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

Июнь

JUNE

Book VI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Read online, with audio: saints.theuncreatedlight.com

Built November 2026.

CONTENTS

June 1. Life and Martyrdom of St. Justin the Philosopher 7

June 2. Life of Our Holy Father Nicephorus the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople 32

June 3. Memory of the Holy Martyr Lucillian, and with him the Four Youths Claudius, Hypatius, Paul and Dionysius, and of the Holy Virgin Paula 60

June 4. Memory of our holy father Metrophanes, Patriarch of Constantinople 77

June 5. Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre 93

June 6. Life of our Venerable Father Bessarion 103

June 7. Suffering of the Hieromartyr Marcellus, Pope of Rome, and Those With Him 119

June 8. Life of Our Holy Father Ephraim, Patriarch of Antioch. 139

June 9. Life of Our Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria 149

June 10. Life of Our Holy Father Vassian, Bishop of Lodi. 174

June 11. Life and Sufferings of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew. 198

June 12. Life of Our Venerable Father Onuphrius the Great 224

June 13. Passion of the Holy Martyr Akylina 262

June 14. Life and Miracles of the Holy Prophet Elisha 275

June 15. Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Amos 310

June 16. Life of Our Holy Father Tikhon, Wonderworker, Bishop of Amathus 373

June 17. Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Manuel, Savel and Ismail 378

June 18. Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Leontius, Hypatius and Theodulus 388

June 19. Memory of the Holy Apostle Jude, Brother of the Lord According to the Flesh 400

June 20. Life of Our Father among the Saints, Leucius the Confessor. . . . 446

June 21. Memory of the Holy Martyr Julian of Tarsus 463

June 22. Life and Sufferings of the Holy Hieromartyr Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata 472

June 23. Memory of the Holy Martyr Agrippina 483

June 24. Synaxarion for the Nativity of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord 502
June 25. Life and Passion of the Holy Venerable Martyr Febronia. 516
June 26. Appearance of the Wonderworking Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos Called "of Tikhvin" 547
June 27. Life of Our Venerable Father Sampson the Hospitable 588
June 28. Translation of the Honored Relics of the Holy Martyrs Cyrus and John 601
June 29. Life, Labors, and Sufferings of the Holy and Glorious, All-Praised, Chief Apostle Peter. 610
June 30. Synaxis of the Holy, Glorious and All-Praised Twelve Apostles:. 656
Index of Saints and Feasts 657

THE FIRST DAY OF JUNE

June 1

1 июня

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

Life and Martyrdom of St. Justin the Philosopher

Житие и страдание святого мученика Иустина Философа

The holy martyr of Christ, Justin the Philosopher, was born in Palestinian Syria, within the bounds of Samaria, in the city which was first called Sichem and afterwards[1] Neapolis Flavil[2]. His father, named Priscus, was a noble pagan; and Justin himself was a pagan as well, until he was enlightened by the light of the holy faith. Inspired by the love of truth, from his youth he applied himself diligently to book-learning, and by virtue of a keen mind he advanced in the sciences taught in the Greek pagan schools. Having acquired the art of eloquence, he felt a desire for philosophy, and at first became a disciple of a certain philosopher, a Stoic[3], in order to learn what the teaching of the Stoics consisted of. Justin burned with desire to gain a conception of God; but, having spent some time with the Stoic philosopher, he learned nothing from him about God, for the Stoic did not know God and did not consider the teaching about Him necessary. Then Justin left this teacher and went to another philosopher, one of those called Peripatetics[4], who was considered a sage. Only a few days had passed before this philosopher began to haggle with Justin about a fee, not wishing to teach him for nothing. Seeing the avarice of his teacher, Justin felt contempt for him as for a usurer, and decided that this

1. After the conquest of Palestine by the Romans (1st century A.D.).
2. Present-day Nablus.
3. The founder of Stoic teaching was Zeno (3rd century B.C.); it was chiefly practical and aimed to teach mastery over the passions and indifference in all circumstances of life.
4. The Peripatetics were followers of Aristotle (4th century B.C.); they taught that all knowledge has its origin in experience.

teacher was not worthy even to be called a philosopher, since he was unacquainted with contempt for worldly riches. Having rejected, for the reasons indicated, the Stoics and the Peripatetics, Justin, driven by his unsatisfied longing for true philosophy, which leads to the knowledge of God, wished to choose as his teacher a certain well-known Pythagorean philosopher[5]. The latter found that Justin must first of all study astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, music and certain other sciences, which he considered necessary for earthly life. But Justin reasoned that the study of these sciences would require many years, whereas the soul would derive no benefit from them; and, hearing nothing from this teacher either that might satisfy the desire of his heart, which with each day was more and more inflamed by divine love, Justin also left him. Then he turned to one of the Platonists[6], whose teaching at that time was in great glory and esteem; the Platonic philosopher promised to teach him the knowledge of incorporeal objects by means of the likeness of corporeal ones, higher knowledge by means of the likeness of lower things, and the understanding of God by means of the understanding of the Ideas, for the supposed goal of this Platonic teaching was the passage from the knowledge of the Ideas to the understanding of God. The blessed Justin gladly inclined to this path, hoping to attain the object of his striving, the divine wisdom which gives the knowledge of God and fills one with His grace. He spent a considerable time with the Platonist teacher, quickly mastered the doctrines and precepts of Plato, and attained perfection and renown as a Hellenic philosopher. But by this path Justin could not yet attain the true Christian knowledge of God, for the Greek philosophers, honoring the incorruptible God under the corruptible image of men, birds, four-footed beasts and reptiles, glorified Him not as He deserved. Nevertheless, Justin found some spiritual consolation in exercising himself in contemplation of God and in learning the knowledge of God, as far as his mind, not yet enlightened by the true teaching, could grasp it.

5. The character of Pythagoras' teaching (5th century B.C.) is evident from the instruction given to Justin by a Pythagorean.

6. Plato (4th century B.C.) acknowledged as innate the ideas of God, truth, and goodness, the independent existence of the soul, and so forth. His teaching is closer to Christianity than are the other ancient philosophical teachings.

Once, while walking outside the city, in a secluded place near the sea and pondering in his mind various philosophical teachings, Justin saw an unknown, venerable old man, white with gray hair. As he looked attentively at the elder, the latter said:

"Do you know me, that you look at me so attentively?"

"I do not know you," answered Justin, "but I am surprised to see you in this deserted place, where I did not expect to meet anyone."

"My kinsmen," said the elder, "have gone in that direction; awaiting their return, I came out to meet them, that I might see them from afar. But what are you doing here?"

Justin answered:

"I love to walk in solitude, so that I may reflect on philosophy without hindrance."

"What benefit, then, do you gain from philosophy?" asked the elder.

Justin answered:

"What can be found more useful than philosophy? It is the enlightener of the mind, the guide and instructor in every reasoning, the director of life; he who knows it well sees, as in a mirror, the ignorance and error of others; without the teaching of philosophy and the right use of reason, wisdom cannot exist. Therefore every man ought to learn philosophy, that he may know what is beneficial and what is not, what to hold to and what to reject."

"But does philosophy bring happiness to man?" asked the elder.

Justin answered:

"Certainly it does."

"Tell me, then, what philosophy is, and wherein its happiness lies."

"Philosophy," answered Justin, "is the understanding of all that exists and the knowledge of truth; in possessing this same understanding and wisdom consists the happiness which philosophy brings."

The elder asked:

"If truth is known by means of right philosophical understanding, what do you say about God?"

Justin answered:

"Being which never changes, but always abides in one and the same state, the first cause of all existence: this is how I think of God."

The elder liked this answer, and he continued his questions:

"Is there one common reason for all that exists? For of one who is skilled in some art we say that he understands that art: whether it be land-surveying, navigation or medicine; is it not the same with respect to other divine and human things? Tell me further: is there such a reason from which comes the knowledge of things both divine and human?"

"Truly there is," answered Justin.

"Is it the same thing to understand God as to understand music, arithmetic, astronomy, or something similar?"

"Not at all. To understand God is one thing, to know some art is another."

"You answered well," said the elder. "Some knowledge we obtain either by hearing and instruction, or by contemplating an object with our own eyes. If, for example, someone told you that in India there is a certain beast, not resembling any other beasts, but wholly different from them in its various properties, then, not having seen it with your own eyes, you could not know of it; and not having first heard an account of this beast yourself, you could not tell another about it either. Now I ask you: how can your Hellenic philosophers rightly understand God and affirm anything true about Him, if they have never seen Him, have never heard Him, and therefore have no knowledge of Him whatever?"

Justin answered:

"Father! The power of the Divinity is not seen with bodily eyes, as man beholds any earthly living creatures; but God can be grasped by the mind alone, as Plato says, whose teaching I follow."

The elder asked:

"Is there not in our mind some power of such qualities and so mighty that by means of it we could grasp the invisible more readily than we know any thing by the bodily senses?"

Justin answered:

"Truly there is such a power; Plato calls it the eye of the mind, which, according to his teaching, is given to man for this purpose: that, purified and enlightened by the teaching of the love of wisdom, it may contemplate the most divine truth, the cause of all things grasped by

the mind. But this truth has no definite form, or any likeness, or age, or anything accessible to the bodily eyes; it is a Being above all beings, incomprehensible, unutterable, a union of goodness and beauty; and by this very Being there has been planted from the beginning in noble souls the desire to know Him, for He loves it when such souls know and contemplate Him."

It was pleasing to the elder to hear such words; yet he was still not fully satisfied with this discourse of Justin about God according to the teaching of Plato, as imperfect for lack of the Christian confession. Not approving of Plato, he said:

"If Plato teaches as you confess, then why did he himself not know and grasp the truth of God? Affirming that God is invisible and incomprehensible, he worshipped visible creation, the heavens, the stars, trees and stones carved into human likeness, as God Himself; and, turning the truth of God into a lie, he adhered to idol-worship and taught others the same. I do not think that Plato and the other Hellenic philosophers possessed a right reason capable of attaining the true knowledge of God: 'they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools' (Rom. 1:21–22). In a word, I will say this: the human mind, not instructed by the Holy Spirit and not enlightened by faith, is wholly incapable of knowing and understanding God."

Thus the elder spoke much of this kind about right knowledge of God, true worship of God, and other divine matters, exposing the error of the Hellenic philosophers. Marveling at the elder's words, Justin asked:

"Where, and from what teacher, can one find instruction in the truth, if there is no truth in Plato and the other philosophers?"

Then the elder began to tell him of the holy prophets, saying:

In the most ancient times, long before all the philosophers, there were certain holy and righteous men, pleasing to God, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, foretold what is now coming to pass; these men are called prophets. They alone, before all others, knew the truth, and in proclaiming it to men they were not embarrassed before anyone and feared no one; no one could persuade them to depart from the truth by

a single word, and vain glory could not overcome them. Concerning everything that they contemplated or heard from God in the revelations granted to them, they spoke simply, truthfully and without fear. Their writings exist even now; whoever reads them with faith is greatly benefited by them, and his mind is enlightened to the knowledge of the truth. These holy prophets confirm their words not by cleverness of speech, nor by any sophistical[7] arguments or deductions, but in simple discourse they utter the very truth, for they themselves, apart from all sophistical arguments, are the most trustworthy witnesses of the truth, as those who believed in the one true God, the Creator of all that exists, and who foretold the coming into the world of His Son, the Lord Christ. And assuredly the prophets deserve belief, since some of their predictions have already been fulfilled and others are being fulfilled now. The truth of some of their predictions they also confirmed by miracles, performing marvelous deeds by the power of divine grace granted to them from on high, which false prophets, not appointed by God, could never perform, but only terrified men with certain demonic apparitions and deceptions.

Thus a blessed man unknown to him conversed with Justin, and at last said to him:

“First of all, pray diligently to the true God, that He may open to you the gates of light, for only he can contemplate and understand the Divine whom God Himself deigns to grant a revelation; and He reveals Himself to everyone who seeks Him in prayer and draws near to Him in love.”

Having said this, the elder withdrew from him and became invisible; never afterwards, anywhere, could Justin again find or see this man. Concerning his heartfelt feelings after the elder's departure, Justin himself, in a conversation with the renowned Jew Trypho, related as follows:

"A certain fire was kindled within me, inflaming my spirit with longing for God, and there grew in me a love for the holy prophets and for

7. The Sophists denied the possibility of certain knowledge of things and undertook to prove any idea, even a false one. Hence the term “sophism”: a correct conclusion drawn from a false premise.

those men who are the friends of Christ. Reflecting on the words of the elder, I came to know that the philosophy he proclaimed is alone true; I began to read the prophetic and apostolic books, and from them I truly became a philosopher, that is, a true Christian."

Having related this about himself afterwards to Trypho, the blessed Justin at the same time recalled the beginning of his conversion to God, when, being instructed in the right way by an unknown man, as though sent from heaven.

After the soul-profitable conversation with the God-inspired elder, Justin immediately turned to the Christian books and with heartfelt diligence began to read the Divine Scriptures. He compared the ancient prophecies of the Sibyls[8] with the predictions of the holy prophets concerning the incarnation of Christ from the Most Pure Virgin, concerning His voluntary sufferings, concerning the future judgment and the end of the visible world; seeing complete agreement between them, he marveled, and gradually, under the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit, came to a more perfect knowledge of God and of the Son of God. Day by day his soul's striving toward piety grew stronger, and inclining toward the Christian faith, he condemned in himself the Hellenic madness. At that time a considerable obstacle to the good intentions of a soul striving toward Christian piety was the frequent and savage persecutions of Christians, as well as the many shameful, unspeakable, dishonorable slanders of vices falsely attributed to Christians by the pagans, namely that the Christians, in their nocturnal (prayer) assemblies, extinguishing the lamps, at the same time extinguish the light of purity, defiling one another with impurity, and like beasts eat human flesh. By such and similar vile accusations the pagans and Jews brought dishonor upon innocent Christians before all peoples. The lies of impious and senseless men were believed as though they were the truth itself; and all unbelievers hated the Christians, righteous and holy men, loathed them, despised them and turned away from them as great lawbreakers guilty of grievous sins, and delivered the Christians to

8. The Sibyls were prophetesses of the future among the Greeks and Romans. The prophecies attributed to them indicate with considerable clarity various circumstances of the Savior's earthly life.

death after many and various tortures. These circumstances at first hindered Justin in his intention to join the Christians; yet he did not give particular credence to the accusations brought against the Christians, knowing well that often by the unreasoning judgment of the people the innocent are condemned as guilty, the pure are dishonored as debauchers, and the righteous are regarded as sinners. Seeing, however, that the Christians fearlessly gave answers in the courts, bravely endured torments, despised all the visible goods of this world as refuse, willingly offered themselves to torment for their Lord, and hastened to death as to a feast, Justin reasoned within himself:

"It is untrue, what they say about the Christians, that they commit such lawless deeds: a sinner sunk in unrestrained sensual pleasures, who from lust consumes human flesh, does not endure torments, does not voluntarily offer himself to wounds, but avoids them; and when he is brought before any court, he strives in every way to escape and spares no means to buy off punishment, so that afterwards he may live without pain and, enjoying bodily health, indulge his passions still more. Not so are the Christians: freely choosing suffering for Christ, in whom they believe, and preferring death to life, can they really love sin so much?"

Reasoning thus, he carefully inquired into the life of the Christians and became fully convinced that they abide in the fear of the Lord in purity and blamelessness, diligently keep their chastity, constantly mortify themselves by fasting and abstinence, pray often and always exercise themselves in every good work. Having become convinced of all this, Justin greatly loved the Christians with all his heart, became attached to them, and received holy Baptism. And he became a great champion of the Christian faith, a fighter by word and writing against the Hellenes and the Jews, an invincible warrior of Christ, a steadfast and courageous ascetic.

Striving for the salvation of human souls, he traveled through various lands, teaching and preaching the name of Christ, turning unbelievers from their error to God. He came also to Rome[9] as a philosopher, in

9. Rome, the chief city of the Roman state, lies in the central part of Italy on both banks of the River Tiber, near its mouth.

philosophical garb, together with his disciples. Since many gathered to him for instruction, he established schools and, under the guise of outward wisdom, taught the true Christian philosophy. There he met Marcion[10], the founder of a heresy, and vigorously opposed him, refuted him, and wrote books against his heresies as well as against other heretical teachings. There in Rome also was a certain pagan philosopher, a Cynic, Crescens[11], a great enemy of the Christians; with this impious philosopher the true Christian philosopher, holy Justin, unceasingly contended in word and wrote books against him. This Cynic, himself living impurely and very lawlessly, hated the Christians for their chaste life according to God, and envied the good reputation of Justin, who, on account of his God-inspired wisdom and pure, blameless life, enjoyed honorable fame among all the Romans. In his malice the Cynic slandered the Christians, accusing them of many shameful deeds, in order to dishonor Justin together with his co-religionists in the eyes of the people and to arouse aversion toward them. Hearing and seeing this, holy Justin said:

"I am ready to suffer for the faith of Christ and to endure death at the hands of unbelievers; and I think that it will overtake me through this Crescens the Cynic, a madman who loves pride more than wisdom, who is unworthy of the name of philosopher, for he dares to assert what he does not truly know, namely that the Christians are godless (have no God) and do many impure and lawless things; thus out of hatred and malice he reviles us, and is worse than common people, for the latter do not dare to say anything about things they do not know."

