the whole people, together with the mistress Troyana, accompanied the saint. The holy martyr, however, implored them all to return home: some went back, others continued to follow him. When they came onto the large bridge laid across the river Ireos, the bridge shook from the presence of Christ, who walked invisibly with His servant, the holy Basiliscus, as the holy martyr Basiliscus himself afterwards related to me, the unworthy Eusignius," says the narrator. "When the bridge shook, the saint stopped, and offering praise to God, he implored the people to return, and with difficulty persuaded them to comply with his request.

During his journey the saint, at every high and beautiful place, bent his knees and prayed to the Lord with these words: "In all places of His dominion, bless the Lord, O my soul!" (Ps. 102:22).

When they all reached a village called Saon, the soldiers and the magistrianus prepared to take food, and they urged the saint to eat bread with them. He refused, saying: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall

want nothing" (Ps. 22:1); "it is my Master, Jesus Christ, who nourishes me."

They again urged him, saying:

"Eat, Lord, lest you die of hunger, and we incur punishment for your sake if we do not bring you to the governor; for it is already the third day since you have taken any food at all."

The saint answered them:

"I am filled with immortal food, and therefore I do not wish to eat mortal food. Earthly bread nourishes you, but the heavenly word of God nourishes me; wine gladdens you, but the grace of the Holy Spirit gladdens me; meat fattens you, but fasting fattens me; bodily vigour strengthens you, but the cross in the name of Christ strengthens me; gold makes you rich, but love for Jesus Christ makes me rich; garments adorn you, but virtues adorn me; you find merriment in laughter, but I comfort my spirit with prayer; you love your temporal, mortal, corruptible king, you desire to see him and fulfil his laws, but I love God and my heavenly King, I kiss His laws and desire to be nourished by beholding Him; you look for glory on earth, but I look for it in heaven; you seek fame among men, but I hope to receive glory at the Last Judgement, at the resurrection of the righteous, when my Master will say: 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Mt. 25:34)."

While the saint spoke thus, the magistrianus ordered the animals to be saddled and offered the martyr to sit upon one of the asses, saying:

"For three days you have walked, hungry; at least sit upon an animal, lest you be utterly exhausted."

But the saint did not consent to sit, saying:

"My Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthens me, and the Holy Spirit gives me rest and comfort."

Then they all set out on their way, and towards evening came to a village, where they stopped to spend the night. And when the soldiers sat down to the evening meal, the magistrianus begged the holy Basiliscus to eat something with them, but he refused, and spent the whole night in prayer and singing, the holy Angels themselves singing together with the servant of Christ.

When day came, they again set out on their way and arrived at the city of Comana at the fourth hour of the day. As they drew near the city, they heard from many whom they met on the road that the governor was putting to death all who would not consent to bow down to idols. But the Lord appeared to the holy Basiliscus and said to him: "Take courage, fear not the threats of the idolaters, for I am with thee."

When they entered the city, the soldiers who accompanied the saint asked the inhabitants of the city:

"Where is the governor now?"

They were told that the governor was in the temple of Apollo[6] and was offering sacrifice there to the gods.

The magistrianus, going to the governor, informed him that he had brought Basiliscus. The governor was very glad of this. The magistrianus also related the wonders that had occurred during their journey, but the governor did not believe him, remarking:

"All this is the sorcery of the Christians."

Then he ordered the holy Basiliscus to be brought to him in the temple of Apollo, intending to compel him here to offer sacrifice. At once the governor's soldiers ran to Basiliscus and forcibly dragged the saint into the temple, saying:

"Go into the temple to the governor and bow down to the gods, if you wish to live."

The magistrianus and the soldiers who had come with him from the journey began telling the governor's soldiers about the wonders they had seen, adding:

"Truly we have seen wondrous signs and the power of God, not in a vision or by sorcery, but occurring in reality."

Then, turning to the saint, they said to him:

"Forgive us the cruelties which through our ignorance we inflicted upon you, Lord Basiliscus, and pray to your God for us!"

While they were saying this, new soldiers sent by the governor seized the martyr and led him into the temple. The saint entered the temple with a bright face, rejoicing in the Lord, his God.

6. Apollo — in Greek mythology, the god of light, son of Zeus and Leto.

Seeing him, the governor asked:

"Are you Basiliscus?"

"Yes, it is I," answered the saint.

"Then tell me," continued the governor, "will you offer sacrifice to the gods, or not?"

"Who told you about me," the saint replied, "that I do not offer sacrifice to God? Every moment I offer the sacrifice of praise in honor of my God."

The governor, not understanding what had been said, spoke to the saint:

"Very well; then offer sacrifice to whichever of all our gods you wish."

St. Basiliscus, approaching the idol, asked those standing around him:

"What is the name of this god of yours?"

They told him:

"Apollo."

"You have rightly said that he is called Apollo," the saint confirmed. "Apollo means *destroyer*[7], and he truly leads to perdition those who believe in him and worship him as a god, since he is not God."

"And what is the name of the god to whom you wish to offer sacrifice?" asked the governor.

"My God," the saint answered, "is ineffable, incomprehensible, invisible, and inexplicable in His attributes."

"Does your God not have a name?" the governor pressed.

"The names of my God are set forth in the holy books," the saint replied, "and if you wish to hear them, I will tell them to you."

"Name them," the governor said to him. Then the holy martyr said:

"My God is called Father and Almighty, the Lord of Sabaoth[8], the King of all, the merciful, compassionate and long-suffering Savior. To Him alone do I offer the sacrifice of praise!"

7. Apollo — in translation from the Greek means "destroyer." Among the Greeks he was usually depicted with a bow, arrows and a quiver, as the enemy and conqueror of the forces harmful to light, that is, to the moral order of things.

8. The Lord Sabaoth — the Lord of hosts, the Lord of powers (1 Kgdms. 1:3, 11).

"To what god you wish to offer sacrifice is all the same to me," the governor insisted, "only offer it. For you are summoned not to argue, but only to offer sacrifice."

"Then listen," the saint said to the governor, "to what my sacrifice is."

And raising his hands to heaven, he prayed to God thus:

"Eternal God, Creator of heaven and earth, who hearest all who truly serve Thee, hear now also me, Thy servant, and at this moment shatter this deaf and blind, insensible idol, that the impious nations may understand what god they worship, and may be put to shame and believe that Thou alone art the one almighty God."

No sooner had the saint finished his prayer than the earth quaked at once, the idol fell to the ground and broke into pieces. The governor and the people who were in the temple fled out in terror, and only St. Basiliscus remained in the temple, singing:

"*Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee before His face. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away... as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish before the face of God*" (Ps. 67:2–3).

After some time the governor ordered the saint to be brought out of the temple, and, gnashing his teeth in malice against him, said:

"O enemy of our gods! Why did you promise one thing and do another? You promised to offer sacrifice to a god, and by your sorcery you have brought it about that our god Apollo has fallen and crumbled."

The saint answered:

"He who shattered your god will also burn his temple."

No sooner had the saint finished these words than fire fell from heaven upon the temple of Apollo and burned it to the ground. In terror the governor and all the people fled from there. Then, summoning St. Basiliscus, the governor addressed him with these words:

"Oh, how great are your sorceries! You have shattered a god and burned his temple!"

But the saint replied to him:

"If your god is truly a god, as you call him, then let him take vengeance on me for himself."

"Our gods are good," the governor replied, "and do no harm to their enemies."

"O foolish man!" the saint exclaimed. "How can demons do good, being evil by nature? They will draw you, their worshippers, down with them into hell."

"Accursed sorcerer," the governor urged the saint, "offer sacrifice to the gods; otherwise I will deliver you to a cruel death."

To this the saint answered the governor:

"Beast that lives in the forest, dog that licks blood, Agrippa the debauched, image of the devil, lawless tormentor! Why do you still detain me? I am hastening to end my life!"

The governor was greatly enraged against the saint and ordered him to be beheaded with the sword.

The soldiers, taking the saint, led him out of the city to the place of execution called Dioscoria; a multitude of people accompanied the saint. The governor gave the order that, after the beheading, the body of the saint be thrown into the river.

"When Christ's[9] martyr was beheaded, we saw (relates St. Eusignius), to whom it was given to see, a fearful wonder: a multitude of holy Angels appeared, who, receiving the soul of the saint, bore it up to heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ was seen standing in heaven and saying: 'Come, good and faithful servant of Mine, Basiliscus, enter into the Heavenly Kingdom, into the assembly of the righteous, where dwell My servants who were taken with you to suffering for My sake.'"

"We, who saw and heard all this," the narrator continues, "fell prostrate on the ground and bowed down to the Lord, giving thanks to Him for having granted us such a vision."

Then the executioner, named Priscus, taking the body of the martyr, dragged it toward the river. We, approaching him (says Eusignius), asked him to wait a little, until the people dispersed, and we gave him thirty gold coins as a ransom for the body of the martyr. He surrendered the body of the martyr to us, saying:

9. The death of the holy martyr took place at the beginning of the 4th century.

"See to it that no one finds out and tells the governor about this; there will be trouble for you and for me."

"And we, taking the honorable body," Eusignius continues, "concealed it, and at night we carried it out to a plowed field, buried it, and sowed seeds on that spot. In that same night the seeds sprouted, and on the following day they bore blossom and fruit. When we were digging the martyr's grave, some of us wished to drink water; through the prayers of St. Basiliscus, whom we invoked, a spring of water at once appeared near the grave; having drunk, we glorified and gave thanks to God. That spring exists even to the present time, and the sick who drink water from it in faith receive healing."

After all this, an unclean spirit fell upon the governor Agrippa, and he began to search for the body of the martyr, thinking to himself: "If I could touch the body of Basiliscus, surely I would be freed from my misfortune."

And no one dared to tell him that the body of the martyr had been buried in the earth. Some said to him: "You ordered the body to be thrown into the river; why, then, do you now seek it?"

Then Agrippa went to the place where Christ's martyr had been beheaded, found there a few drops of his blood, and, gathering them with his own hands together with the earthly dust, tied them up in his belt. At once he was freed from the unclean spirit and believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some time later, a citizen of Comana, Marinus, a pious man, built a church in the name of the holy martyr Basiliscus, and, taking his holy relics out of the earth, translated them to this church. From the relics of the saint there took place many wondrous healings from all diseases, through his prayers and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit honor and glory are offered, now and always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

In suffering thou didst prove steadfast and manly, and in wonders most marvelous, openly bearing the Name of Christ, thou didst put the tormentor to shame. Wherefore we honor thee, O Basiliscus, ever crying to thee, O all-honored one: Rejoice, bright goodness of martyrs!

* * *



THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF MAY

May 23

23 мая

New Calendar May 23 · Old Calendar June 5 (civil dates)

Memory of Our Venerable Father Michael the Confessor

Память преподобного отца нашего Михаила Исповедника

Today we commemorate St. Michael, Bishop of Synada[1], who bore a name identical with that of the Archangel of the heavenly hosts, and who led an angelic life, adorned with virginal purity and every virtue. Already in infancy he was dedicated to God, and in his youth he took the monastic habit and proved himself a worthy servant of God, labouring together with St. Theophylact, Bishop of Nicomedia[2], in the patriarchate of the most holy Tarasius. The two of them were sent by him to a monastery situated on the shore of the Black Sea. Laboring there in the monastic struggle, both saints greatly advanced in virtue, and their prayers had great power with God.

Once, during the harvest, when the air was unbearably hot, and in that place many were faint from thirst for lack of water, the saints prayed to God, and by their prayers it came to pass that an empty bronze vessel poured forth water in sufficient quantity. Thus the Lord fulfils the petitions and prayers of those who honour Him, and inclines His ear to their prayers. This miracle recalled that earlier miracle in the wilderness, when God brought water out of the rock for Israel, faint with thirst (Ex. 17:6), and another, when, for the sake of Samson, the judge of Israel, who was dying of thirst, God caused a spring of living

1. Sinad was one of the ancient cities on the Black Sea.
2. Nicomedia was a city at the northeastern corner of the gulf formed by the Sea of Marmara. It was founded in 264 B.C. and received its name from Nicomedes I, king of Bithynia. On the site of ancient Nicomedia there now stands the city of Isnid.

water to flow from the jawbone of an ass that had dried up (Judg. 15:19).

After this, the most holy Patriarch Tarasius, seeing the virtuous life of these venerable fathers, who shone like stars in the heavens, judged them worthy of the high episcopal rank. He ordained the blessed Theophylact as Metropolitan of Nicomedia, and ordained St. Michael as Bishop of the city of Synada, and both of them shepherded the flock of Christ, giving by their lives a good example to their flocks.

When the most holy Patriarch Tarasius departed from this life to the Lord, and after him St. Nicephorus assumed the throne of the Church of Constantinople, the storm of the iconoclastic heresy arose anew, a heresy which had already been condemned at the Seventh Ecumenical Council of the holy Fathers[3]. The impious Emperor Leo the Armenian[4], infected with that heresy, raised a persecution against the Church of Christ, denying the veneration of the holy icons and calling them idols, and those who venerated them he subjected to torture and death. First of all he expelled the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, as well as the other Orthodox hierarchs, from their thrones, and in their place he appointed his fellow heretics, and thus the abomination of desolation stood in the holy places (Dan. 9:27).

At this time St. Michael showed himself to be a zealous defender of Orthodoxy and a denouncer of heretical impiety. Strengthened and made wise by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he withstood the heretics and stopped the mouths of those who reviled the holy icons. The impious Emperor Leo, unable to bear the rebukes of the saint, who boldly censured his heretical error, delivered the hierarch of Christ to torments. The saint, however, not fearing torments, bravely defended his convictions and said to the emperor:

"I venerate the holy icons of my Savior Jesus Christ and of the Most Pure Virgin, His Mother, and of the other saints, and I worship them; your command I cannot consider possible to fulfil."

Put to shame, Leo, filled with wrath, condemned the Confessor of Christ to exile[5].

3. The Seventh Ecumenical Council took place in 787 in the city of Nicaea.
4. Emperor Leo (V) the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820.

Driven from one place to another, the saint endured many bitter sorrows and afflictions, until he attained the heavenly abode and received eternal rest. Thus he ended his righteous life, crowned with a double crown, numbered among the hierarchs as a hierarch and among the martyrs as a martyr, to the glory of Christ our God[6].

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a most honourable hierarch and a priestly sufferer for piety, thou didst not fear the threats of the evil-named one, but didst overcome his heretical opposition, crying out with a free voice: "I worship the icon of Christ and of His Most Pure Mother." Wherefore we honour thee, O Michael.

* * *

Passion of the Venerable Martyr Michael the Black-Robed Monk

Страдание святого преподобномученика Михаила Черноризца

The holy martyr Michael was from the city of Edessa[7] and was the son of Christian parents. After their death he distributed to the poor all the property that he had inherited from his parents, and set out for Jerusalem to visit the holy places. At that time Jerusalem already belonged to the Muslims.

Having venerated the holy places, he withdrew to the monastery of St. Sabbas and received the monastic habit there.

Some time later he was sent by his superior to Jerusalem to sell the handiwork of the monks. Here he was met by a eunuch[8] of the Muslim queen Seida, who took him with him, since the vessels which he was selling were very beautiful and well made, and brought him to his queen. The queen, seeing the young monk, fair of face but thin from fasting, became enamoured of him, began to entice him to adultery and said:

5. St. Michael was at first exiled to the Thracian city of Eudokiada.
6. The holy martyr reposed about 818.
7. Edessa was a city in antiquity in the northern part of Mesopotamia.
8. A eunuch was a castrated servant, usually destined for service in the harems of the East.

"Be obedient to me, and if you are ill, I will cure you of your illness."

To these words of the queen the blessed Michael answered thus:

"I am sick over my sins; I serve my Lord, Jesus Christ, and I do not wish to listen to you."

The queen tried in every way to compel the saint to lawlessness, just as once in Egypt the wife of Potiphar tried to compel Joseph the Beautiful to lawlessness (Gen. 39:1–23); but the chaste Michael did not consent to lawlessness, thus persuading the queen:

"It is not possible for me to do this, for I am a monk and have vowed to God to keep the purity of my body undefiled until the end of my days."

That impious woman, convinced that the chaste monk would on no account consent to her lawless request, filled with shame and anger, ordered the saint to be beaten with sticks. Then she sent the monk, as if he were a reviler of their faith, to the king, who was at that time not far from Jerusalem.

The king, having questioned the saint, ordered him to be unbound and urged him to pass over to the Mohammedan faith.

The saint said to the king:

"It is not possible for me to forsake my God and become a follower of the devil."

The king again began to entice him:

"Ask of me whatever you want, and you will reign with me."

“I ask of you one of three things,” the saint replied: “Either release me to my superior, or be baptized in the name of my God, or send me to Christ, my God, by beheading me with the sword.”

But the king ordered that a cup of deadly poison be given to the saint. The saint, however, having drunk the poison, remained unharmed, according to the word of Christ spoken in His holy Gospel: "if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" (Mk. 16:18).

The put-to-shame king ordered the head of the servant of Christ to be cut off with a sword in the midst of Jerusalem[9].

The monks of the monastery of St. Sabbas, taking the body of the holy martyr, carried it to their lavra and with honour laid the martyr of

Christ together with the holy fathers, glorifying Christ God, wonderful in His saints. Amen.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Euphrosyne, Abbess of Polotsk

Житие преподобной Евфросинии, игумении Полоцкой

In the city of Polotsk there lived a prince named Vseslav[10], who had a son George. From this George was born the blessed Euphrosyne.

Before taking the monastic habit, the holy Euphrosyne bore the name Predislava. Having been taught letters from her earliest years, Euphrosyne diligently studied Holy Scripture and other books for the salvation of the soul. From Holy Scripture she learned the fear of God and zealous love for God, her Creator.

The venerable maiden was very beautiful of face, so that when she reached the age of twelve, many illustrious princes asked Euphrosyne's father to give her in marriage to their sons[11]. But the young maiden in no way consented to give herself in wedlock to a mortal earthly husband, since she had betrothed herself to the immortal Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. All the venerable maiden's thoughts were directed to God. Nevertheless, Euphrosyne's father determined to give her in marriage to a certain prince, even against her will. When Euphrosyne learned of this, she secretly, without anyone's knowledge, went to the women's monastery to the blessed abbess, Princess Romana, and began earnestly to beg her to tonsure her into the monastic habit. The blessed Romana, however, long refused, partly because of Euphrosyne's youth, and partly from fear of her father; therefore Romana advised her to enter the life of the world, saying that she was still so young and so beautiful of face. But seeing that Euphrosyne had a firm intention to take the tonsure for the preservation of her virginity and the attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven, and seeing also that Euphrosyne cherished a great heartfelt love for the Lord Jesus

9. The holy martyr reposed in the 9th century.

10. Vseslav Bryachislavich, son of Bryachislav Izyaslavich, reigned in Polotsk from 1044 to 1101.

11. An early age of marriage was a common occurrence in ancient Russia.

Christ, Romana ordered the priest who served in her monastery to tonsure Predislava and clothe her in the angelic habit; and the young princess was given the name Euphrosyne.

When the parents of the blessed maiden learned of all that had happened, they were filled with great sorrow and at once set out for that monastery. Seeing their daughter here in the monastic habit, they gave way to unrestrained weeping. But the blessed Euphrosyne, unmoved by her parents' tears, advised them not to weep but to rejoice that they had their daughter betrothed to the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of heaven.

In the monastery the venerable Euphrosyne remained in constant fasting and prayer, and together with the other nuns performed all the monastic labours, submitting to all with great humility.

After some time, the Venerable Euphrosyne began to beg Bishop Elias of Polotsk to permit her to dwell in a tent set up beside the great cathedral church in honor of St. Sophia. (In doing this, the blessed Euphrosyne imitated the ancient virgins of Jerusalem, among whom was the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos; those virgins lived near the church of Solomon, in special tents set up against the church wall.[12]) The bishop, seeing the Angelic life and the Seraphic love for God of the saint, did not hinder the good desire of her heart. And the saint dwelt, like an Angel of God, in the tent by the church, constantly, all days and nights, praying to God and glorifying Him. In the time free from prayer she wrote books with her own hands and sold them; all the money she received in this way she gave to the poor.

After the saint had labored for a sufficient time at the church of St. Sophia, one night she saw in a dream an Angel of God. Taking her by the hand, the Angel led her outside the town, to a place called Seltsy; here stood the palace of Sophia, and there was also a small wooden church in honor of the holy Savior. And the Angel said to the blessed woman:

– It is fitting for you to dwell here, for through you God will bring many to salvation in this place.

12. A fuller account of this can be read in the narrative of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple, placed under the 21st day of the month of November.

This vision was repeated a second and a third time. The Venerable Woman marveled, perplexed at what she had seen, and gave thanks to God, who had granted her such a vision. Yet, obeying the command of God, Euphrosyne answered:

– My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready!

And an Angel appeared in a vision to that bishop and said:

– Lead the servant of God Euphrosyne to the church of the Savior that stands at Seltsy, and settle her by that church, so that there may be a monastery there of virgins dedicated to God, whom God wishes to save through this blessed Euphrosyne. Her prayer rises to God like fragrant myrrh, and the Holy Spirit rests upon her as upon a royal head; and as the sun shines over the whole universe, so her life shall shine before the Angels of God.

The bishop, waking from sleep, went to the Venerable Euphrosyne to declare to her the will of God. Euphrosyne told the bishop of her own vision, and both gave thanks to God.

Then the bishop called Prince Boris, Euphrosyne's uncle, Prince George, her father, and many boyars and other honorable men, and, having told them of the vision, said:

– Here, in your presence, I give Euphrosyne a place at the church of St. Savior at Seltsy, that there may be a monastery of virgins there. Let no one hinder her or take from her what I have given her.

All agreed with the bishop.

Then St. Euphrosyne was settled at the church in honor of the Savior, and a monastery was built here for maidens who desired to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in purity. Thus St. Euphrosyne became the instructress and guide of many maidens who renounced the world and took the monastic habit. Beholding the God-pleasing life of the blessed Euphrosyne, all the other maidens too were encouraged to God-pleasing labors.

After some time the Venerable Woman sent word to her father:

– Send my sister Gradislava to me, that I may teach her the holy books.

Her father sent Gradislava. St. Euphrosyne taught her younger sister to read books, and, instructing her in many soul-profiting conversa-

tions, she betrothed her to Christ, for she persuaded her to take the monastic habit under the name Eudocia.

After some time, Euphrosyne's father sent word to her:

– Send your sister back to us.

But Euphrosyne answered:

– Let her remain with me a while longer, for she has not yet fully studied the Scriptures.

Soon, however, Euphrosyne's parents learned of the tonsure of their other daughter as well. Filled with anger, they came to the monastery and, with bitterness of heart, said to the blessed Euphrosyne:

– O our daughter! What have you done to us! You have added a new sorrow to our old sorrow, and a new grief to one grief! Was it not enough for you to leave us? And now you have taken from us another child, dear to us! Is it for this that we bore you, for this that we raised you! Did we bear you so that, before your death, you should be shut up as in a tomb, in these black garments, settled in a monastery, and deprive us of the joys we looked to receive from you?..

But the Venerable Euphrosyne began to comfort her parents with soul-profiting conversations. Somewhat consoled, they returned to their house, lightening the natural sorrow of their parental hearts with spiritual joy.

Soon afterward, the princess Zvenislava, her kinswoman, the daughter of her uncle Boris, came to the Venerable Euphrosyne. Zvenislava brought to the Venerable Woman all her precious garments prepared for her wedding, and said to the blessed one:

– My lady and sister! I count all the treasures of this world as nothing; these bridal adornments I give to the church of the Savior, and I myself desire to be betrothed in spiritual marriage to the Lord, my God, and to bow my head beneath His good and light yoke.

The Venerable Euphrosyne received her with joy and at once commanded that she be tonsured, giving her the name Eupraxia. And both ascetics persevered in fasting and all-night prayers, serving the Lord with one soul in holiness and righteousness.

Noting that the number of sisters in the community was increasing day by day, the Venerable Euphrosyne desired to build a stone church

in the name of the Savior. Her zeal, by God's help, was crowned with success. Soon, in that same year, a beautiful stone church was built. The overseer of the work was a man named John. One night, when he was sleeping before sunrise, he heard many times a voice saying to him:

– John! Arise, go, and oversee the building of the church in honor of the Almighty.

Once he came to Euphrosyne and asked her:

– Lady, is it you who send me to wake up and set to work quickly?

Euphrosyne, understanding that this voice was not from men but from God, answered John:

– Even if it was not I who sent to wake you, nevertheless obey the voice calling you to the work and do what it commands you, for this is God's work.

The building of the church was already nearing completion. Only the bricks needed for the building were lacking. Then the Venerable Woman prayed to God, saying:

– I thank Thee, O Lord Who lovest mankind, almighty God! Thou who hast given us the greater, give us also the lesser, that we may bring to completion the work of building the church, raised to the glory of Thy most holy name.