At that time Antoninus[12], the successor of Hadrian, reigned in Rome. Antoninus himself was not embittered against the Christians; nevertheless, by force of the decrees of earlier emperors, the impious

10. Marcion belonged to the heretical Gnostics and taught that the visible world was created not by God, but by His lower powers; he rejected the Old Testament.

11. The Cynics (the founder of their teaching was Antisthenes, 4th century B.C.) carried the teaching of simplicity of life to extremes, rejecting science, art, and all external culture.

12. Two apologies by St. Justin are known. In the first, written no earlier than 150 and consisting of 68 chapters, he sought to obtain the protection of Emperor Antoninus for Christians; in the second, written about 162, he sought to incline Marcus Aurelius to treat Christians more gently. In his apologies Justin the Philosopher speaks "in the name of the Christians, unjustly hated and persecuted."

idolaters who governed the people persecuted and killed the Christians out of great hatred toward them, and also out of greed, in order to plunder their estates. And not so much for confessing the name of Christ as on false, calumnious accusations of many lawless deeds, they brought the faithful to trial, interrogated them under fabricated slanders, and executed them by various kinds of death. At this time there occurred in Rome the following event: a certain pagan woman, who lived in impurity, heard from the Christians the word about the true God and the teaching about a chaste life, about the recompense of the righteous and the torment of sinners; she was moved in soul and believed in Christ. She earnestly admonished her husband, a zealous idolater sunk in carnal impurity, desiring to instruct him toward a life of self-restraint and to turn him to the true faith. When she saw that she was wholly unable to amend him, she sought means to dissolve the marital union with him, so that they would no longer live together and she would no longer be defiled by impurity. Her husband, learning which Christian had taught his wife the Christian faith, went to the city governor to complain of the Christian, whose name was Ptolemy. The servant of Christ Ptolemy was seized, kept for a long time in a foul prison, and, brought to trial, was condemned to death by the governor. During this unrighteous trial there stood a certain man named Lucius, and seeing that the blessed Ptolemy was condemned though innocent, he said to the unjust judge:

"For what fault, governor, are you delivering to death a man who is innocent of death? He is not an adulterer, not a ravisher, not a murderer, not a thief, not a plunderer, nor is he convicted of any other lawless deed. His sole fault is that he has confessed himself a Christian."

Looking sternly at the speaker, the governor asked with malice:

"And are you not also among the Christians?"

Lucius answered:

"Yes, I am a Christian."

Then the governor commanded that he too be put to death. A third man, their friend, who openly confessed himself a Christian, joined these two Christians; and all three laid down their souls for Christ.

Blessed Justin, learning of this unjust slaying of the saints, was filled with sorrow; he wrote a scroll, or apology[13], proving the innocence of the Christians, and handed it to the emperor, his sons, and the entire Senate, fearlessly prepared for torments and death for Christ. The emperor read this scroll attentively, marveled at the wisdom of the Christian philosopher, and not only was not angered at him or put him to death, but even praised his reason. In this scroll Justin exposed the falsity of the pagan gods, clearly depicted the omnipotence of Christ, proved that the accusations brought against the Christians were false, and that their life was chaste and righteous. Moved, the emperor commanded that the Christians not be tormented for confessing the name of Christ and that their property not be plundered, except in cases of crimes truly deserving condemnation and execution.

Saint Justin recorded this imperial command; dismissed by the emperor, he went with his consent to Asia, where the Christians were then especially subjected to persecution. Clad in the philosopher's garb, which he did not lay aside until his death, Justin came to Ephesus[14], proclaimed and explained the emperor's command to all, and sent it into the surrounding lands and cities. Quiet came upon the Church of Christ, the persecution ceased for a time, and there was great joy for the faithful. While at Ephesus, Saint Justin held disputations with the wise Jewish rabbi Trypho and gained the victory by appealing to the Old Testament Scripture; of this disputation, as of the aforementioned apology, there is an extensive account in the book of Justin[15].

Having spent a good deal of time in Ephesus, he returned again to Italy and, following the example of the Apostles, preached Christ

13. Valiant men who, in the days of the grievous persecutions of Christians in the second and third centuries, came forward before the Roman government and society as literary defenders of the Christians and as denouncers of paganism, are known in church history under the name of Apologists, that is, defenders, and their writings bear the common title of Apologies. The following Apologists are known in the history of the Christian Church: in the East, Aristides, Quadratus, Melito, Bishop of Sardis, Tatian, Athenogenes, Miltiades, St. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch; in the West, Minucius Felix, Quintus Septimius Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius, and St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage.

14. Ephesus was the chief city of the Asia Minor province of Asia, situated on the river Cayster. At present, on the site of ancient Ephesus stands a poor Turkish village called Sejsa-Selyuk.

15. "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew."

everywhere along the way, converted Jews and Greeks to the holy faith by means of disputations, and confirmed the faithful in it. When he came to Rome, there rose against him with the greatest hatred and fiercest malice the Hellenic philosopher, the Cynic Crescens, already mentioned; Saint Justin often held disputations with him, always defeated him and put him to shame before all. Unable to withstand Justin and not knowing what else to do, the malicious Crescens brought many false charges against him before the Roman court. The saint was seized and, as one guilty deserving punishment, was tormented in chains and tortured at trial; but no guilt was found in him. The envious man, fearing that Justin would be released to freedom, secretly prepared a deadly poison, by means of which, by deceit, he deprived the invincible warrior of Christ of his life.

Thus died[16] the true Christian philosopher Saint Justin, leaving behind many writings, very useful to the Church of Christ and filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit[17]. Standing before Christ the Lord, the Giver of the contest, he received from Him the crown of suffering and was numbered in the choir of holy martyrs, glorifying the Holy Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, forever, amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

With the wisdom of thy divine words, O Justin, the Church of God, adorned throughout, illumines the world with the brightness of thy life; and through thine outpouring of blood thou hast received the crown, and standing with the Angels before Christ, intercede unceasingly for us all.

* * *

16. In the years 165–166.

17. Besides those mentioned, the following works of St. Justin were known to the ancients: "Remarks on the Soul," and also "Refutation against the Greeks" and "Discourse against the Greeks," which contained a denunciation of paganism. St. John of Damascus preserved a considerable part of Justin's work "On the Resurrection," which has not come down to us. The well-known church historian Eusebius asserts that Justin wrote a book called "The Singer," "A Refutation of All the Heresies That Have Existed," and a book "Against Marcion." Justin the Philosopher himself mentions in his First Apology his work against heresies. The most remarkable production of Justin the Philosopher was the dialogue against the Jews entitled "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew."

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Justin and His Companions

Страдание святого мученика Иустина и дружины его

At the time when the idolaters, in all lands and cities, issued an impious decree against the pious Christians who keep the good law, that every believer in Christ should be compelled to offer sacrifice to the idols, the holy martyrs Justin, Chariton and Charita (a woman), Evelpistus, Hierax, Paeon and Valerian were seized, brought to Rome, and presented for trial before the city governor Rusticus. He said to Justin:

"Obey the gods and the imperial commands, so that you do not fall under condemnation."

Saint Justin answered him:

"No one can ever be condemned if he obeys the commandments of our Savior Jesus Christ."

"What doctrine do you hold?" asked the governor.

Justin answered:

"I diligently studied all the external teachings and attained skill in every kind of knowledge, but afterward I joined the true Christian teaching, even though it is not approved by those who err in unrighteous thinking."

Then Rusticus said:

"So you, wretched man, love teachings contrary to our way of thinking?"

"Yes, I love them," answered Saint Justin, "for I follow the righteous teaching of the Christians."

"What is this teaching?"

"The right teaching, which we Christians keep inviolably, is this: to know the one God, Maker and Creator of all things visible and invisible, and to confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, foretold of old by the prophets, who will come to judge the human race. He is the Proclaimer of salvation and the Teacher of those who desire to be established in virtue. Concerning His infinite Divinity I, a feeble man, the least of all, cannot speak with sufficient power; but I confess that this

was foretold by the prophets, who for many centuries foreproclaimed the descent to earth of Him whom I have named the Son of God."

The governor asked:

"Where do the Christians gather?"

Justin answered:

"Each one goes where he wishes and is able. Do you think we all gather in one place? That is impossible: for the Christian God does not dwell in any place, but, being invisible, fills heaven and earth; everywhere the faithful worship Him, and His glory is proclaimed everywhere."

The governor said:

"Nevertheless, tell us where you gather, and where you assemble your disciples." Justin answered:

"Until now I have lived near the house of a certain Martin, by the bath called Timiotinus; but I came to the city of Rome a second time, and I know of no other place besides the one named. Whoever wished to come to me, I joined to the true teaching."

"So you are a Christian?" asked Rusticus.

"Yes, I am a Christian," answered Justin. Then the governor turned to Chariton:

"And are you not a Christian?"

Saint Chariton answered:

"By the help of God, I too am a Christian."

Then Rusticus asked the blessed woman Charita whether she also followed the Christian faith; Charita likewise declared herself a Christian, by the grace of God. Then Rusticus asked Evelpistus:

"And who are you?"

"I am a servant of the emperor," he answered, "but, as a Christian, Christ Himself has granted me freedom; by His mercy and grace I have become a partaker of the same hope as those whom you see."

Then the governor asked Hierax whether he too was a Christian. Hierax answered him:

"Truly, I too am a Christian, for I honor the same God and worship Him."

"Did Justin make you Christians?" asked the governor.

Hierax answered:

"I was and shall be a Christian."

Saint Paeon, who was also there, said:

"I too am a Christian."

"Who taught you Christianity?"

"From my parents I received this good confession," answered Paeon.

Then Evelpistus said:

"I too received instruction in Christianity from my parents, and hearing the words of Justin I was still more strengthened in the Christian faith."

"Where are your parents?" asked the governor.

"In Cappadocia."

Then the governor asked Hierax:

"In what country do your parents live?"

Hierax answered him:

“Our true Father is Christ, and our mother is faith in Him; my earthly parents have reposed, and I came here from Iconium in Phrygia.”

The governor turned to Valerian, urging him also to answer:

"You too are a Christian, and you do not zealously serve the gods?"

Valerian answered:

"I too am a Christian; I honor and worship the one true God, and I despise your gods."

Again the governor turned to Justin:

"You there, who call yourself eloquent and consider yourself a follower of the true teaching: if you were to be covered with sores from head to foot, do you think you would thereby enter heaven?"

Justin answered:

"If I endure the torment you speak of, I hope to receive from my Lord the same reward as is prepared for those who have kept the teaching of Christ; for I know that all who have lived piously and suffered in any way for God are awaited by the hidden grace of God until the end of the whole world."

To this the city prefect Rusticus said:

"So you intend to ascend to heaven and receive some reward from your God?"

"I do not intend it," replied Justin, "but I know it for certain, and I hope for it without doubt."

Rusticus said:

"Let us, however, come to the business before us: gather together, all of you, and offer sacrifice to the gods."

To this Justin replied:

"No one who reasons soundly will choose to forsake piety and fall into error and lawlessness."

The city prefect Rusticus said:

"If you do not obey our commands, you will suffer torments without any mercy."

Justin answered:

"Truly we desire to suffer torments for our Lord Jesus Christ and so be saved, for these torments will obtain for us salvation and boldness at His Dreadful Judgment, before which, by the command of God, the whole world shall appear."

All the other holy martyrs spoke likewise, adding:

"Carry out your intention quickly; we are Christians, and we will not offer sacrifice to idols."

Having heard this, the prefect pronounced sentence:

"Those who do not wish to offer sacrifice to the gods and submit to the imperial command shall be punished with rods and led to execution by beheading, as the Roman laws prescribe."

Thus the holy martyrs, glorifying God, were led to the customary place of execution, received their wounds, and, struck down by the axe, ended their suffering in saving confession. Afterwards some of the faithful secretly took their honorable bodies and buried them in a worthy place, with the assistance of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

Life of Our Venerable Father Agapitus of the Kiev Caves, the Unmercenary Physician

Житие преподобного отца нашего Агапита Печерского, безмездного врача

When our Venerable Father Antony of the Kiev Caves was glorified with the gift of healing, the blessed Agapitus came to him in the cave from Kiev, desiring to receive healing of soul through tonsure into the monastic rank; having obtained what he desired, he followed with all his heart the angel-like life of Venerable Antony, being guided also by his instructions. Agapitus was an eyewitness of how this great man himself served the sick and healed them by his prayer, while concealing the gift given to his prayer, and handed to the infirm, under the guise of medicine, herbs from his own food. Seeing this, the blessed Agapitus began to emulate the holy elder in his struggles, and labored in this way for many years. When any of the brethren fell ill, the blessed one would leave his cell, in which there was nothing that could be stolen, go to the sick brother and serve him: he lifted him up, laid him down, carried him in his arms, and unceasingly prayed God for the healing of the infirm. If the illness sometimes lingered, it was so that the Lord might increase the faith and strengthen the prayer of His servant Agapitus. Imitating the struggles of Venerable Antony, the blessed Agapitus was vouchsafed to share with him in an equal grace: by his prayer he healed all the sick, also giving them herbs which he boiled into his own food, for which he was in fact called the physician. Concerning him a report spread through Kiev, and many sick people came to him and departed healthy.

At that time there lived in Kiev a certain physician, an Armenian by birth and faith, so skilled in his craft that formerly there had been no equal to him. It was enough for him to look at a man sick with a mortal illness for him at once to recognize and announce the day and hour of his death, and always without error; such a patient he would by no means undertake to heal. One of the sick of this kind, the first boyar of Grand Prince Vsevolod[18], whom the Armenian had cast into despair by

18. Vsevolod Yaroslavich reigned for the first time for six months (1075–1076), and for the second time from 1078 to 1093.

predicting death within eight days, was brought to the Kiev Caves Monastery. But the blessed Agapitus, offering prayer for him, gave him herbs in his food, which he himself partook of, and healed him; and immediately word of it went through all the Russian land. The Armenian, wounded by the arrow of envy, began to reproach the blessed one, and sent to the Kiev Caves Monastery a man condemned to death, who was to take poison before Agapitus and die. The blessed one, seeing this man dying, gave him, with prayer for him, of the herb which he himself partook of, and by this delivered from death the one condemned to die. From then on the Armenian took especial arms against the blessed one, and persuaded his co-religionists to give Agapitus himself a drink mixed with deadly poison; the blessed one took it and remained unharmed. "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation" (2 Pet. 2:9), according to His word: "if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" (Mk. 16:18).

Afterwards Prince Vladimir Monomakh, son of Vsevolod, fell ill in Chernigov[19]. The Armenian, though he diligently treated him, did so without success, so that the illness grew more and more. Already at the point of death, the prince asked the then Hegumen of the Kiev Caves, John, to send for the blessed Agapitus to come to Chernigov to heal him. The hegumen summoned him and informed him of the prince's request; but the blessed Agapitus, whom no one had yet seen going out through the gates to heal outside the monastery, said humbly:

"If I go to the prince for this matter, I must go to everyone. I beg you, Father, do not urge me to go out beyond the monastery gates for the sake of human glory, which I promised before God to avoid until my last breath. If you permit, I would rather withdraw to another country, and afterwards return here again when this need has passed."

The prince's messenger, convinced that he would not be able to summon the blessed Agapitus himself to his lord, began to ask that he at least give herbs for healing. At the persuasion of the hegumen, the blessed one gave the messenger herbs from his food; they were brought

19. Vladimir Vsevolodovich then reigned in Kiev from 1114 to 1125.

to the prince, who partook of them and at once recovered, through the prayers of the blessed one.

Then Prince Vladimir Monomakh came himself to the Kiev Caves Monastery, desiring to see the one through whom God had restored his health; he had never before met the blessed one, and now wished to honor him by generously rewarding him. But Agapitus, not desiring earthly glory, hid himself; then the prince gave the hegumen the gold he had brought for the man of God. But a little time later the same Vladimir again sent one of his boyars with many gifts to the blessed Agapitus. The messenger found the holy Agapitus in his cell and placed the prince's gifts before him. The blessed one said to him:

"Child, I have never, from anyone, taken anything (for healing), because I healed not by my own power but by Christ's; I do not require this now either."

The boyar answered:

"Father, he who sent me knows that you require nothing; but I beg you to accept this, to comfort your son, to whom through you God has granted health; and if you wish, give the gift to the poor."

The elder answered him:

"If you say so, I will accept it with joy. Tell him who sent you that the rest of what he has is also not his own, and he will take nothing with him when he parts from life; therefore let him give the remainder too to the poor. For the Lord Himself, who dwells among the destitute, delivered him from death; I of myself would have had no success at all. And I ask that he not disobey these my instructions, lest he suffer more grievously."

With such words the blessed Agapitus took the gold brought to him and went out of the cell with it, as though to hide it; he went out and threw it down, and himself ran off and hid. A little time later the boyar came out, saw the gifts cast down before the gates, picked them up, and gave them to Hegumen John. Returning to the prince, he told him all that he had seen with the blessed one and all that he had heard from him; and everyone understood that this was a true servant of God, seeking his reward from God alone and not from men. The prince, not

daring to disobey the saint, began to distribute generous alms to the poor.

After many God-pleasing labors and struggles, the unmercenary physician himself, the blessed elder Agapitus, also fell ill. Learning of this, the aforementioned Armenian physician came to visit him and began to dispute with him about the healing art, asking by what remedy Agapitus's illness was being treated.

The blessed one answered:

"By that with which the Lord Himself, the physician of soul and body, bestows health."

The Armenian considered him wholly ignorant of healing and said to those accompanying him:

"He knows nothing of our art."

Then he took him by the hand and said:

"I tell you the truth: on the third day he will die; if my word should prove false, I will change my life and myself become such a monk."

The blessed one said with fervor:

"So this is the manner of your healing: to speak more of death than of help! If you are skilled, give me life; if you cannot, why do you belittle me and condemn me to death on the third day? The Lord has informed me that in three months I shall go to Him."

The Armenian said to him again:

"Look, you are already wholly changed; such men never survive longer than three days."

Saint Agapitus was indeed in extreme weakness, so that without outside help he could not even move. Meanwhile, to the blessed Agapitus, who was himself most gravely ill, they brought for healing a certain sick man from Kiev. The blessed one, with God's help, at once rose as though he had not been ill at all, took his usual herb which he partook of, and showed it to the Armenian, saying:

– Here is the herb with which I heal: look and understand.

Looking at it, the man said to the saint:

– This is not one of our herbs, but, I think, one from Alexandria.

The blessed one, reproving his ignorance, gave the sick man some of the herb to taste, prayed, and immediately restored him to health. Then he said to the Armenian:

– My son, I beg you, taste this herb with me, if you wish, for I have nothing else with which to entertain you.

– Father, – the Armenian answered him, – we fast for four days this month, and I am now keeping the fast.

Hearing this, the blessed one asked him:

– Who are you, and what is your faith?

He answered:

– Have you not heard of me, that I am an Armenian?

Then the blessed one said to him:

– How did you dare to enter here and defile my cell, and even to take hold of my sinful hand? Depart from me, you of another faith[20] and impious one.

And he departed, put to shame.

After this the blessed Agapitus lived, as he had foretold earlier, for three months, and, after a brief illness, departed unto the Lord. Having been an unmercenary physician on earth, he received a great reward in heaven, where there is no sickness. The brethren prepared his venerable body for burial and, with the customary chanting, laid it in the cave of Venerable Anthony[21]. After the saint's repose, the Armenian came to the Monastery of the Kiev Caves and said to the abbot:

– Henceforth I renounce the Armenian heresy and truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for Whom I desire to labor in the holy monastic order. The blessed Agapitus appeared to me and said:

– You promised to take the monastic habit; if you lie, you will destroy both your life and your soul. I believe that he who appeared to me

20. The Armenians adhere to the Monophysite heresy condemned by the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon (451), and reject all the Ecumenical Councils that followed it. The essence of the Monophysite heresy consists in the teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ, born of two natures, does not abide in two, for the human nature in the Person of God the Word was so closely united with His Divine nature that it can be distinguished from it only in thought. In ancient Rus there generally existed the view of the Armenians as evil heretics: thus Metropolitan Cyprian (1376–1406), in his canonical responses, wrote to Abbot Athanasius: "The Armenian heresy is more abominable than all heresies; therefore an Orthodox Christian (that is, a Christian) ought to have no communion whatever with them."

is a saint, and if he had wished to live here longer, God would have granted it to him. I thought that he would not live beyond three days, but God added three months to his life; and had he wished, he would have lived three years. Yet I think that he himself, being a saint, desired to leave us, longing for the Kingdom of the saints; and if God removed him from this temporal life in this monastery, He granted him eternal life in the heavenly monasteries. Therefore I desire to fulfill the command of this holy man without delay.

The abbot, having listened to the Armenian, tonsured him into the monastic habit and long instructed the physician of bodies, that, following the blessed Agapitus, he might be skilled in the healing of his own soul. The Armenian lived in a manner pleasing to God and, having spent the remainder of his life in that same Monastery of the Kiev Caves, there too received a blessed end, entrusting his soul into the hands of the Physician of souls and bodies, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is glorified with the Father without beginning and with the Most Holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Dionysius, Abbot of Glushitsa, the New Wonderworker

Память преподобного отца нашего Дионисия, игумена Глушицкого, нового чудотворца

This Venerable Father Dionysius first struggled near a lake called Great Kubenskoye[22], lying fourteen versts[23] east of the city of Vologda. Later he left that place and, accompanied by a monk named Pachomius, began to visit many places in the vicinity of the said

21. Ven. Agapitus died not later than 1095; his relics rest in the cave of St. Anthony.

22. The Venerable Dionysius, in the world Demetrius, was born in 1362 in the vicinity of the city of Vologda. Nothing has been preserved concerning his parents or his life before he took the monastic vows. He was tonsured by Dionysius, abbot of the Monastery of the Savior-on-the-Stone, which was situated on Lake Kubena, and he labored in that monastery for nine years. Lake Kubena is called "Great" probably because it is the largest of all the lakes of the Vologda region.

23. A *poprishche* is a measure of distance equal to 690 sazhens.

lake, seeking a place where he might devote himself in solitude to the service of God. Venerable Dionysius and Pachomius came to a settlement called Luchitsa[24]; there they first built a cell for themselves, and soon afterward erected a church in the name of St. Nicholas, which they consecrated with the blessing of Gregory, Bishop of Rostov. After this, monks began to gather about them, wishing to live with them and struggle for the salvation of their souls. Having established a monastery at that place, Venerable Dionysius instituted the common life there and, afterward receiving the rank of priest,[25] began to offer sacrifice to the Lord in purity.

Soon afterward the Venerable One appointed his disciple, the aforesaid Pachomius, as superior of the monastery he had established; and, having bestowed the blessing of peace upon the brethren, he himself withdrew from the monastery fifteen poprishches to the River Glushitsa, where he stopped for the night. In a light sleep he heard what seemed to be a voice sounding in that desert place and calling him. He awoke at once, felt great joy, and, having prayed, planted in that place a cross which he had brought with him. Then, beneath a tree —which still grows within the monastery, bears black berries, and is called bird cherry—he built himself a small cell. A man suffering from a toothache ate a berry from this tree in faith and immediately felt himself healed. After this Venerable Dionysius gave himself in that place to strict abstinence, all-night vigils, fasting, and prayer. And after a short time monks began to come to him there, one after another, so that the number of his disciples increased. Seeing this, the Venerable One built there a church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos, Her Honorable Protection,[26] and established a monastery. Several years passed, and the number of monks increased so greatly that the church could no

24. The village of Luchitsa, otherwise called "St. Luke," was situated on the shore of Lake Kubena at the mouths of the river Kubena. Here, before the coming of the Venerable Dionysius, there existed a monastery fallen into desolation, and Dionysius restored it.

25. The Venerable Dionysius was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Gregory of Rostov, and, in the opinion of the Most Reverend Philaret (*Lives of the Saints*, June, p. 11), this took place even before the completion of the church at Luchitsa.

26. This church was built in 1403. Prince Demetrius of Kubena, wishing to render assistance to the Venerable Dionysius, sent his own master carpenters for its construction.

longer hold them; they began to ask St. Dionysius to build them another church, larger than this one. Fulfilling the brethren's request, the Venerable One built a new church,[27] much larger than the first, wondrously adorned it with icons,[28] supplied it with books, and diligently instructed the brethren, teaching them what would profit their souls.

One day, as the Venerable One was preparing to go to church for the divine service, a multitude of demons attacked him. Gnashing their teeth, they began to beat him; then, lifting up the floor, they laid him beneath it and said to him:

– Leave this place, or you will die an evil death!

But the Venerable One overcame their feeble power by prayer, and they vanished at once. Meanwhile, when the brethren did not see the saint, they went to his cell and found him pinned down beneath the floorboards. They lifted the floor, whereupon he said to them:

– You see, brethren, what struggle our enemies wage against us; but let this not frighten us.

After this Venerable Dionysius secretly left the monastery and came to a desert place, four poprishches south of the great Lavra[29], on the bank of that same River Glushitsa, called Sosnovets. There he erected a church in the name of John the Baptist[30], built cells, and moved some of the brethren from his monastery to this place. He told them that his body would be buried there, and instructed them to obtain everything necessary for his maintenance from the great Lavra. At this last place of his ascetic struggles, seven years before his repose, the Venerable One dug his own grave, so that every day it might remind him of the hour when his body would be laid in it. From that time he redoubled his God-pleasing labors in fasting, prayer, and vigil, and many times stood all night in the frost, afflicting his flesh thereby. Having wrought many

27. This second church was built nine years after the first, in 1412.

28. The Venerable Dionysius himself painted icons, being a skilled artist. Icons painted by his hand have been preserved to this day. Thus, in the Priluki Monastery an icon of the Venerable Demetrius painted by him is shown; in the Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery, in the iconostasis of the cathedral, there is an image of the Venerable Cyril, also of his work, and others.

29. This is the name given here to the Monastery of the Protection (Pokrov), from which the Venerable withdrew.

30. This church was built in 1420.

miracles by the power of Christ and, before his soul's departure, received the Most Pure Body and Blood, Venerable Dionysius departed into eternal rest."[31]

Troparion, Tone 1:

Kindled from thy youth by divine love, O Venerable Dionysius, thou didst hate all the beauties of the world and love Christ alone; therefore thou didst dwell in the inner wilderness, living with the beasts, wholly given to Christ.[32] *Wherefore the all-seeing Eye,*[33] *beholding thy labors, enriched thee with the gift of miracles even after thy repose. Therefore we cry unto thee: pray unceasingly for us all, who ever honor thy venerable memory in song.*

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Fixing all thy spiritual desire upon God, thou didst follow Him steadfastly from thy soul, dwelling in the wilderness; and there, living as an angel, thou didst become a path to salvation for many. Therefore Christ also glorified thee and enriched thee with the gift of miracles. Wherefore we all cry unto thee: Rejoice, O Venerable Dionysius, dweller in the wilderness.

* * *

✠

31. The Venerable Dionysius reposed at the age of 74, on Sunday, 1 June 1437. The Moscow Council, held in 1547 under Metropolitan Macarius, numbered him among the saints, and in the 16th century the first church was built in his name. His relics rest under a covering in the Sosnovets Monastery, in the church in honor of Sts. Dionysius and Amphilochius. In the monastery two icons are preserved, one of the Protection (Pokrov) and the other of the Sign of the Mother of God, both of which, according to tradition, were painted by the Venerable Dionysius. The Venerable's appearance was as follows: he was of low stature and very thin of body; his head was of considerable size; his eyebrows were semicircular; his face was oblong; his cheeks were sunken; his eyes were meek; his beard was thick and reached to his chest; his hair was light brown and partly gray.

32. "All for Christ" (*Ves Khristovi*), that is, he gave himself wholly to Christ and devoted all his strength to the fulfillment of the commandments of Christ.

33. "The all-seeing eye," that is, the all-seeing God.

THE SECOND DAY OF JUNE

June 2

2 июня

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

Life of Our Holy Father Nicephorus the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople

Житие во святых отца нашего Никифора Исповедника, патриарха Цареградского

A great champion of piety, St. Nicephorus was born in Constantinople[1] to pious and God-fearing parents, Theodore and Eudocia. His father was deemed worthy of the crown of confession, having endured wounds and exile for venerating the holy icons. During the reign of Copronymus,[2] he held the office of notary[3] in charge of secret imperial affairs, and a denunciation was made to the impious emperor that he piously venerated the holy icons and bowed before the image of the Savior, the Most Pure Mother of God, and all the saints. The emperor immediately summoned blessed Theodore to him, interrogated him, and, having confirmed the truth of the denunciation, long compelled him to abandon the veneration of icons. But when the servant of Christ would not submit to the emperor's will, after cruel beatings he was banished to the city of Moline and cast into a dreadful prison there, where he suffered for the true faith. Some time later he was summoned again to Constantinople and urged still more insistently to incline to the heresy preached by the emperor; but he remained firm in piety as an adamant,[4] choosing rather to suffer wounds and death

1. Constantinople, or Tsargrad, was the capital of the Byzantine, now Turkish, empire; it was founded by the Emperor Constantine the Great in the 4th century A.D. on the site of the former city of Byzantium.
2. Constantine V Copronymus reigned from 741 to 775.
3. *Notarius* properly means "shorthand writer." In the first centuries A.D. this was the name of the imperial secretaries who attested official acts. Under Constantine the Great a secret chancery of notaries was instituted, which kept the minutes of the most important state deliberations. The secretaries of the Patriarch of Constantinople were also called notaries.

than to violate the laws of the Church and the tradition of the holy fathers. At the command of the lawless emperor he was again subjected to various cruel torments and once more sent into exile. Having spent six years as a prisoner and sufferer in Nicaea,[5] he departed unto the Lord, into the eternal freedom of blessed life.

His wife, the honorable Eudocia, shared in all the hardships and misfortunes of her husband, followed him into exile, and suffered in bonds, never separated from him either in body or in spirit. After her husband's death she returned to Constantinople and passed her days in a manner pleasing to God, as befits a Christian widow. During this time her son Nicephorus, after studying the sciences, received his father's office at the imperial court. Then blessed Eudocia was deemed worthy to see her son first in the angelic habit and later in the rank of hierarch; giving thanks to God, she withdrew to a women's monastery, was tonsured as a nun, and, after God-pleasing labors, reposed in the Lord at an advanced age.

Blessed Nicephorus, of whom our account speaks, was a holy branch from a holy root: nurtured in piety from his mother's breast, brought up in good conduct, and instructed in a life pleasing to God, he spent the years of his youth chastely and in great abstinence, and was filled with wisdom both outward and inward, worldly and spiritual. He mastered not only the books of the Hellenic lovers of wisdom, but also the Divine Scriptures. An eloquent orator, adorned with every virtue, distinguished for understanding and good conduct, he was loved and honored by all. When Nicephorus came of age, during the reign of Leo, the son of Copronymus,[6] he was honored with the rank of imperial counselor. He preserved the true faith amid those of false belief, venerating the holy icons and leading others to do likewise through his God-wise exhortations. After Leo's death, during the reign of his son Constantine and the latter's mother Irene,[7] the Seventh Ecumenical Council was convened at Nicaea against the iconoclast heresy.[8] Blessed Nice-

4. *Adamant*, in the Greek, means diamond, a stone distinguished by its hardness.
5. At the time described, Nicaea was a considerable city of the maritime region of Bithynia; today it is a poor village named Iznik. It is notable in the history of the Christian Church as the site of the first Ecumenical Council (in 325).
6. Leo IV the Khazar reigned from 776 to 780.

phorus, though still a layman, gave substantial aid to the holy fathers assembled at the Council, for he was wise and very well versed in the Divine Scriptures; and, as a man of exceptional distinction, he was charged to speak at the Council in the emperor's name.

Thus, even before becoming a bishop, he showed himself a confessor and teacher of Orthodoxy, putting the heretics to shame in the resolution of disputed questions; for this the holy fathers of the Council praised and blessed him.

After that Council, Nicephorus remained for several more years in the honorable secular rank of imperial counselor. Then, convinced that labor for the vain and turbulent world brings no benefit to the soul—for he saw discord beginning between the son and the mother at the palace—Nicephorus, scorning vain glory, relinquished his high office, withdrew from the city, and settled in a remote and peaceful place by the Thracian Bosporus.[9] There he began to labor in solitude for God alone, striving for his salvation through prayer and fasting. After some time he built a church and gathered monks, forming a monastery; though he had not yet taken the monastic habit, he already labored as a monk, testing himself to see whether he could endure the ascetic struggle, fraught with the sorrows of life. And he lived in this way for many years, almost until the middle of the reign of Nicephorus.[10]

After the departure unto the Lord of the most holy Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, blessed Nicephorus, outwardly a layman but in life a perfect monk, was chosen to the patriarchate. At that time he received the monastic habit for the first time, and was then first ordained presbyter; afterward, against his own will and at the persuasion of Emperor Nicephorus, on the most radiant day of holy Pascha he was elevated to the episcopal throne. He adorned the holy Church with his teaching word and virtuous life, correcting the corrupt, strengthening

7. During the minority of her son, the Emperor Constantine (Porphyrogenitus), Irene at first governed the realm.
8. The Seventh Ecumenical Council, held at Nicaea in 787, condemned iconoclasm and restored the veneration of icons.
9. The Bosphorus, or Strait of Constantinople, which joins the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara, is called Phratian, to distinguish it from many other straits bearing the same name.
10. Nicephorus reigned from 802 to 811.

the faithful, and driving heretics away like wolves from the rational flock. In those years the Greeks were at war with the Bulgarians, and Emperor Nicephorus, having gone to war, was killed. His son Stauracius reigned after him, but not for long—only two months—then he died. After Stauracius, the pious Michael, surnamed Rangabe, who had earlier held the rank of curopalates,[11] took the kingdom. Two years later Leo the Armenian[12] drove him out and seized the scepter of the Greek Empire. Before Leo's coronation, the most holy Nicephorus sent bishops to this usurper with a confession of the Orthodox faith, asking the new emperor to sign with his own hand, in keeping with the custom of the former pious emperors, a promise to uphold without alteration the dogmas of the holy faith set forth in that confession. The crafty and hypocritical emperor professed in words to be zealous for piety and promised to sign the confession, but only after his coronation:

"When," he said, "the imperial crown has been placed upon me, then I will sign."

And they believed that fox. Instead of the confession of the pious faith, the flatterer secretly signed a book brought to him by the heretics, obeying predatory wolves such as himself rather than true shepherds. Then, with great pomp and imperial splendor, he entered the cathedral church of Hagia Sophia. As the customary rite of imperial coronation was being performed, and the most holy patriarch placed the crown upon his unworthy head, God revealed to the most holy patriarch what sort of emperor this man would be: for the imperial crown being placed upon him turned, as it were, into a crown of thorns in the patriarch's hands, and its points pierced the bishop's hands painfully. He understood that this was a sign of the persecution and torment soon to come from that emperor, and with sorrow of heart he informed his clergy of it.