The next morning, by the will of God, the builders found a kiln filled with fired bricks, already cooled and very strong. These bricks had been made by an unseen hand, and in a very short time, indeed in a single night, this wondrous work had taken place. All were filled with joy and glorified God. Thus the building of the church was brought to its end. Afterward the bishop came here with the clergy and the princes, and all the townspeople, to consecrate the church; all celebrated the consecration of the church with rejoicing. The Venerable Euphrosyne, falling prostrate in the church, prayed to God with tears in these words:

– Thou, O Lord, Searcher of hearts, Almighty, look upon this church, built in Thy name, as once Thou didst look upon the temple of Solomon; look also upon the rational flock gathered at Thy church. Be merciful to all of us who serve Thee at this holy church. Give us help in every good work, that we may bear with success the yoke laid upon us

and follow after Thee, our Bridegroom. Thou Thyself guard this fold of rational sheep. Be to us Shepherd, Doorkeeper and Guardian, that not one of the sisters be snatched away by the wolf that destroys the souls of men, the devil. Thou, O Lord, be for us a weapon and a strong defense, that "evil and wound shall not come near our body" (Ps. 90:10), and destroy us not for our sins. We place all our hope in Thee, for Thou art a God merciful and compassionate to all who believe in Thee. To Thee we shall offer glory unceasingly until the end of our life.

Then the Venerable Woman began to instruct the sisters, saying:

– Behold, I have gathered you in the name of the Lord, as a bird gathers its young beneath its wings; I have gathered you as the sheep of God into the divine meadow: feed then in the commandments of the Lord, grow in virtues from strength to strength, that I may care for your salvation and teach you with joy and not with sorrow, and that I may rejoice in spirit, seeing the spiritual fruits of your labors. You yourselves see with what great labors I sow the words of God in your hearts; yet at times your hearts remain as it were unripe, not advancing in virtue, while the time of harvest draws near. Behold, the shovel is already on the threshing floor; it will separate the tares from the wheat. I greatly fear, my sisters, lest among you there be found tares that will be cast into unquenchable fire. Hasten then, I beg you, to keep yourselves unharmed from the sinful tares, that you may escape the fire of Gehenna. Prepare yourselves as pure wheat of Christ, perfect yourselves by your ascetic labors, struggling in humility, purity, love and prayer, and then you will prepare from yourselves a bread pleasing to God.

Thus the Venerable Euphrosyne instructed the sisters of her community, caring for them attentively as a loving mother for her spiritual children. Through her teachings and prayers all the nuns advanced in a virtuous life and prepared themselves as vessels worthy to be a dwelling for the Holy Spirit.

Besides the stone church already mentioned, the Venerable Euphrosyne also built another stone church in honor and glory of the Most Holy Theotokos. Having adorned it with icons, she handed it over to

the monks, for whom she also built a monastery attached to this church.[13]

The Venerable Euphrosyne desired to have in her monastery an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos called "Hodegetria,"[14] namely one of those icons which the holy Evangelist Luke painted during his lifetime. The Venerable knew that three icons painted by St. Luke were located: one in Jerusalem, another in Constantinople, and the third in Ephesus. Having fervently prayed to God with tears, asking Him to grant her what she desired, she sent one of the servants of her monastery, named Michael, to Constantinople to the pious Emperor Manuel[15] and to the Most Holy Patriarch Luke[16], with many gifts, and asked them to send her one of the icons of the Most Holy Theotokos painted by the Evangelist Luke, namely the one which was in the city of Ephesus. The Emperor and the Patriarch, seeing the great zeal of the blessed Euphrosyne for God and for the Most Pure Mother of God, resolved to grant her request and dispatched a messenger to Asia, who brought to Constantinople from Ephesus the wondrous icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. Having given the icon to the servant of Euphrosyne's monastery, the Emperor and the Patriarch dismissed him and gave him a paper in which praise was expressed for the handmaid of Christ and the patriarchal blessing was bestowed upon her.

Having received the venerable icon, the Venerable Euphrosyne was filled with great joy and gave thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ and to

13. The monastery founded by St. Euphrosyne still exists today under the name of the Spaso-Euphrosyne Monastery. In 1579 it was seized by the Jesuits, from whose power it was freed in 1820. In the monastery is preserved the altar cross made by St. Euphrosyne; pilgrims are shown two cells in which the Venerable Euphrosyne lived in ascetic labors. At the monastery there is a school for girls of the clerical estate.

14. Hodegetria (from the Greek, “way and I lead”) means “the Guide.” This title was given to some icons of the Mother of God, as a spiritual Guide of the faithful. In particular, the icon of the Mother of God Hodegetria, which was in Constantinople in the Blachernae Church, was so named because once the Mother of God Herself, appearing to two blind men, led them into the Blachernae Church before Her icon and there granted them their sight. The name “Hodegetria” was also given to those icons of the Mother of God that sailors placed on the prow or stern of a ship. For this reason, in many places there is preserved the pious custom of offering a moleben before the icon of the Mother of God Hodegetria when setting out on a distant journey, especially by sea. The feast of the icon of the Mother of God Hodegetria is kept on January 21, July 28, and on other days.

15. Emperor Manuel Comnenus reigned from 1143 to 1180.

His Most Pure Mother. Euphrosyne placed this icon in the church of the Holy Savior, adorning it with gold and precious stones.[17]

Meanwhile, the parents of the Venerable Euphrosyne died. Having spent a sufficient number of years in monastic labors, the blessed Euphrosyne desired to behold the holy places of the city of Jerusalem and to venerate the life-giving tomb of Christ. The blessed one intended to end her life there as well, and she fervently prayed to the Lord about this. When all those around her learned of her intention, they were filled with great sorrow. Coming to her, all began with tears to beseech her not to forsake them and their homeland. The blessed one, however, consoled them all with loving, soul-profiting conversations, just as a mother consoles her children. Among others, her beloved brother Vyacheslav came to Euphrosyne together with his wife and children. Bowing before her, he said with tears:

"Lady, my sister and mother! Why do you now want to leave me? Why do you forsake us, light of my eyes and guide of my life!"

The saint answered:

"I do not wish to forsake you, but I want to pray for myself and for you at those holy places."

When the blessed Euphrosyne had finished her spiritual conversation with her brother, she bade him leave his two daughters, Kiriniya and Olga, with her sister Eudocia; for the blessed Euphrosyne had such a spiritual gift that whomever she looked upon, she immediately knew whether there was in him the spirit of virtue and whether he could become a chosen vessel for the Lord. In this way she knew in advance that those two young maidens, the daughters of her brother, would please Christ by their virtuous life. When Vyacheslav had departed from Euphrosyne, the saint said to his daughters:

"I wish to betroth you to the Immortal Bridegroom, that you may be led into the bridal chamber of the Kingdom of Heaven."

The maidens, delighted by her God-inspired conversation, were moved in soul, and falling at her feet, said:

16. Luke Chrysoberges was Patriarch from 1186 to 1196.

17. In 1239 this icon was transferred to the city of Toropets by the spouse of St. Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky.

"Let the will of the Lord be done! May your holy prayer arrange for us as it pleases you."

Euphrosyne, rejoicing in spirit at the good intention of the maidens, instructed them with soul-saving discourses and nurtured in their hearts love for Christ.

Then, some time later, Euphrosyne summoned her brother Vyacheslav and said to him:

"I wish to tonsure your daughters, that they may be brides of Christ."

But Vyacheslav was troubled in spirit at her words and said to her:

"Lady and my mother! What is this you have planned to do to me? You wish to add to one of my sorrows yet another sorrow; you wish me to weep, first of all, because of your departure from us to a distant land; then you wish me to weep for my children, being deprived of their consolation!"

The wife of Vyacheslav, the mother of those maidens, grieved even more than her husband and wept very much and for a long time. Nevertheless, Vyacheslav and his wife did not dare to oppose the words of the blessed Euphrosyne, since they received her words as though they were the words of Christ Himself, and they knew that she was a true handmaid of Christ and a worthy vessel of the Holy Spirit.

Thereupon Euphrosyne asked Bishop Dionysius, who was then bishop, to come to the monastery, to lead the maidens into the church and to tonsure them; at this, the name Agatha was given to Kiriniya and Euthymia to Olga. Then the bishop blessed them with the blessing of the holy fathers and mothers who from of old had been pleasing to God.

Some time later the blessed Euphrosyne entrusted her monastery to her sister Eudocia, and, after kissing all the sisters, praying to God and placing all her hope in Him, she set out for Jerusalem; all accompanied Euphrosyne, shedding bitter tears. Taking with her another brother of hers, named David, and a kinswoman, Eupraxia, Euphrosyne first arrived in Constantinople. Here she was received with great honor by the emperor and the patriarch. Then, having venerated the holy churches and many relics of the saints here, she set out for Jerusalem. Arriving

in that city, she venerated the life-giving tomb of Christ, then placed a golden censer at the tomb and brought many gifts to the Church of Jerusalem and to the patriarch. The blessed Euphrosyne also visited the other famous places in the vicinity of Jerusalem; having venerated the holy sites with great tenderness, Euphrosyne settled in the monastery called the Russian one, which was attached to a church built in honor and glory of the Most Holy Theotokos. Then she again came to the Tomb of the Lord and began to pray here with tears and heartfelt tenderness in these words:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, born of the Most Pure and Most Holy Ever-Virgin Mary, for our salvation, who didst say: Ask, and it shall be given you (Mt. 7:7). I thank Thy compassion that I, a sinner, have received from Thee what I asked, for I have been granted to see these holy places which Thou hast sanctified with Thy most pure feet, and I have been granted to kiss Thy holy tomb, in which Thou didst rest in Thy most pure flesh, having accepted death for our sake. O most gracious Lord! I ask Thee yet one more thing: grant me to die in this holy place. Despise not my humble prayer, O my Creator! Receive my spirit in this holy city and place me together with the others who have pleased Thee, in the bosom of Abraham."

Having prayed thus, the saint went to the aforementioned church, to which she had settled. Here she fell into bodily illness. Lying on her sickbed, she prayed to the Lord thus:

"Glory to Thee, my Lord, O Lord Jesus Christ! I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me, Thy unworthy servant, and hast dealt with me as Thou didst will Thyself."

The blessed Euphrosyne desired to be also at the Jordan, but she could no longer go there because of her illness. Therefore she sent her brother David and Eupraxia to the Jordan. Returning from there, they brought her water from the Jordan. The saint received that water with great joy and thanksgiving; she drank the water and sprinkled her whole body with it. Then, lying down on her bed, she said:

"Blessed is God, who enlightens and sanctifies every man coming into the world."

During that illness the Venerable had an angelic vision, in which it was revealed to her by God both of her blessed end and of the rest prepared for her. And the saint rejoiced in her soul in God her Savior, praising and glorifying Him for His many benefits.

Then the saint sent to the Lavra of St. Sabbas to ask the archimandrite and the brethren whether a place for her burial could be given to her there.

They answered:

"We have a commandment from our holy father Sabbas: never to bury women in his monastery. There is the cenobitic monastery of Theodosius, built in glory and honor of the Most Holy Theotokos. There many holy women rest. There rests also the mother of St. Sabbas, and the mother of St. Theodosius, and the mother of the holy Unmercenary Theodotus, and many other honorable women; there it is fitting for the blessed Euphrosyne to be buried too."

The Venerable, having heard such an answer, gave thanks to God that her body would be laid together with the relics of the holy women, and at once she sent to the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius with a request to prepare a place for burial. The monks of that monastery pointed out a place by the church vestibule and made a coffin for the burial of the saint.

The Venerable Euphrosyne lay on her sickbed for twenty-four more days. When the time of her blessed end drew near, she called a priest, received from him the Divine Mysteries of Christ, and in the midst of prayer committed her holy soul into the hands of God on the twenty-third day of the month of May.[18] Her honorable body was laid in the monastery of the Venerable Theodosius, at the porch of the church of the Most Holy Theotokos.[19]

Then her brother David and her kinswoman Eupraxia, returning to their native land, to the city of Polotsk, brought here the news of the blessed end and honorable burial of the Venerable Euphrosyne. Having mourned the death of the blessed Euphrosyne, all resolved to celebrate

18. The Venerable Euphrosyne reposed in 1178.

19. The honorable relics of St. Euphrosyne were afterwards transferred (as some suppose, in 1187) to Kiev, where they rest in the caves of St. Theodosius.

her memory every year to the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, praised and glorified by all creation, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day the uncovering (in 1164) of the relics of St. Leontius, Bishop of Rostov, Wonderworker, is celebrated.

On the same day is the memory of our Venerable Paisius of Galich, who was Archimandrite of the Dormition Monastery of St. Nicholas (near the city of Galich), and who reposed in 1460.



THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF MAY

May 24

24 мая

New Calendar May 24 · Old Calendar June 6 (civil dates)

Our Venerable Father Simeon of the Wondrous Mountain

Преподобного отца нашего Симеона Дивногорца

A young man named John came with his parents from Edessa[1] to Antioch[2]. John was of marriageable age, and his parents, seeing here a most beautiful maiden named Martha, asked her father and mother whether they would consent to give her in marriage to their son. These in turn spoke of it to Martha. But the maiden did not wish to enter into wedlock, for she had resolved to betroth herself to Christ, her God and Lord, that she might keep her virginity in purity. Since her parents, however, were pressing her to marry, Martha left them and hastened to the church of the Forerunner near the city of Antioch. Coming there, she fell prostrate and began to pray to the Lord with tears, asking Him to arrange everything as would be more profitable and salutary for her. And in this church there was a vision to Martha, bidding her to submit to her parents and enter into marriage. Fulfilling the will of God, the maiden was joined to John, and was not only his helper in all the affairs of life but also his guide, instructing him in every good work; Martha adorned her life with fasting, abstinence and prayer, striving to please God. The venerable Martha often came to the church of the Forerunner and prayed here with great zeal to John the Forerunner, asking him to obtain for her from God, by his prayers, the gift of bearing a male child; at the same time Martha promised to dedic-

1. Several cities are known by the name of Edessa. In this case, probably the Edessa (now Urfa) located in the northern part of Mesopotamia is meant.
2. Syrian Antioch is meant.

ate him, as Anna once dedicated Samuel (1 Kgdms. 1:11), to the service of God. A year after this, while Martha, praying here at night, dozed off, St. John the Forerunner appeared to her and said:

"Take courage, woman. Your prayer has been heard, and you shall receive what you ask. As a sign of God's good pleasure, receive this fragrance" (and with this he gave her a censer with incense); "cense your house with this censer."

Awaking from sleep, Martha found in her hand a censer from which there issued an unspeakable fragrance.

Then the Forerunner of the Lord appeared to her again and said:

"Go to your husband, for you shall conceive a son and shall name him Simeon. He shall nurse only from your right breast and shall not touch the left at all. He shall be a son of the right hand; he shall eat neither meat, nor wine, nor any other food prepared by the skill of human hands; his food shall be only bread, honey, salt and water. You must bring him up with great care, as a holy vessel destined for the service of the Lord our God. Two years after his birth you shall bring him to my church, and here you shall baptize him; when the infant is granted the grace of baptism, then it will be seen by all what he will become."

Martha, filled with both fear and joy at such a vision, gave great thanks to God and to the holy Forerunner of the Lord, John. Then, returning to the house of her husband, she conceived by him, and when the time was fulfilled she bore a son without pain and named him Simeon. Martha nursed the infant from her right breast. Sometimes, testing the words of the holy Forerunner John spoken to her in the vision, she offered the infant her left breast; but the infant, weeping, turned his face away from the left breast and in no case would accept milk from it. It was also marvelous that on any day when Martha ate meat or drank wine, on that day the infant would not take milk at all from his mother's breast, but remained hungry even until the next day. Understanding the reason for the infant's refusal of food, Martha began to abstain from meat and wine, and so nourished one who was to become a great ascetic, herself remaining in constant fasting and prayer.

When the infant had reached two years of age, his parents brought him to the church of the Forerunner and had him baptized there. After baptism the infant at once began to speak, clearly saying the following words:

"I have a father, and I have no father; I have a mother, and I have no mother!"

He repeated these words for seven days. His parents were greatly astonished at this and foresaw that their child would be an imitator not of earthly but of heavenly deeds. When the infant had been weaned from his mother's milk, he was fed bread, honey and water, for he would in no case consent to eat meat, just as he did not eat anything cooked.

When the infant had entered his sixth year, an earthquake occurred in Antioch (in the reign of Justinian the Great).[3] During this earthquake the stone house in which Simeon's parents lived collapsed; his father died, killed by the falling house, while his mother remained alive, for by God's providence she had gone out of the house during the earthquake and was staying in the church. The infant Simeon likewise was then not in his house, but in the church of the holy protomartyr Stephen, where by God's protection he was preserved whole and unharmed. Coming out of the church, Simeon did not know which way to go home, since everywhere lay the debris of ruined houses. Unable to find his house, he wandered for a long time among the ruins of Antioch; at last a pious woman who knew his parents took him on her shoulders and carried him to a mountain not far from the city, where she herself lived.

The blessed Martha, Simeon's mother, learning that her house had collapsed and thinking that her husband had perished with it and her son had been crushed by the stone walls, gave herself over to great weeping. Seven days later St. John the Forerunner appeared to her and said that her child was alive, and also showed her the place where he was. Martha at once set out for that mountain. Coming there, she found Simeon with the woman mentioned, who told Simeon's mother with astonishment that the boy during all those seven days had eaten nothing

3. Justinian I (the Great) reigned from 527 to 565.

but a small amount of bread and water. Taking him, the mother together with him went to the church of the Forerunner and there offered thanks to God and to His saint John the Forerunner for preserving the boy alive; then she returned home.

Once, when Martha was pondering in herself the visions she had had concerning the boy, and the many wondrous deeds already accomplished regarding him, and wondered what would become of her son, she fell asleep and had this vision: it seemed to her that she received wings and rose on high, holding the boy in her hands; offering him as a gift to the Lord, she said:

"I would wish to see, my child, such an ascent of yours. May my Creator release me in peace, me who have been granted to be blessed by many women, for I give to the Most High the fruit of my womb."

After this Martha settled with her son in a certain place in Antioch called "Cherubim." This name was given to the place for the following reason: Titus, son of Vespasian, Emperor of Rome,[4] having conquered Jerusalem, took from the temple of Jerusalem two golden Cherubim that stood above the Ark of the Covenant and brought them to Antioch. The very place where these Cherubim had been set up was called "Cherubim."

While the blessed Martha was living here with her son, Simeon had this vision: he saw the Lord Jesus Christ seated on a high throne, and many righteous were gathering to Him from all sides; before the throne the book of life lay open, by which judgment was being rendered; in the east appeared the paradise of delight, and in the west the fiery Gehenna. Then the Holy Spirit said to Simeon:

"Listen, child, and understand all that you see here; strive to please God, and then you shall be granted the same honor and glory as the other saints, and shall receive the unspeakable blessings prepared for all who love the Lord."

After this vision the boy was filled with divine wisdom and received the revelation and vision of many unknown and wondrous mysteries.

4. Vespasian governed the Roman Empire from 70 to 79 A.D. His son Titus reigned from 79 to 81.

After some time Simeon saw a certain man, wondrous of countenance, clothed in white garments, who said to him:

"Follow me."

Simeon followed him. The man who had appeared to him led him into the land of Tiberias, which lay near Seleucia. The man brought the boy to a place called Pila. Here the boy remained on a desert mountain, living with the wild beasts as with lambs. He had only beasts as his companions, so that no man ever saw him. Night and day an unspeakable light shone upon him. Simeon received his food from the hands of that bright man who had brought him here; that man often appeared to him, instructed him in everything, and supplied him with food at the proper time.

After some time, by the direction of the same man, Simeon climbed to the top of the mountain and found here a small monastery, whose hegumen was the blessed John, who stood on a pillar. This hegumen had frequent visions foretelling that the blessed boy Simeon would come to him: he saw, for example, the boy in white clothing, at times approaching the monastery in a chariot, at times flying through the air and hovering above the monastery, at times standing on a bright pillar and drawing near the monastery together with the pillar. This blessed John also saw an Angel, who pointed out that boy to him and said:

"This is he through whom you shall obtain salvation."

Of all these visions the hegumen John spoke to the monks who lived with him.

When, by God's providence, the blessed Symeon came to his monastery, the monks marveled greatly that so small a child, not yet six years old, could walk alone through such a wilderness and find the monastery. Abbot John, seeing Symeon from his pillar, understood that this was indeed the lad whom he had repeatedly beheld in his visions. Rejoicing greatly at all that had come to pass, John called Symeon to himself, took him up in his arms, kissed him, and with tears gave thanks to God. The boy was very beautiful of face and fair of hair; his gaze was pure and bright, revealing to all the goodness of his soul. He was meek, quiet, quick in answer, wise in speech, and filled with heavenly gifts. Symeon dwelt in that monastery apart from all the others, keeping his

lips in silence. His fasting was such that sometimes he went three days, sometimes seven, and sometimes ten, and then he ate peas soaked in water and drank very little water. Seeing all this, Abbot John marveled greatly.

In that monastery there lived a simple man who tended the herds. Seeing the boy's extraordinary fasting, he was kindled with diabolical envy toward him and resolved to kill him. But when he began to carry out his wicked design, his hand immediately withered; he fell ill in his whole body, so that he was near to death. Because of this he confessed his sin to the abbot and to the blessed Symeon, and repented of it. The boy, being without malice, not only forgave him his sin but also prayed to God for his healing, and at once, as soon as he touched the withered hand, it was healed and the whole body of that man became whole. From this time the abbot and the brethren honored the blessed boy all the more, for they saw in him one whom God had chosen for His service even from his mother's womb.

After some time the blessed Symeon began earnestly to ask the brethren to build him a pillar near the pillar of Father John. In accordance with his wish, a pillar was built beside John's pillar. The boy, being only seven years old and clothed in the monastic habit by the blessed John, climbed upon it. And he stood on the pillar, imitating Father John.

At the beginning of his pillar-ascetic labor, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in the form of a Youth, shining with ineffable beauty. Seeing this Youth, St. Symeon was kindled with love for Him with all his heart. Recognizing that this was God and his Lord, he asked Him boldly:

"Lord, how did the Jews crucify Thee?"

The Lord, stretching out His hands in the form of a cross, said to him:

"Thus did the Jews crucify Me; yet I Myself was pleased to give Myself up to the Cross. But be steadfast and strong, being crucified with Me all the days of your life."

From this time St. Symeon seemed to forget his body entirely and became like the incorporeal creatures, living the angelic life and sur-

passing even the old man John in his labors. John sang thirty psalms each night, and Symeon fifty, and sometimes eighty; often he would chant the whole Psalter in one night, not yielding to sleep at all. And by day the saint unceasingly glorified the Lord. The old man, however, sparing Symeon's youth and fearing lest he should be worn out by such great labors, admonished him, saying:

"Child! Leave off your labors, which exceed human strength, so that you do not even let us sleep. It is enough for you that from your birth you have been co-crucified with Christ. It is necessary for you to have some, even if small, care for your body as well; it is necessary for you to give yourself to at least a short sleep and to take food in moderation, so that you may be able to endure to the end the ascetic life of fasting. For food and drink do not defile a man, as the Lord Himself says in His holy Scripture: 'Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things' (Gen. 9:3)."

The blessed Symeon answered the old man:

"Although food does not defile a man, it gives rise to sinful thoughts, darkens the mind, deepens passion, turns the spiritual man into a carnal one, and directs his thoughts toward earthly desires. We monks ought day and night to be instructed in the law of the Lord, lest we fall under the seduction of sleep and sink into despondency, as the prophet says: 'My soul melteth for heaviness' (Ps. 118:28). Especially for the glorifying of God must we open our lips with unslumbering vigilance, and then we shall draw upon ourselves the grace of the Holy Spirit. But what are my words to you, honored father? I set forth this rule for myself alone and not for others, for it is necessary for me to subdue my young body by such great labors."

The old man marveled greatly at such a wise answer from the young boy.

Once, when Symeon was illumined with the light of the Holy Spirit, the whole diabolical kingdom and all the demonic fantasies were revealed to him, for he saw the prince of darkness himself, seated on a great throne, wearing a crown that gleamed on his head, while legions of demons stood before him. Before the face of the prince of darkness appeared all the worldly allurements prepared by him: gold, silver, pre-

cious stones, pearls. All this seemed to be, as it were, in a certain swamp; everywhere were heard the sounds of trumpets, pipes, and other musical instruments. And sin was seen in the form of a beautiful woman, followed by servants-tempters who lure men to sin. Visible were the spirit of vanity, the spirit of uncleanness, the spirit of sloth, and the spirit of avarice; visible was the serpent, never satisfied with its mouth, ready to devour the whole world. These tempting spirits tried to incline Symeon too to sin; they called him to sin with various crafty words, but he, armed with his customary weapon, the sign of the Precious Cross, and calling upon the name of Christ, always drove away from himself all those demonic fantasies, just as the sun drives away darkness. Looking toward the church, Symeon saw the throne of God, from which proceeded the glory of God, which illumined Symeon also. At that moment one of the patriarchs was sent to St. Symeon from the church, holding in his hand fragrant myrrh; pouring it upon Symeon's head, he said:

"By the power of this anointing may you drive out the demons! Girded with divine power from on high, may you smite them by thousands and conquer them by tens of thousands. Take courage, trusting in your Creator, for 'The enemy shall not exact upon him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him' (Ps. 88:23)."