On the day after his coronation, St. Nicephorus again asked the emperor to fulfill his promise and sign the confession of the true faith, following the example of the former right-believing emperors. But Leo had already embarked upon the path of falsehood and, defiling the im-

11. Michael I reigned from 811 to 813. The *kyropalates* was the commander of the palace guard.
12. Leo the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820.

perial purple, categorically refused to comply with the hierarch's request. Some time passed, and the emperor began openly to blaspheme the holy icons, taking up arms not against the enemies pressing upon Greece from every side and laying it waste, but against the icons of Christ, the Most Pure Theotokos, and all the saints, and against those who venerated them. He summoned to Constantinople all the bishops and presbyters who, for various offenses, had been suspended from serving at the Divine sanctuary according to the canons. He gave them quarters in the imperial palace and fed them like beasts being fattened; by this means he won the favor of those whose name is belly.[13] The emperor often conversed with them, learning the iconoclast heresy and consulting with them on how to revive the blasphemous dogma against the icons, which had been rejected by the Seventh Ecumenical Council. To bring them more readily into agreement with himself, he promised not only to restore the former ranks of which they had been deprived, but also to increase their honors. Made arrogant by the emperor's favor, they began zealously to assist him, troubling the Orthodox everywhere with persecutions. In the emperor's name they gathered countless books from every place and examined them together. If they found a heretical book written against the icons, they gladly accepted it as an honorable Gospel and kept it; but if they came upon a book written against the iconoclast heresy, they immediately cast it into the fire as an abomination and burned it. Then the emperor ordered all the Greek bishops to assemble in Constantinople for a council. The bishops set out from their respective places and, upon reaching the city, presented themselves, as was customary, to the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus. The emperor ordered that such bishops be seized at once and thrown into prison. Those among them who, fearing to incur his dreadful wrath and persecution, yielded to agreement with him in heresy, he released from their chains and prisons and honored; but those who remained steadfast in the true faith he oppressed shamefully with bonds and tormented with hunger and thirst. Very many, overcome by fear, joined the emperor in agreement, and the heretical assembly gained

13. "Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. 3:19).

considerable strength. The false teachers began boldly and unhindered to spread their blasphemous teachings in all the churches, persuading the people not to venerate the holy icons. The true teachers of Orthodoxy, however, they drove from the churches and harmed; they even sought to silence the most holy patriarch himself, the trumpet sounding forth the voice of God, and to bar him from entering the cathedral church.

The servant of God, St. Nicephorus, seeing and hearing all that was happening in the Church, ceaselessly implored God with tears that He would keep His Church unblemished and preserve His flock unharmed from the heretics. Calling to himself many of the orthodox, he admonished, entreated and instructed them: not to join themselves with the heretics, to beware of their leaven (Mt. 16:6; Lk. 12:1–9) and their teaching, as of the bite of a viper, and not to be frightened by that cruel time or by the threats of the tyrant, who kills the body but not the soul (Lk. 12:4–10).

"Even if," he taught, "the whole people follow the emperor into heresy, and only a few remain faithful to the true faith, let those who remain not be troubled by their small number, for the Lord is not pleased by multitude. He looks more upon the one who fears and trembles at His words than upon the multitude who disregard the fear of God, according to His word in the Gospel: 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom' (Lk. 12:32)."

Then the most holy patriarch summoned to himself the most renowned hierarchs: Emilian of Cyzicus, Euthymius of Sardis, Joseph of Thessalonica, Eudoxius of Amorium, Michael of Synnada, Theophylact of Nicomedia, Peter of Nicaea, and many other holy fathers, among whom were Theodore the Studite,[3588] Nicetas, abbot of Midikion, and other orthodox men. After a long discussion with them about the veneration of the holy icons, conducted on the basis of Holy Scripture and the tradition of the holy fathers, he went in the evening to the cathedral church of St. Sophia and began the All-night Vigil, praying God to grant peace to the Church and to deliver her from heresy. The emperor, learning of this, became troubled and afraid lest the patriarch raise a revolt against him among the people, who had gathered in great num-

bers in the church for the All-night Vigil; he knew that the people loved the patriarch and that all would gladly obey him, even to the point of willingness to die for him. And so, at dawn, the emperor sent to the patriarch in the church to say:

"Why do you disturb the people and plot against the emperor, who desires the common peace and unanimity? Why do you stir up mad people to rebellion, and wish to fill the imperial city with the blood of civil strife?"

The most holy patriarch answered the emperor's envoys:

"We are not thinking of anything like what you say; not even has it ever entered our minds what the emperor who sent you thinks of us. We have gathered in the house of God not for any counsel hostile to the emperor, but for the glorification of God, for prayer and supplication, that God may be appeased and may shield His Church, the emperor and the whole people with peace, may put an end to heretical wavering, and may establish all in unanimous orthodoxy."

The envoys said:

"No, it is not as you say: you speak one thing with your lips, and in your heart you think another, and you wish to carry out what you think. Since you are clearly preparing to rise against the emperor, you and your like-minded companions, when day comes, go into the imperial palace and there answer the emperor himself to the question we have put to you, so that the emperor may learn more fully of your intentions."

Having said this, the envoys departed. All who were in the church, seeing and hearing this, understood what would follow: what persecution and evil the servant of God and the whole Church of Christ would have to endure. And they began to pray even more fervently, with many tears and sighs. When the All-night Vigil was over, St. Nicephorus came out into the middle of the church and taught in a loud voice:

"O council gathered by the Spirit of God! Who expected that the holy Church would undergo such sorrows as we now see? Instead of joy she experiences sorrow, and from peace she passes into disquiet. The flock that feeds on good pasture of the word suffers plunder from

the corrupted, and the Mother who exhorts all her children to unanimity is torn apart! That Church which Christ acquired with His precious blood, which He kept in purity from every stain (Eph. 5:27), which He fenced about with Apostles, prophets, martyrs and saints of every rank, and which He showed as a paradise adorned and walled round, now suffers such afflictions from men who outwardly resemble us but in truth stand far from us, have become our enemies, and have come to such malice that together with the image they heap dishonor upon the one depicted in it, and together with the countenance of Christ painted on the board they reject Christ Himself. For, as honor, so also dishonor done to an image pertains to the one represented in the icon. Now the enemies of truth are destroying the ancient church tradition of the veneration of the holy icons and enacting a new one, contrary to the former, invented by heretics, and thereby they trouble the souls of the faithful. Brethren and children! I beg you, let us not be timid and faint-hearted; let their threats not terrify our hearts; let us await the help of God. Those who fight against us and seek to destroy righteousness in the Church are like those who swim against the swift currents of a river: in the end they will be swept into the depths from exhaustion, for truth is invincible, and it crowns those who honor it, defeating those who war against it. He who holds to it, though unarmed, will overcome the enemy; he who has lost it will easily be defeated, even though he be a warrior armed for battle. The witnesses of our words are those of whom we speak: they have no knowledge of the truth; even children who are learning their alphabet laugh at them, for they contradict themselves in their vain reasonings, as if, like madmen, eating their own flesh. Do you understand what I am saying, brethren?"

All who were present in the church cried out:

"We know and are convinced, most holy father, that our Orthodox faith is true, and for it we are all ready to die."

The patriarch said:

"It behooves us, brethren, to remain in agreement and of one mind in the confession of the Orthodox faith, so that our opponents may not be able to draw away a single one of us into their impiety; for by the grace of Christ there are more of us than of them."

The people, crying out with a loud voice, again gave firm pledge to stand for the Church even unto death. After a lengthy conversation with the people in the church, the most holy patriarch, at the coming of day, put on his omophorion and, with the bishops, abbots and the whole clergy who were with him, set out for the imperial palace. Many people followed them as well. When the patriarch with the orthodox reached the palace gates, all were held back, and only the first hierarch was allowed to pass. Ordinarily the Greek emperors received a blessing from the patriarch and mutually kissed his right hand as a sign of spiritual love. But the impious Leo the Armenian did not show the entering patriarch the customary respectful greeting, did not ask for his blessing, did not even offer him a seat, but, looking at him sternly, began to speak with anger:

"What is this schism that has arisen among you, and this plotting and uprising against the honor of the emperor? Without our knowledge you gather councils, disturb the people, and incite them to agitation and revolt? To gather councils without our consent and counsel, and to spread among the people the claim that we hold to impiety and not to the Church's teaching—is this not open hostility and the beginning of discord? If we wished to uproot the right ordinances which you call ancient, it would have been fitting for you to revile us, disparage us, and accuse us of impious heresy. But now, when out of love for orthodoxy we desire to eradicate discord and disagreement and to bring all to unity of faith, why do you revile us, act with hostility, and say that we wrong the Church, when in fact we are concerned for her peace and tranquility? Do you not know that many people, in confusion, are being drawn away from the Church because icons are painted and set up? Those who are drawn away bring books and show in them the words of Holy Scripture by which making icons and venerating them is forbidden. And if there is no answer to the questions they raise, what will prevent division in the faith, which will never again be brought into union? Therefore, for the sake of those who are agitated in mind and troubled by perplexity, you must at once hold a disputation with these who have withdrawn from the Church over the icons. Our authority desires and commands that either you refute them and bring them to your

way of thinking, or, defeated in the dispute, yourselves submit to them; then we too, seeing where the truth lies, will join the better side and confirm it by our imperial power, so that it may stand unshaken."

St. Nicephorus answered the emperor:

No, we beseech your Majesty not to hold us guilty of schism and sedition. We have not even used prayer as a weapon against your royal authority, for from the divine Scripture we have learned to pray for the king and not to wish him evil (1 Tim. 2:2). Nor do we turn the sound words and teachings of the faith into heretical speculation and ruin, for Saint John the Theologian, teacher of truth, commands that those who dare such deeds not be received into the house nor greeted (2 Jn. 1:10). It is known with certainty not only to us but to everyone who possesses the least understanding that peace and quiet are a very good thing, and that if anyone is guilty of breaking the peace, all rightly ought to call him a villain. That emperor is good who knows how to turn war into peace and sedition into quiet. You, however, together with your like-minded companions, have planned to bring war upon the Church, which abides in peace, and, abandoning the holy laws by which the Cross of Christ is glorified and piety illuminates the world with light, you have proposed to introduce the darkened teaching of destructive men, which none of the Churches accepts. For neither Jerusalem, nor Rome, nor Alexandria, nor Antioch rejects the icons of Christ, of the Most Holy Theotokos, of the Apostles, and of the other saints of God; on the contrary, they piously venerate them according to the tradition of the holy Fathers. Which of the Ecumenical Councils, confirming by the Holy Spirit the dogmas of the Orthodox faith, approved and accepted iconoclastic reasonings? Therefore you, O emperor, do not revive the rejected heresy, and do not introduce into the holy Church a teaching already condemned. We shall have no disputation with the heretics, for what need is there to argue about that which has already been refuted, rejected, and anathematized by the holy Fathers in council?

The emperor replied to the most holy Patriarch:

Did not God say to Moses: "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow

down to them or serve them" (Ex. 20:4–5)? On what reasonable grounds, then, do you paint icons and give to the images you have made the honor that belongs to God Himself? What the idolaters did in old times, you are doing now, disregarding the commandment of God given to Moses, and through him to all people, not only the ancient people of the Old Testament but also us, the faithful Christians of the New Covenant.

The most holy Nicephorus answered:

Do you not know why God gave the commandment to the Israelites, after their departure from Egypt, not to make idols or any likeness? It was because life in Egypt had accustomed the Israelites to impiety and to the idolatrous polytheism of the Egyptians, who worshipped now certain men long since dead, now the birds of heaven, the beasts of the earth, reptiles, fish, and various monsters, made likenesses of them, and bowed down to them as to the true God. In order to root out of the Israelites the idolatry to which they had grown accustomed in Egypt, God gave them the commandment not to make idols or any likeness, yet He did not forbid making honorable images and icons, which serve not to degrade but to increase the worship of God. Was it not by the command of that same God that Moses made the tabernacle and overlaid the Ark of the Covenant on all sides with gold, the Ark in which were kept the tablets, Aaron's rod, and the manna? (3 Kgdms. 7 ff.) Did not God command that golden Cherubim be made and set over the ark in the tabernacle, and were not likenesses of the Cherubim faces woven into the veils of the tabernacle? And were not all these things honored by the Israelites as sacred and divine, and before all this did not the Israelites bow down to God and offer sacrifice? When they bowed and offered sacrifice before the tabernacle, the ark, and the Cherubim, they did not worship the tabernacle, the ark, or the Cherubim, nor offer sacrifice to them, but to God Himself, dwelling in the heavens; the tabernacle and the ark with what was in it, and the likeness of the Cherubim, they honored reverently as divine objects, not as objects deified, just as we now do, bowing before the holy icons, lighting candles and setting lamps before them. We do not bow to the board or to the paints, but to the countenance of Christ, the Incarnate God, depicted on the

icon; nor do we paint on the icon the divinity of Christ, for it, being invisible and incomprehensible, cannot be depicted, but we portray the humanity of Christ, once seen by human eyes and touched by human hands, and we do not call the icon of Christ God, but the image of the face of Christ, God. To Christ God, before His holy icon, we bow as to God, and the icon of Christ we venerate as a divine object, but we do not deify it. The same must be said of the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos and of the other saints, in whom God Himself is honored, wonderful in His saints. But having begun with the Old Testament, we have not yet finished. Did not God command Moses to raise up in the wilderness a bronze serpent, so that people bitten by serpents would come and look upon it? Was not that bronze serpent a miraculous image, which wondrously healed those who had suffered the bites of living serpents? For that serpent had its healing power not of itself, but from Him whom it prefigured. It prefigured Christ our Savior, who was to be lifted up on the Cross, according to the word later spoken by Christ Himself in the Gospel: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (Jn. 3:14).

And what is surprising in the fact that today the holy icons also work miracles, if already in the Old Testament miracles were wrought through the bronze serpent? As that serpent worked miracles not of itself, but by the power of Him whom it prefigured, so too the holy icons work miracles by the power of the person depicted on them. Let us recall also the Temple of Solomon: did God count it to Solomon as a sin that in the temple he built he made other great golden Cherubim, besides those made by Moses, and depicted their likenesses on the walls, pillars, and doors, and made the bronze sea upon twelve carved oxen? Not only did God not count this as a sin against Solomon, but He even showed that the work was pleasing to Him, when He Himself visited that temple and all that was in it, for it is written: "The cloud filled the house of the Lord, and the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple" (3 Kgdms. 8:11).

Thus the commandment of the law of God, mentioned earlier by you, O emperor, given to Moses, not to make any likeness, abolishes

only pagan idolatry, and not our Christian piety, the veneration of the holy icons. If God by this first commandment of His had forbidden entirely every depiction and likeness of honorable persons, just as He forbade impious images, He would have contradicted Himself, commanding Moses afterwards, as was said, to make the tabernacle and its furnishings, and also to raise up the serpent of bronze. But such a thing is not to be said: God does not contradict Himself, and as He is faithful in all His words, so He is holy in all His works. He commanded in word not to make pagan idols; but to depict the holy icons for the adornment of the Church and the glory of God, this He taught by deed, Himself instructing Moses to portray the likenesses of the Cherubim faces.

Thus the emperor and the patriarch spoke at length about the holy icons, at first privately, and afterwards the bishops and clergy standing behind the doors were admitted within. Many senators also entered; the emperor moreover summoned armed soldiers with drawn swords, to intimidate those who would not agree with him. What took place there, what reasoning, and what greatness of soul and boldness were displayed by fearless hearts, is written in the Life of Venerable Theodore the Studite, on 11 November, and in the Life of Saint Nicetas the Confessor, on 3 April. All this ended in the anger and fury of the emperor, and in the ignominious expulsion of the patriarch and all his company from the royal palace. The bishops who were with the most holy Nicephorus were immediately sent into confinement in various places, but the patriarch was for the time left in his place, partly because they did not dare to inflict final harm upon him, and partly from fear lest the people should rise in revolt and sedition on his account. The clergy and many of the monastic order, however, they tormented in prisons and dungeons with wounds, and starved them with hunger and thirst, compelling them to heresy.

The most holy patriarch, seeing that the emperor had wholly fallen away from orthodoxy, that the Church was greatly troubled, and that the spiritual order was subjected to persecution and suffering, wrote to the empress, exhorting her to give the emperor the necessary counsel to end such persecution. He also wrote to the city prefect Eutychianus, who was in agreement with the emperor and was his first counselor.

Moved by apostolic zeal and the prophetic spirit, he added to his exhortations the following stern word:

If you do not cease leading astray from the straight paths of the Lord, the chastising hand of the Lord will soon be upon you.

Yet the holy patriarch not only could not persuade the obstinate, but even provoked them to greater fury. The emperor sent one patrician, Thomas, to deprive the patriarch of the administration of the cathedral church of holy Sophia and to forbid him to serve in it or to speak a sermon to the people, so that the patriarch was in his own house as though in confinement, going out nowhere. From grief and from many labors he grew weak in body, fell ill, and lay on his sickbed awaiting his end; the heretical assembly, however, did not cease its agitation and desired disputation with him. There was sent from the emperor and from his like-minded companions the brother of the empress, named Theophanes, with the rank of spatharios[14], to the most holy patriarch, in order to bring him to dispute with them. The saint answered the messenger:

A shepherd who has been robbed of his sheep does not go out to battle against the wolves, and one who seeks his own health does not wrestle with wild beasts. Why do you, having taken from me the sheep entrusted to me by Christ, summon me to dispute, that I alone should contend with the heretics as with wolves? If this is your desire, then return my sheep to me; release from bonds and prisons the priests and clergy, and let each receive his place; let the hierarchs who have been exiled be returned and take up their thrones again; and let the heretical false bishops now occupying their places, unlawfully ordained, be deposed; and let all the orthodox who have been persecuted and suffer receive relief from the persecution and their former liberty. Then, if it pleases God and if I recover, we shall be ready to expose together the pernicious malice of the heretics that has been accepted. But a council and a discussion of the faith ought to take place in the great cathedral Church, where Christ God Himself is present in the most pure Myster-

14. The bearer of the royal sword.

ies, and not in the royal palaces, for the things of the Church are to be debated in the Church, while the palaces are for arranging civil affairs.

With this answer Theophanes returned to those who had sent him. They were still more embittered against the saint, and again sent to him several of their assembly to summon him now to judgment. The holy patriarch answered them:

"Who summons me to judgment? Is it one of the patriarchs, the Roman, the Alexandrian, the Antiochian, or the Jerusalemite? If they are not present at your council, then to whom am I to go? Or is it me, the patriarch, that you summon? Will you, lawless men, judge me, the lawful shepherd? I will not go to my open enemies, who, like savage beasts, are prepared to tear me to pieces without fault on my part. And how shall I go, sick as I am, when I am not even able to rise from my bed? Will you take me up and carry me on my bed?"

And these envoys returned without success. Then the heretical assembly, filled with great malice, unlawfully deprived of his rank the holy and God-pleasing man, Patriarch Nicephorus, who was guiltless in anything, and delivered him to anathema, while they themselves were in the highest degree worthy of deposition and damnation. They anathematized not only St. Nicephorus but also his predecessors, the most holy orthodox patriarchs who had departed to the Lord after a blessed repose, Tarasius and Germanus. Thus ended the crafty heretical assembly.

Late in the evening the emperor sent soldiers to take Nicephorus from the patriarchal house and lead him into confinement. The fierce soldiers approached the house with weapons and clubs, making noise and tumult, reviling the most holy Nicephorus and the former patriarchs Germanus and Tarasius. Hearing this, the patriarch wept and thanked God that he had been deemed worthy of such reproaches for the sake of Orthodoxy. The aforementioned patrician Thomas, to whom the emperor had entrusted the cathedral church of St. Sophia, and who was also the guardian of the patriarchal house, ordered the soldiers to cease their noise, firmly locked the doors of the patriarchal house, went to the emperor and said to him:

"Sovereign! There is no need for a multitude of soldiers, otherwise the people, hearing the noise, will gather and do some harm. Send only two men, with them a few servants, to carry the patriarch out in their arms, for he is very ill and cannot walk by himself."

The emperor did so: he ordered the soldiers to withdraw from the patriarchal court, and an hour later he sent two men from his palace; and the most holy Nicephorus was led out, or rather carried out, of his house. Wishing to pray in his great cathedral church of St. Sophia, he entered it supported by two men, ordered candles to be lit and incense to be censed, prostrated himself on the ground in the form of a cross, and prayed a long time, weeping and watering the ground with his tears.

Then he rose from the ground; seeing some orthodox who had also come into the church and were weeping for the patriarch, he blessed them and bade them farewell for the last time, saying:

"Children, I found you orthodox Christians, and I leave you orthodox Christians."

And he went out of the church. The soldiers seated him in a chariot, and at midnight, when everyone was asleep, they took him to the seashore. Here they placed him in a boat and ferried him to Chrysopolis[15], to a place called Voluê[16], where there was a monastery. Thus was the great servant of God, the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, unjustly expelled from his throne, after nine years of governing the Church of Christ. After a short time he was sent further, to the island of Proconnesus[17], to the monastery of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore. When, on the way to this island, they were carrying him by ship past the land where the Venerable Theophanes, abbot of the great village, dwelt, the two holy men saw each other with prophetic eyes and greeted one another. The Venerable Theophanes, being in his cell, ordered his disciple to put burning coals into the censer, lit candles, placed incense on the

15. Chrysopolis, in Bithynia near Byzantium, now Üsküdar (Scutari).

16. According to the Greek original, into the monastery of the Good One, that is, of Christ; but the Latin copyist of the translation, in place of Vopi (of the Good), put volu (an ox), whence there arose in the Slavonic translation the reading Volue.

17. Proconnesus, an island in the Sea of Marmara; now Marmara.

coals, and bowed to the ground, speaking as though to some person passing by. The disciple asked him:

"Father! What are you doing? To whom have you bowed, and with whom are you speaking?"

The Venerable answered:

"The most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, unjustly exiled for his orthodoxy, is being taken to confinement on a ship past this land; for that reason we have lit candles and incense, to render the patriarch the honor that is fitting."

At the same time the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, being on the ship, suddenly bent his knees, bowed in return to the holy elder, and, stretching his hands toward the air, gave a blessing. One of those who were with the most holy man on the ship asked him:

"Whom are you blessing, most holy father, and before whom have you bent your knee?"

The patriarch answered:

"Theophanes the Confessor, abbot of the great village, has greeted us and honored us with lit candles and incense, and I on my part have bowed to him, for he too, in a short time, will suffer as we do."

And this soon came to pass. Having reached the place of exile appointed for him, the hierarch of Christ Nicephorus spent there, in straitened circumstances and frequent illnesses, suffering want of necessities, thirteen years, and passed to eternal rest with the Lord. As he was departing, he uttered with a joyful soul the words of David: "Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us over as prey to their teeth! Our soul has escaped, like a bird from the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are delivered" (Ps. 123:6–7).

Having said this, he committed his soul into the hands of his Lord; the faithful wept over him, and the heretics rejoiced. His honorable body was buried in the church of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore. Afterwards, when the heresiarchs had perished, the iconoclastic persecution ceased, and peace and orthodoxy shone forth again; the honorable relics of St. Nicephorus were transferred to Constantinople on 13 March 846, in the reign of Michael, son of Theophilus, and of his mother Theodora, and were honorably laid in the cathedral church of St.

Sophia, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever, amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The crown of victory from heaven, O most glorious Nicephorus, hast thou received from God; save those who honor thee in faith, as the hierarch and teacher of Christ.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Great Martyr John the New

Страдание святого великомученика Иоанна Нового

There are few holy men who, by their God-pleasing, virtuous lives, have given us an example for imitation; among them is this present servant of God, no less than the first, though last in time. Our Lord Christ has honored with crowns not only the martyrs of the first centuries, but also now, in the last times, He opens the door (of His Kingdom) to those who seek it, granting them the same glory and gifts. Let us therefore begin the narrative of St. John, the valiant soldier of Christ, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit: who he was, whence he came, and how he was deemed worthy of the choir and crown of martyrdom.

The homeland of this man was Trapezus, a famous and great city lying in the eastern lands, near Assyria and the border of Great Armenia. Abounding in everything necessary, this city serves as a convenient haven for ships sailing to it from every side; its inhabitants, having their dwelling by the sea, engage in trade and seafaring, whence they derive their means of livelihood. Just so the blessed John was engaged in trade, making frequent voyages by sea to various cities. Once it fell to him, with a considerable stock of goods, to board the ship of a foreign man, who was by birth a Frank[18], not of the eastern confession in faith, coarse in manner, unmerciful and inhuman. During the voyage of the saint with that man, the devil, the enemy, began to envy the

18. In olden times in Rus', the name Fryagi was applied chiefly to the Genoese, and later to Western Europeans in general.

blameless life of John: he could scarcely bear the virtuous life of the blessed man, often seeing him in prayer and fasting, of good conduct and accessible to everyone, merciful to those who suffered need on the ship and to those who fell ill. The servant of Christ comforted such people, giving them what they needed from his own means, extending to them a generous hand of help; with eyes full of tears he said within himself:

"If you show mercy to a suffering brother, you too will be shown mercy; and if you comfort one who grieves, you too will be deemed worthy of comfort from God."

The invisible enemy saw this, envied him, and sought to place an obstacle in the saint's path to salvation. Above all he schemed to turn him away from the pious faith, and he armed against him a visible enemy: the captain of the ship, who held to another confession of faith and who began to vex the orthodox servant of Christ with disputes concerning Eastern (Orthodox) piety. In the many verbal disputes about the faith that took place between them during the sea voyage, St. John, being a man of great wisdom and skilled in book learning, always got the better of the Frank and exposed his error; and the latter, angered by the invincible warrior of Christ, grew irritated, reproached him with many insults, and out of hostility plotted evil against him. When such enmity had kindled in him, the ship put in to shore at Belgrade, near the Bosporus[19]. There the wicked shipmaster went to the local governor, a Persian by birth and by faith[20], a zealous guardian of his ancestral traditions, and laid before him such a slander against St. John:

"Governor! There came here with me on the ship a man who, having renounced the Christian faith handed down by the fathers, wishes to

19. According to the opinion of the well-known church historian E. E. Golubinsky, the Belgrade mentioned here is the present-day Bessarabian Bel'tsy. Others understand Belgrade to mean Akkerman.

20. According to the Life of St. John, composed by a presbyter of the Moldo-Wallachian Church (who from 1416 was South Russian metropolitan, 1419), and likewise according to the service, the martyr suffered at the hands of fire-worshippers, but according to the Greek martyrology at the hands of Muslims. But from history we do not see that these fire-worshippers were Persians or Muslims: in the middle of the fourteenth century, when St. John the Great Martyr approximately died, Akkerman was held by the Cumans, among whom, as among the Tatars at the time of Batu, fire-worship may have existed.

come over to your faith and to share in your traditions. During the sea voyage he informed me of this and confirmed with many oaths that he would not change his intention. If you take care to bring him soon to unity of belief with you, you will earn great praise from your people, for this man is very skilled in speech and is not the least among the most distinguished nobles of the city of Trebizond."

Hearing this, the impious governor was filled with joy; seating himself in the customary place of judgment, he commanded that the blessed John be brought before him with honor, and said to him:

"I have heard much about you, honorable man: I have heard that you have come to love our faith and wish to embrace it. Our faith has as its object of contemplation what is noble, and it kindles love in the hearts of those who understand it; to those who receive it gladly it grants a prosperous life and long days. The Christian faith, by contrast, is worthy of mockery. Honorable friend! Do not delay in putting it away from you, and before this whole assembled people publicly revile the Christian traditions and laws. For that reason all have gathered here together, not excluding wives and children, because they heard of your desire to confess our bright and glorious faith. Come, wondrous man, stand with us, with the clearest voice glorify the radiant sun, render honor to the star that precedes the sun, and offer sacrifices to the heavenly luminaries that illumine the universe. Then you will be granted many honors and great rank from our emperor, and you will be a sincere brother to us and will enjoy a life pleasing to all people."

While the ruler, with a mixture of malice and deceit, was speaking these flattering words, St. John, lifting his mind's eyes upward, called upon the Lord for help, the One who said: "When they bring you before kings and princes for My name's sake, take no thought beforehand what you shall say, or how you shall answer in that hour; for it shall be given you what to say, and none of those who oppose you shall be able to resist" (cf. Mk. 13:11). Then, looking upon the tormentor with his bodily eyes and fearlessly stretching out his hand, he answered:

"It seems to me that you are plainly lying, O governor! I did not say that I wished to renounce my Christ; far be it from me, may my Lord Jesus Christ never permit even the thought of this to arise in me. This

is the scheme of the enemy of truth, your father, Satan. Having entered into you as into his own true vessel, he speaks with me through you, hoping to draw me to perdition, and compels me to fall away from the true God, the Creator of all visible and invisible creatures, and of this very sun which you, deluded by the power of darkness, honor as a god, and in madness render to a creature the honor that is fitting to give to God Himself. Do not, then, entice me to bend toward a lie; rather, learn from me the mystery of the truth, I beg you, cast off the darkness of impiety that lies upon your soul, and be granted to become a son of light, shining brighter than the sun with the dawn of divine baptism. Do not count the sun visible in the heavens as God, but know that it is a luminary of fiery nature, set by the Creator to serve mankind and made on the fourth day. Can a creature be God?"

Having said this, St. John raised his hands and lifted his eyes to heaven, and cried out before all:

"I will not deny You, Christ my Savior, the God glorified together with Your Father, who is without beginning, and the Holy Spirit! I will not bow down to the sun, I will not serve fire, I will not offer sacrifice to the star which pagan fable calls Venus, a name shared with lustful passion!"

So spoke the martyr with a firm voice and a joyful countenance. The tormentor, inflamed by the fire of inner wrath, often changed countenance and could not endure for very long the words of a man who spoke against him, for St. John, in the midst of the great crowd, glorified that Christ whom the governor reviled, confessed Him to be the true God, and utterly abased and overthrew the impious faith, or rather the delusion, of the ruler. Then the tormentor commanded the soldiers to strip the martyr of his garments, which the soldiers carried out at once, quicker than the word: and the saint stood naked, clothed in Christ. Then the governor commanded that a multitude of rods be placed before the martyr, and said to him:

"You promised to narrate no fables, but to renounce your useless faith, and you eagerly desired to join our bright faith and adorn yourself with our laws. Cease, then, your long-continued abuse and fulfill what you promised: join our glorious faith and bow down to the radiant

sun. If you do not do this, then for our faith, which excels in its goodness, I will not only shatter your body with these rods, but I will torment you with other, more cruel tortures, unbearable for a human being, and at last I will deliver you to the most bitter death."

The holy martyr answered:

"O tormentor, filled with all impurity! I am not a fabulist, but a servant and preacher of the true God, glorified in the Trinity, in whom I learned to believe from my forefathers and parents. Now I bow down to Him alone, to Him I offer the sacrifice of praise, Him I acknowledge and confess as the Creator of all, Him I await as Judge of the living and the dead; He will come to render to each according to his deeds, at the time when, by His command, this visible sun, set to serve mankind, will grow dark. Therefore do not hope to hear from me anything other than what I first said, and what I now say: as long as I possess my mind and govern my reason, I will not honor a creature in place of the Creator, nor will I bow down to a made thing in place of the Maker. And so do not delay, doer of unrighteousness, in openly revealing the dog-like and inhuman disposition hidden within you, and free yourself from the care of devising torments for me. By whatever manner of torture and death you choose, send me to the Lord God, toward whom I myself strive. Whatever you wish to do, do it quickly, so that my hearing is not overlong burdened by your impious speeches, of which the prophet said: 'they devise evil in their hearts, all day long they gather themselves for battle' (Ps. 139:3), and so that my eyes need not look longer upon your all-defiled face. Here is my naked flesh, ready for your torment. Beat with rods, burn with fire, drown in water, or cut down with the sword; and if you have other, more cruel torments, do not hesitate to inflict them on me: I am ready to accept all joyfully for the love of my Christ."

These words of the martyr kindled the fierce tormentor to anger; he at once commanded that the blessed one be stretched upon the ground and mercilessly beaten with knotted staves. The servants beat the passion-bearer of Christ so cruelly that many parts of his flesh, being torn, rose into the air along with the rods, and the whole place where the saint was tormented was stained with blood. The valiant sufferer en-

dured this torment bravely, and, lifting his spiritual eyes to heaven, said:

"I thank You, Lord God, that You have granted me to be cleansed by my blood from my sins, into which, through human weakness, I fell after holy baptism."

The sons of perdition, hearing the martyr's prayer to God, were filled with even greater fury and beat him cruelly until his voice fell silent. At nightfall the governor commanded that the martyr, barely breathing, be bound with two chains, cast into prison, and guarded until morning for still greater torment. And since the martyr, from the savage wounds, could not walk by himself, he was dragged like a corpse and thrown into the dungeon.

In the morning the beast-like tormentor, seating himself in the customary place of judgment, commanded that the holy martyr John be brought. The passion-bearer of Christ appeared with a bright countenance and a joyful soul. Seeing the martyr and observing his bright and cheerful face, the impious judge was greatly amazed that after such cruel torment his soul remained in him, and that he rejoiced, as if he had suffered no pain at all.

"Do you see, John," he said, "to what dishonor your disobedience has brought you? You nearly lost the sweet life which is dearest of all things to all people. Yet if you will submit to my reasonable admonitions, health is ready for you as well: within a few days your wounded flesh will be healed, for we have very skilled physicians who have come from India and Persia. But if you still wish to remain in Christianity, know that a still greater evil awaits you."

The holy martyr answered:

As for my wounded flesh, I am in no way concerned, O judge! Since our outward man is wasting away, the inward man is renewed, as the great Apostle of the Lord says (2 Cor. 4:16). I have one concern: to endure to the end the torments you inflict upon me, through Christ who strengthens me and who said: “He that shall endure to the end shall be saved” (Mk. 13:13). If you have devised still other torments against me, inflict them upon me; for the wounds you have already laid upon me I count as nothing.