From this time the blessed Symeon received power over the unclean spirits and cast them out of men, whom he also healed of all other diseases.

Once the servant of God, Symeon the Stylite, addressed the blessed old man with these words:

"Father! Not long ago, only a few days since, the Lord revealed to me the power of Satan and all his baneful riches; I saw all his flattery and deceit with which he wages war against virtuous men."

John answered Symeon:

"May God preserve you, child, from all his snares."

Symeon said:

"Even though the impious demonic power should plan to do us much harm, it will not succeed in any way."

The old man, seeing that the boy counted the temptations of the demons as nothing, and fearing lest he fall into pride, said to him:

"In any case, child, we ought to fear the manifold snares of the demons, and it is not enough to trust only in our virtue; for our enemy has shod himself in iron boots,[5] always striving to draw monks into temptation; and whenever he sees a fitting opportunity, he stirs up a grievous battle against the monks. We must always pray to God and call upon Emmanuel[6] for help, that He may always be with us and strike down all the power of the enemy."

While the saints were conversing thus, Satan, hearing their talk, was filled with rage and began to gnash his teeth at the young ascetic; then he began to terrify him with various phantasmal images, transforming himself now into fierce serpents, now into beasts, rushing upon him every day and every night as if intending to devour him. But the blessed Symeon, having God Most High as his helper, shielding himself with the sign of the Cross, said:

"I shall not fear 'the terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth by day, nor the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor the destruction that wasteth at noonday' (Ps. 90:5–6)."

In the month of December, at night, namely during the second watch of the night, the devil, gathering all his hordes, suddenly came against St. Symeon and, tearing off the roof built over the pillar, hurled the blessed Symeon down from the pillar. But the hand of God protected the boy; therefore the saint stood by the pillar unharmed, bold in spirit, for he was not at all dismayed by the enemy's assault. Then the devil stirred up a violent and sharp wind from the sea; a storm arose, thunder was heard, and lightning was seen, striking Symeon's pillar all night long. The venerable John, thinking that Symeon had already been slain by the thunder and lightning, began to weep and asked the monks to go and see whether the boy was alive and whether he was still on the pillar. But the monks did not answer John, for out of fear of

5. An image expressing the power and cunning of demons.

6. Emmanuel is the name of the Messiah, or Jesus Christ, in the well-known prophecy of Isaiah concerning the birth of the Son of a Virgin (Is. 7:14). This name means, from the Hebrew, "God with us."

that demonic delusion they did not leave their cells; and there were among the monks some who harbored hatred toward the boy Symeon, yielding to the demonic temptation. The monks said to one another:

"Where now is that boy's fasting, which exceeds human strength? Where are his labors? Where are his wonder-workings? Let him now help himself!"

But the blessed Symeon, hearing that Father John was weeping over him, called to him loudly, saying:

"Do not grieve for me, father, for I have suffered no harm whatever, being guarded by the grace of Christ; the devil is put to shame."

When morning came, the monks went to the pillar of Simeon, thinking they would find the youth already dead; but seeing him alive and joyful, his face shining like that of an Angel of God, they were ashamed. Reproached by the elder John, they went back to their cells, put to shame.

Ephraim, Archbishop of Antioch, heard of the blessed Simeon. Learning in what great ascetic labors he spent his life, Ephraim came to him; and seeing the youth, so young in body yet already perfected enough in the virtuous life, crucified with Christ, he glorified God and returned to his city in tears, telling everywhere, for the benefit of the citizens, of the strict ascetic life of the servant of Christ.

From this time many began to come to the blessed Simeon, both of the monks and of the laity: some to see him, others to be edified by his God-inspired discourse, and still others to be healed of their bodily infirmities, seeing in Simeon a physician and healer who asked no reward.

Once the blessed Simeon asked those who came to him for a strong and rough cord, and secretly from everyone wound it about his body, so that the cord penetrated to his bones. His body was covered with sores from which blood flowed; his hair shirt, being soaked with blood, stuck to the saint's body; his flesh began to rot, yet St. Simeon bore his labor with courage. At last a stench began to rise from his decaying flesh. The monks who climbed up to him on the pillar did not at first know whence this stench came; but afterwards, understanding the saint's great labor, they reported everything to Abba John. John, horrified at

so great a labor, ordered that the cord be removed from Simeon's body little by little, and forbade him to subject his body to such fierce torment.

The blessed Simeon also had the gift of teaching, which flowed like a river from his lips. Gathering the brethren, the elder John ordered Simeon to deliver an exhortation, and himself listened to him with love. Thus the young youth became a wise and profitable teacher for the old, for his lips were filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Because of his gift of teaching, the elder John called Simeon a new David; he also told him of a vision he had had concerning him in a dream: namely, he said he had seen as it were a certain Divine power holding in its right hand a honeycomb, which dripped honey over the youth's head.

Another elder once asked the brethren, pointing to Simeon's pillar:

"Are there doves living in this pillar?"

The brethren answered him:

"No."

Then the elder said:

"I saw a dove, bright in appearance, fly in to the youth through a little door, and an hour later fly out from him and rise to heaven."

While that elder was conversing with the brethren, the blessed Simeon had a vision: it seemed to him that he was carried up on high and flew over the whole universe, as though he had wings; then it appeared to him that he was raised by seven ladders to a lofty mountain, where, like the holy Apostle Paul, he saw what "eye has not seen" and heard what "ear has not heard" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Coming down from there, St. Simeon asked the one who had led him:

"What was it that I saw?"

The same one answered:

"These are the seven heavens, to which you were carried up."

Then the saint saw Paradise, and beautiful gardens, and most bright and very large mansions, and the fountain of peace flowing there. Here the venerable one saw no one but Adam and the good thief.

When Simeon came to himself, he told the elder John of all that he had seen. The elder, having listened, said:

"Child! Blessed be God, who has granted you such grace."

Meanwhile the youth progressed more and more in his ascetic labors. If anyone came to him who had no clothing, he would take off his own garment and give it to the one who came, remaining himself naked; he did so not only in summer but also in winter. The elder John more than once clothed him, though he did not want it, fearing lest the youth die of cold and frost. But the youth, striking his breast, wept, saying:

"Woe is me, wretch! Behold, the holy forty martyrs for the name of Christ endured both cold and frost in the lake [7], and I am afraid of being chilled a little. How then shall I be saved from the eternal gnashing of teeth? How can I receive one lot with the saints?"

And Simeon wept for a long time with such and similar words.

The elder, grieved, said:

"What more do you want to do to yourself, Simeon? Here you lack only a knife with which to kill yourself!"

After some time Simeon devised such a torment for his flesh: he sat on his feet and did not rise for a whole year; as a result the venerable one's thighs and shins began to rot, so that a stench spread around. Abba John, calling a physician, asked him to heal Simeon's sores; but Simeon, smiling, said:

"My Lord lives! Let no human hand or help touch me."

The Lord, by His grace, restored his health, and the youth stood up, healthy in both feet and thighs, so that there remained no trace whatever of the wounds on them. Kneeling, the saint gave thanks to God for a long time for his healing.

When the feast of holy Pentecost came, on the morning of the festal day the blessed Simeon asked the venerable John:

"Father, who is worthy to receive the Holy Spirit, as the holy Apostles received Him in tongues of fire?" (Acts 2:1–4).

The elder answered him:

7. The reference is to the exploit of the forty holy martyrs who suffered in the Armenian city of Sebaste in the 4th century. The Church commemorates them on March 9.

"Do not seek what is above you, and do not investigate what is unknown to you; rather, meditate on what has been commanded you."

The youth said in reply:

"In Holy Scripture it is said: 'He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them' (Ps. 144:19)."

Having said this, the youth raised his eyes to heaven and from the depths of his heart prayed to God in these words:

"Lord, Who didst send Thy Holy Spirit upon Thy holy disciples and Apostles, send the gift of Thy grace also upon me; 'make me understand, and I shall learn Thy commandments' (Ps. 118:73), for Thou canst perfect praise to Thyself 'out of the mouths of babes' (Ps. 8:3). Send down Thy Holy Spirit upon me, that I may proclaim to people the words of eternal life."

While the saint was praying thus, the Holy Spirit descended upon him from heaven in the form of a burning candle and filled his heart with wisdom and understanding, so that the saint began to say much, teaching everyone from Divine Scripture; no one could resist the wisdom of the Spirit dwelling in him. And not only with his lips but also in writing the saint related many soul-profiting discourses on the monastic life, repentance, the Incarnation of Christ, and the future Judgment; besides this, he interpreted many difficult passages of Holy Scripture.

The elder John greatly marveled at this gift of the young youth and said:

"In this youth what David wrote has been fulfilled: 'the word of the Lord tested him' (Ps. 104:19). Now I understand that he will accomplish many wondrous deeds, nearly as glorious as the deeds of the Apostles."

And all the other monks greatly marveled at the youth, and even began to fear him, astonished not only by his teaching but also by the miracles he performed.

Some of those monks saw in a dream three mansions, three thrones in them, and three crowns lying on the thrones. When the monks asked for whom such glory was prepared, they heard a voice saying:

"For Simeon the youth!"

The venerable Simeon, shining with his angelic life like the sun, rose more and more from all earthly things to the heavenly. He wished to labor on an even higher pillar, for which reason a pillar was built for him, forty steps high. When Simeon prepared to climb this pillar, the Archbishop of Antioch learned of it and came to him, as also the Bishop of Seleucia, who had earlier heard of the labors of the young youth. Coming to the monastery with their clergy, they, taking the blessed youth with reverence, led him with lit candles first into the church, into the sanctuary, where they ordained him to the rank of deacon; then, singing psalms, they lifted him up to that pillar. And St. Simeon remained on this pillar for eight years. The elder John greatly grieved in his heart over the youth, for he could not see his face. Simeon, laboring on the high pillar, showed his angelic life to all, becoming like the Cherubim, and constantly glorified God.

But lest any man boast or exalt himself before God, God permitted Satan to raise against Simeon a grievous fleshly battle: Satan wished to defile him with dream-fantasies, but the youth courageously resisted the temptation; Simeon gave no sleep to his eyes and diligently prayed to the Lord, asking Him to be a helper against the enemy rising against him. Then Simeon saw a certain honorable man, bright of face and gray-haired, coming down from heaven, clothed in priestly vestments, and holding in his hands a chalice with the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ; at this the whole air was filled with ineffable fragrance; when that bright man approached the blessed Simeon, he communed him with the holy and life-giving Mysteries and said:

"Take courage, and let your heart be strengthened! From this time on, dream-fantasies will not disturb you; only watch your thoughts diligently and trust in God."

The holy Simeon, filled with great joy because of the vision and with ineffable sweetness of heart, glorified God.

The blessed youth guarded himself both from various thoughts not pleasing to God and from conversations with people: each day he shut himself in until the ninth hour, and wished to converse with no one but God alone.

Meanwhile the time came for the blessed repose of Abba John the Stylite. Foreseeing this repose, the Blessed Symeon sent word to John:

"Do not grieve, honorable father, if you hear of the day of your death, for death is the common lot of all men. I know that now Christ God is calling you to rest, so that after your labors you may repose together with the other saints. Give me, honorable father, your blessing as Abraham's, and remember me when you come to bow before the throne of the glory of the All-Holy and Consubstantial Trinity; pray for us, that we too, having overcome the world, may receive the Kingdom of Heaven and see one another in it."

John, hearing these words, did not doubt their truth; nor did he fear in his heart, for he was always ready for death, although at that time he suffered from no ailment, being in perfect health of body. John answered Symeon through the messenger:

"May God the Father, whom you have sought, and the Only-begotten Son of God the Father, whom you have loved, and the Life-giving Spirit of God, whom you have desired with all your heart, bless you, my child. May the one Godhead of the All-Holy Trinity be your strength and protection; may it instruct you and comfort you. May all who bless you be blessed, and those who curse you be cursed. May the Lord give you honor and glory, because you have honored me, your spiritual father, as a father according to the flesh. May your blessed mother, who has served me greatly, also receive grace and mercy from the Lord."

The brethren standing around the elder, hearing such words, were filled with fear and asked the Blessed John:

"What is it that you are enjoining, honorable father, concerning the youth Symeon?"

The elder answered:

"I greatly desire that you all be imitators of Symeon in his fervent-hearted prayer to God; may you too be granted the prayerful help of this youth, for he is a vessel chosen by God Himself, great and honorable."

Then Abba John instructed the brethren with soul-profiting discourses and prayed for them; afterwards he lay down on his bed as though to rest for a time, and soon fell asleep in a sweet sleep unto

eternity, without any illness of body at all — and thus he passed over to the other blessed fathers.

After the death of the Blessed Elder John, Saint Symeon began to labor with still greater exertions. The order of his life was as follows: from early morning until the ninth hour he prayed; after the ninth hour he occupied himself with reading books and copying them until sunset; at sunset he again began to pray and remained all night without sleep in constant prayer until the dawn of day. When day came, Symeon allowed sleep, as though it were some servant, to approach him for a short time. Dozing a little, he soon rose and began his customary rule of prayer. During his prayer he held incense in his right hand, which, without burning coals, spread fragrance all around him. Sometimes there was heard by him a voice as of a great multitude of people in the air, singing with him and crying out:

"Alleluia!"

This was the voice of the holy Angels.

Often the saint spent days and nights entirely without sleep. Once he abstained completely from sleep for thirty days and thirty nights, praying God to drive sleep from his eyes. And it was said to him from God:

"It behooves you to give your body rest in sleep, even if only for a short time."

The devil, however, unable to endure the glorious ascetic feat of the Blessed Symeon, again armed himself against him with all his host, seeking to terrify him with various phantasmal images. Sometimes he transformed himself into serpents, sometimes into various beasts that rushed upon the saint with open jaws; sometimes he changed into some unusual bird with the face of a youth, which swooped down upon the venerable one; and sometimes he appeared to him in the form of many warriors marching to battle with loud cries, intending to drive the saint from the pillar and cast the pillar itself to the ground. Once the devil struck the pillar with a large stone; the pillar leaned as though about to fall, but the invisible power of God supported it and set it upright. At another time the demon appeared in the form of a maiden, black of face

and shameless in manner, who tried to embrace the saint's neck with her arms, saying:

"This is the last time I struggle with you; if you overcome me, I will depart from you for a time."

All these and similar demonic fancies and apparitions the saint drove away by prayer and by the sign of the Precious Cross.

The saint also had a divine and wondrous vision: he saw the heavens opened and our Lord Jesus Christ, surrounded by ineffable radiance, as though by some fiery flame; before the Lord stood the holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, one on the right and the other on the left. Beneath the feet of the Lord there was a crimson cloud. Seeing all this, Saint Symeon bowed down to his Lord and stretched out his hands to Him, asking Him in His mercy to help him bring forth good fruits. Christ the Lord blessed Symeon three times with His fingers. Then, looking down, Symeon saw on the earth a great many demons, of various forms: some had the form of wild boars, others of goats. And the Lord gave Symeon power over all those demons, that he might drive them away. As a sign of this authority the Lord gave Symeon a staff of palm wood. Immediately all the demons fled from Symeon's face and vanished no one knew where.

The Blessed Symeon also drove out all evil spirits from people who were brought to him and were possessed by demons; the saint healed many other diseases and even raised the dead. Thus once there came to the saint a man whose son had died. Falling down before the saint with tears, the man begged the servant of God to deliver him from so great a calamity and to pray to God for his dead son. The saint, offering prayer to God, said to that man:

"Go in the name of the Lord! Your son is alive!"

The man believed the saint's words. Coming home, he indeed found his son risen from the dead. Taking him, the man went with him to the saint with indescribable joy, and gave thanks to God and to His servant, Saint Symeon.

Afterwards Symeon again saw the Lord our God, before whom stood the ranks of Angels; the foremost of the Angels held in their hands a royal crown adorned with precious stones; on the top of the

crown was a cross shining like lightning. The Angels wished to crown Symeon with this crown as king. Seeing all this, Symeon said to the Angels:

"Do not take from me the hair shirt in which I have clothed myself for the sake of the name of Christ."

The Angels answered him:

"For this very reason you shall receive the crown of the Kingdom of Christ prepared for you, and you shall be clothed, as in purple, in the grace of the Holy Spirit, and shall reign together with the other saints in the endless Kingdom."

The Blessed Symeon, looking upon the Lord, said:

"Lord and Creator of all! If Thou art pleased to grant me the glory of Thy saints in Thy Kingdom, then, I beseech Thy goodness, make it so that I may not partake of the corruptible food of men!"

And Symeon heard that the Lord granted his petition. Thereupon the Angels approached the Blessed One, placed upon his ascetic hair shirt a radiant royal garment, crowned his head with the crown, and sang aloud, saying:

"Very glorious is Christ God, King of heaven and earth; let His servant Symeon also be praised!"

After this vision Saint Symeon no longer partook of earthly food at all until the end of his life, but was nourished only by heavenly food brought to him by an Angel.

Concerning how great the wonders were that Saint Symeon worked and how glorious his ascetic feats were, a very great deal is related; here only a few of the many exploits of the Blessed Symeon are set forth.

Once there were revealed to Saint Symeon all the calamities that were soon to befall the city of Antioch and all its surroundings: Symeon saw an Angel hovering in the air over the city of Antioch with a sword in his hand. Then the saint began to pray zealously to the Lord with all his heart, interceding for the city of Antioch before God as a new Moses, and asking the Lord to turn away His wrath from the people. And the Lord said to him:

"Behold, the cry of the sins of this city has come up before Me; therefore I am angry with this city and will destroy it, sending upon it fire, sword and death. Because this city has provoked Me with its sins, I will give it into the captivity of a senseless people."

Saint Symeon spoke of this vision to all the townspeople who came to him, and exhorted them to repent of their sins.

After a short time the Lord indeed raised up against Antioch Chosroes, the king of Persia (grandfather of the young Chosroes who took captive the Life-giving Tree of the Cross of the Lord in Jerusalem)[8]. Chosroes came with a great Persian and Chaldean host and began a fierce war with the citizens of the city of Antioch. The Blessed Symeon, remaining on the pillar and being sheltered by God from the barbarians who had come into that land, zealously prayed to the Lord, asking Him to turn His wrath away from the city and not to give it into the hands of its enemies; yet he could not persuade God or appease God's righteous wrath. Then Saint Symeon had a new vision: in ecstasy he saw before him a radiant cross, and beside the cross two Angels holding bent bows with arrows prepared. And the Angels said to him:

"This cross the Lord has sent you for your protection, as a sign of peace; for the wrath of God directed against this land shall not touch you. These arrows, however, have been prepared for the driving away of enemies, should they desire to approach this place where you labour. We have been appointed for your protection."

Then Simeon saw in a vision that the city had been taken. Enemies passed through its midst; on every side there was heard a cry and a great lamentation. Some of the citizens were put to the sword, others were led into captivity, and still others leapt from the city walls and fled. Among these last he saw two monks of his monastery, who, frightened by the barbarian invasion, had abandoned the monastery and the mountain and fled into the city. But at the very time these

8. Khozroy (or more precisely Khosrov), from the Persian, means simply "king." This title was usually added to the proper name of one or another king. In this case Khozroy I Anushirvan is meant, who reigned from 531 to 579. His grandson Khozroy II Parvez (reigned 590–628) took the Life-giving Tree of the Cross of the Lord from Jerusalem in 614, during the war with the Greek emperor Phocas. The Cross was returned in 628 by Khozroy II's successor Svroes, upon the conclusion of peace with the Greek emperor Heraclius.

monks were fleeing from the city, the barbarians overtook them; one of them was slain by the sword, and the other was led away into captivity.

All that the saint had seen was in a short time indeed fulfilled, only a few days after the vision. The city of Antioch was taken by the enemy and given over to the sword and to fire, and many of its citizens were led away captive. But through the prayer of St. Simeon, some of the citizens escaped the hand of the barbarians. Thus, when the barbarians entered the city, many of its citizens managed to run out of it by other gates, not yet occupied by the enemy; many citizens also fled, leaping over the city walls. The fugitives took refuge in the mountains and deserts, guarded by the mercy of God, with the exception of the two monks mentioned above.

The barbarians also came to that mountain on which the monastery and the pillar of Simeon stood, but they returned with nothing; for the mountain was covered from them, as once Mount Sinai was covered with darkness and cloud (Ex. 19:16), so that the barbarians could see neither the monastery nor the pillar. Many of the enemy were terrified and turned to flight by some invisible power; they fled in such great fear as though armed hosts were pursuing them, for the prayer of St. Simeon was a terrible and invincible weapon against his adversaries. Not one monk, of all those who laboured in the monastery, suffered from those barbarians, with the exception of the two monks mentioned above, who had fled from the monastery into the city out of fear of the enemy.

When the barbarians had left that land, many wounded came to the saint, and the blessed Simeon granted healing to them all. Besides this, the saint delivered from bonds and captivity many of the citizens who had already been led away captive; for all those who merely called upon the name of Simeon, while in bonds, were at once freed from them. The bonds fell from their feet and hands, and they walked in the midst of the barbarians, unnoticed by them, and then came into their own land without any hindrance on the part of the enemy. The monk mentioned above (whose companion had fallen by the enemy's sword) was saved from captivity in just this manner. Having escaped from the enemies

together with a soldier of Antioch, the monk related the following concerning himself:

"As soon as we remembered the blessed Simeon and, with tears of compunction, called upon him for help, the bonds that were upon us were at once loosed and fell away of their own accord; then we passed through the midst of those barbarians, for not one of them asked us anything or hindered us."

Near the city of Antioch, by a mountain, there sat an old man, a blind beggar, who lived by the alms he asked of all who passed along that road. When the barbarians hastened to run up to the city, one of them struck the old man on the neck with his sword, but did not sever his head; he only inflicted a mortal wound. The old man lay wallowing in the pool of blood flowing from him, being barely alive. But St. Simeon, seeing all this with his prophetic eye, sent some of the brethren to take the old man and bring him to him. The monks laid the old man upon a mat and brought him to the pillar of Simeon. The saint, taking up earth in his hands and sprinkling it with holy water, applied it to the wound, saying:

"In the name of Emmanuel, let the head be joined to its place and be made firm upon it."

And at once the old man's head was returned to its place, it grew together with the sinews, and became perfectly sound. When the old man had been healed of such a dreadful wound, St. Simeon said:

"Behold, his eyes too have been opened!"

All who witnessed that miracle glorified God.

After some time the blessed Simeon was distressed by the constant disturbance caused him by the innumerable multitude of people who came from various countries and brought many sick and infirm. Since all this hindered his silent life, he resolved to leave that pillar, on which he had already laboured for eight years, in order to withdraw to some other, more solitary place. At a short distance from there was a mountain, high and very desolate, for there was no water in it at all. No one ascended it, because of its lack of water; only wild beasts, serpents and other venomous reptiles dwelt upon it.

It was upon this mountain that the blessed Simeon resolved to remove. When he thought of this, the Lord appeared to him, accompanied by many Angels, descending from heaven upon that mountain in a bright cloud. The Lord said to him:

"Labour, Simeon, to ascend this Wondrous mountain[9], for from this time the mountain shall be called by this name; upon it I shall reveal My grace to you to the wonder of all."

And at once there was pointed out to the saint upon the mountain a high hill and a stone upon which the feet of the Lord had stood; and that footstool was illumined by the glory of the Lord like the sun. The Lord commanded Simeon to stand upon this stone and labour there.

When this vision was over, Simeon called the brethren to him and told them of the Lord's will concerning his removal to that mountain. Having appointed as abbot for the monks an elder, a man experienced and aged, Simeon came down from his pillar and made his way to the Wondrous mountain, accompanied by the brethren, who wept at his departure.

When the saint drew near the hill that God had shown him, he stopped and for a long time prayed to God. At the end of his prayer there was heard the voice of a multitude of Angels crying: "Amen!"

Then the blessed Simeon commanded his disciples to set up in that place a stone cross as a lasting reminder of the Angelic voice heard in that place. Looking at the hill situated on the Wondrous mountain, the saint saw the glory of God shining upon it; then, joyfully ascending it, he stood upon the very stone on which he had seen the Lord. At this time the blessed Simeon was nineteen years of age from his birth.