Put to shame by these wise words of the saint, the frenzied tormentor was seized with rage, and, roaring like a beast, he commanded that the martyr be stretched out on the ground again and beaten even more cruelly. For a long time the servants took turns beating the passion-bearer without mercy, so that the martyr's inner parts were also wounded; yet he, with his lips, kept whispering prayer to God. When the soldiers who had beaten the members of the body that clothed the adamantine soul were exhausted, and the people of every age who had gathered to watch the sufferings began to cry out against the wicked judge, condemning his merciless and cruel disposition, the tormentor then commanded that a wild and fierce horse be brought, that the martyr's feet be tightly bound to its tail, and that one of the soldiers, mounting the horse, drive it through the city streets and drag the sufferer of Christ for as long as the horse was able to run. Thus the saint was dragged through the whole city, and it was grievous for pious eyes to behold. When the horseman dragging the saint reached the dwellings of the Jews and rode along their streets, crowds of Jews mocked the martyr being dragged along; these malicious people, distorting their faces, shouted and threw at him whatever each had in his hands, making a disorderly and absurd mockery. At last one of the Jews ran into his house, seized a drawn sword, overtook the saint being dragged, and cut off his honorable head. Thus the valiant soldier of Jesus Christ finished his path of suffering, commending his holy soul into the hands of his Lord[21]. His honorable body the soldier untied from the horse's tail and cast down in the same place, and it lay with the head severed, without burial or care, and no Christian dared to touch it, fearing the fury of the impious.

When night came, a wondrous sign could be plainly seen above the body of the martyr: many lamps burned brightly, three radiant men chanted ineffable sacred hymns and offered incense, and a pillar of fire stood over the body of the saint; many saw this sign. A certain Jew, whose house was near the place where the much-suffering body lay, thought that Christian priests had come to lift it and give it the custom-

21. The holy martyr died, probably, not later than 1340.

ary burial. He took a bow and an arrow, drew near, and, wishing to shoot one of the visible (so he supposed) priests, set the arrow to the string and drew the bow as hard as he could. But when he wished to loose the arrow, the arrow together with the string clung to the fingers of his right hand, and the bow to his left hand, so that he could neither release the arrow nor free his hands from the bow and the arrow; and so this Jew, a serpent's brood, suffered all night long. At dawn the wondrous men became invisible, the pillar of fire and the lamps vanished, and the people of every age who gathered at that place saw the wicked archer remaining in the same position: as he had drawn the bow with the arrow, so he remained, bound by the invisible power of God as with iron fetters. Against his will this Jew was compelled to relate in full all that he had seen above the body of the martyr, and also the retribution he had received from God for his bold attempt at this wicked deed. After this miracle had been sufficiently made known, his hands were loosed, and he was freed from the punishment. The governor, learning of this, was greatly afraid and commanded the Christians to bury the martyr's body; the Christians took it and laid it with honor beside their church.

A few days later the Frank who had delivered the saint to torment wished to steal the honorable body and carry it off to his own land; he had already repented of his malice. One night, choosing a convenient time, he came with companions to the martyr's tomb, dug up the place, opened the grave, and wished to take the honorable remains. But at that moment the soldier of Christ appeared in a dream to the presbyter of that church and said:

"Rise and go quickly to the church, for they wish to steal me."

The presbyter arose at once, hastened to the place, and found the grave dug up and open, and the body of the saint had almost been carried away. Calling pious people together, he told them what had happened, and all glorified God, who glorifies His saints; they took the honorable relics of the holy martyr, brought them into the church, and laid them in the sanctuary near the holy table. There the holy relics remained for more than seventy years, and various wondrous manifestations occurred over them night and day: sometimes a certain wondrous

light appeared, sometimes a pillar of fire, sometimes an ineffable fragrance issued from the tomb, and healing powers were manifested. The report of this reached the pious and Christ-loving Great Voivode Alexander, who then ruled Moldavia and the seacoast, a man who adorned himself with many virtues and loved the martyrs; and he greatly desired to have in his possession the most precious treasure, the honorable relics of the holy martyr of Christ, John. In counsel with the most reverend Archbishop Joseph[22], he sent several of his nobles to Belgrade with a sufficient military escort, and they did not delay in bringing the martyr's relics from there. The Great Voivode went out to meet them with all the nobles, the most reverend archbishop with the clergy, and all the people, joyfully welcoming the arrival of the martyr with candles, censers, and fragrant myrrh. The Great Voivode, falling before the reliquary of the saint, embraced the much-suffering relics, touched with his eyes and lips the honorable hands of the martyr, and, shedding joyful and abundant tears, besought the saint to be the guardian of his realm. With great honor the honorable relics of the martyr were placed in the most holy metropolitan church in the capital city of the Moldo-Wallachian state, Suceava[23]. Concerning the healings that were given then and afterward, and are still given, from the relics of the martyr to those afflicted with various infirmities, the chronicler says that we leave it to the beneficiaries themselves to tell of the blessings received from him. It was sufficient here to relate what torments St. John endured, how he put to shame the impious governor, what contest he undertook, and how he received the crown from the hand of Christ, the Bestower of the crown of the contest. Such was the good gain of St. John: he gave little and gained much, leaving his body as a burden to the treacherous tormentor, and he hastened not to Trapezus but to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the company of martyrs as a martyr, to the bosom of Abraham, to the dwelling of the saints, to the good havens and the incorruptible chambers, where he stands before the Thrice-Holy and Most

22. Made metropolitan of Moldo-Wallachia in 1401 or 1402.
23. The present-day, as some suppose, Giurgiu, a town in Romania, on the left bank of the Danube, opposite Ruse.

Divine Trinity, to whom be glory, dominion, honor, praise, and worship, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

Thou didst live on earth, O sufferer, guiding well with alms and frequent prayers and tears; then again, zealous for suffering, thou didst manfully take up the struggle and didst rebuke the impiety of the Persians; wherefore thou wast a firm foundation of the Church and a praise of Christians, O John, of ever-memorable name.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Sailing the sea's deep waters on trade, thou didst strive from the east toward the north; but when God called thee, as He called Matthew the tax-collector, thou didst leave thy trade and follow Him by the blood of martyrdom, purchasing the imperishable with temporal things, and didst receive the unconquerable crown.

* * *

NOTES

3588. St. Theodore the Studite, while still in his youth, entered upon the path of the monastic life, first laboring under the guidance of his uncle, the Venerable Plato (whose memory is kept on April 5 veneration of icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Afterwards St. Theodore became abbot of the Studion Monastery in Constantinople; under his governance that monastery attained an unprecedented height. St. Theodore was twice banished from Constantinople for rebuking Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who had unlawfully divorced his wife Maria and aggravated the gravity of his sin by an unlawful marriage with Theodote. Upon his return to the Studion Monastery from exile, when persecution against the holy icons broke out, St. Theodore, paying no heed to the threats of the iconoclasts, openly led processions with the venerable monks. Then Emperor Leo the Armenian sent him into confinement, where he was kept in damp and stifling dungeons, being repeatedly subjected to cruel beatings. In the reign of Michael the Stammerer St. Theodore was released from confinement, but he did not live long, worn out by his imprisonment. He reposed at the age of 67 in the year 826, on November 11, the day on which his memory is celebrated. At the moment of St. Theodore's repose, the Venerable Hilarion of Dalmatia saw a host of Angels descending from heaven and heard a voice: "Behold, the soul of Theodore, abbot of the Studion, is triumphantly ascending on high, and the heavenly powers are meeting it."
St. Theodore left behind numerous writings in the form of discourses, catechetical instructions, letters, canons, stichera, epigrams and lives of saints. The most complete

presentation of the writings of the Venerable Theodore in the Russian language was undertaken by the editors of the journal "Christian Reading" as a supplement to that journal for 1907 and 1908.[1*]



THE THIRD DAY OF JUNE

June 3

3 июня

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

Memory of the Holy Martyr Lucillian, and with him the Four Youths Claudius, Hypatius, Paul and Dionysius, and of the Holy Virgin Paula

Память святого мученика Лукиллиана и с ним четырех отроков Клавдия, Ипатия, Павла и Дионисия и святой девы Павлы

The holy martyr Lucillian, who suffered in the days of the Roman emperor Aurelian,[1] at first dwelt in the polytheism of the pagans, and was even a priest of idols, already come to venerable old age, adorned with gray hairs and of honorable appearance. He lived not far from Nicomedia,[2] serving the impure gods in their temples. Afterwards, by the grace of Christ our God, who desires all men to be saved and not to perish (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4), he was convinced of the deception of the demons and of the pagan error, attained the knowledge of the truth, believed in the one true God, our Lord Jesus Christ, rejected and despised the idols, and in his old age his youth was renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 102:5). Then he was born anew by holy Baptism, and with all his mind and soul gave himself wholly to the love of Christ.

He also made plain to the other pagans the vanity and ruin of their impiety, instructed them unto salvation, and by his teaching led them to Christ, so that for many he became an example of turning to God. The local Jews, seeing that Lucillian had passed from idolatry to the Christian faith, and that many, following his example and teaching, were forsaking idol-worship, joining the Christians and receiving holy Baptism,

1. *Aurelian* reigned from 270 to 275 A.D.
2. Nicomedia: a city in the Asia Minor province of Bithynia on the shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara).

were filled with anger and hatred. Murderers of God and savage men, they out of envy slandered him and delivered him to the impious court; and the servant of Christ was brought before Silvanus, the governor of Nicomedia, for interrogation. The governor strongly urged the old man to renounce Christ and return to idol-worship, but he refused to obey him. Then the governor was filled with fury and commanded that Lucillian be subjected to various tortures: they broke his jaws, beat him without mercy with rods, hung him head downward, and afterwards, after a long and cruel torment, cast him into prison. There the holy Lucillian found four youths imprisoned for the Christian faith: Claudius, Hypatius, Paul and Dionysius. He spoke with them joyfully about Christ God and strengthened them for the martyr's contest, so that, remembering the eternal reward in heaven, they would not fear temporal torments, would not be terrified of death for the sake of the future life, and would not spare their flourishing youth for Christ, who prepares for them in His Kingdom unfading blessedness. All together they prayed to God day and night and comforted themselves with hope in Christ. After a fairly long time had passed, the holy Lucillian was again subjected to torments, now together with the youths, and with them was cast into a red-hot furnace. But the almighty God showed over them His wondrous mercy, as once over the Hebrew youths cast into the furnace of Babylon (Dan. 3): the fire turned to cold, the flame to dew, and abundant rain, pouring down from above, thoroughly cooled the whole furnace, and the holy Lucillian and the youths came out unharmed. The pagans, blinded by unbelief and malice, ascribed this glorious wonder of God not to the power of God but to the sorcery of the Christians. Then the unrighteous judge condemned the holy martyrs to death and sent them to Byzantium,[3] that they might undergo execution there. When they reached Byzantium, the four holy youths, Claudius, Hypatius, Paul and Dionysius, were beheaded with the sword, and the holy Lucillian was hanged on a cross, nailed to it by nails through all

3. Byzantium: a colony of Megara, founded in 658 B.C. on the European side of the Bosphorus, held a dominant position on the narrow strait connecting the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara. In 330 A.D., after his victory over Licinius, Constantine the Great transferred the capital of the Roman Empire here, and Byzantium came to be called Constantinople, the New Rome.

his body, and so gave up his spirit to God. He was crucified on the cross by the Jews, as is seen from the third ode of the canon dedicated to him, where this is said in the following manner: "Judas of old betrayed the Deliverer Christ to the murderers of God; but thou hast now been betrayed by the lawless Jews."

To their crown of suffering was joined also the holy virgin Paula. Born of Christian parents, from her youth she nourished in her heart a fervent love for Christ, kept her virginity for the immortal Bridegroom, and strove to be worthy of the heavenly mansion. Orphaned after the death of her parents, and possessing means, she went about the prisons, and, buying from the guards with gold the right of entry, visited the prisoners suffering for Christ. She served the servants of Christ, giving them from her property all that was necessary; to those tormented by hunger and thirst she brought food and drink; to the naked she gave garments; she healed the bodies of the martyrs wounded and festering with weals, washing, wiping, applying healing plasters and binding them with clean linen. Kissing their wounds received for Christ, she asked them with tears to pray to Christ God for her, that He might not deprive her of His mercy. This chosen bride of Christ also came to the holy Lucillian, who was imprisoned in Nicomedia with the youths, and enjoyed his useful instructions. When the saint and the youths were tortured, she was a witness of their contest, and in the secret of her heart diligently prayed to Christ that He would strengthen His servants and give them courage and help to endure their torments to the end, for the glory of His holy name. When the people, at the end of the executions, were dispersing, she came to the place of the martyrs' torments, gathered up the blood that had been shed on the ground, and kept it as a relic; when the old man and the four youths were led to Byzantium for death, she followed them and served them; and when the holy youths were beheaded, the holy virgin took their honorable bodies and with reverence committed them to burial. After the repose of the holy Lucillian and the holy youths, she returned to Nicomedia and continued to act in the same way. The impious learned that she was a Christian, seized her and brought her to judgment before the same governor Silvanus, who, seeing that she remained unyielding after many flattering

and threatening exhortations, commanded that she be long and pitilessly beaten on her bare body with rods and sticks; and when she was exhausted in body from many wounds, but not in spirit, an Angel of the Lord appeared and healed her; and bodily health returned to the martyr, and she showed herself still more bold and courageous in her torments. Then she was cruelly struck on the mouth for having vexed the tormentor with reproachful words. Afterwards she was cast into prison, and then again brought out to torture and thrown into a furnace heated to the utmost. But she came out of the furnace without harm, for for her, as for the earlier holy martyrs, the power of God annulled the power of the fire, lest the burning flame should touch the bride of Christ. After all this, the tormentor condemned her to death by beheading with the sword and sent her to Byzantium, that she might undergo execution in the same place where the holy Lucillian and the youths had died. Led to the place where Lucillian had accepted crucifixion for Christ, the martyr of Christ diligently thanked God, who granted her the crown of martyrdom and fellowship with the saints. Having fervently prayed to the Lord, she joyfully bowed her virgin head beneath the sword and received the beheading. Thus she passed from the lower to the higher, and entered the heavenly mansion, into the joy of her Lord, crowned by her most beloved Bridegroom, Christ our Lord, with the double crown of virginity and martyrdom.

* * *

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Lucian

Житие и страдание святого священномученика Лукиана

To recall the victories of the glorious martyrs over the devil and his servants, and the deeds of suffering of the ascetics of Christ, means to proclaim the glory of Christ our God and to preach His power, made manifest in the good contests of the martyrs who suffered for the glory of His most holy name. Christ Himself was the conqueror in all things, according to His word: "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33), and at first He alone fought the enemy on behalf of all. The holy martyrs, suffering after Him, being members of

His Body (1 Cor. 12:27), fill up, according to the apostolic word, "that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ" (Col. 1:24) in their flesh; and insofar as they, contending for His most holy name, die unconquered, insofar Christ appears victorious in them, for in them He suffers as in the members of His body, in them He displays His triumph over the adversary, and, being glorified, together with Himself glorifies also His members who suffered for Him, that is, the holy martyrs, who are nearest of all to Him in glory in proportion as they were imitators of His sufferings. Therefore it befits us also to praise and call blessed the good soldiers of Christ, by whose teachings and the example of their courageous contests the Church of Christ shines throughout the whole world; and they themselves, under the altar, clothed in white garments, stained with their own blood yet made white by Christ, rest in blessedness (cf. Mt. 5:14).

To the company of the martyrs belonged also the holy Lucian; as soon as Divine grace had washed him in the bath of baptism, it could then be seen in him that he would be great and glorious among men. His parents according to the flesh named him Lucius, in honor of the great proconsul Lucius, from whom he descended; afterwards, by the grace of the Holy Spirit and according to the custom of the holy Fathers, his name was changed at baptism to a better one. Named Lucius by his parents, that is, "bright," with the increase in him of God's gifts he acquired a more perfect name, being called Lucian, which means "bright-appearing." This was a sign that in the light of the new grace he would be a light to the world concerning the Lord (Mt. 5:14). He was by birth a Roman, of noble descent, but was still more ennobled by the second, Christian birth (Jn. 3:3), having been granted adoption to the eternal King. He was skilled in wisdom, learned in the Greek and Roman languages, but he acquired perfect wisdom from the teaching of the holy Apostle Peter; for he attached himself to him, became his disciple, and was filled by him with heavenly wisdom. He learned from him also the manners and labors of the apostles: after his passion-bearing death, he visited many places in Italy, sowing the seeds of the word of God.

Lucian had already attained perfection in the wisdom of God when he came to Rome, guided by God, the holy Dionysius the Areopagite,[4] desiring to visit the holy prisoners, the Apostles Peter and Paul, but he no longer found them alive. At that time the Apostolic See was governed by Pope Clement. He received Dionysius in friendship and with great honor, both for the sake of Dionysius's holiness and for the long-standing spiritual love in Christ between them, and Dionysius stayed with him for no small time; they were consoled by the sight of one another, took delight in conversations profitable to the soul, and strengthened one another not only by words but also by examples of virtue. Once the Blessed Clement, filled with the Holy Spirit, said:

"O my beloved brother Dionysius! Do you see how abundant is the harvest of the Lord's sowing among the pagans, and how few are the laborers in the word of God's preaching (Mt. 9:37)? And since you have been fully instructed in the Orthodox faith and have attained perfection in the virtues of the Christian law, I beg you: go to the Western lands for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, like a good soldier of His, take up arms against the enemies of our Lord and conquer them by the strength of God who strengthens you."