Yet St. Simeon found no rest even here from the visitors who came to him. Thus, already in the morning of the following day, the people who had come to the monastery of Simeon, not finding the servant of God there, raised a great lamentation. But learning that the saint had removed from there to another mountain, all the people hastened there, bringing with them many sick and infirm. Seeing those who had come, the saint was grieved, for even here he was not allowed to be alone with

9. The Wondrous Mountain was situated in the triangle formed by the cities of Antioch on the Orontes, Seleucia-Seria, and Ros.

God alone. Yet, sympathizing with the newcomers, he showed mercy, and laying his hands upon the sick, calling upon the name of Christ, he healed them and sent them home perfectly whole.

It happened once that a lion dwelling on that mountain rushed upon a man who was going to the venerable one; the lion had already prepared to tear that man to pieces; the man, not hoping to save himself from the beast by flight, cried out:

"Do me no harm, for the sake of Simeon, the servant of God!"

And at once the lion, hearing the name of Simeon, was subdued and did no harm whatever to that man.

The man, coming to the saint, related to him what had happened. The other visitors, afraid of the beast, asked the venerable one to drive it from that mountain, so that all might come to the venerable one without fear. The venerable one, calling to him his disciple Anastasius, from whom, as Christ once did, he had cast out seven demons[10], said to him:

"Go into the cave to the lion and say to him:"

"Simeon, the servant of Christ, says to you in the name of God: Depart from this mountain; let there be no lair here for you, that you may not terrify the brethren who come here."

Anastasius went to the lion's cave and, finding the beast in it, spoke to him the words of the venerable one, addressing him as a reasoning creature.

The lion, fulfilling the words of the venerable one, hastened thence to other desert places, doing harm to no one on the way.

At that time various diseases greatly multiplied in that land, and very many people died. The saint, understanding in his spirit that this had come about because of the wrath of God for the sins of men, began zealously to pray to the Lord with tears, asking Him to have mercy upon His people and to turn away from them His righteous wrath. And the saint heard a voice from the Lord, saying:

"Why do you grieve in heart for these people? Do you love them more than I? Since their sins and iniquities have multiplied, they de-

10. Jesus Christ cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene (see Mk. 16:9).

serve punishment. Yet, so as not to grieve you, I give you power to heal their various ailments and diseases."

This the Lord said to His servant Simeon.

The people who lived near that place, as soon as they fell ill, at once called upon the servant of God, St. Simeon, for help, and saw him (in sleeping visions) visiting their houses, signing them with the cross and granting healing to all. When their sleeping visions ended, they awoke feeling restored to health. They called upon the name of Simeon in this manner: they lit lamps filled with oil in their houses and burned incense, saying:

"Christ our God, through the prayers of Thy servant Simeon, who labours on the Wondrous mountain, have mercy upon us!"

And they received mercy from the Lord.

Those among them who did not have a greater quantity of oil poured oil into the censer and lit it; and the censer did not go out until the third or fourth day, as though new oil were being constantly poured into it. Thus, by a wondrous means, the oil in their censers did not run short, by reason of the invocation of Simeon's name.

Once it was revealed to St. Simeon by the Lord that the death of the most holy Archbishop Ephraim of Antioch was drawing near. Calling the brethren to him, St. Simeon announced this to them; then Simeon asked the brethren to pray more fervently to the Lord, for, he said, the great pillar of the Church is ready to fall. But the brethren answered:

"We have heard that the Archbishop is in good health."

On the day after the morning chanting (that day was a Friday), St. Simeon again called the brethren to him and said to them with heartfelt tenderness:

"The holy hierarch of God Ephraim reposed this night, for I saw his soul being borne up to heaven by the holy Angels. As he passed near me, Ephraim kissed me and said:

'I beg you, remember me in your prayers to the Lord.'"

Then the Venerable Simeon began to speak with tears as follows:

"Woe to Antioch, for it now has no Ephraim! Woe to the city, for Ephraim has now been taken from it![11]"

After the death of the blessed Ephraim, the archiepiscopal throne was taken by Domnus[12], who had come to Antioch from Constantinople. This Domnus was unmerciful to the poor. Learning of this, the Venerable Simeon foretold the chastisement of God upon Domnus for his lack of mercy. And indeed, before long Domnus fell into a grievous illness: his hands and feet became contracted, so that he could neither walk nor move his arms, but lay like a piece of wood.

Afterwards it was revealed to St. Simeon that an earthquake, even more terrible than the first, was to occur in Antioch. Having announced this to all who came to him, Simeon began to weep and to beseech God to turn away His wrath. That same evening the earth shook so violently that the city walls fell and various city buildings were leveled to the ground; all the people were seized with great fear and terror. Many of the citizens were killed by the city walls; all the rest hastened to the Wondrous mountain to the servant of God, and entreated him with tears to beseech the Lord to end the calamity. When the saint prayed with great fervor, the earthquake ceased; then the saint saw the sky opened on the eastern side; from it issued an ineffable light, signifying God's good pleasure toward the people who had repented. Afterwards, by the command of God, the Venerable Simeon built a monastery on the Wondrous mountain, and also built a church with the hands of those whom he had healed (for there were very many of these people, who had received healing of their ailments through St. Simeon's prayer); then the Venerable, by his prayer, obtained from God a sufficient supply of water for the monastery; by his prayer the wheat in the monastery granary also multiplied, so that its quantity hardly diminished for three years, although it was taken from the granaries in large amounts to feed the multitude of visitors.

Later St. Simeon also built a new pillar, on which (as the Venerable clearly saw) the Lord Jesus Christ Himself came with His holy Angels and sanctified that pillar. The blessed Simeon ascended the pillar with great joy, and labored upon it until the end of his life.

When the blessed Simeon had reached the age of thirty-three years, by the command of God (made manifest to the saint in a revelation),

Simeon resolved to accept ordination to the rank of priest, although previously he had not wished to accept this high rank. By God's providence there came to the blessed Simeon Dionysius, bishop of Seleucia, who ordained Simeon to the presbyterate.

After his ordination to the priesthood, the blessed Simeon celebrated the Divine bloodless Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ with great reverence, serving God in purity like an Angel. The saint often had manifold wondrous visions and revelations from God. He foretold future events, foreseeing distant things as though they were present; the saint also perceived the secret thoughts of men. He performed very many miracles, both on land and on sea, appearing in visions; he gave sight to the blind, cleansed lepers, restored health to the lame, cast demons out of men, stopped the mouths of wild beasts, healed every sore and every infirmity, and raised the dead, so that in him was fulfilled the word of Christ: "He who believes in Me, the works that I do he also shall do" (Jn. 14:12). Truly wondrous was God, made manifest in His servant, the wondrous Simeon!

When the Venerable Simeon had completed seventy-five years of life, knowing in advance of his impending departure to the Lord, he called the brethren to him, instructed them for a sufficient time, then, bestowing the last kiss on all in the evening hour, he committed his soul into the hands of God on the twenty-fourth day of the month of May[13], at the hour when he was accustomed to take food from the Angel. Together with the holy Angels he now delights in the endless Kingdom, beholding the face of God, glorifying the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God in Trinity, to Whom glory is offered now and unto endless ages. Amen.

11. Ephraim was patriarch from 527 to 545.

12. Domnus II was patriarch from 546 to 560.

13. The principal events in the life of St. Simeon the Stylite are distributed by year as follows: St. Simeon was born in 521; in 527, at the age of six, he ascended a pillar; eight years later, in 535, he moved to another pillar; in his twenty-second year he moved to the Wondrous Mountain, that is, in 543; in 560, in his thirty-ninth year, he was ordained to the priesthood. He reposed in 596, at the age of seventy-six. The Venerable Simeon the Stylite commemorated today should be distinguished from another Simeon, also a Stylite, whose memory is celebrated on 1 September. He likewise labored within the borders of Syrian Antioch, but lived considerably earlier (he reposed in 459).

Troparion, Tone 1:

Dweller of the desert, and an Angel in the flesh, thou didst appear a wonderworker, O God-bearing Father Simeon: by fasting, vigil and prayer thou didst receive heavenly gifts, and thou healest the infirm and the souls of those who come to thee in faith. Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him who crowned thee; glory to Him who worketh through thee all healings.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Desiring the things above, and setting aside the things below, and having made the pillar as heaven, thou didst therefore shine forth with the dawn of miracles, O Venerable one, and thou dost ever pray to Christ, the God of all, for us all.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Meletius the Stratelates, and with him 1318 Soldiers

Страдание святого мученика Мелетия Стратилата и с ним 1318 воинов

The holy martyr Meletius lived in the reign of the Roman emperor Antoninus[14], held the office of stratelates[15], and came from the southern lands of the Galatian region[16]. Being a Christian, he prayed to God that the pagan error might utterly disappear. Then the demons, seeing their own destruction, entered into dogs and began to lament their perdition. They ran everywhere, howled, and by this struck fear into men; but the holy Meletius, with the soldiers subject to him, struck them down and destroyed the pagan temples. For this, Maximian[17], the ruler of the city where the holy martyr was[18], ordered him seized and began to compel him to offer sacrifice to the idols; but

14. Nicodemus in the Synaxarist, and others, understand by the name Antoninus the Roman emperor Antoninus Heliogabalus, who reigned from 218 to 222.
15. *Stratilat* means voivode, a military commander.
16. Galatia lay almost in the center of the Asia Minor peninsula. To the north it bordered on Paphlagonia, to the west on Bithynia and Phrygia, to the south on Lycaonia and Cappadocia, and to the east on Pontus.
17. The governor Maximian, or Maximus, was at first governor of Egypt, and afterward Antoninus sent him to Galatia to torment Christians.

the saint would not even hear of it. The tormentor then commanded that he be beaten with iron hammers and subjected to other torments. After this, St. Meletius was hanged upon a pine tree and nailed to it, from which he died. The comites[19] Stephen and John, together with all the soldiers under their command, along with their wives and children, had their heads cut off with the sword. Thus the holy martyrs died for Christ[20].

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Serapion, and with him Callinicus, Theodore and Faustus

Страдание святого мученика Серапиона и с ним Каллиника, Феодора и Фавста

The holy martyr of Christ Serapion was by birth from Egypt. At the time when the holy Meletius was accomplishing his martyric contest, he came from Egypt, and seeing those who were subjected to torments together with him, he believed in Christ. For this he was seized and cast into prison, where an Angel of God ordained him bishop to instruct those who desired to suffer for Christ. On this day the kinsmen of the holy Meletius, the comites and soldiers, gathering together, proclaimed in a loud voice that they too were Christians, and thereby aroused the wrath of the ruler. The bishop Serapion and the sorcerer Callinicus, who had believed in Christ, had their heads cut off with the sword; Theodore and Faustus, with many others, were burned; and the women and children were cut to pieces by the executioners with wooden swords. Thus the holy martyrs gave up their souls into the hands of the Lord.

18. This city bore the name Tavia. It was situated in eastern Galatia, near its borders with Pontus.

19. A *komes* was an imperial bodyguard, a collector of taxes for the imperial treasury, or a city governor; but here the word "komites" denotes military tribunes, that is, city governors.

20. The martyrdom of St. Meletius and the other holy martyrs who suffered with him is dated to 218.

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Nicetas the Stylite, Wonderworker of Pereyaslavl

Память преподобного отца нашего Никиты Столпника, Переяславского чудотворца

This Venerable Father of ours was born and raised in the city of Pereyaslavl-Zalessky[21]. From his youth he was distinguished by a cruel and vindictive character; he stirred up disturbances and caused people much harm, bringing them to court and committing robberies. He also had friends like himself. Once, having finished his affairs, he came to the church during the evening service and heard the following words of the prophet Isaiah, which were read there: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil" (Is. 1:16), and so forth. At these words he was at once seized with terror; and returning home, he spent the whole night without sleep, pondering these words. The next day, in his customary way, he went to his friends, made merry in their company, and asked them to dine with him that day. Afterwards he went to the market to buy provisions, and bringing them home, told his wife to prepare the dinner. And when the wife began to wash the meat, she noticed that blood was flowing from it in an unusual way; and then, when she put it into the pot and began to boil it, she saw that the blood foamed in the pot and rose to the surface, and now a human head, now a hand, now the soles of feet. Filled with terror, she told her husband. When he came and saw for himself what his wife had told him, he was seized with horror for a long time; then, coming to himself, he said with a deep sigh of the heart:

"Woe is me! I have sinned greatly."

After these words, praying and bathed in tears, he went out of the house, and having walked one stage from the city, he came to the mon-

21. Pereiaslavl-Zalessky, now a district town of Vladimir Province, was at first situated on Lake Kleshchino, near the headwaters of the Perm, a tributary of the Kliazma River. Around 1152 the Suzdal prince Yury Dolgorukiy transferred it to a new site five versts farther south. It was called "Zalessky" (beyond the forest) because it lay in dense forests that separated it from other towns.

astery of the holy Great Martyr Nikita[22]. There he fell at the feet of the abbot of this monastery and said:

"Save a perishing soul."

Astonished at so extraordinary a change in Nikita, the abbot answered him:

"Test yourself: remain three days at the monastery gates, weep, and confess your sins before all who enter the monastery and leave it."

Nikita did so. For three days he wept and prayed, confessing his sins before everyone. After this he saw, near the monastery, a marshy place overgrown with reeds, above which hovered a multitude of gnats and mosquitoes. He came to this place, took off his clothing, and, entering the swamp completely naked, sat down among the reeds and began to pray to God. When three days had passed, the abbot sent a monk to see what Nikita was doing. The monk came, and not finding him at the monastery gates, after a short search found him lying among the reeds, with gnats and mosquitoes circling above him in a huge cloud. Returning to the monastery, the monk told the abbot what he had seen. Then the abbot, together with the brethren of the monastery, went to Nikita, and seeing him in such a state that his body could scarcely be made out (so abundantly was blood flowing from him), said to him:

"My son! What are you doing to yourself?"

Nikita answered nothing else, but only said to the abbot:

"Father! Save a perishing soul."

After this the abbot brought him into the monastery, tonsured him to the monastic life, and placed him in a narrow cell, where he remained in constant prayer and fasting, spending days and nights without sleep. At this time the malicious enemy began to frighten him with various visions, but he protected himself from these visions with the sign of the Cross, calling upon the holy Great Martyr Nikita for help, and he told no one about it. Soon Nikita set up a pillar[23] near the church and dug a narrow path under the church wall by which he came

22. The Monastery of St. Nicetas stood in a field three versts from the town, on its northern side. It becomes known from the Life of the Venerable Nicetas. The time of its foundation is unknown.
23. The pillar which the Venerable Nicetas established for his ascetic labors was not above ground but within the earth. It was a cylindrical pit, or simply a cave, so that the pillar-dwelling of St. Nicetas was in essence a life of seclusion.

into the church to pray. For such ascetic labors he received from God the gift of working miracles, for many who came to him afflicted with various infirmities received healing from him.

At this time the right-believing Prince Michael of Chernigov[24] fell ill with a paralytic disease. Hearing of St. Nikita, he ordered his boyars to convey him to the city of Pereyaslavl to the Venerable for healing. When he was already on the road, a demon met him in the form of a monk and said that he was from the same monastery where St. Nikita had labored. The prince asked him about the Venerable, and the demon said that he was a deceiver. This greatly grieved the prince. Some time later the same demon, now in another form, met the prince again on the way and said to him:

"In vain, prince, do you weary yourself by making so long a journey."

When the prince came within one stage of the monastery where the Venerable dwelt, he ordered a tent to be pitched for him to rest from the journey, and sent one of his boyars to the monastery to inform the Venerable of his arrival. Then the same demon met the messenger in the form of a monk blind in one eye, carrying a spade in his hands, and told him that the Venerable had died and that he had already buried him.

Perceiving the deception, the boyar rebuked the demon by the prayer of the saint, and the demon remained wholly motionless on the spot where he stood. The boyar then came to the pillar of St. Nikita and told him of the prince's arrival and of his grievous illness, whereupon the saint sent the prince his staff. The right-believing Prince Michael took this staff in his hand and stood on his feet completely healed, so that he came on foot to the pillar of the Venerable, received his blessing, and related to him everything about the demonic temptation that had befallen him during the journey. Then the Venerable rebuked the demon in the name of God and commanded him to stand motionless openly before all for three hours beside his pillar; after this the demon swore an oath to the saint never again to do evil to men, and immediately van-

24. Prince Michael was the son of Vsevolod, prince of Chernigov. His healing is dated to 1186.

ished. Having received healing, the right-believing Prince Michael earnestly gave thanks to God and to the holy elder, and, giving a rich gift to the monastery, returned to his city.

Thus our holy father Nikita, dwelling in his pillar and offering constant prayers to God, granted healing to all who came to him to receive remedies for their infirmities.

One night some of his relatives came to the Venerable, asking him to pray for them, and seeing on him the heavy chains which, having rubbed long against his body, had been polished and gleamed, they thought they were silver. Darkened by the devil's suggestion, they resolved to kill the saint, and coming to the pillar they tore away the covering that was on it, entered it, and forcibly separated the saint's soul from his body[25].

Then, taking the chains, they wrapped them in coarse cloth and fled. Before the morning service the parakklesiarch[26], as was his custom, came to the saint's pillar to receive a blessing from him, and seeing that the covering of the pillar had been torn away, went to the abbot and reported it. Then they came to the pillar and found the body of the Venerable still warm, and a fragrance issued from it. Reverently taking him out of the pillar, they solemnly buried him with censing and the singing of psalms beside the church of the holy martyr Nikita, on the right side near the sanctuary. At this, all the sick who happened to be there at that time received healing.

The impious murderers of the Venerable, thinking they had acquired a precious treasure, continued to flee and soon reached the river Volga. There they unrolled the cloth and, seeing that the three honorable crosses and the heavy chains were of iron, and that from long rubbing they had been cleansed and therefore gleamed, they threw them into the river near the city of Yaroslavl, close to the monastery of the holy Apostle Peter[27]. On the very first night after this, a monk of that monastery named Simeon saw in that place, not far from the shore, three

25. The Venerable Nicetas reposed in 1186, on 24 May.

26. The *paraekklesiarch* is the one who lights the lamps before the icons in monasteries; a sacristan.

27. The Monastery of Sts. Peter and Paul at Yaroslavl stood on the bank of the Volga River, on the site where the Church of St. Peter now stands.

brightly shining pillars. They rose from the earth to heaven and emitted rays of light. The monk told the archimandrite of his monastery, and he informed the city governor, and, accompanied by a multitude of people, they went to the place and found the honorable chains of the Venerable, which, like dry wood, miraculously floated on the surface of the water. Reverently taking them up, they carried them with the singing of psalms into the city, and meeting on the way a lame man who crawled on the ground on his legs, they signed him with the crosses that were on the chains, after which the soles of his feet and his knees were strengthened, and he stood on his feet, completely healed. Besides this, many other sick people who suffered from various infirmities received healing from the chains of the Venerable. Some time later the Venerable Nikita appeared to the aforementioned monk Simeon and said to him:

"Let this honorable sign of my labors be soon transferred from here and placed upon my tomb."

After this the chains of the Venerable were transferred with honor from the city of Yaroslavl to the city of Pereyaslavl and placed upon his honorable tomb. To all who come with faith they grant many healings, to the glory of Christ God.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Having abhorred youthful passions through Orthodox understanding, and having embraced virtuous manners, thou didst overcome the enemy and please God in wisdom; and having received from Him from on high the gift of miracles, to cast out demons and heal infirmities, O most glorious Nikita, pray Christ God that He save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

For Christ's sake thou didst endure a violent death at the hands of thy servants, and didst receive from Him the crown of incorruption; and to those who come with faith from thy honorable tomb thou grantest healings, O Venerable Nikita, intercessor for our souls.

* * *



THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF MAY

May 25

25 мая

New Calendar May 25 · Old Calendar June 7 (civil dates)

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Ferapont, Bishop of Cyprus

Память святого священномученика Ферапонта, епископа Кипрского

This Holy Ferapont was a monk, and in the rank of bishop he served on the island of Cyprus.[1] During the persecution raised by the pagans against the Christians,[2] he bravely confessed the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and received the crown of martyrdom.[3] His honorable relics first rested in Cyprus, where they poured forth miracles for all; but afterwards they were transferred to Constantinople, and for the following reason: when the Agarenes, by the permission of God, laid waste all the eastern lands for our sins, taking their inhabitants captive, they drew near also to the island of Cyprus, intending to do with it what they had done with the other eastern lands. At this time Saint Ferapont appeared to the sacristan of his church and said to him:

"Go quickly, take my relics and carry them to Constantinople, for the enemies of the Cross of Christ wish to come to this island and lay it waste. Tell this also to the other Christians, that they may depart from here before the Agarene invasion."

Immediately the sacristan told all the Christians of the saint's appearance and his command. Soon the Christians prepared for a voyage

1. The island of Cyprus lay in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, near the shores of ancient Phoenicia. Christianity was planted here by the holy Apostle Paul.
2. The persecution of Diocletian is meant (he reigned from 284 to 305).
3. The time of Saint Ferapont's death is determined by the persecution of Diocletian. The day of his death is unknown. May 25 is, in all probability, the day of the translation of his relics to Constantinople.

by ship; having prepared a new reliquary, they laid in it the honorable relics of Saint Ferapont, and taking them with them onto the ship, they set out on their journey.

When the travelers had sailed the greater part of the sea and were already drawing near to Constantinople, a great storm suddenly arose on the sea; all were struck with great fear and confusion. But at this time there began to issue from the reliquary with the relics (as if a certain fine vapor) a great fragrance; this fragrance not only filled the whole ship but spread over the sea for three stadia around the ship, and at once the storm subsided, as if calmed by that wondrous and ineffable fragrance. The sacristan, who with love guarded the honorable relics of the holy hieromartyr, heard a voice issuing from the reliquary, calling him to it. At last all those around heard this voice, with which Saint Ferapont called to himself the guardian of his relics; then all, with fear and reverence, drew near to the reliquary to see the relics of the holy hieromartyr. Approaching the reliquary, all saw a fragrant myrrh issuing from the relics of the hieromartyr, filling the whole reliquary. The Christians who were on the ship gathered that myrrh into glass vessels and anointed themselves with it in faith, for the healing of their souls and bodies.

Having reached Constantinople, the Christians placed the honorable relics of the hieromartyr Ferapont in a church built in honor and glory of the Most Holy Theotokos.[4] All this took place during the reign of Nicephorus.[5] Later, because of the many miracles wrought by those honorable relics, another church was built by the Christians in the name of the holy hieromartyr Ferapont; and into this church the honorable relics of the servant of God were transferred.

Of the many miracles wrought by the servant of God Ferapont, only a few have been recorded. Let us relate accounts of some of them.

A certain man, by birth an Italian, named Florin, being tormented by a legion of unclean spirits, received healing at the relics of Saint

4. This church was built in honor and glory of the "Oil-Giving" or "Merciful" Icon of the Mother of God. The feast in honor of this icon of the Mother of God is celebrated in the Orthodox Church on November 12.

5. Emperor Nicephorus I reigned from 802 to 811. The translation of the honorable relics of the hieromartyr Ferapont took place in 806.

Ferapont and returned home completely well. He said that he saw as it were a certain fine vapor, very fragrant, issuing from the reliquary of the honorable relics; this fragrance the demonic legion could not endure, and therefore it fled from him, as if pursued by someone.

Anastasius, a citizen of the city of Bixinion, for a long time had a withered hand, which hung from his shoulder like a dead thing. But when he came to the church of the holy hieromartyr Ferapont on the eve of the Theophany of the Lord, he received complete healing: his hand grew strong and became healthy like the other; in the presence of all, Anastasius took a vessel with his healed hand and filled it with Theophany water. All, seeing this, gave thanks to God, glorified in His holy servant Ferapont.

There was also another man, named George, by rank a decurion,[6] a soldier; by the deceit of the devil his face had been turned backward, and he was blind in one eye. This George, having prayed at the tomb of the martyr, received swift healing: his face turned back to its former place and the eye regained its sight, for which George gave thanks to his unmercenary physician.

A paralytic named Theodore was brought into the church built in honor of the holy martyr. The saint appeared to him in a dream and offered him bread and a cup of wine. He, taking this from the saint's hands in his sleep, at once awoke and felt strength within himself; rising from his bed, he glorified the Lord Jesus Christ and His holy martyr, saying:

"Oh, how easily and swiftly you, Saint Ferapont, heal all kinds of ailments and sicknesses!"

A little girl was brought into the church of the holy martyr, whose legs had grown together from the time of her birth, bent back and grown fast to her back; but after her parents offered a fervent prayer to Saint Ferapont, at once the girl's legs took their usual position; they stretched out and separated, so that the maiden, having come to full age, walked, glorifying and giving thanks to God.

A woman named Maria had an incurable bodily disease called cancer; suffering grievously and already despairing of recovery, Maria

hastened with fervent prayer to the tomb of the holy hieromartyr and received here swift and complete healing from her illness.

Another woman, who for seven years had suffered from a flow of blood, resorted with fervent prayer and faith to Saint Ferapont; and no sooner had she touched his tomb than her blood ceased to flow, and she returned home in full health.

Yet another woman, who suffered from dropsy, coming to the relics of Saint Ferapont, saw in a dream the holy martyr anointing the diseased place on her body with some ointment. Awaking, she saw that from the diseased place a great deal of pus had flowed out, after which she felt herself completely healthy.

Stephen, a soldier from the Armenian regiments, greatly suffered in body; he was bent and stooped toward the ground; likewise another soldier, named Theodore, suffered from the same infirmity. When both had recourse to the help of the servant of God and offered him warm prayers, they received complete healing.

A leper, coming to the tomb of the saint, was cleansed of his leprosy through his prayers and gave thanks to God.

A certain philosopher, who had a dangerous and very large abscess on his chest, when he came to the tomb of the saint and dozed off there, saw that the saint applied a plaster to the diseased place on his chest. Waking from his sleep, he felt considerable relief from his illness, and a day later was completely healed of it, for which he gave thanks to God.

Many other ailments and sicknesses were healed by anointing with the myrrh that issued from the honorable relics of the servant of God Ferapont; by the same myrrh demons were cast out of people, and those who were dying returned from death to life; and all this was wrought through the prayers of the holy hieromartyr Ferapont, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom glory is offered forever. Amen.

* * *

6. That is, a commander over ten soldiers.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is celebrated the third uncovering of the honorable head of Saint John the Baptist (concerning this event see under February 24).



THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF MAY

May 26

26 мая

New Calendar May 26 · Old Calendar June 8 (civil dates)

Passion of St. George the New, Holy Martyr[1]

Страдание святого мученика Георгия Нового

St. George was the son of pious parents. His father, John, belonged to the most distinguished nobles of the city of Sredets[2], and his mother was named Mary. George was given to his parents in answer to their fervent prayer, for they had already reached old age and had no children, like the ancient Abraham and Sarah. For this reason John and Mary prayed earnestly to the Lord, to His Most Pure Mother, and to the Holy Great Martyr George of Cappadocia. They came daily to the church of this servant of God, gave alms there, and fervently besought the Lord to loosen the barrenness of their womb. And the Lord did not despise their prayer, but in their old age granted them the fruit of a male child. John and Mary brought the infant to the church of the Holy Great Martyr George, had him baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in holy Baptism gave him the name George.

The boy was brought up in the fear of God and was taught to read the Books. George soon came to know the Holy Scriptures so well that he surpassed all his peers in learning. When George reached the age of

1. The designation "the New" is applied to St. George in distinction from other saints bearing the name George, who lived considerably earlier than he, such as George the Great Martyr (his memory is celebrated on April 23, etc.).

2. Sredets, or Sofia, is the capital of the Bulgarian principality. Already in antiquity Sofia was an important trading center and constituted the chief city of the Roman province of Dacia. In 441 Sofia was devastated by the Huns; in 809 it was conquered by the Bulgarians; in 1382 it fell into the hands of the Turks. On December 22, 1877, it was taken by the Russians under the command of Gurko, whereupon the greater part of the Muslim population fled.

youth, he was greatly like the ancient Joseph in the beauty of his countenance and in his chastity.

At that time the Saracens ruled Bulgaria. When the blessed George had reached the age of twenty-five years since his birth (his parents had by then already departed to the Lord), the Saracens began to persuade him to their impiety, saying to him:

"George, forsake Christianity and accept our faith. Listen to the messenger of God Muhammad[3]; accept our law."

With these words the Saracens began to place upon the venerable head of St. John a *tafiya* (a cap), which in accordance with their custom they wore on their heads and in which they entered their houses of prayer. But the saint answered them, saying thus:

"It is not fitting for us Christians to imitate your impious customs and to wear *tafiyas* on our heads; it is not fitting for us to renounce Christ, the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and to deprive ourselves of the fruits of holy baptism. Tell me: can I believe in Muhammad, who was sent neither by God, nor by the prophets of God, nor by the apostles, but was a simple commander of a regiment of Satan, bearing with him the banners of the devil? You yourselves do not know what you believe; you yourselves have strayed from the true path."

Having thus rebuked the Saracens, St. George began to confess aloud Christ as the true God, the Creator and Maker of all that exists, visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly.

Then, spitting in the faces of the impious and calling them godless men, the saint cast the *tafiya* to the ground and began to trample it with his feet, saying to himself: "O George! Why do you delay? Christ is calling you!"

The impious Saracens, filled with wrath, seized the saint and, with great blows and abuse, brought him before their ruler, denouncing him and saying:

"This man reviles and blasphemes our faith."

3. Mahomet, or Muhammad, the founder of the Muslim religion (lived in the late 6th and early 7th centuries).

The governor, struck by the beauty of the saint's face and his manly gaze, began to speak to him flatteringly:

"If you renounce Jesus Christ, whom you call the Son of God, and if you submit to the command of the sovereign Selim[4] and fulfill his will (many kingdoms obey this Selim), you will receive many gifts and every kind of honor from our king, and you will be appointed commander over all the voivodes of the great city of Sredets."

But the martyr of Christ again confessed the Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of a large crowd, and he refuted and reproached the Saracen faith. Then the tormentor, becoming enraged, commanded that the saint be beaten with clubs without mercy. And St. George was tortured cruelly, so that his flesh clung to the clubs and his blood flowed in drops from the wounds. Yet despite this the saint showed no intention of submitting to the impious command of the king.

Then the governor commanded that his body be cut all over with knives, from head to foot, and that his wounds be scorched with burning candles. The whole body of the saint was scorched with candles, so that not even his face could be seen, and his flesh began to melt, as wax melts from fire. But the martyr of Christ endured his sufferings with courage, calling upon and confessing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After this the tormentor commanded the soldiers to lead the martyr through the city, to strike the tympanums and to cry out: "Do not revile the messenger of God Muhammad, and do not blaspheme his traditions of the Saracen faith."

The saint, however, prayed to Christ the Lord and exhorted the Saracens to believe in Christ.

Then the impious lit a large bonfire in the middle of the city, intending to burn the saint. And the martyr of Christ George was led to the prepared place of burning.

But, weakened from his wounds, he fell to the ground speechless, only his lips moving, calling upon the Lord for help. The Saracens, taking the saint while he was still alive, cast him onto the fire. Thus did

4. Selim I, Turkish sultan, reigned from 1512 to 1529; he was distinguished by extraordinary fanaticism (religious intolerance).

the martyr of Christ George complete his passion-bearing struggle. The impious Saracens also threw many dogs into the fire, so that the Christians could not distinguish the relics of the martyr. But God glorified His servant: suddenly a cloud with thunder and lightning came over that place, and a great rain arose, which extinguished the fire so that there was not even smoke from the pyre. The Saracens, frightened by so great a miracle, fled from that place. Meanwhile the rain continued until nightfall.

When night came, over the place where the honorable body of the martyr had been burned there appeared a very great light, which illumined the whole place. Then the archpriest of the cathedral church in honor of the Holy Great Martyr George of Cappadocia went together with the other Christians to the judges, and, giving them money, obtained their permission to take the honorable relics of the holy martyr and to bury them in the customary manner. When the judges consented to this request, that archpriest went to Metropolitan Jeremiah and reported to him everything about the holy martyr. The metropolitan went to the relics of the holy martyr with great haste and faith, accompanied by all the clergy and many Christ-loving people, with the singing of psalms and hymns, with candles and censers. Raking away the ashes in the place where the light had been seen, the Christians found the honorable relics of the holy martyr George the New, unharmed by the fire. The bones of the dogs, however, had turned to dust and ash.

In the places through which the holy martyr of Christ had been led through the city at night, and where his blood had dripped, a light appeared at night, as if from a burning candle; all the Christians saw this.

Taking the honorable relics of the holy martyr, the metropolitan placed them in a shrine in the church of the Holy Great Martyr George of Cappadocia. Here the honorable relics of the holy martyr rest even to this day, and by the grace of God they grant healings to all who approach them with faith.

The holy martyr of Christ George suffered in the Bulgarian city of Sredets, where he had also been brought up. He received his martyr's struggle in the year 7022 from the creation of the world, and from the Nativity of God the Word in the flesh in the year 1514, on the 26th day

of the month of May[5], during the reign over all of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom glory is offered with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

From thy youth, with divine desire, thou didst offer thy whole self unto the Lord; in prayers and fasting thou becamest a pattern of virtue. Wealth and glory and bodily nobility thou didst scorn as things of naught, and Christ alone thou didst love from thy soul; and thou didst preach before the impious Turks that He is the true God, worshipped in the Trinity. The Saracen faith and the laws of Muhammad thou didst trample under thy feet, and thou didst terrify the tyrant; adorned with the crown of torments, thou didst gloriously ascend to the choirs of heaven, O wise George. Pray Christ God to preserve thy fatherland, and to save the Orthodox emperor, the people, and the city, which ever honor thy struggles.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

As a most bright star that deceiveth not, thou didst appear to the world, proclaiming Christ, the righteous Sun; by thy sufferings, O great passion-bearing martyr of Christ George, thou didst quench the Saracen delusion and didst trample under thy feet the traditions and laws of Muhammad. The lawless king and the tormentors thou didst terrify by thy steadfast endurance; and to the faithful thou dost grant light, ever praying to God for us all.

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father John the Psychaite

Память преподобного отца нашего Иоанна Психаита

Our holy father John, having loved Christ from his youth, became in his character like the holy prophets Elijah and John. Leaving

5. According to some, St. George suffered on February 11. In that case May 26 is taken as the day of the translation of his relics.

the world, he went to the Psychaite Lavra[6] and there embraced the monastic life, after which he received from God the gift of casting out demons and healing diseases. He labored during the time of the iconoclastic disturbances, strengthening the Orthodox in the faith by his teachings. An accusation was made against him to the emperor, the persecutor of the icons[7], and the latter, summoning him, began to compel him to renounce the veneration of the honored icons, to join his heresy, and to sign an impious scroll. But the venerable one did not agree to do this, and even rebuked the emperor, calling him a heretic. For this he was sent into exile, where he suffered many afflictions at the hands of the lawless and unjust iconoclasts, and there he ended his life.

* * *

Commemoration of St. Carpus, Apostle of the Seventy

Память святого Карпа, Апостола из семидесяти

The holy apostle of the seventy, Carpus, was a follower and servant of the holy apostle Paul; he carried his epistles to the places to which they were addressed. For a considerable time Carpus labored together with the apostle Paul, proclaiming everywhere the word of Christ[8]; for this he endured many afflictions and calamities. Afterwards the holy Carpus was appointed by the apostle Paul as bishop of the city of Beroea in Thrace[9].

The Holy Apostle Carpus labored in preaching the Gospel of Christ, also on the island of Crete[10]. There he received into his house, among others, St. Dionysius the Areopagite[11], and he saw the Lord, who ap-

6. The Lavra of Psichaite, according to the indication of the Bollandists, was located in Constantinople.

7. A particularly cruel persecutor of icons was the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus (743–775), who intended solemnly, with observance of legality, to abolish the veneration of icons as a heresy, for which purpose in 754 he convened a council and called it Ecumenical. Equally cruelly persecuted the veneration of icons the emperor Leo the Armenian (813–820). He issued a decree forbidding monks to preach about the veneration of icons, and all monks were required to sign this decree. Presumably by the emperor, the persecutor of icons, the last emperor is meant here.

8. Among other things, at Troas the Apostle Paul had left a phelonion and various books, among which the apostle especially mentions the parchments (2 Tim. 4:13).

peared to him in a vision at the time when Carpus was asking Him to put to death two sinners, and he heard the voice of the Lord proclaiming: "Torment Me still, for I am ready to suffer yet once more and to be crucified for the salvation of men"[3466].

St. Dionysius the Areopagite bears witness concerning this St. Carpus, and that he never began to celebrate the pure and life-giving Mysteries before he was granted the divine vision appearing to him from heaven.[12]

While serving as bishop in Beroea, Carpus converted many Hellenic pagans to Christ. Rebuking the Jews, he told them that Christ, whom they had crucified, is the true God and the Creator of all. Afterwards he was cruelly slain by the Jews, and in this manner he committed his soul into the hands of the Lord[13]. His honorable relics were laid by faithful and God-fearing people in the same city where he had served as bishop, and by these relics many various healings were granted to the sick, to the glory of Christ our God.

Troparion, Tone 3:

O holy Apostle Carpus, pray to the merciful God that He grant forgiveness of transgressions to our souls.

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9. Thrace was the name of that part of the Balkan Peninsula which lay north of Macedonia, the Aegean and the Sea of Marmara. At present, on the site of ancient Thrace are the following lands: the eastern part of Hungary, Transylvania, Bessarabia, Moldavia, Wallachia, Bulgaria, Serbia and the eastern part of Rumelia. The city of Beroea is now called Verria or Kara-Verria; it has about 12,000 inhabitants. The Apostle Paul was in Beroea during his second apostolic journey.

10. The island of Crete (otherwise Candia, from the chief city of the same name) lies in the central part of the Mediterranean Sea, south of the Aegean Sea. Christianity was founded here by the event of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, for Cretans were present at that event (Acts 2:11). Then Christianity was established here by the Apostle Paul, who appointed Titus as bishop here so that he "should set in order the things that were lacking, and ordain elders in every city" (Tit. 1:5). In the 17th century Crete passed under Turkish rule.

11. Dionysius the Areopagite was a member of the Areopagus, the supreme court of Athens. He was converted to Christianity by the Apostle Paul during his second apostolic journey (c. 54). He was counted by the Holy Church among the saints. His memory is celebrated on October 3.

12. Dionysius the Areopagite speaks with great praise of the Apostle Carpus. Thus, for example, in the epistle to the monk Demophilus he says of Carpus: "This man was great in his virtues and was distinguished by such a lofty purity of mind that he possessed a great capacity for visions of God."

13. The death of the Holy Apostle Carpus took place at the end of the 1st century.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

As a most radiant star the Church has ever possessed thee, O Apostle Carpus, illumined by the bestowing of thy wonders: save those who honor thy memory in faith.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Apostle Alphaeus

Память святого апостола Алфея

The Holy Apostle Alphaeus was the father of the Apostles James son of Alphaeus and Levi. This Levi was a publican[14], and it was he whom the Lord called, saying: "Follow Me!" (Mk. 2:14).

Leaving everything, Levi followed Christ and was His constant companion throughout the whole time.

The Apostle Levi is also called Matthew, and it was he who wrote the first Gospel.

The Holy Apostle Alphaeus came from the city of Capernaum, but where he preached the Gospel is unknown.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Averkius and Helen, according to some records children of the Apostle Alphaeus. St. Averkius suffered for Christ, being bound naked among bees and ulcerated by their stings; his sister Helen was stoned to death.

On the same day is celebrated the uncovering of the relics of Venerable Macarius of Kalyazin. See his Life under March 17.

NOTES

3466. To understand these words, it is necessary to recall the following incident from the life of the Holy Apostle Carpus. Someone among the unbelievers seduced one of the Christians into his wickedness. Carpus was very grieved by this. Never before having shown impatience, Carpus was on this occasion greatly troubled in his soul. He reflected

14. A publican is a tax collector.

within himself that impious men who corrupt and destroy people should not live on earth; and he began to pray to God that fire should fall from heaven and burn those two wicked men, both the seducer and the seduced. As he was praying about this, suddenly the room in which he stood shook and split in two. Lifting his eyes upward, he saw the heaven opened, and in it the Lord Jesus Christ seated in human form. Lowering his gaze downward, he saw a deep abyss, on the edge of which stood those two sinners for whose destruction Carpus had pleaded. Carpus, seeing that those who had grieved him were already about to fall into the abyss and be devoured by a serpent creeping below, was filled with joy; but since they still did not fall into the abyss, Carpus again became vexed and sorrowful and again began to pray to God for their destruction. When he raised his eyes to heaven, he saw that the Lord had drawn near to those sinners and offered them a helping hand. Then the Lord said to Carpus: "Torment Me still, for I am ready to suffer yet once more and to be crucified for the salvation of men." The account of this is given by St. Dionysius the Areopagite in his epistle to the monk Demophilus. This epistle may be read under the 3rd day of the month of October (the day of memory of St. Dionysius the Areopagite).



THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF MAY

May 27

27 мая

New Calendar May 27 · Old Calendar June 9 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Theodora and Didymus

Страдание святых мучеников Феодоры и Дидима

In the reign of the emperors Diocletian[1] and Maximian[2], while Prince Eustratius governed the city of Alexandria[3], an imperial edict was issued commanding the Christians either to offer sacrifice to the gods or to endure torments.

Prince Eustratius, seated on the judgment seat in Alexandria, ordered that Theodora, a Christian maiden who had recently been taken and cast into prison, be brought before him for judgment. When she had been brought in, the judge asked her:

"What is your faith, maiden?"

The saint answered:

"I am a Christian."

The judge said:

"Are you free, or are you a slave?"

"I have told you," replied Theodora, "that I am a Christian. Christ, having come into the world, has freed me from sin; and I was born of noble parents in this vain world."

The prince, looking toward the city governor named Lucius, asked him:

"Do you know this maiden?"

1. Diocletian ruled the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
2. Maximian ruled the western half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
3. Alexandria – a famous city founded by Alexander the Great about 333 in Egypt on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; before the Nativity of Christ it was renowned as a center of learning and commerce; from the beginning of the 4th century it became one of the most important centers of Christian life and the residence of the patriarch.

Lucius answered:

"Indeed I know that she comes from a noble and honorable family."

Then the prince said, turning to Theodora:

"If you, maiden, come from a noble and honorable family, why have you not up to now been married?"

The maiden answered:

"I have renounced marriage for the sake of Christ, for our Lord Jesus Christ, having come into the world and been born of the Most Pure Ever-Virgin Mary, freed us from corruption and promised to grant us eternal life. And so, believing in Him, I have resolved, out of love for Him, to keep my virginity undefiled until my death."

The judge said in reply:

"The emperors have commanded us to compel all maidens who wish to keep their purity to worship our gods; and if you will not consent to worship the gods, you will be given over to a brothel."

The maiden answered:

"Surely you understand that God looks above all to the disposition of the heart. Being the Searcher of hearts, He knows all our thoughts and accepts our very intentions as deeds. My God knows my intention to keep my virginity undefiled; therefore, if you command, as you boast, that I be given over to fornicators, it will not be adultery of my body, but violence and suffering inflicted upon me. And if you cut off my head, or my hand, or my foot, or forcibly deprive me of my virginity, you will not make me a harlot by this, but a martyr. Know, however, that my Lord and God is able to keep my virginity undefiled, if He wills it."

The judge said:

"Do not intend to dishonor your nobility; do not expose yourself to outrage and ridicule, being the daughter of honorable and illustrious parents, as is attested here concerning you."

The maiden answered:

"I glorify Christ and my God, who gave me nobility and purity, and I trust that He will keep His dove intact."

The judge said:

"Why do you allow yourself to be deceived, believing in a crucified man as God? Will He deliver you from the hands that will take you for defilement? Do not think that, having entered a brothel, you will come out of it pure."

Theodora answered:

"I believe that Christ, my God, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, will deliver me from the unclean hands of fornicators and will preserve His servant in purity."

After this the judge gave Theodora three days to reflect. But she expressed her readiness to suffer, saying that in three days, just as in a greater number of days, she would have no other intention or desire than to die for Christ her God.

After that the saint was taken to prison and, after three days, again brought forth for interrogation. When the governor understood that she would remain steadfast in the holy Christian faith, he ordered that she be taken to a brothel. As she was being led there, the saint prayed to the Lord, saying:

"O Christ God, who tamed the unreasoning beasts before the face of Thy holy martyr Thecla (see her life under September 24), tame also the fiercest rational beasts, the fornicators, who intend to defile the purity of my body. Thou, O God, who didst deliver Susanna from the hands of the lecherous elders (Dan. 13), save me also, Thy servant, from such fornicators; do not suffer the temple which is dedicated to Thee alone to be defiled. Thou who didst drive away from me the invisible enemies who sought secretly to steal my virginal treasure, drive away also these open violators who intend to rob me of my treasure as brigands. Come to my defense, O Lord my God, and by Thy almighty power cause me to come out of here pure, so that these impious hands may not touch me, that I may glorify Thy holy name."

While the saint was praying thus, the foul fornicators were standing around that house and disputing among themselves as to which of them should enter first to the maiden. At that moment a certain youth, strong of body and dressed as a soldier, approached them, drove them away from the house, and entered to the maiden; no one hindered him from going in to her. This was one of the Christians, named Didymus,

who, by God's providence, had purposely entered that house in the guise of a soldier, as though for sin, but in truth had come there to defend the maiden. Seeing him, the holy Theodora was greatly astonished. But the blessed Didymus said to her:

"Do not fear, sister! He whom you see outwardly as a wolf is in truth a lamb and your brother in the holy faith. I have come to save you, the servant and dove of my God. Let us exchange garments: you put on mine, and I shall put on yours, so that you may carry your virginity intact out of here, covered by my garments. I, in your clothing, shall go to the martyr's contest and show myself a true soldier of Christ God."

The holy maiden consented to this act, understanding that Didymus had been sent to her by God. Having exchanged garments, they dressed themselves: the maiden in men's attire, and the youth in women's. Then the youth said to the maiden:

"As you go out from here, cover your face as though you were ashamed, for everyone leaves here in shame; then no one will recognize you."

The maiden did so: she went out in the soldier's garb with her face covered, and hastened toward her home, glorifying God for His providence over her, for He had thus delivered her from the fornicators as a bird from a snare, or as a sheep from wolves.

When Theodora had gone out of the brothel, a certain youth possessed by lustful passion entered it; seeing a man instead of the maiden, he was greatly astonished and exclaimed:

"What is this? How has the maiden been turned into a man? I have heard that Christ once, as the Christians say, changed water into wine (Jn. 2:1–11); but now I see that He has changed the female sex into the male."

And coming out of the brothel, he said to his friends:

"Let us flee from here quickly, flee, lest Christ turn us into women!"

And running off, they reported everything to the judge Eustratius. Eustratius ordered that Didymus be brought to the judgment seat and asked him:

"Who are you?"

Didymus answered:

"I am a servant of Jesus Christ; my name is Didymus."

The judge said:

"Why do we see on you not men's but women's clothing?"

Didymus answered:

"I took them from Theodora and gave her my own, so that she might not be recognized by the fornicators and might escape their hands."

The judge asked:

"Who commanded you to do this?"

Didymus answered:

"My God, Jesus Christ, taught me to act so; He sent me to save His sheep from the teeth of beasts, whole and unharmed."

The judge said:

"Where is Theodora? Tell us where she is, if you do not wish us to torment you."

Didymus answered:

"Truly I do not know where she is now; I know of her only that she is an honest and faithful servant of Christ, that she confesses the most holy name of Christ our God; therefore Christ also loved her and kept her in purity as His bride."

The prince, filled with anger, ordered that the head of Didymus be cut off with a sword, and his body cast into the fire.

The holy Didymus, learning of his death sentence, was filled with joy and called out to God, saying:

"Blessed art Thou, O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast not despised my prayer and hast fulfilled my desire, for Thou hast also kept Thy servant Theodora in purity and integrity, and hast granted me to receive the martyr's crown!"

The saint was led outside the city to execution. When the holy Theodora learned of this, she went after the holy martyr Didymus and, coming to the place of execution, began to contend with him about the martyr's crown, saying:

"Although you have saved me from defilement, I did not ask you to save me from death. I was the first to be taken, the first to be tormen-

ted and judged; yield to me the martyr's end. Let me be beheaded, and you go wherever you wish; there will be a great reward for you from the Lord for the very fact that you have kept my virginity undefiled. I do not wish you to die for me and anticipate my crown; I do not wish to be the cause of your death. I myself will die, I myself will pay my debt, for I have a head; let it be cut off for the name of Christ. I have blood; let it be shed for our Lord. I did not wish, and do not wish, to be defiled, but I desired, and now desire, to be martyred; do not take from me the crown which I began to weave before you. But if you envy my martyrdom, then allow me to go under the sword first, and you may be a martyr of Christ after me; I want you to remain after me, and not I after you, because they cannot take your purity from you, but they can deprive me of my innocence. If you have brought me out pure from the brothel, then allow me also to stand before Christ pure."

The holy Didymus said to her:

"Beloved sister! Our Lord, who has once already kept you undefiled, is able always to keep your purity; but do not prevent me, condemned to death, from dying; I shall die for Christ and wash away my sins with my blood."