Saint Dionysius agreed to this with all his heart. Then the Blessed Clement began to seek out and gather friends, helpers, and fellow-workers, pious and wise, shining with holy lives. Among them he chose St. Lucian, ordained him bishop, and joined him in friendship with St. Dionysius, so that he might be his companion and fellow-worker in the preaching of the word of God, and, for the rest, a father in the Holy Spirit, teacher and guide. Having arranged this, the Blessed Clement confirmed the chosen ones with affectionate words, saying:

"Go, most beloved brethren, go, invincible soldiers of Christ, and as the Lord was with our holy fathers the Apostles and with their companions, so may He be with you, the preachers of His holy name: for a

4. St. Dionysius the Areopagite (a member of the Areopagus, the highest governing council in Athens) was converted to Christianity under the influence of the preaching of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:34), and by him was ordained bishop of Athens; then in 90 A.D. he was sent to Gaul to preach the Gospel together with the presbyter Rusticus and the deacon Eleutherius. He suffered with them in 96 A.D. under Domitian. His memory is October 3.

multitude of people from among the pagans, beyond number, will be won by you for the Lord and brought into His fold."

After a long conversation, St. Clement took leave of them warmly, blessed them, and sent them forth in peace. They went on together and preached Christ first throughout all of Italy.

As they drew near the city of Ticinum,[5] the Blessed Lucian, in a place called Parma, preached the word of God to the people and turned them away from vain idol-worship. The local inhabitants, unbelieving and excessively zealous idol-worshippers, unable to bear the insult offered to their gods and not heeding the preaching of God's word, did not hesitate to seize St. Lucian, and, having heaped many indignities upon him, threw him alone into the public prison. Entering it, the blessed man sang with great joy: "Teach me, O Lord, Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth" (Ps. 85:11), and again: "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Ps. 16:5). Thus rejoicing in the Lord, the holy man remained in the prison as though under the shelter of God's wings, and, in full trust in Christ's protection, prayed to Him thus: "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name" (Ps. 141:6), for those who are to be righteous are waiting for me, that through me, O Christ, Savior of the world, those of the pagans who are predestined to eternal life may turn to Thee (Rom. 8:28). Such and similar supplications the saint offered with all his heart, and his prayer, passing through heaven, was heard by the Lord: for he asked that he not be left on the way bereft of his companions, with whom he desired to go to suffering and to reach the place to which he had been sent. It was not because he feared to die for his Lord that the valiant soldier of Christ prayed in this way, but because he wished first to multiply the spiritual fruit for the Lord, and then, having gathered an abundant and prosperous harvest, to receive together with his friends the crown of martyrdom and the reward for his labors. And soon he received God's help: certain Christians, learning of the fate of the holy man, came by night to the prison, moved by love for Christ, and by whatever means

5. Ticinum, the present-day Pavia, an ancient city in Cisalpine Gaul, on the left bank of the Ticino, not far from its confluence with the Po.

they could, they freed Lucian from his bonds and enabled him to set out together with his holy friends.

The holy company, guided by the Lord, arrived safely in the famous city of Italian lands, Ticinum, otherwise called Pavia; having rested there a little from their labors, they continued to increase the glory of God, preaching the word of Christ unceasingly and abundantly in various places, so that in them one could see the fulfillment of the words of the prophet: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace, who brings good news of joy" (Is. 52:7; Rom. 10:15). It is impossible to describe how many thousands of people they turned to Christ in a short time, proclaiming the word of salvation to all; and the power of God so aided them that those who looked upon them thought they beheld citizens of heaven, for they shone among all men with signs and wonders, enlightening the souls of God's chosen ones. Then they left Italy; reaching the seashore, they embarked on a ship and set sail wherever the Holy Spirit directed them. Joyfully they put in at the harbor of the city of Arelate, disembarked, and were received with honor and friendship by the inhabitants of that city; there they rested and, following the example of the holy Apostles, began to choose for themselves regions for preaching the word of God. In order to spread and multiply the Church of God through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ everywhere among the pagans, even to the British Ocean, St. Marcellinus went with a small company of brethren into Spain, the Blessed Saturninus into Gaul, and St. Dionysius with the Blessed Lucian and the others came to the land of the Parisians. From here St. Lucian, with the presbyter Maximian and the deacon Julian, departed to preach in Belgium. Wholly filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, he proclaimed the name of the Lord there, overcame the power of the enemy, planted the Church of Christ, and instructed the people to salvation no less by the example of a virtuous life than by his word. Moreover, God gave him the power to work miracles and to heal every sickness and infirmity in men; and over the demons he received such authority that they, scarcely hearing his command, immediately left the people they tormented.

Preaching about Christ day and night without ceasing, Lucian remained in prayer and vigil, in daily fasting, in abstinence, and in complete mortification of the flesh, and wore himself down thus continually until, in the words of the Apostle, he "presented his body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (cf. Rom. 12:1). His usual food was a small piece of bread and greens, his drink water; but the power of God nourished him, and the grace of the Lord strengthened his weary limbs. The blessed man so ardently longed for the crown of martyrdom that he seemed already dead to the world.

Thus did this true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ bear his cross. He knew that suffering is twofold: one hidden, the other open; and before undertaking the feat of open martyrdom and being crowned with the unfading crown from the Lord, he wore himself down in secret, though his abstinence was known to all. He was worn out by the mortification of the flesh and adorned with patience; possessing a wondrous humility, full of meekness, he attained such perfection in the virtues that, living in the flesh on earth, he seemed in spirit already to live with the Angels in heaven. Therefore his face was always seen bright and affable, and his mind peaceful, and the whole appearance of this elder, adorned with wondrous gray hair, showed an earthly angel, a heavenly man.

When the fame of Lucian spread throughout all Belgium, people came to him desiring to receive baptism, and they were baptized by him in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, afterward breaking the idols they had formerly worshipped. The ancient enemy, the devil, seeing the mockery from those whom Christ drew to Himself through His servants, turned all his cunning and snares to the ruin of the holy Church of God; he roused anger and hatred against the Christians in Domitian, who, after Nero, by then dead, raised a second persecution against the Christians: he taught him to compel the Christians throughout the whole Roman empire to offer sacrifices to the carved gods, and to put to death after various tortures those who remained firm in the faith. Throughout all the cities and villages of his realm Domitian sent out an impious decree, that all the local governors, persuading the Christians to worship the idols and offer sacrifices to them,

should destroy by various torments those who disobeyed. Persecutors of the name of Christ were sent into Gaul to seek out the soldiers of Christ, and chiefly those who had come here from Rome, whose fame had already spread far; they wished together with them to destroy the very name of Christ. Three persecutors were sent here: Latrinus, Arius, and Antor. They were given a special command: to find the holy servant of God Lucian, take him and bring him before the judgment of the Caesar, or even to slay him at once with the sword, if he would not offer sacrifice to the idols. The persecutors went through the cities and villages of Gaul, but nowhere was he whom they sought. Then word reached them that the man of God Lucian, preaching the Gospel of the eternal kingdom, was enlightening the people of Belgium. Hearing this, the tormentors, inflamed with extreme rage and wrath, hastened into Belgium.

St. Lucian learned that the coming of the tormentors was near before they arrived, by revelation of the Holy Spirit. He remained in the place where he taught the people the words of life, and with him was a great multitude of people already converted to Christ by his preaching. In hope of eternal glory and blessed recompense, he exhorted them with all his heart, saying:

Beloved brethren in Christ and children, it has pleased my Lord Jesus Christ to show me the fruit of my labors and to grant me the reward promised before. O most dear ones, abide firm and unshaken in the faith of Christ. I am now old and worn out, and I rejoice in the crown of martyrdom, desiring to depart from you to the Lord; but you, abide unchangeably in the grace of God which you have received. Let not the fear of the tormentors turn you from the faith of Christ; let not threats terrify you, let not flattery ensnare you, let not promises of any honors and riches draw you away; but enjoy the eternal joy of the life to come, where unspeakable rewards are prepared for you. To these I too aspire in good hope, and for their sake I do not dread the fury of the persecutors.

Having said this, Lucian raised his eyes to heaven and, before all, gave thanks to God that He counted him worthy of the lot of the holy martyrs and did not separate him from his friends. He said:

"I thank Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who didst unite me with the Blessed Dionysius and with his fellow-workers in his death, and didst make me equal to them in their labors; I pray Thee, deem me worthy to be with them also in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Having said this, he left the city of Bellovacum,[6] not because he fled the torment out of fear, but in order, according to the Lord's commandment to withdraw from persecutors (Mt. 10:23), to set an example to his flock. Walking with his blessed fellow-sufferers, the presbyter Maximian and the deacon Julian, he did not cease throughout the whole journey from soul-profiting conversation and prayer; at last he reached the summit of the mountain toward which he was going, which lies near a river called the Fara, flowing from the west, three stadia[7] from the city. When he came there, like a city set on a mountain, he could not be hidden (Mt. 5:14); for that very mountain, rising picturesquely above the river, was visible from afar. There the blessed one, standing firm as in a place open to view, resolved to await the crown of martyrdom.

The aforementioned tormentors, having reached the city and not finding the holy Lucian in it, began to learn more certainly where he had gone. They were told that he was teaching the people not far from the city; they at once rushed there on swift horses and reached the mountain, where the man of God remained with the people and disciples. First they seized the holy servants of God, Maximian and Julian, in order to terrify the holy Lucian by their tortures and death and to draw him to the veneration of idols. The seized martyrs were sternly commanded to bow down to the idols, and they tried to instill fear in them, saying:

"If you do not offer sacrifice to our immortal gods, we shall at once put you to death by the sword."

But the martyrs, firm in the faith, fearlessly answered:

6. Now Beauvais in France.
7. A stade (*poprishche*) is approximately 690 sazhens.

"We will never bow down to idols, for they are vain and made by human hands; we have known the one true Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, for the faith in whom we are ready to die."

Hearing this, the wicked men at once slew them with the sword before the eyes of the holy Lucian. Thus the saints received the crowns promised them by the Lord and were numbered among the choir of the holy martyrs. The holy Lucian, rejoicing and glorifying God for their exploit, said before all:

"I rejoice and am glad in Thee, O Lord my God, that I see my children gone before me in receiving the crown of Thy glory."

Then Latrinus, Arius and Antor, with fury and anger, together addressed the blessed one with a cruel word:

"Is it you who by sorcery are enticing the people not to obey the command of the mighty Caesar and the Roman senate, and not to offer pleasing sacrifices to the immortal gods?"

The blessed Lucian answered:

"I am not a sorcerer, but a servant of Jesus Christ; I have been taught not sorcery but divine wisdom, and by its power I show men of God the way of truth, and instruct them how, without hindrance, they may follow my Lord Jesus Christ. He came down from heaven to earth, that by His blood He might redeem His creature from bondage to the enemy, turn it away from the worship of idols, or rather, let me say, of demons, and grant salvation to those who are brought from the darkness of unbelief into the true light; and it is right that they bow the neck of their hearts before Him alone, who was pleased to suffer crucifixion and death for the deliverance of all."

The tormentors objected:

"How do you confess as God Him whom you call not only dead but crucified?"

The holy Lucian answered them:

"Although you, because of your unbelief, are unworthy to hear the mysteries of the Heavenly King, nevertheless, for the sake of the many faithful standing here, I will tell you something in brief: the true God, the Son of the true God, who ever abides in eternity with the Father, at the end of the ages, desiring to renew the human race, which was per-

ishing through the transgression of Adam, was pleased to be born incorruptibly and ineffably of the Most Pure Virgin, that He might be true God and true man, the one Christ, true Son of God and of man, in one Person of two natures. And He, being impassible according to His Godhead and ever abiding with the Father, became visible and, according to human nature, subject to sufferings for us: for He became obedient to God the Father even unto death, and death on the cross, for our redemption (cf. Phil. 2:8). If the Son of God had not willed to be the Son of Man and clothed Himself in the form of a mortal, neither would the human race have received forgiveness from God, nor would mortals have been clothed in immortality."

These and many other words of the blessed Lucian filled the tormentors with still greater fury, and they said:

"You have already reached deep old age, and it is time for you to leave off childish babbling; that is why you dare to go to death without hesitation, why you do not dread it, because great vanity beguiles you and excessive talk takes away your reason. We tell you the truth: if you do not soon repent, do not abandon your madness and boldness, and do not offer a pleasing sacrifice to the immortal gods, we shall at once deliver your old age without mercy to cruel tortures."

Then the tormentors sat down and began to question him sternly:

"Tell us quickly your name and birth."

The soldier of Christ answered them:

“My parents named me Lucius, but in holy Baptism, through which I was born anew to eternal life in Christ, I was renamed Lucian. By birth I am a Roman; this origin is held in honor throughout the whole world. But I do not boast that I am a Roman, but that I am a servant of my Lord Jesus Christ, as you too can plainly see in me; for I have no other life or glory than my Lord Jesus Christ, and to die for Him is gain (cf. Phil. 1:21).”

Then the tormentors said:

"We were right in saying: you are a sorcerer and a seducer of those who listen to you, and above all you are a proud man, for you do not cease to speak shamelessly and do not even spare your venerable old age. But if you are a Roman, why have you madly departed from the

worship of the Roman gods, whom Caesar and the whole Roman senate and the whole world worship?"

The holy Lucian answered:

"By the grace of Christ, in whom I was baptized and whom I have known as the true God, I have renounced in my faith not only the devil and idols, but all his works. But you do not wish either to hear or to remember my words and preaching about Christ the Lord, because your unbelief has blinded you and your Caesar together with his senate, from whom you received the command that we, human beings, rational creatures, should offer sacrifice to demons and bow our necks before senseless idols made by human hands."

Latrinus, Arius and Antor, no longer able to bear the dishonor done to their gods and Caesar, laid hands on the saint, bound him and handed him over to the soldiers; and they, stretching the martyr out, beat him for a long time without mercy with cruel scourges. Enduring the tortures, the soldier of Christ was not overcome by suffering nor terrified by threats, but remained firm in the faith of Christ, and by the courage of his spirit strengthened his limbs, exhausted by old age and wounded. Unwavering in countenance and mind, he did not cease to confess the name of Christ in a loud voice, saying:

"I will never cease with my heart, my faith and my lips to praise Christ, the Son of God."

The tormentors, even more enraged, ordered the holy martyr to be deprived of life by the sword; then one soldier drew his sword, struck the holy neck, already prepared for the blow, and severed the venerable head. When the holy body lay beheaded and still moved, all witnessed, and the executioners themselves, that over him there shone from heaven a great light, and together with the light there was heard a voice from on high:

"Rejoice, good servant Lucian, who did not fear to shed your blood for Me. Come and receive the crown promised you before, and take up your dwelling in heaven with the saints: come and inherit the abode of eternal glory prepared for you with the Angels."

This voice was not for the sake of the saint, who had always firmly believed in the recompense God had promised him, but for the sake of

the people standing around, that they might be ever more firmly established in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which St. Lucian had been planting for so long a time. All this took place on the Sabbath day, on the aforementioned mountain, three stadia from the city. Seeing and hearing this, the people, both believers and unbelievers, were seized with great fear. Some fled from there; others, rejoicing, marveled to see themselves freed from the snares of the devil; yet, unable to gaze upon the radiance of the light made manifest, they withdrew a little from that place. Then St. Lucian, though dead in body, miraculously received from God the power of movement; he rose from the ground as one living and stood upon his feet; then, taking his most honorable head in his hands, he walked on unhindered, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him and by the help of the Angels, and with steady steps, as one living in the flesh, began his journey, carrying his holy head, just as his friend St. Dionysius did in the city of the Parisians. Having gone about three stadia and crossed over the waters of the aforementioned river Fara, the man of God reached the place he had chosen for his burial. There he lay down upon the earth and fell asleep in peace in the Lord.

Pious people, converted to Christ by the preaching of the martyr, came and anointed his holy body with fragrant spices, wrapped it in clean linen, and buried it with many honors, not without the presence of Angels: for while the honorable body was being committed to burial, there was perceived, besides the earthly fragrances, yet another wondrous and ineffable sweet scent. All who were there marveled and asked one another:

"What is this?"

Then they said:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast made us worthy to smell such a fragrance as our nostrils have never smelled! Glory to Thee, O Christ the Savior: for we have been so delighted by this fragrance that henceforth, we think, we shall not be deprived of any good!"

And while they were saying this, the divine fragrance continued to be given to them. From this it was undoubtedly known that the holy

Angels were present, who had been with the martyr without ceasing from the beginning of his suffering until his death and burial. Having performed the honorable burial, the pious buriers bowed down to the earth, crying out with contrite hearts:

"We believe, O Jesus Christ, that Thou art the true Son of God, reigning in the heavens with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as we have heard with our ears and learned to believe in our hearts from Thy holy martyr Lucian."

A multitude of people who had gathered for the burial from the surrounding cities and villages, seeing this, and those who had come last hearing it from those who had seen, were moved in their hearts, and on that same day about five hundred souls believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Before this, through the teaching of St. Lucian, up to thirty thousand persons of both sexes and every age had been converted to Christ in that land, who, leaving their idols, confessed God the Father unbegotten and His Only-begotten Son, together with the Holy Spirit, in the Trinity, the one true God. Afterwards some of the converted, out of zeal, built a church over the martyr's tomb, to the glory of God and in honor of His servant, St. Lucian. The bodies of the holy martyrs Maximian and Julian had been buried on the mountain where they were slain, but later, when the number of Christians increased, they were transferred from there and placed together with the body of the blessed Lucian. And many blessings were bestowed there by our Lord Jesus Christ through the intercession of His holy martyrs. As they had one faith, one love, and one confession in their sufferings, so, we believe, they also have one fellowship in eternal blessedness and one inheritance of the eternal kingdom. We thank our Creator that three witnesses of His, confessing the Trinity, attained perfection through martyrdom; we reverently honor them, knowing that through them the blind receive sight, the lame walk, demons are cast out, and many cures from various infirmities are wrought by their holy prayers, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory forever, amen.