While they were contending with one another in love, the order was given that both should be beheaded with the sword. The holy Martyr Theodora was the first to bow her head beneath the sword, and then the holy Martyr Didymus likewise bowed his head beneath the sword.[4] Their bodies were cast into the fire. Thus they received the victor's crowns from Christ our God, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, honor, and worship for ever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Ferapont

Память святого священномученика Ферапонта

This St. Ferapont was a hierarch of the church of Sardis.[5] Here, by his teaching, he converted many Hellene idolaters to Christ and enlightened them with holy Baptism. St. Ferapont was seized by

4. The repose of the holy Martyrs Theodora and Didymus took place in 303 or 304.

the governor Julian and cast into prison in chains; for a long time he was tormented by hunger and thirst. Brought out of the prison, he was subjected to various tortures; then, bound, he was led to Synaon, a city of Phrygia,[6] and to Ancyra, a city of Galatia, and everywhere he was tormented in many ways. When the saint was brought to a river called Astala, he was stretched out naked upon the ground and bound to four stakes driven into the earth. Then the tormentors beat the saint so severely that the skin fell from his body and the earth was soaked with his blood. Those stakes put forth shoots, grew branches and leaves, and then became great trees whose leaves healed various ailments and sicknesses of men. At last St. Ferapont was brought into the region in Lydia near the river Hermus (which flows through Lydia), in the eparchy of Sataly (subject to the metropolis of Sardis), and here, after many sufferings, he was put to death for confessing the name of Christ, and thus he received from the Lord the incorruptible crown.[7]

* * *

Translation of the Honorable Relics of Sts. Cyprian, Photius and Jonah, Hierarchs of Kiev and Wonderworkers of All Russia

Перенесение честных мощей святителей Киприана, Фотия и Ионы, Киевских и всея России чудотворцев

In the month of April 1472, during the reign of the Christ-loving Grand Prince of All Russia, John Vasilyevich,[8] under the Most Reverend Metropolitan Philip,[9] in the glorious city of Moscow, the foundation was laid for the holy and great cathedral church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. When they began to dismantle

5. The city of Sardis, or Sard, was located in the Asia Minor region of Lydia. In antiquity it was the capital of the Lydian kingdom and was renowned for its wealth. There were many Christians here already in the times of the Apostles. The Church of Sardis is mentioned in the Apocalypse (Rev. 1:11, 3:1–4).

6. An Asia Minor region.

7. The time of the repose of St. Ferapont is unknown.

8. This refers to the Grand Prince John Vasilievich III, who reigned in Moscow from 1462 to 1505.

9. This was Metropolitan Philip I, who occupied the Moscow see under Grand Prince John III from 1465 to 1473.

the first church, which had been built by St. Peter the Wonderworker,[10] and had taken it down to the floors, the tombs of the former Russian hierarchs, the Most Reverend Metropolitans Cyprian, Photius and Jonah, were discovered. On May 28, at the beginning of the second hour of the day, the tombs were dug out. Then the Most Reverend Metropolitan Philip of All Russia came with the archbishops, and with him all the Moscow clergy; there also came the pious Grand Prince John Vasilyevich with his son, the mother of the Grand Prince, his brothers, the princes George, Andrew, Boris and Andrew, all the dignitaries of the grand-princely court, princes and boyars, and a multitude of Orthodox Christians, inhabitants of the glorious city of Moscow, men and women. Having sung the psalms fitting to the occasion, they first took up the coffin of the Metropolitan of All Russia, Cyprian, and set it in the prepared place in the newly founded church, in a special reliquary on the right side; then they took up the coffin of Metropolitan Photius and set it in the same place. The sacred vestments and omophoria worn by the hierarchs were found incorrupt, although many years had passed since their repose: for after the death of Metropolitan Cyprian, sixty-five years less eighteen days had passed, and after the death of Metropolitan Photius, forty-one years less thirty-four days. After the translation of the relics of Sts. Cyprian and Photius, they came to the tomb of the hierarch Metropolitan Jonah, and when the lid was immediately removed from it, so strong a fragrance spread that all who stood around that place perceived it. At the same time they all saw that the holy relics of the hierarch were entirely whole, only the body had dried upon the bones, and the vestments in which he had been clothed were also whole and untouched by decay, although eleven years and two months had then passed since his repose. Taking up the coffin of the hierarch, they set it on the ground surface on the left side of the church.

The Right-believing Prince John and the Most Reverend Metropolitan, together with a multitude of the Orthodox people, then gave thanks to God for this, and ordained that the memory of the uncovering of the

10. This refers to St. Peter the Metropolitan, who in 1325 moved from Vladimir to Moscow, and at whose insistence the first stone church, the Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God, was built by the Moscow prince John Kalita.

honorable relics of the hierarchs be celebrated on the 27th day of the month of May.

* * *

Memory of Our Venerable Father Ferapont, Wonderworker of Belozersk

Память преподобного отца нашего Ферапонта, Белозерского чудотворца

This Venerable Father Ferapont was from the region of the Moscow principality, from the city of Volok Lamsky.[11] He was the son of pious parents of the surname Poskochin, and in the world bore the name Theodore. Having reached maturity, he was filled with the fear of God and desired to withdraw from the world. Leaving his house and parents, he came to the glorious city of Moscow, and in the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos of Simonov[12] he received the monastic tonsure, being given the name Ferapont. After this, living in obedience, prayer and fasting, he labored for many years in that monastery. Once, for certain monastic needs, he was sent by the archimandrite to the region of the White Lake,[13] examined the places there, came to love them greatly, and returned to his monastery.

By the providence of God it came to pass that in this monastery, living in stillness, there was the Venerable Cyril, afterwards the Wonderworker of Belozersk, and at this time he was granted a vision of the Most Holy Theotokos, Who commanded him to go to the lands of the White Lake, as is told in more detail in his Life.[14] The Venerable Cyril and Ferapont, having agreed, went out together from the Monastery of Simonov and came to the lands of the White Lake. Having gone round all the desert places there, they came to the place where the Monastery

11. Volok Lamsky, otherwise called simply Volok, the present district town of Volokolamsk in the Moscow province, was founded by Novgorodian colonists on the river Gorodenka, a tributary of the Lama, and already existed in 1135. In antiquity this town was very extensive and populous, but now it is an insignificant small town with a population of 1000.

12. The Simonov Monastery, named after the locality of Simonovo near the Moskva River, was founded around 1370 by the Rostovian who was a disciple and blood nephew of the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh. He also built there the first church, dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos in honor of her glorious Nativity. His memory is celebrated on November 28.

13. Lake Beloye, or Beloozero, is located in the present-day Novgorod province.

of Kirillov[15] now stands. Here the Venerable Cyril related to Ferapont the appearance of the Most Holy Theotokos that had been granted to him, and on this place they began to build themselves a cell. But the Venerable Ferapont did not long remain with the Venerable Cyril. Soon he left him and found between two lakes a place that pleased him. He began to clear it and built himself a cell. After this, brethren began to gather to him; they built a monastery and erected in it a church in honor of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos.[16] The Venerable Ferapont often went to the Venerable Cyril for spiritual conversation and for the ordering of monastic life, since he lived not far from his monastery, only twelve poprishches away, and received great benefit from him. Thus did the Venerable ones pass their lives in God.

By reason of such a virtuous life, their fame reached the ears of the rulers of that land, and even of the Grand Prince Andrew Dmitrievich himself, in whose appanage the regions of the White Lake were included. Hearing of the holy ascetics, the prince was greatly rejoiced that such venerable men had appeared in his domains; he glorified God and gave rich gifts from his treasury for the building of monasteries. It happened that the princely governor in the Belozersk land was a close boyar of the prince. He visited the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos, met the Venerable Elder Ferapont, conversed with him, and came greatly to love him. Returning then to Mozhaisk, he told the prince about the Venerable one, and the prince was moved to great tenderness by this account, for he was exceedingly pious and God-loving.

Some time after this, the prince felt a strong desire to establish a monastery in his city of Mozhaisk, where he had his princely residence.

14. The Venerable Cyril was tonsured by the Venerable Theodore, founder of the Simonov Monastery in Moscow. After Theodore's departure to the see as Archbishop of Rostov, Cyril was elected archimandrite of the monastery in 1390, but held this office only a short time. Troubled by the fact that wealthy and noble people often visited him, he shut himself up in his former cell and sought to remain in silence, but even there his soul yearned for complete solitude and silence in a deserted place. His memory is celebrated on June 9.

15. This place is located near Mount Maura, not far from the river Sheksna. The monastery was founded in 1397 on the northern shore of Lake Sivers.

16. This monastery, now bearing the name of the Ferapontov Monastery of Belozero, was founded in 1398 on the elevated shore of Lake Borodavsky, 14 versts from the present town of Kirillov.

He asked his boyars for counsel as to where to find a man who might establish the monastery, and the boyars reminded him of the blessed Ferapont, saying that for this holy work he would find no other more experienced man. Then the prince sent one of his nobles with a letter to the holy elder and gifts for him, asking him not to refuse his request. The saint, hearing the prince's request, weighed it seriously and reported it to the brethren, and the brethren advised him to fulfil the prince's request. The Venerable one submitted to the will of the brethren and, taking with him one of the monks, came to Prince Andrew. The prince received the holy elder and his companion with great honor and asked him to look for a place for building the monastery. The Venerable one long refused this, begging the prince to let him go back to his monastery, but he could not refuse, and, submitting to the prince's will, he went and found, near the river Moskva, at a distance of one *poprishche* from the city of Mozhaisk, a suitable and beautiful place.[17] Then, taking the blessing of the bishop together with the prince, they built a church in honor of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, the same as the church of the first monastery of the Venerable one, and they erected beside it, according to the monastic custom, all the buildings, adorned them splendidly, and gathered monks.[18] The prince greatly honored this monastery, more than the other monasteries nearby. For its abbot he obtained the rank of archimandrite; he appointed the Venerable Ferapont as its first superior and carefully tended his old age.

After this, the Venerable one, having lived out the rest of his life in a God-pleasing manner, in deep old age departed to the Lord,[19] Whom he had loved from his youth, and he was buried with honor in this monastery. To our God be glory now, always, and unto ages of ages.

17. This place was called Luzhki, from which the monastery came to be called Luzhetsky.
18. This was in 1408.
19. The Venerable Ferapont reposed at about 90 years of age, on May 27, 1426, having lived in the Luzhetsky Monastery for 18 years. His glorification began as early as the end of the fifteenth century, and he was numbered among the saints at the Moscow Council of 1547. His relics rest beneath the floor in the cathedral church of the Luzhetsky Monastery, and in the Belozersk monastery a church is dedicated to him.

* * *



THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF MAY

May 28

28 мая

New Calendar May 28 · Old Calendar June 10 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Elikonida

Страдание святой мученицы Еликониды

The Holy Martyr Elikonida lived in the reign of Gordian[1] and Philip[2]; she was born and raised in Thessalonica[3]. When persecution of the Christians began, she came to the city of Corinth[4]. Seeing here people offering sacrifices to idols, she stood upon a high place and cried out with a loud voice:

"O senseless and hard-hearted men of Corinth! I see that you are very impious, for you have forsaken the eternal and incorruptible God and turned to the service of soul-destroying idols. Look, I beg you, upon the height of heaven and the breadth of the earth; consider Him who has stretched out the heavens like a skin over your heads! Who founded the earth upon the abyss? Who can restrain the unruly waves of the sea by His fearful and glorious Name? Who formed man out of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life? Only He who holds all creation in His hand is the one true God, dwelling in the heavens. 'For all the gods of the nations are idols' (Ps. 95:5), dumb and lifeless; and let all who bow down to them be like them!"

1. Emperor Gordian reigned from 238 to 244.
2. Emperor Philip reigned from 244 to 249.
3. Thessalonica, or Solun, was a very important city of ancient Macedonia, situated on the shore of the Thermaic Gulf by the Aegean Sea. In the history of the Russian Church, this city is notable as the birthplace of the holy first teachers of the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius (see their Life under 11 May called Saloniki and may be counted among the first (after Constantinople) trading cities of European Turkey.[1*]
4. Corinth was a famous city in antiquity, situated at the southeastern corner of the Gulf of Corinth, between the Ionian and Aegean seas. At present, the settlement of Kuronto, with 5,000 inhabitants, stands on the site of ancient Corinth.

While the saint was speaking these things freely and loudly, the impious pagans seized her and dragged her before their governor Perrinius for judgment.

The governor, looking at her and seeing that she was very comely and honorable of countenance, began to speak with her gently, saying thus:

"May every good thing be granted to you, my fair daughter, for I think that you believe our gods to be eternal; I rejoice over you."

The saint answered:

"What joy can there be for the impious? Your joy, governor, will turn to weeping, and your pride will turn to weakness. I believe in God, who reigns over all, and I rejoice that for the sake of my God I have been counted worthy to enter upon this struggle, in which I surely hope to receive the crown of victory."

The governor said:

"Do not imitate foolish women in your verbosity, but tell us meekly and briefly: what is your name?"

The saint answered:

"I am not mad, but wise in Christ Jesus, my Lord; and if you wish to know my name, I am called Elikonida."

The governor said:

"The name Elikonida has not been given to you according to your deserts, for through your great madness you are preparing your body for torments and wounds."

The saint answered:

"No, I am rightly called Elikonida, because the mercy of my God is always with me, and I shoot arrows at your father the devil.[5] Likewise, the name Perrinius is also rightly given to you, for your impious and wretched body, together with your defiled soul, will be dragged to perdition with fiery tridents."

The governor said:

5. The name "Elikonida" derives from the Greek words for "mercy" and "I cast." Elikonida—that is, one who casts arrows at the devil through the mercy of God.

"Tell us briefly: will you offer sacrifice to the gods, or not? I swear by my god Asclepius the physician[6] that I will not spare you if you do not obey the imperial command and bow down to our gods."

"You hear," replied the saint, "that I speak freely: I am a servant of Christ; but who your Asclepius is, I do not know. Do with me what you will."

Then the governor, filled with anger, began to torment the saint. First he ordered her to be stripped naked, stretched out upon the ground, beaten, and her legs cut; then he commanded the martyr to be thrown into a cauldron filled with boiling pitch. But suddenly an Angel of the Lord appeared, who cooled the cauldron, turning the boiling pitch into cold dew, so that a fragrance rose from the cauldron. Seeing this, the governor cried out:

"O how great is the sorcerer Christ, who can turn fire into water!"

The saint, turning to the governor, said:

"Do you still consider your gods Zeus[7] and Asclepius great, after they have been put to shame by a woman, a servant of Christ?"

At these words the governor was filled with even greater fury, and calling the saint a sorceress, he ordered her hair to be torn from her head together with the skin, and her head and breast to be burned with candles. The saint endured all these torments manfully, as though feeling no pain.

Then the governor, changing his wrath to gentleness, began to speak to the saint flatteringly:

"Beloved daughter! Come and offer sacrifice to our invincible gods, especially to Venus[8] and Minerva[9], and I will make you a priestess of the great Diana[10] and make you equal to the wives of senators. In your honor I will erect a golden column in the midst of the city, I will write to the emperors about you, and you will be as a mother to this whole city."

The holy Elikonida answered:

6. Asclepius was considered by the ancient Greeks to be the god of healing.
7. Dius or Zeus was the supreme god of ancient Greek religion.
8. Venus or Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty.
9. Minerva or Athena was the goddess of wisdom.
10. Diana or Artemis was the goddess of the hunt and patroness of the forests.

"Lead me into the temple of your gods, that I may offer them sacrifices."

Hearing this, the governor was filled with great joy and at once ordered heralds and trumpeters to proclaim it throughout the whole city; then with great solemnity he led the saint into the idol temple. The saint, entering the temple, said to the priests:

"I wish to offer pure sacrifices alone, by myself; therefore order everyone to leave the temple; go out yourselves too, and close the doors behind you."

The priests did as she asked and left her alone in the shrine; they themselves, standing outside the shrine, rejoiced and sounded with trumpets and timbrels.

Meanwhile the Bride of Christ, entering inside the shrine, took the idol of Venus and broke it into three pieces; likewise she overthrew the idol of Minerva, which, falling to the ground, was completely shattered. Then she cast down Asclepius from the altar and cut off his hands, feet, and head; she did the same with Zeus. But the people standing outside the shrine did not hear what was happening within it, for the sound of the trumpets and timbrels drowned out everything, and they all stood outside the shrine, waiting until the maiden finished her prayers and sacrifices.

After a sufficient time the priests, growing weary of waiting, entered the shrine and, seeing that their gods had been cast down to the ground, and seeing also the saint seated in the altar and praising Christ her God, at once leaped up, tore their garments, seized the maiden with great anger, and dragged her to the governor. Coming before the governor, they said:

"Destroy this sorceress!"

And there was uproar and lamentation among all the people, who were enraged at the destruction of the idols; all cried out:

"O governor! Destroy this sorceress quickly!"

The governor ordered the breasts of the holy martyr to be cut off and her to be shut up in prison, so that he might have time to consider what cruel death to deliver her to. The saint remained in prison for five days.

At this time another governor, named Justin, arrived at Corinth in place of Perrinius. He was told about the martyr Elikonida, her sufferings, and her destruction of the idols. Justin, who was greatly zealous for his gods, was filled with great fury against Elikonida for her destruction of the idols, and ordered a furnace to be heated as strongly as possible. The furnace was heated for three days; then Justin ordered this holy Elikonida to be thrown into the furnace. The saint, like the ancient youths in Babylon, rejoiced in the midst of the furnace, glorifying and blessing the Lord, for the fire was to her as dew and the flame of fire as a cool wind. Then a great flame came out of the furnace and rushed upon the pagans standing round about; in this way up to seventy men were burned; but the saint, after a fairly long time, came out of the fire unharmed.

The governor said, turning to her:

"Tell us, wicked woman, by what sorceries did you prevail over the power of the fire?"

The saint answered:

"Christ, my Lord, whom you have not seen and whom you cannot see, came to me and cooled the flame of the furnace."

Not believing this, the governor ordered a brazen bed to be brought before the tribunal; he commanded it to be heated and the saint laid upon it before his eyes. Having ordered coals to be placed beneath the bed, the governor said:

"Now let us see whether Christ will come to save her."

While the saint was tormented in this way, so much blood flowed from her that it extinguished the fire; and her bed grew cold.

Then the martyr was taken from the bed and led back to prison, where, falling to the ground, she prayed thus:

"Jesus, our strength and might! Jesus, our glory! Christ, our hope! Be my helper and heal my wounds, O good Physician, who in Thy goodness savest all who trust in Thee."

As she prayed in these words, Christ, the Savior of the world, appeared to her, surrounded by a very bright radiance, together with the holy Archistrategos Michael and the Archangel Gabriel. Coming to her, He offered her His hand, saying:

"Arise, stand up on your feet and be strengthened! I am always with you! I watch over your struggle; by My Divine power I lighten your sufferings and heal your wounds."

Rising to her feet, the martyr fell prostrate before the Lord, bowed to Him, and said:

"Jesus, Christ my God! Heal me, Thy servant! Help me to overcome my enemy, that, having vanquished his power, I may enter Thy temple with singing and the voice of joy."

The Lord said to her:

"Be bold, My daughter! Behold, I will heal you and prepare for you an immortal crown in My eternal Kingdom."

Having said this, the Lord departed to heaven, and the holy Angels gave Elikonida pure bread, shining like the sun. Having eaten this bread, Elikonida felt herself completely restored to health; her face was illumined like the sun, and her body became white as snow. And the saint gave thanks to God, glorifying Him until dawn.

When morning came, the saint was brought out of the prison, then led to the tribunal, and then was delivered to be eaten by beasts. Two hungry lions, which had eaten nothing for three days, were released upon her. But the lions, approaching the saint, bowed down before her and began to lick her feet. The people, seeing this, raised a cry, shouting:

"Truly this woman is a sorceress, for she has bewitched even the beasts, so that they dare not approach her! O governor! Destroy this woman! Destroy her quickly!"

While the people were speaking thus, the doors of that building were shattered and thrown open by the power of God. Those very lions leapt out and rushed upon the people in great fury, roaring loudly; the people fled, and the hegemon himself, terrified, ran into the praetorium[11]. The lions pursued those who were fleeing and killed one hundred and twenty of the people. Then the hegemon, not knowing what else to do with the martyr, ordered that her head be cut off with a sword.

11. The praetorium was a public place in the city where trials were ordinarily held.

When the saint was led outside the city to be beheaded, she raised her hands to heaven and began to pray, saying:

"O Christ, my God! Come to me now! Stand by Thy servant at this hour! Fulfil Thy promise, and bring me into Thy holy fold; number me among Thy blessed sheep. Number me among the women who pleased Thee: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Susanna, and Thy Most Immaculate Mother, the Most Pure Ever-Virgin Mary; also Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, and the Prophetess Anna, who bore witness to Thee together with St. Simeon the God-receiver at Thy meeting; number me also among Elizabeth, the mother of Thy Forerunner John, and the Protomartyr Thecla. Join me to their number and grant me to rest with them for ever."

While the saint was thus praying, a voice was heard from heaven, proclaiming:

"Come, My daughter! A crown and a throne have already been prepared for thee. Behold, the Angels are beginning to sing solemn hymns for thy ascent to heaven."

Hearing this voice, St. Elikonida was filled with great joy, and gladly bowed her head beneath the sword. When she was beheaded, milk flowed from her wound instead of blood, which was a sign of her purity[12]. The Christians buried her precious body with reverence, glorifying the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God in Trinity, to Whom glory, honor, and worship are offered, now and unto ages without end. Amen.

* * *

12. The holy Martyr Elikonida reposed in 244.

Memory of Our Venerable Father Nicetas, Bishop of Chalcedon[13]

Память преподобного отца нашего Никиты, епископа Халкидонского

Our Venerable Father Nicetas loved Christ from his youth. Renouncing the world and all worldly attachments, he pleased God by his virtuous life, and was raised to the throne of the episcopacy of Chalcedon, where, like a candle set upon a lampstand, he shone upon the world and adorned the Church of Christ.

St. Nicetas was exceedingly merciful to the poor: he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, received strangers into his home and gave them rest; he was a father to orphans, a defender of widows, and a savior to all who were wronged.

When the grievous times of the Iconoclast heresy began[14], in the reign of Leo the Armenian[15], St. Nicetas showed himself a courageous Confessor of the name of Christ. For he labored greatly in contending against the impious teaching, denouncing doctrines contrary to the Orthodox faith and exhorting all reverently to venerate the icon of Christ the Lord and of His Most Pure Mother, as well as the icons of all the other saints. This valiant Confessor of Christ endured many torments at the hands of the impious emperor and his like-minded followers; he also endured exile, humiliation, and other afflictions for his Orthodox faith.

After a sufficient time, having undergone many labors as a Confessor, St. Nicetas departed from earth to the heavenly habitations[16]. God

13. Chalcedon, or more correctly Kalchedon, was originally a Megarian colony on the shore of the Sea of Marmara. Under the Christian emperors Chalcedon was the capital of Bithynia, a region of Asia Minor. In the history of the Christian Church, Chalcedon is notable as the site of the IV Ecumenical Council, convened in 451 by Emperor Marcian (450–457) to condemn the Monophysite heresy. This heresy was founded by Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, who taught that in Jesus Christ the human nature was wholly absorbed by the divine nature, and that therefore only one nature, the divine, is to be acknowledged in Him.

14. The iconoclastic heresy appeared in the 8th century. The iconoclasts foolishly confused the veneration of icons with idolatry. The founder of this heresy is considered to be Constantine, bishop of Nacolia (in Phrygia, a region of Asia Minor). The most zealous champions of iconoclasm were the emperors Leo III the Isaurian (717–741) and Constantine V Copronymus (741–776). This heresy was condemned at the VII Ecumenical Council, which took place in 787 in the city of Nicaea.

15. Leo V the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820.

glorified him in heaven before His Angels, and on earth before men, for many miracles were wrought at his precious relics, and healings of every kind of illness were granted, to the glory of God, Who is glorified in His saints.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

By the brightness of thy deeds thou didst shine forth, O Venerable One; thou wast heir to the apostolic throne, O Nicetas. Like the sun, O father, thou didst shine upon thy flock, filled with all the divine teachings. Therefore we cry to thee: Rejoice, adornment of Chalcedon!

* * *

Memory of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Rostov

Память святого Игнатия, епископа Ростовского

St. Ignatius was born of pious parents and was raised by them in every Christian virtue. Having become convinced of the vanity of this world, he renounced the world and received the monastic tonsure. Because he led a most virtuous life, he was first appointed archimandrite and then bishop of the city of Rostov[17]. Taking the Rostov diocese under his care, he shepherded his flock with great attention. Having served as a hierarch for twenty-six years, he reposed in the Lord in the year 6796 from the creation of the world, and in the year 1288 from the Nativity in the flesh of God the Word, on the 28th day of the month of May, a Friday, after Vespers[18].

When the news of the saint's death became known, the whole city of Rostov gathered around his body. All wept bitterly and mourned,

16. The repose of Venerable Nicetas took place at the beginning of the 9th century.

17. St. Ignatius was ordained bishop on 19 September 1262.

18. There is a report that St. Ignatius in 1269 founded a monastery at the mouth of the river Sheksna, on the shore of White Lake, in the name of the Holy Trinity. The monks of this monastery labored much over the conversion to Christianity of the Chud and the Karelians. In 1274 St. Ignatius was present at the local Council of Vladimir. Twice the hierarch had to undertake a difficult journey to the Horde to plead on behalf of his diocese. St. Ignatius is known as the reconciler of Princes Demetrius and Constantine Borisovich. In memory of their reconciliation, the Church of Sts. Boris and Gleb was founded in Rostov. St. Ignatius reposed in 1288. His honorable relics rest to this day in the Dormition Cathedral of Rostov.

grieving at the death of the common shepherd and teacher of all, the helper and defender in troubles and sorrows, the intercessor for widows and orphans, the provider for the poor and needy, the guide and teacher of the priestly and monastic orders, and the counselor of princes and nobles. Taking the precious body of the Hierarch Ignatius, they all carried it to the church; but because of the multitude of people gathered there, they could not bring it inside, and set it down before the church. After this they began to sing the funeral hymns.

At that time two pious nuns were passing by the church. One of them was named Theodosia; she had been the wife of the Hierarch's protodeacon Paul, but immediately after entering into lawful marriage they had devoted themselves to a virginal and pure life. Throughout their lives they labored in fasting and prayer. Many could attest to the purity of their lives. When blessed Paul departed to the Lord, his wife received the monastic tonsure. Having learned of the death of the Hierarch Ignatius, she came to venerate his relics; another nun, named Xenia, came with her, having led a life no less virtuous and pleasing to God. These two nuns, together with certain other pious people who had been granted a divine revelation, saw this miracle: as the precious relics of the Hierarch Ignatius were being carried to the church, the saint of God rose from the tomb in his episcopal vestments, walked through the air, and stood high above the church; then he blessed all the people and the whole city, and afterward entered a cave dug in the earth near the table of oblation, where a tomb had been prepared for him.

God revealed this to those nuns and also to certain other pious people, for the glorification of His servant and to show all his holiness. By this the Lord showed the people that the Hierarch Ignatius had found favor with the Lord and had been granted a portion equal to that of the saints.

At about the same time another miracle occurred. A certain archimandrite named Stephen had, from the day of his birth, one finger bent toward his palm. When he touched the precious body of the Hierarch Ignatius, his crooked finger at once straightened and became sound like the other fingers.

Then the precious body of the Hierarch Ignatius was brought into the church. On the following morning all gathered once more around the relics of the servant of God, to perform the customary service and sing the funeral hymns. When they laid the body of the saint of God in the tomb and placed in his hand the scrolls on which were written the names of all those whom the Hierarch Ignatius had ordained to the rank of presbyter and deacon, the servant of God, as though alive, stretched out his hand and received the scrolls. All who saw this miracle were filled with great fear and joy and glorified God. Through the prayers of this servant of God, the Hierarch Ignatius, may we too be granted to share with him in the eternal blessings prepared in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom glory is offered for ever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Enlightened by the teachings of piety, thou didst receive the flock as a hierarch and become an heir of the Apostles; therefore thou didst receive from God the gift of miracles, O Hierarch Father Ignatius. Pray to Christ God that He may save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Today thy most radiant memory has appeared, O most blessed Hierarch Ignatius, shining brightly in the world and revealing to all the divine radiance.

* * *

Memory of St. Hieromartyr Helladius

Память святого священномученика Елладия

St. Helladius, after enduring various torments, was cast into the fire and remained unharmed; he died from blows. The service in his honor says that Christ visited him in prison and healed his wounds, and that his bonds fell from him. It is believed that he suffered at the hands of the Persians during their invasion of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF MAY

May 29

29 мая

New Calendar May 29 · Old Calendar June 11 (civil dates)

Memory of the Holy Martyr Theodosia

Память святой мученицы Феодосии

Concerning St. Theodosia of Tyre[1], Eusebius[2], Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine[3], an eyewitness, reports the following: "When in our land a persecution raised by impious idolaters against the Christians had already continued for five years, on the seventeenth day of the month of April, on the very day of the feast of the Resurrection of Christ, a pious and God-fearing maiden from our city, a native of Tyre, not yet eighteen years of age, approached the Christian prisoners who were in the praetorium; at that time the Christians were conversing among themselves with boldness about the Kingdom of God. Approaching them, Theodosia began to beg them to remember her before the Lord when, having completed their sufferings, they should stand before God. The soldiers, seeing the maiden bow down before the Christian

1. The homeland of the holy martyr Theodosia was the city of Tyre. Tyre lies on the northeastern shores of the Dead Sea, on the southwestern slope of the Gilead mountain range.

2. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (lived from 268 to 340), a renowned church historian who laid the foundations of church history, was distinguished by great learning. To him belong the following works: 1) the "Ecclesiastical History," brought down from the apostolic times to the year 324, divided into 10 books; 2) the "Life of Constantine," consisting of 4 books and representing a direct continuation of the "Ecclesiastical History"; 3) the "Chronography." Besides these, many minor works of an apologetic, polemical and exegetical character belong to Eusebius.

3. Caesarea of Palestine was situated on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. In ancient times Caesarea was the residence of the Roman procurators and the center of the public and political life of the country. In the history of the Christian Church, Caesarea of Palestine is remarkable because it was here that the Apostle Peter first opened the door of the Church of Christ to the Gentiles, baptizing the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10). Here too took place the last trial of the Apostle Paul, after which he was sent to Rome (Acts 26; Acts 27). In Palestine there was another Caesarea, which, in contrast to this one, was called Philippi. It was situated at the sources of the Jordan.

prisoners, seized her, and as though she had done some wrong, led her to the hegemon Urban for interrogation. The hegemon, filled with great fury and wrath, commanded that she be tormented with cruel torments. Her ribs and breasts were torn with iron claws, so that the flesh was stripped from her down to the bones; then the Martyr of Christ, still alive and enduring the torments with a joyful countenance, the hegemon commanded to be drowned in the sea."

Thus says Eusebius, who saw all things with his own eyes.

Moreover, it is added that this holy Martyr of Christ, Theodosia, after being drowned in the sea, was taken up by Angels from the water onto dry land completely alive. And the saint walked, bearing on her hands a stone tied to her neck. Afterwards the saint was again seized by the pagans, who brought her to the court of judgment. St. Theodosia was condemned to be eaten by wild beasts, but she remained completely unharmed by them. At last the tormentor commanded that she be beheaded with a sword. At the time of the beheading, a dove was seen flying out of her mouth, shining like gold and rising to the heavens[4].

When night came, the holy Martyr appeared to her parents together with many other holy virgins; the saint was clothed in a garment whiter than snow; in her hand was a golden cross, and on her head a wreath; and the saint said to her parents:

"See, how great is the glory and grace of my Christ! See how great is the glory of which you wished to deprive me."

The saint spoke these words because her parents, noticing in her a desire to suffer for Christ, hindered her in every way; but she secretly from them hastened to the prisoners of Christ, and, as we have said, was taken to torment and crowned by her Champion, the Lord Jesus Christ, our God.

* * *

4. The death of the holy martyr took place in 307 or 308, on April 6. May 29 is the day of the translation of her relics. The holy martyr's relics were first transferred to Constantinople, and afterwards to Venice.

Passion of the Venerable Martyr Theodosia

Страдание святой преподобномученицы Феодосии

The holy Bride of Christ, Theodosia, was born in Constantinople to wealthy, honorable, pious and virtuous parents. Originally they were barren for many years. Grieving over this, they prayed and fasted much, having recourse day and night to the churches of God, and generously distributing alms to the poor.

Once, when they were at the All-night Vigil in the church built in honor of St. Anastasia the Martyr, the mother of St. Theodosia prayed more fervently than before for the removal of her barrenness; when she dozed off a little, St. Anastasia the Martyr appeared to her and said:

"Do not grieve, woman, for you shall conceive and bear."

Awakening, she came into great joy and told her husband of the vision. Then her husband said:

"As the Lord lives! If He removes our barrenness and we bear a son or a daughter, we will offer it as a gift to our Master, Christ God."

After some time his wife indeed conceived and bore this holy maiden, whom they named Theodosia, that is, "given by God," for she was granted by God. Then they enlightened the infant with holy Baptism.

After forty days from her birth, the mother took her daughter in her arms and carried her to the church of St. Anastasia, with joyful tears giving thanks to God and the holy Martyr, promising to dedicate her daughter to the monastic order, so that she might be numbered among the choir of virgins and Brides of Christ. (It should be noted that at that church there was also a monastery for maidens who had dedicated themselves to the service of God.)

Having received God's blessing, the mother returned home and began to raise the child promised to God with great care, teaching Theodosia the reading of the divine books and the fear of God, and kindling in her heart the fire of divine love.

When Theodosia reached the age of seven from her birth, her father died; then the mother, taking the maiden, led her to the monastery of St. Anastasia and gave her for tonsure into the holy Angelic order.

Three years later Theodosia's mother also died, leaving all her property to her daughter, the nun. But Theodosia, having reached full age, filled with understanding and love for God, did not wish to accept the property left to her by her mother, but gave it to God, to Whom she also offered herself as a sacrifice: summoning a goldsmith, she gave him a sufficient quantity of gold and silver to make three icons: of Christ the Savior, of the Most Holy Theotokos, and of the holy Martyr Anastasia. These icons were three cubits[5] in size. The blessed Theodosia set them up in the church, and all the rest of her property she distributed to the beggars, the needy, orphans and widows, while she herself, in monastic poverty, continued to serve the Lord day and night, being enriched by God with spiritual riches. Arming herself with the armor of prayer against the invisible adversary, she mortified with ascetic labors the flesh that warred against the spirit, conquered the incorporeal enemy, trampled the head of the infernal serpent and overthrew the proud Beliar[6] by humility, meekness, God-pleasing love, purity, reverence, obedience and the other monastic virtues.

Once, when the saint was praying at night, the devil approached her and said:

"Behold, you arm yourself against me: in that case I too will arm myself against you, and not only against you, but against all Christians, for I have found such a man through whom I shall be able to stir up strife against the Church; I shall turn many away from venerating the icon of Christ; many will go after me and will fulfill my will."

But the holy Theodosia, making the sign of the Cross over herself, said:

"Be accursed, O devil, adversary of Christians! May all your schemes be destroyed and perish by the power of Christ, my God!"

And the devil vanished. The Venerable Theodosia, making the sign of the honorable Cross over herself, began to sing the psalm of David: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from His face" (Ps. 67:2).

5. A cubit equaled 8–10 vershoks.

6. Beliar, or more correctly Belial, in translation from the Hebrew means: worthless, ungodly, wicked. The Apostle Paul applies this name to the devil, the source of all evil (2 Cor. 6:15).

Of this terrible vision and of all the haughty words of the devil, St. Theodosia told her abbess and asked her:

"From where can that calamity come upon Christians which the enemy promises to bring?"

The abbess answered her:

"My daughter! The Apostle bears witness: 'Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution' (2 Tim. 3:12). For the flock of Christ has always been troubled by wicked men who think wrongly, deceiving all and deceived themselves; these wicked men are the instruments of the devil. In a similar way, also at the present time, confusion and persecution will be brought by the devil upon the Church of God. 'But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. 3:13–15)."

Some time later, against the orthodox emperor Theodosius, who was called Adramytenus[7], there rose his voivode, named Leo, who was called Conon, a native of Isauria[8]. Having taken from Theodosius the royal power, Leo made himself emperor[9].

In the first period of his reign he showed himself pious, but very soon he turned into a new Belshazzar[10], defiling the holy things of the Church and not worshipping Christ God Most High and His honorable icon. And he breathed into the Church the venom of the asps of the soul-destroying Manichaean heresy; moreover, this beast-like man, roaring as it were with a lion's voice, uttered blasphemous heretical words against the holy icons, calling them idols and calling those who venerated them idolaters. This impious emperor issued an edict by

7. Theodosius III Adramytenos reigned from 715 to 716.

8. Isauria was a region of Asia Minor bordering on Lycaonia to the east, on Phrygia to the north, on Pisidia to the west, and on Cilicia to the south.

9. Leo III the Isaurian reigned from 716 to 741.

10. Balthasar, one of the descendants of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is known as an ungodly and dissolute man (see Dan. 5:1–4, 22–23). He defiled the sacred vessels of the Jews, which Nebuchadnezzar had seized from Jerusalem (Dan. 5:3).

which he commanded that the veneration of icons be abolished throughout his realm.

At this time the Constantinopolitan throne was occupied by St. Germanus. He, together with the other orthodox bishops, strongly opposed the emperor and did not accept his heretical edict, which commanded renunciation of the veneration of icons. Germanus said to this blasphemer:

After our Lord and Saviour was incarnate of the precious blood of the Most Holy Theotokos and had fulfilled all the divine designs concerning our salvation, every service to idols was abolished and all idol images were given to the fire. More than seven hundred years had now passed since the Apostles labored and proclaimed to the world the saving teaching of Christ. During these seven hundred years there were very many righteous and venerable fathers, and not one of them blasphemed the holy icons; still less did any of them hear of that impious sophistry which you introduce into the Church, rejecting the veneration of holy icons, which is rightly rendered to holy things from of old. For the holy Church has adopted the custom of venerating the honorable icons from the most ancient times, beginning with that image not made by hands, which the Saviour Himself sent upon a cloth to Abgar, prince of Edessa. Then the woman with an issue of blood, healed by touching the hem of the garment of Christ, after the Lord's ascension into heaven, made from stone a likeness of Jesus Christ. Afterwards the holy Evangelist Luke painted an icon of the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God; from this time began the pious custom of painting holy icons and adorning with them the churches of God and the houses of Christians. And the six Ecumenical Councils[11] that came before us did not blaspheme this custom, but on the contrary commanded that the images of the saints be venerated and not rejected. Know therefore, O emperor, that for the sake of the holy icons I am ready not only to endure any evil whatsoever, but am ready to accept even death itself, for the icon of Christ bears the name of that very Christ, who was incarnate of the Most Pure Virgin Mary and lived on earth among men. Every pious

11. The Seventh Ecumenical Council had not yet been convened at this time.

Christian ought to be ready to die both for the name of Christ and for His honorable icons, for he who dishonors an icon dishonors also the very one who is depicted upon that icon."

Hearing this, the emperor was filled with anger and fury; roaring like a lion, he began to rage with great cruelty, persecuting the faithful and putting to various deaths all who opposed him. First of all he sent his soldiers with weapons and commanded them to drive St. Germanus from the patriarchal throne with dishonor and blows; in place of Germanus, Leo set up the false patriarch Anastasius[12], a heretic and one of like mind with himself. Then Leo commanded that all the divine books and the writings of the God-wise teachers be given to the fire. It should be noted that at the church of Holy Wisdom there was a library containing about three hundred thousand books; attached to this library were twelve schools and as many wise teachers, and over these teachers was a chief, a wise gymnasiarch, who had received this honor from the emperor and the patriarch. All these teachers opposed the godless command of the impious emperor; therefore the lawless tyrant, surrounding with his soldiers the library and all the schools with their teachers and pupils, set fire to it on every side and burned it, so that none of those who were there escaped the fire, and not one book was spared from the flames.

At this time the whole city of Constantinople was plunged into great grief and sorrow; all wept and sighed; some lamented the unjust exile of the most holy Patriarch Germanus, others the burning of so great a number of books and the destruction of the wise teachers, others the great dishonor inflicted upon the icons, for the icons were everywhere broken, thrown into the marshes and burned in bonfires.

The newly appointed heretical patriarch Anastasius, who stood in the holy place as an abomination of desolation (Mt. 24:15), was greatly pleasing to the emperor, since he in every way assisted him in his iconoclastic heresy. This false patriarch soon cast the honorable icons out of the great church and commanded that the same be done in all the other churches.

12. Anastasius was patriarch from 730 to 753.

In Constantinople there were gates called "the Bronze Gates"; they had been built already in the time of the great Constantine and led to the imperial palaces. Above these gates there was a bronze image of the Saviour, which had hung there for four hundred years and more. That impious patriarch resolved to take down and give to the fire this honorable image, and for this purpose he sent soldiers with axes to do the godless deed. When the commander of those soldiers, a spatharios by rank, having set a ladder against the gates, began to climb it with an axe in his hands and was already preparing to undertake his God-opposing work, he was seen by some pious women who happened to be passing there; the nuns also saw him, among whom was the venerable Theodosia; kindled with zeal for the icon of Christ, and moved by this blessed Theodosia, who was more zealous than all of them for the honorable icons and filled with divine courage and boldness, those nuns ran to the ladder and overturned it to the ground; at the same time they threw down the soldier as well, who, falling from the height, was greatly injured. Dragging him along the ground, they beat him until he died; then they went quickly to Patriarch Anastasius and began to revile his impiety; they reproached him as a wolf, a predator, a heretic and an enemy of the Church of Christ; then they began to hurl stones at him. Anastasius, filled with shame and fearing lest a popular uprising arise against him, hastened to the emperor and reported to him the dishonor done to him by the women, and also reported the killing of the spatharios at the Bronze Gates. The emperor, filled with anger and fury, at once sent his soldiers with drawn swords and commanded them to avenge the dishonor of the patriarch and the death of the spatharios. Those holy women were cut down for the zeal they showed for piety; and the blessed nun Theodosia, as being of more noble birth and as confessing piety with greater boldness, and as the instigator of everything that had happened, the emperor commanded to be seized and thrown into prison, daily inflicting upon her a hundred blows. Thus was the saint tormented for seven days.

On the eighth day the tyrant commanded that the saint be led through the whole city and beaten without mercy. When the saint was brought to the place called "the Ox Market" (where animals were sold

and slaughtered)[13], it happened that one soldier accompanying the saint accidentally stepped on a large goat's horn and wounded his foot with it. Enraged, he took up that horn and began to beat the holy martyr without mercy on the head with it; then he struck the saint in the throat with that horn and pierced it; and at once the saint, the venerable martyr, the virgin Theodosia, the sacred bride of Christ, gave up her honorable soul into the hands of her immortal Bridegroom and departed to His heavenly chamber, crowned with the double crown of virginity and martyrdom[14]. Her much-suffering body, cast upon the ground, was taken up with reverence by Christians and buried in a special place. From the honorable relics of St. Theodosia healings were granted to the sick, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and unto endless ages. Amen[3521].

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thou didst attain unto the virtue that becomes a martyr, having become the pure dwelling-place of Christ and a beloved house of the Holy Spirit; for thou didst put to shame the enemy who wars against the human race, O thou who didst suffer well, and thou didst slay Copronymus with the sword of faith, O Theodosia; and thou didst depart with joy to the heavenly chamber. Pray ever for great mercy for those who honor thee in faith.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

By thy labors thou didst attain the life without toil, and with the blood of Copronymus thou didst strangle the vile enemy of Christ's Church, O all-blessed martyr Theodosia; and thou rejoicest with the heavenly hosts, while thou dost cover those who celebrate thy memory.

* * *

13. According to some explanations, this place was called "the Ox" because there was a furnace there in the form of an ox, in which criminals were burned.
14. The death of the holy martyr Theodosia took place in the year 730.

Memory of St. John the Fool-for-Christ, Wonderworker of Ustyug

Память святого юродивого Иоанна, устюжского чудотворца

The blessed John was born of pious parents, of a father named Sabbas and a mother Natalia, in the vicinity of the great city of Ustyug[15], in a village called Pukhovo, situated on the far side of the river called the Sukhona, where the ancient city of Ustyug stood. From his early years he showed extraordinary abstinence. On Wednesdays and Fridays he ate nothing, and on other days he subsisted only on bread and water; he always spent his nights without sleep in prayer, and always walked with a sorrowful and piteous countenance, so that those who saw him thought he was not in full possession of his mind. The blessed youth always conducted himself thus, and his mother many times urged him to change this manner of life, saying:

"My child, do not wear out your body by going without food; such severe abstinence may bring you illness."

"Do not compel me to this, mother," the youth answered, "abstinence will deliver me from sins."

"But what sins, my child," his mother asked, "have you, at such a young age? Only the grace of God is in you, and we see no sins in you."

To this the youth answered his mother:

"Mother mine! Cease speaking such words; listen to what the Scripture says: let no man boast that he is without sin; there is none without sin but God alone (Rom. 3:10, 23; 1 Jn. 1:8, 9). And again: food and drink will not bring us nearer to God (1 Cor. 8:8). Therefore let us not nourish our body, lest it become our enemy."

With such words the blessed John admonished his mother. Although he himself was unlettered, he was taught by the grace of the Holy Spirit given to him, as the prophet said: "I will meditate on the mighty works of the Lord God; I will remember Thy righteousness, Thine alone" (Ps. 70:15–16).

After this, the father of the blessed youth from the village of Pukhovo moved to the town of Orlets[16], also in the vicinity of Ustyug, on

the river Yug, and there he died. Then his mother went to the monastery of the Life-Giving Trinity that existed there, received the monastic tonsure, and was soon chosen abbess of that monastery. All this time she had her son with her; but the blessed youth, having come to know the vanity of this world, took upon himself the appearance of a fool-for-Christ[17], and his mother, seeing that he conducted himself in this way, left him to the will of God.

After this, the Venerable John left the monastery and, coming to the city of Ustyug, settled in a church watchman's hut near the cathedral church of the Most Holy Theotokos, of Her honorable Dormition. Keeping vigil by night, he offered unceasing prayers to the Lord, and by day he endeavored to appear to people as a fool and ran about the streets, so that his pretense would not be recognized. He would ordinarily rest upon dung, and he walked about entirely naked, wearing only a single torn rag about his loins. But when it happened that he put on a shirt, that too was always worn out, and he never washed it. The venerable man endured much insult, mockery and beating from frivolous people, and he constantly endured hunger and thirst, yet from no one did he accept anything. Once, because of the winter cold, he climbed into a heavily heated oven and lay down in it upon the glowing coals as on a bed, and he suffered no harm from this whatever. Besides this, he healed of a fever the wife of a prince named Theodore, surnamed the Red[18], the princess Maria.

Having thus passed his life, the blessed John, knowing of his departure to the Lord, prayed for the whole world, signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and, lying down on the ground, committed his holy soul into the hands of God. This took place in the year 1494, on the 29th day of the month of May. The venerable man was buried near the cathedral church, and he works miracles for those who approach him with faith[19].

15. Veliky Ustyug, now a district town of the Vologda Province, is situated on the left bank of the river Sukhona at its confluence with the river Yug.

17. "Fool" (yurodivy) properly means foolish or insane. This is the name given to Christian ascetics who, out of humility and for the sake of their eternal salvation, appeared foolish or strange.

18. This was the governor of Ustyug, Prince Theodore the Red.

Troparion, Tone 5:

By the nakedness of thy body and by thy endurance thou didst lay bare the treacheries of the enemy, rebuking his unseemly deeds; thou didst grievously suffer the scorching heat of the sun, but didst feel neither the great cold, nor frost, nor fire, being covered by the help of God, O wise John. Those who honor thy memory with faith and who diligently draw near to the shrine of thy relics, intercede that they be delivered from afflictions and escape falling.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Desiring the heavenly beauties, thou didst diligently forsake the lower sweetness of bodily eating; through non-acquisition of the vain world thou didst love the Angelic life, and, passing away, thou didst depart, O blessed John. With them, intercede unceasingly with Christ God for us all.

* * *

NOTES

3521. Accounts have been preserved of miracles wrought by the relics of the holy martyr, recorded by the great logothete (keeper of the patriarchal seal) Constantine, who lived in the thirteenth century. A certain youth from Phrygia, who had lost the use of his legs, received complete healing after he was brought to the tomb of the holy martyr; another youth, who had fallen from his horse and lost his reason, was instantly healed after he was brought to the tomb of St. Theodosia and anointed here with oil from the lamp; Constantine the logothete himself says of himself that he suffered greatly from an illness in his legs, which the best physicians could not cure, but, having had recourse to the holy martyr, he received complete healing. In his narrative Constantine the logothete observes that the miracles wrought by St. Theodosia are innumerable. The honorable relics of the holy martyr were laid in the monastery of Diocratis or Dexiocratis (named after the patrician who built the monastery church), not far from the Golden Horn in Constantinople.

19. During the calamities of the interregnum, the inhabitants of the city of Ustyug prayed to the blessed John, and to him they ascribed the victory of the royal army over Sapieha in 1610. In 1613, through the prayers of the Ustyug wonderworkers (Procopius and John), they not only defended their city from the Poles, but also defeated them. A church in honor of the blessed John was built in Ustyug.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF MAY

May 30

30 мая

New Calendar May 30 · Old Calendar June 12 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Isaac the Confessor

Житие преподобного отца нашего Исаакия Исповедника

Soon after the uncovering of the most honorable and Life-creating Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the reign of the great Constantine, whose life is given under 21 May, the enemy of the Christian race and, above all, of Christ our Savior Himself, the adversary of the holy faith, by his cunning brought confusion into the Church of God. Namely, he incited the impious and lawless Emperor Valens[1] to defend the Arian heresy[2] and to promote its spread. This godless emperor raised a persecution against the orthodox Christians. He commanded that the holy churches be locked, so that the customary Divine sacrifices might not be offered in them; others he turned into stables for horses, and some he razed to the very foundations. This persecution lasted a long time. And at that time there was great weeping and great sorrow among the Christians, who day and night prayed to the Lord, asking Him to have mercy on His holy Church and to render a righteous judgment and vengeance upon the impious emperor. In that time it was as in the Apostolic times, when King Herod "stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church" (Acts 12:1).

After some time, God raised up on the defense of the Church His servant, the monk Isaac, just as of old He raised up the prophet Daniel to defend the innocent Susanna[3]. This blessed Isaac first labored in the eastern desert, imitating the holy Prophet Elijah and living an angelic

1. Valens reigned from 364 A.D. to 378 A.D.
2. On the Arian heresy see below, in the supplementary article on the First Ecumenical Council.
3. The history of Susanna is set forth in Dan. 13.

life. Having learned of the persecution raised by the Arians against the Church of God, and having also learned that the emperor was furthering the spread of the heresy, he was greatly grieved. Leaving the desert, he came to Constantinople in order to confirm the faithful in piety. His word was like a burning candle; the Spirit of God rested upon him, and heavenly grace illumined him. Having seen with his own eyes the great calamities that the faithful suffered from the heretical emperor and his partisans, he prayed to God, asking Him to look down from the height of His throne upon those unjustly persecuted, to show them His mercy, and to humble the pride of the persecutors.

God, who once heard His servant Moses praying for his people who were in distress (1 Kgdms. 28:17–22), heard also His servant Isaac, and raised up barbarians against the impious Emperor Valens. Namely, the barbarians who then lived along the Danube, gathering all their regiments, began war with the Greeks; they had already seized Thrace and were approaching Constantinople. It was necessary for Emperor Valens to gather warriors in order to enter battle with the enemies; but here there happened to the emperor the very thing that once happened to Saul, king of Israel, the enemy of David. For Saul did not return from the battlefield, according to the prophecy of the holy Samuel, because he had angered God (3 Kgdms. 22:1–53).

As Valens was leaving Constantinople with his regiments, the blessed Isaac went ahead of him and cried out in a loud voice:

"O Emperor! Open the churches to the orthodox, and then the Lord will prosper your way."

But the emperor did not answer him; he despised him as a simpleton and a madman. Paying no heed to his words, he continued on his way.

The next morning the blessed elder came to the emperor again and said:

"Open the churches, O Emperor, to the orthodox, and then the war will end happily for you: you will conquer your enemies and return home in peace and good health."

The emperor, hearing his words, "return home in peace and good health," wished to open the church doors and give the churches back to the orthodox, and he already began to consult about this with his

nobles. But one military commander, who adhered to the Arian impiety, advised the emperor not to listen to the monk, but to drive him away from himself with dishonor. Having reviled the elder, the emperor drove him away from himself with dishonor and blows, and set off on his further journey.

On the third day the blessed elder again approached the emperor; taking hold of the bridle of the horse on which he sat, Isaac began to beseech and admonish the emperor even more earnestly to open the churches; otherwise he threatened him with the judgment of God.

At that place there happened to be a deep chasm, at the bottom of which thorns grew and there was a marsh; when any beast fell into this marsh, it could no longer get out, but was sucked down by the marsh and perished. The emperor commanded that Isaac be cast into this marsh, so that he might perish there; then he set off on his further journey.

But the holy Isaac, thrown into this marsh, was guarded by the right hand of God and suffered no harm there: the thorns did not wound him, and the marsh did not draw him down. He lay among the thorns as though on a soft bed among flowers, praising and thanking God, until three radiant men appeared to him, who drew him out of the marsh unharmed and set him on dry ground; and they themselves became invisible.

Then the Venerable Isaac understood that it was the Lord Himself who had sent His Angels to draw him out of that chasm; falling on his knees, he gave thanks to his Savior that He cared for His servants and did not forsake all who fear Him and hope in Him.

Having prayed for a sufficient time and having been strengthened by the Holy Spirit, Isaac arose; then he went quickly by a roundabout way and, outstripping the emperor, stopped in his path. Seeing the saint, the emperor was greatly frightened, and from fear and astonishment he was silent. The saint, however, said to him boldly:

"Behold, thou wished to destroy me in the thorns and the marsh; but the Lord has preserved me alive and sent me His Angels, who led me out of that chasm. Hear me, O Emperor! Open the churches to the orthodox; then thou wilt conquer thine enemies and return back with

glory. But if thou dost not heed me, thou wilt not return from the battlefield, but wilt perish upon it."

The emperor was greatly astonished at the monk's boldness and the brightness of his face, but despite this he did not heed him, for his heart was hardened and estranged from God. Then the emperor gave the blessed man into the custody of two of his officials, Saturninus and Victor, and commanded them to keep him in chains. At the same time he said to them:

"Keep this troublesome old man with you until I return, and I will repay him for his impudence and boldness."

The Venerable Isaac, however, being filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, burned with even greater zeal (as once the prophet Micaiah against Ahab, king of Israel), and cried out to Valens in a loud voice:

"If thou returnest in peace, know that 'the Lord has not spoken by me.' And he said, 'Hearken, all ye people!' (3 Kgdms. 22:28). I tell thee that, having led thine armies out to battle, thou wilt not overcome the barbarians, but wilt flee from them, wilt be taken by them, and wilt be burned alive in the fire."

When the saint had said this, the emperor departed in anger on his further journey, and the saint was led away into chains.

Meanwhile the Greeks met the barbarians; the battle was very fierce. By the permission of God the barbarians won, according to the prophecy of the holy Isaac; many of the Greeks fell by the sword. Emperor Valens himself was wounded and, unable to withstand the enemies, turned to flight. The barbarians pursued the Greeks and cut down the Greek warriors like grass; they were already overtaking the emperor himself, who fled with only one of his counselors, a military commander, an Arian, who had advised him not to heed Isaac. Approaching a certain village, he saw a barn in which there was straw; since his horse was already exhausted, he dismounted and hid in that barn together with his counselor. But he did not escape the avenging hand of God, for the barbarians who were pursuing him, having reached that village and learned that Greeks were hiding in that barn, set it on fire on all sides and burned it to the ground. Thus perished that wretched emperor and his evil counselor.

After that battle, the Greek army that remained intact set out to meet the Roman Emperor Gratian[4], who was coming to help the Greeks. Arriving in the Greek lands, Gratian chose as emperor for the Greeks Theodosius, called the Great[5]. Theodosius, gathering warriors, set out against the barbarians, defeated and drove them off, and returned in triumph to Constantinople.

Meanwhile some of the Greek warriors, who did not yet know of Valens's death, came shortly after his death to the Venerable Isaac, who was kept in chains, and said to him:

"Prepare thine answer, for the emperor will soon return from the battlefield and will interrogate and torment thee."

But the saint answered them:

"Seven days have already passed since I smelled the stench of his burned bones; for, as I said, he has been burned."

Those who heard this were struck with great fear; and indeed, shortly afterward word came of Valens's death. After this, the holy Isaac was released from his chains, and all began to honor him as a prophet of God.

When Theodosius entered the city in triumph, the above-mentioned nobles, Saturninus and Victor, told him everything about the Venerable Isaac: they spoke of his boldness and of his prophecy. The emperor, respecting such a man, commanded that he be brought before him with great honor, and he bowed down to him, regarding him as a great servant of God, and asking him to pray to God for him and for his whole realm. The Venerable Isaac exhorted the emperor to remain in piety, to restore peace to the Church, and to comfort the persecuted. The emperor heeded the saint and did as he said: he drove the Arians out of Constantinople, at which the faithful greatly rejoiced.

The Blessed Isaac, having given thanks to God for all things, intended to depart into the desert to labor there; but Saturninus and Victor begged the Venerable not to leave the imperial city, but to remain near

4. Emperor Gratian reigned from 375 A.D. to 383 A.D.

5. Theodosius the Great governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 379 A.D. to 395 A.D.; the western half from 393 A.D. to 396 A.D.

them and, by his prayers and teaching, to help the Christians lead a peaceful life. The saint consented to fulfill their request.

At this time a dispute arose between Saturninus and Victor, since each of them wished the Venerable to settle in his house. Learning the cause of their dispute, the saint addressed them, saying:

"Children! I see your love for me. But since you desire to bring my humility to rest, I tell you: I shall abide all the days of my life with the one who first builds a house for me."

And both of them began to take care that a house for the servant of God might be built as quickly as possible.

Saturninus had, outside the city, a very beautiful site, most suitable for the life of monks; it was on this site that he hastened to build a monastery for the servant of God, and here the Venerable Isaac settled. Likewise Victor built a fine dwelling for the saint and greatly regretted that Saturninus had outstripped him. Coming to the saint, he began earnestly to beg him to move into the cell built for him. But the Venerable continued to labor in the monastery of Saturninus, though at times he came to Victor and stayed with him for several days, not wishing to grieve him by a refusal.

Meanwhile many who desired to labor together with him in the works of monastic life began to gather around the Venerable. Thus a large monastery was built at the expense of the God-loving men Saturninus and Victor. The Venerable was the mentor and hegumen of many monks, and a useful teacher to the laity as well, for he guided all onto the path of salvation both by word and by the example of his virtuous life. The Venerable was very merciful to the poor, so that if at times he had nothing to give to one who asked, he would take off his own clothing and give it away; the saint also performed many other God-pleasing deeds. At last, having reached old age, he drew near to death. Gathering all the brethren and giving them edifying instruction, Saint Isaac appointed in his place as hegumen a certain honorable man who led a holy life, the Blessed Dalmatus, after whose name that monastery was later called the Monastery of Dalmatus.

Having labored in many God-pleasing works, the Venerable Isaac departed to the Lord into eternal rest[6]; the whole city gathered for his burial; his honorable body was laid in the church of the holy First Martyr Stephen; and his holy soul stands before the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, in the choir of the holy and venerable fathers, and together with them intercedes for us before the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God in Trinity, to Whom glory is offered forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As a faithful servant of God, kindled with zeal for the Church of Christ, thou didst restrain the reins of Valens, and prophesying concerning him, thou didst foretell his ruinous death for the closing of the church. Wherefore, ever pray for us who honor thee, O Venerable Isaac.

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6. The repose of Saint Isaac occurred at the end of the 4th century. His relics were first laid in the church of St. Stephen, which stood near the Dalmatian monastery; afterward they were translated to the church of All Saints.

THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF MAY

May 31

31 мая

New Calendar May 31 · Old Calendar June 13 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Hermias

Страдание святого мученика Ермия

During the persecution raised against the Christians in the reign of the impious Roman Emperor Antoninus[1], the emperor appointed a certain nobleman named Sebastian to torment the Christians. Coming from Cilicia into Cappadocia[2], he met at Comana[3] a certain soldier named Hermias, an aged Christian, white with the hoariness of years, who believed in the one true God and led a virtuous life. The prince said to Hermias:

"An edict of the Roman Emperor Antoninus has been sent to me, commanding all Christians to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods; but if the Christians will not offer sacrifices, they shall be delivered to many cruel torments. Therefore you too, Hermias, offer sacrifice to the gods, and then you will be the emperor's friend and will be rewarded with great honors. Obey me; otherwise I shall deliver your soul and body to torments."

Christ's athlete Hermias answered him:

"I am a soldier of the heavenly and immortal King Christ, Whose Kingdom shall have no end; therefore I shall not obey the commands of a mortal and impious emperor, whose reign is brief, while the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ shall remain unchanged forever. Whoever be-

1. Emperor Antoninus I reigned from 138 to 161 A.D.
2. Cilicia and Cappadocia are regions in Asia Minor.
3. The city of Comana was situated in the northeastern part of Asia Minor, in the province of Pontus. In the history of the Christian Church, this city is known as the place of exile of St. John Chrysostom (see his Life under November 13). Some, however, understand this to refer to the city of Comana situated in Cappadocia.

lieves in Him shall inherit eternal life. I too believe in Him. Formerly I served Him in secret, but now I serve Him openly. The devil shall not conquer me; you have power only over my body, and that by God's permission. No one has power over my soul except God alone, Who will grant me endurance and preserve me unharmed forever."

After Sebastian had heard St. Hermias, he turned to him and said:

"Offer sacrifice to the gods, if you wish to enjoy the delights of this life."

But the saint answered:

"What joy, what pleasure, and what life can there be for me if, forsaking my Creator, I bow down to demons? Truly, this is not joy but sorrow; not pleasure but grief; not life but eternal death."

The prince said:

"I see that you are very wise."

The saint answered:

"I am wise in the Lord my God, in Whom I believe and Whom I serve with all zeal. For His sake I am ready to suffer, and gladly consent to die."

"Out of respect for your gray hairs and your wisdom," said the prince, "I am ready to spare and have mercy on you."

The saint answered:

"I seek no mercy from you, but seek mercy from God, Who makes His servants wise by the Holy Spirit."

At this the prince said:

"So you prefer death to life?"

"This death," answered the saint, "is not death but eternal life, if I endure with patience the torments you have appointed."

Then the prince commanded that the saint's face be crushed with stones, that he be beaten about the mouth, and that the skin be stripped from his face. And the saint said:

"I thank my God, for His grace abides with me."

Then the prince asked the soldier:

"Why do you not take your allowance, as all the other soldiers do?"

"Because you unjustly rob the poor," answered the Martyr, "I do not take your allowances, nor do I live on them, for I have spiritual food given me by the Holy Spirit, from which I shall never hunger."

Then the prince commanded that a furnace be heated and that Christ's Martyr be cast into it. After three days the furnace was opened, but they found the saint alive and unharmed, glorifying God, for the fire had not touched his body.

After this the prince summoned a sorcerer and commanded him to give Hermias poison.

But the saint prayed to God, drank the poisoned draught, and suffered not the least harm, according to the word of Christ the Lord, Who said: "if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" (Mk. 16:18).

The sorcerer prepared a still more deadly poison and gave it to the Martyr, saying:

"If you suffer no harm at all from this poison, I shall abandon my sorcery and believe in the crucified God Whom you serve."

But St. Hermias tasted this poison and drank it to the last drop, suffering not the least harm, and remained in good health and unharmed. Then the sorcerer cried out:

"You have conquered me, Hermias! You have overcome and vanquished me, servant of Christ! You have saved my perishing soul from hell and moved me to serve God. As an old statue made of iron is renewed when it is reforged, so I too, grown old in sins and impiety, am renewed in soul; I am renewed as I turn to the living God, Who abides forever. O heavenly God, the one true God, Who through Thy servant Hermias hast delivered me from demonic deception and the defilement of idol worship! Receive me, a sinner, as I turn to Thee, and have mercy on me, who confess Thee!"

While he cried out thus, the prince was filled with rage and commanded that he be beheaded. And that sorcerer was slain, baptized in his own blood; and the new Christian and Martyr departed to Christ God, for Whom he had laid down his life.

As for St. Hermias, the prince commanded that he be mercilessly tortured, his sinews being drawn out throughout his body. While he was thus cruelly tormented, the saint said:

"I feel no pain at all from this torment; for just as a knife, cutting a vein, lets out corrupt blood and brings health to the body, so I, as the sinews are torn from my body, become ever more sound in the faith of Christ."

Then the tormentor commanded that the saint be cast into a cauldron filled with boiling oil. But the cauldron at once grew cold, and the boiling oil became a cool dew. Christ's Martyr cried aloud:

"I feel no pain, and I shall not obey your command, tormentor! I shall do only the will of the heavenly Father, to Whom I offer myself as an unblemished sacrifice, for He is the Master of our souls and bodies."

While the saint spoke thus, the tormentor commanded that bitter vinegar mixed with gall be poured down his throat. But the Martyr said:

"This bitterness is to me as a honeycomb, for the sake of my God, in Whose name I endure all this."

Then the tormentor commanded that St. Hermias's eyes be put out. Hearing this, the saint said to the tormentor:

"If you need my bodily eyes, which see the vanity of this world, then take them; I have the eyes of my heart, with which I clearly behold the true light."

And the holy Martyr's eyes were put out.

Then the saint was hung upside down and remained in that position for three days, so that much blood flowed from his nostrils. After three days, some came to look upon the saint, thinking that he had already died; but they found him alive and glorifying God, and were greatly amazed. But because of their unbelief, darkness covered their eyes; they were blinded and began to cry out:

"Have mercy on us, servant of the true God, for we have been stricken with blindness!"

But the saint said to them:

"Come near me!"

When they came near him, he laid his hands upon them and said:

"In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, receive your sight!"

And immediately they all received their sight, and, returning, told all that had happened.

The prince, falling into still greater rage, commanded that the skin be stripped from the Martyr's whole body. While the servants carried out the tormentor's command, the saint reviled the prince and reproached his abominable gods, thereby provoking the prince to yet greater fury. Roaring like a lion, he cut off the honorable head of the holy Martyr with a knife.

Thus Christ's Martyr Hermias completed his contest[4].

The Christians came secretly to that place, took his honorable body, and buried it in Cappadocia, at a place called Comana. There many miracles were wrought through the Martyr's honorable relics, and manifold healings were granted, to the glory of Christ our God, to Whom, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, honor, and worship, now and unto the endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Having zealously contended for Christ, thou didst acquire courage in thy valiant gray hairs, O Martyr Hermias. By Christ's might thou didst overthrow the evil designs of the lawless; unharmed thou didst remain after drinking their magical potions, crying: "God is with me, and none is against me."

* * *

4. The end of St. Hermias the Martyr came about 166 A.D.

Passion of the Holy Martyr Philosopher

Страдания святого мученика Философа

This holy Martyr of Christ, Philosopher[5], came from the environs of the city of Alexandria[6]. The great among monks, Anthony[7], related of him, and also how he accomplished his contest of martyrdom.

There was a most beautiful garden, full of plants of every hue and fragrance. In this garden a richly adorned couch had been set out for torture, and upon it they laid the holy Martyr Philosopher, bound hand and foot, to sleep. Hearing the seductive and shameless words of a lewd woman who had come to him, the valiant Martyr closed his eyes so as not to look at her; but he could not close his eyelids or his ears, for he was bound and therefore could do nothing to that end. So he acted thus: biting his tongue with his teeth and inflicting great pain upon himself, he felt such pain that he did not hear what the shameless woman whispered to him. And since he was unable to close his nostrils, he moistened the unclean couch with his bloodied tongue and stained his clothing with much blood; thus he remained unharmed by temptation. Such was the contest undertaken by the valiant Martyr, yet he did not yield to the tormentor. After this they cut off his head[8], and he rejoices forever in heaven[9].

* * *

5. Philosopher is not a proper name, nor are the other names assigned to this saint. He is placed under May 31 because of the name of Justin the Philosopher, whose commemoration is celebrated on June 1.

6. Alexandria is a city in Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great at the mouths of the Nile on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

7. Here is meant the Venerable Antony the Great, founder of eremitic monasticism in Egypt. His memory is celebrated on January 17.

8. St. Philosophus the Martyr suffered under the emperor Decius, about the year 252.

9. The account of the exploit of St. Philosophus the Martyr is related more fully and intelligibly in the Life of the Venerable Paul of Thebes, by number and in his Life.

INDEX OF SAINTS AND FEASTS

A

Memory of our Venerable Father Achillius, Bishop of Larissa, 524

Passion of the Holy Martyr Alexander, 443

Memory of the Holy Apostle Alphaeus, 715

Passion of the Holy Martyr Alvian, Bishop, and His Disciple, 187

Memory of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, 272

Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Andronicus and of Junia, His Helpmate, 542

Passion of St. Ascalon the Martyr, 592

B

Memory of St. Barbarus, who was formerly a robber, 223

C

Passion of the Holy Martyr Caluf the Egyptian, 582

Commemoration of St. Carpus, Apostle of the Seventy, 713

Passion of St. Christopher the Martyr, 292

E

Passion of the Holy Martyr Elikonida, 729

Passion of the Holy Martyr Erasmus, 188

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Esper and Zoe, 73

Memory of our Venerable Father Euphrosynus, Wonderworker of Pskov, 521

F

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Ferapont, 722

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Ferapont, Bishop of Cyprus, 703

Memory of Our Venerable Father Ferapont, Wonderworker of Belozersk, 725

G

Memory of St. George the Confessor, 464

Passion of St. George the New, Holy Martyr, 708

H

Memory of St. Hieromartyr Helladius, 739

Passion of the Holy Martyr Hermias, 759

Translation of the Honorable Relics of Sts. Cyprian, Photius and Jonah, Hierarchs of Kiev and Wonderworkers of All Russia, 723

I

Memory of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Rostov, 737

Passion of the Holy Great Martyr Irene, 191

Passion of the Holy Martyr Isidore, 466

J

Memory of St. John the Fool-for-Christ, Wonderworker of Ustyug, 749

Commemoration of our Venerable Father John the Psychaite, 712

Commemoration of our Venerable Father John, Bishop of the Goths, 584

L

Life and Labors of our Venerable Fathers Methodius and Constantine, in monasticism Cyril, Teachers of the Slavs, 323

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Prophet Jeremiah, 7

Life of our Holy Father Epiphanius, Archbishop of Cyprus, 385

Life of Our Holy Father Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople, 378

Life of Our Venerable Father Arsenius the Great, 247

Life of Our Venerable Father Isaac the Confessor, 752

Life of Our Venerable Father Pachomius the Great, 477

Life of our Venerable Father Paphnutius of Borovsk, 42

Life of Our Venerable Father Serapion the Sindonite, 470

Life of Our Venerable Father Theodore the Sanctified, Disciple of Pachomius, 526

Life of Our Venerable Father Theodosius, Abbot of the Kiev Caves, 128

Life of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine and of His Holy Mother Helena, 602

Life of the Holy Prophet Isaiah, 274

Life of the Holy Righteous and Much-Suffering Job, 211

Life of the Venerable Euphrosyne, Abbess of Polotsk, 657

Life of the Venerable Isidora the Fool-for-Christ, 300

Life of Venerable Simon, Bishop of Vladimir and Suzdal, 307

M

Memory of the Blessed Maiden Musa, 539

Martyrdom of the Holy Martyr Glykeria, and with Her Laodicius, the Prison Guard, 431

Passion of the Venerable Martyr Michael the Black-Robed Monk, 655

Memory of Our Venerable Father Michael the Confessor, 653

Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Mocius, 315

N

Narrative on the Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra, 295

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Nicetas the Stylite, Wonderworker of Pereyaslavl, 697

Memory of Our Venerable Father Nicetas, Bishop of Chalcedon, 736

P

Passion and Miracles of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb, Princes of Rus', 79

Memory of our Venerable Father Pausicacius, Bishop of Sinada, 463

Memory of our Venerable Father Peter the Wonderworker, 168

Passion of St. Phalaleus the Martyr, 587

Passion of the Holy Martyr Philosopher, 764

Commemoration of our Holy Father Polybius, Bishop of Rhinocorura, 385

R

Commemoration of the holy Right-believing Prince Constantine and his sons, Michael and Theodore, Wonderworkers of Murom, 634

Repose of the Right-believing Prince John of Uglich, in Monasticism Ignatius, Wonderworker of Vologda, 582

S

Commemoration of our Holy Father Sabinus, Bishop of Cyprus, 384

Commemoration of the Sign of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross of the Lord that Appeared in the Heavens, 243

Passion of the Holy Martyr Silvanus, Bishop of Caesarea, and the Forty Martyrs with him, 186

Our Venerable Father Simeon of the Wondrous Mountain, 669

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Simeon, Isaac and Vakhtisy, 575

Memory of the Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot, 299

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Solochon, 543

Suffering of Holy Martyr Maximus, 476

Suffering of the Holy Hieromartyr Patricius, together with the three presbyters Acacius, Menander and Polyaenus, 576

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Acacius, 229

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Barbarus the Soldier and Others with Him, 220

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Basiliscus, 638

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Hesychius, 312

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Meletius the Stratelates, and with him 1318 Soldiers, 695

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Serapion, and with him Callinicus, Theodore and Faustus, 696

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Theodotus, together with the seven virgins: Phaina, Claudia, Matrona, Tekusa, Julia, Alexandra and Euphrasia, 546

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Virgin Pelagia, 173

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Alphius, Philadelphus, Cyprian[3082] and the Others Who Suffered with Them, 313

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Peter, Dionysius, Andrew, Saul, Christina, Heraclius, Paulinus, and Venedimus, 570

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Timothy and Mavra, 116

T

Memory of the Blessed Thaisia, 304

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Theodora and Didymus, 717

Memory of the Holy Martyr Theodosia, 740

Passion of the Venerable Martyr Theodosia, 742

U

Uncovering and Translation of the Honorable Relics of Alexis, Metropolitan of All Russia and Wonderworker, 597

V

Passion of the Holy Martyr Vata, 71