* * *



THE FOURTH DAY OF JUNE

June 4

4 июня

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

Memory of our holy father Metrophanes, Patriarch of Constantinople

Память святого отца нашего Митрофана, патриарха Константинопольского

Our holy father Metrophanes lived in the days of Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor.[1] He was the son of Domitius, a Roman of royal descent. This Domitius, also called Domitian, was the brother of Probus, who once occupied the throne of the Roman emperor.[2] Being a man of good sense, Domitius soon recognized the falsehood of idolatry, renounced the false pagan gods, and believed in the true God, our Lord Jesus Christ. And since Rome at that time was full of pagan impiety, and Christians there suffered cruel persecution, Domitius left the capital of the empire and came to Byzantium with his two sons, Probus and Metrophanes. At that time the God-pleasing and holy man Titus (also called Tratus or Toratus) was bishop in Byzantium.[3] With him Domitius and his sons came to dwell, being taught the faith of Christ and the law of the Lord, and instructed in a virtuous life. Seeing that Domitius had cleaved to Christ with all his heart and all his soul, and was full of fervent zeal to labor for the Lord, the bishop numbered him among the clergy, ordaining him a presbyter. When Titus, having instructed Domitius, died, Domitius received the episcopal throne after him.[4] And after the repose of the blessed bishop Domitius, his son Probus received the hierarchal throne.[5] After the repose of Pro-

1. Emperor Constantine the Great, from 306 to 337.
2. Probus, or Pro, reigned from 276 to 282.
3. St. Titus occupied the Byzantine episcopal throne from 242 to 272.
4. Dometius was Bishop of Byzantium from 272 to 303.
5. Probus served as hierarch from 303 to 315.

bus, the son of Domitius and brother of Probus, St. Metrophanes, of whom we are about to speak, was raised to the episcopal see of Byzantium.[6]

At this time the emperor Constantine the Great came to the Thracian region[7] and stopped in Byzantium. Here, seeing the hierarch Metrophanes, the emperor learned from his conversations that he was a great servant of God, and he greatly marveled at the hierarch's virtuous life and his wisdom. Having come to love him warmly, and desiring to enjoy his God-inspired words, he took him with him to Rome.

Soon after this, the emperor Constantine wished to transfer his capital from Rome to Byzantium. The city greatly pleased him, both for its beauty and for its advantageous location. It lies in the southeastern corner of the Balkan Peninsula on the shore of the Bosphorus, the strait joining the Red Sea with the Mediterranean and the Sea of Marmara. The most splendid roads by land and sea led to this city, and the whole surrounding region abounded in various earthly fruits. All this so pleased Constantine that he resolved to transfer the capital of the empire here. The emperor adorned the new capital with the most splendid buildings and named it New Rome.[8]

But, after the name of its founder, the city was more often called Constantinople, that is, the city of Constantine, and as the residence of the emperors it was also called Tsarigrad. Having transferred the capital of the empire to Byzantium, Constantine also brought here from Old Rome the hierarch Metrophanes, named him his father, and obtained for him from the bishops gathered at Nicaea for the First Ecumenical Council[9] the title of patriarch. Metrophanes was thus the first Patriarch of Constantinople.

---

6. St. Metrophanes, the first Patriarch of Constantinople, occupied the Constantinopolitan throne from 315 to 325.

7. Thrace lay at the eastern extremity of the Balkan Peninsula and bordered the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara. At present it is Eastern Rumelia, a Turkish province.

8. The Russian edition reads "Red Sea" (Chermnoe more); the Bosphorus joins the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara. —Trans.

9. The council took place in 325 and was convened to refute the heresy of Arius, who taught that the Son of God is not consubstantial but only similar in substance to the Father, and is a created being, standing, however, above other created beings. At this council 318 bishops were present, who had assembled from various countries within the bounds of the Roman Empire.

Because of his deep old age and bodily weakness, Metrophanes himself was not at the council in Nicaea. In his place he sent his chorepiscopus[10] Alexander, a venerable, holy, and aged man who had labored much for the peace of the Church in Thrace and Illyricum.[11] At the council he occupied the place of his patriarch Metrophanes and opposed Arius.

After the close of this Ecumenical Council, the pious emperor Constantine the Great besought all the hierarchs who had been at the council to go with him to Constantinople to visit the sick patriarch Metrophanes, who lay on his deathbed. On one of the Sundays the fathers, together with the emperor, came to Metrophanes and conversed with him for a long time. At this the emperor said to the saint:

– Most honorable father! I see that you are worn out by old age and sickness. So I beg you, tell us, who is worthy to become your successor?

To these words St. Metrophanes answered the emperor with joy in his countenance:

– Truly, through your lips the Holy Spirit now speaks. Indeed, when seven days ago I was pondering this, the Lord revealed to me that after ten days I would depart from this world. And when I finish my life, let my fellow-minister Alexander succeed me on the throne, truly worthy of election and of the gift of the Holy Spirit. After him, Paul, who at present serves as reader,[12] is to be the heir to the throne.

Then, looking at the blessed Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria,[13] he said to him:

– Brother! You too will leave behind an excellent successor.

And taking by the hand his archdeacon Athanasius, he said:

– Here is a valiant soldier of Christ; he will be your successor,[14] and he will not only stand firm, together with my brother Alexander,

10. A chorepiscopus was a rural bishop subordinate to the city bishop.
11. Illyria was a province embracing the whole eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea together with the regions lying behind it. Now on the site of this province lie Albania, Dalmatia and Bosnia.
12. After St. Metrophanes, the Patriarch of Constantinople was indeed St. Alexander, and after him St. Paul, who occupied the patriarchal throne, with some interruptions, from 341 to 350.
13. St. Alexander occupied the Alexandrian throne from 325 to 340.

against the Arian impiety, but will also prosper in great labors, so that he, together with the courageous Paul, will undergo many sufferings.

Thus the saint foretold the future, and ten days after the revelation of the Lord he departed from the world on the fourth day of the month of June, having lived in all one hundred and seventeen years from the day of his birth. Now the saint abides in endless life, standing before the throne of the Great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Christ our Savior, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst clearly preach the Faith of Christ, and keeping it, thou didst multiply in truth Thy faithful flock; wherefore, O Metrophanes, thou rejoicest with the Angels, ever beseeching Christ for us all.

Another Kontakion, Tone 4:

From thy youth thou didst appear as an honorable vessel, being chosen a hierarch for God, to Whom with joy thou didst cry out: Thou art equal to the Father and the Spirit, O Christ.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Concordius

Страдание святого мученика Конкордия

In the reign of the emperor Antoninus[15] in the city of Rome so cruel a persecution was raised against the Christians that no one, unless he offered sacrifice to the gods, could either buy or sell anything. At that time there lived in the city of Rome a certain man named Concordius. He came of a noble house. His father, Gordian, was in holy orders and was a presbyter. Having a son Concordius, Gordian taught him understanding of the Holy Scripture and the faith of Christ. Therefore,

14. After St. Alexander, the Patriarch of Alexandria was indeed St. Athanasius, from ... to 373. He suffered many persecutions from the Arians and Arianizing emperors. Several times he fled the city, seeking refuge in the West; at times he was expelled from Alexandria by the Arians. St. Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople, shared the same fate with him.

15. The Roman emperor Antoninus, called by the pagans Shem, that is, the Pious, reigned from 138 to 161.

Concordius was made a subdeacon by Pius, bishop of Rome, who had suffered torment for Christ in the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.[16] This blessed man, together with his father, day and night engaged in fasting and prayer; moreover, they gave alms with an open hand to the poor and to all who were in need. For their part they asked the Lord to grant them the possibility of escaping the cruelties of the persecution raised against the Christians.

Once the blessed Concordius said to his father:

– My lord! If you have nothing against my intention, then give me your blessing to go to the holy Eutychius and to dwell with him for a short time, until the fury of our enemy, the emperor Antoninus, subsides.

– Let us rather remain here, child, – said his father in answer to Concordius' request, – so that we too may receive from the Lord the crowns of martyrdom.

The blessed one answered:

– I can receive the martyr's crown wherever Christ God is pleased – so allow me to carry out my intention.

After these words his father let him go, and Concordius departed to his kinsman Eutychius, who was then on his estate on the Salarian road, near the city of Trebula.[17]

Receiving Concordius with great joy, the blessed Eutychius began to give thanks to God, and they lived together in that place, engaging in fasting and prayers. Many came to them there, afflicted with various infirmities. They, praying in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, gave them healing, and through this the fame of them spread among the people far and wide. The eparch of Tuscia, Torquatus,[18] who then lived

16. Marcus Aurelius occupied the Roman imperial throne from 161 to 180.

17. The name Trebula was borne by three small towns in the land of the Sabines, located in central Italy east of Rome. Since what follows tells how St. Concordia was summoned by the Tuscan eparch who resided at Spoleto, in the province of Umbria, one must think that the town designated here as Trebula lay in the northern part of the land of the Sabines, not far from Umbria, a province lying to the northeast of Rome.

18. The Romans called the inhabitants of Etruria Tuscans; Etruria was a province in the west of central Italy, north of Rome. Thus the Tuscan eparch was the ruler of Etruria.

in the city of Spoleto,[19] heard about them. Calling the blessed Concordius to him, he first asked the saint his name.

– I am a Christian, – answered Concordius.

– I am asking you about your name, – the eparch said again, – not about your Christ.

– I have already told you, – answered St. Concordius, – that I am a Christian and confess Christ.

– Offer sacrifice to the immortal gods, – said the eparch, – and you will be our friend; I will regard you as a father and will ask the emperor Antoninus, my lord, to appoint you priest of the gods.

– Let your gods rather remain with you, – said St. Concordius in reply.

– Listen to me and offer sacrifice to the immortal gods, – the eparch went on urging him.

– Rather, you listen to me, – answered St. Concordius, – and offer sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that you may escape eternal torments. If you do not do this, you will receive punishment in eternal life and will suffer torment in unquenchable fire.

Then the eparch commanded that he be beaten with rods and cast into the common prison.

At night the blessed Eutychius came to Concordius with the holy bishop Anthimus. Anthimus was a friend of Torquatus and had besought him to release the prisoner to him for a short time. And so Concordius was let out of prison at night and lived with Anthimus for a good while. At this time Anthimus ordained Concordius to the priesthood, and they, living together, engaged in fasting and prayer.

After some time had passed, Torquatus sent for Concordius and asked him:

– What have you decided about your life?

"My Life is Christ, to Whom I offer daily the sacrifice of praise, but you will burn in Gehenna," said Concordius to the eparch.

Then Torquatus commanded that the saint be bound to a shameful post. But the saint spoke with joy:

19. Spoleto, now Spoleto, is a town in central Italy, in ancient Umbria, on the border with Etruria. It is probable that Umbria and Etruria were under the rule of one governor.

"Glory be to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ!"

"Offer a sacrifice to the great Zeus[20]," the eparch insisted.

"I will not offer sacrifice to a deaf and dumb stone," answered the blessed Concordius, "for my Lord Jesus Christ is with me, Whom my soul serves!"

After this the eparch, enraged, sent Concordius to confinement in a narrow dungeon, and commanded that iron be placed upon his hands and neck, and forbade anyone to enter to him, for he desired to starve the saint to death.

But the blessed Concordius, imprisoned in the dungeon, did not lose heart, but with joy began to give thanks to almighty God:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," he sang.

At midnight the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said:

"Fear not, but stand fast in the faith with courage, for I am with you."

After three days had passed, the eparch sent to him by night two of his armour-bearers and commanded them:

"Go and inform the prisoner that he must offer sacrifice to our gods, or else his head shall be cut off."

The armour-bearers came to Concordius with an idol of the god Zeus, and asked him:

"Have you heard what the eparch has commanded?"

"I know nothing of this," answered the saint.

"Offer sacrifice to the god Zeus," the armour-bearers continued, "otherwise you will be beheaded!"

Then the blessed Concordius, giving thanks to God, said:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ." And he spat in the face of Zeus.

Seeing this, one of the soldiers drew his sword and cut off the saint's head, and thus the blessed Concordius, confessing the Lord, yielded up his spirit.[21]

---

20. Zeus, in Roman Jupiter, was revered as the chief deity, father of gods and men; he was the lord of heaven and earth, of thunder and lightning, of winds and rains.
21. This was about the year 175.

After that, two clerics and some pious men came to the dungeon; taking the body of the saint, they laid it not far from the city of Spoleto, in a place watered abundantly by flowing springs. Here, at the tomb of the martyr, those possessed by demons and those suffering from various diseases began to receive healing through the prayers of St. Concordius, who stands before our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit reigns unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Frontasius, Severinus, Severian and Silanus

Страдание святых мучеников Фронтасия, Северина, Севериана и Силана

The holy Frontasius, Severinus, Severian and Silanus were sent by the first Bishop of Petragorium, Fronto,[22] to preach the word of God. During their preaching they were seized by the hegemon Squiridon, who interrogated them:

"Tell me: whence are you, and by what names are you called? For you not only have not offered sacrifices to the gods, but have turned many others away from this, and have even destroyed the temples of the gods. Tell me, by what authority do you act thus?"

They answered him:

"Why do you question us, hegemon, being a stranger to divine virtue? Are you not already striving to destroy the righteous cause? Then, before you proceed to carry out your intention, consider: who created your soul and body? For the pagan idols are the work of human hands, and can neither benefit themselves nor help others, much less create anything."

"I see," said Squiridon, "that you are bold and talkative, taught every kind of idle talk by your Teacher."

"Our words are full of truth," answered Severinus and Severian, "but you venerate idols, which are stones set up by demons; they are deaf, dumb and empty."

22. The episcopal see of Petragoria was also called Pericord. The city of Périgueux lay in southern Gaul.

"Leave off your arguments," Squiridon interrupted them, "and if you wish to remain alive, offer sacrifice to the gods."

"Our gain lies in this," answered Frontasius, "that we should live and die for Christ!"

After that the hegemon turned to Silanus, who knew how to play the harp, the melodious cymbals and the lyre, and asked him:

"And you, young man, why do you not offer sacrifice to the gods?"

"I am prepared," answered the holy Silanus, "to offer myself in sacrifice to my Lord Jesus Christ, Who by the grace of baptism has washed the world from the defilement of sin."

"How did He wash it?" asked the hegemon.

Silanus answered:

"My Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples: 'Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Mt. 28:19), 'He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned' (Mk. 16:16). Thus you also, hegemon, if you believe in Christ and are baptized, will be saved; but if you do not believe, you will be condemned."

Enraged, the hegemon commanded that they be led out of the city to the place of execution and subjected to the most cruel tortures. The tormentors drove iron nails into the heads of the martyrs, in the likeness of the crown of thorns of our Savior, and nailed them to a pillar. Each had nine nails in his head. But the cruel fury of the tormentors could not turn Christ's warriors away from Him. When the hegemon could not overcome the saints by these tortures, he made a final decision concerning them: he commanded that their heads be cut off. Then the holy martyrs, bending their knees to the ground and commending their souls to God, offered their necks to the executioners, and received a martyr's death for confessing the name of Christ. The impious soldiers, having severed the heads of the martyrs, cast their bodies to the ground for dishonor, leaving the honorable remains unburied. But Divine power wrought at this the following miracle.

The bodies of the saints, by the sudden inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon them, came to life, and each, taking in his hands the head lying nearby, without any human help rose to his feet and thus came to the

river called Il. Entering the waters here, the revived bodies of the martyrs walked upon them as though upon dry land. Having then crossed the river, before the eyes of many who watched the miracle in amazement, they ascended a high hill. There they came to the church of the Most Pure Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, in which the holy bishop Fronto was praying. The holy martyrs entered the church and, kneeling, laid their heads before the feet of the bishop, while their bodies stretched out on the ground in the form of a cross, and they became dead again. Then the holy bishop Fronto, with the presbyter Anianus and in the presence of a numerous people, with honor and hymns, buried Frontasius, Severinus and Silanus in the aforesaid church. Severian, however, at the request of a certain devout woman, he honorably buried in another place, located on her estate, not far from his holy companions in suffering.

The holy martyrs suffered in the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius,[23] glorifying by their deeds and by their steadfast confession our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Zosimas, Bishop of Babylon

Житие преподобного отца нашего Зосимы, епископа Вавилонского

The Venerable Zosimas, surnamed Kiliks (because he was a native of Cilicia[24]), in his youth loved God. Renouncing the world, he came to Mount Sinai,[25] was clothed here in the monastic order, and began to labor in fasting and prayer. However, he did not remain long on Sinai. Striving for quiet and stillness, Zosimas, while still in his

23. The Roman emperor Claudius reigned from 41 to 54.

24. Cilicia was a region of Asia Minor located in its southeastern part, on the borders of Syria and along the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

25. Mount Sinai is properly a group of mountains composed of granite cliffs, cut through and surrounded by steep and rugged valleys. It lies almost in the middle of the known arms of the Red Sea, which form the Sinai Peninsula. It consists of three mountain ridges. The southeastern summit of the middle ridge was the place of the famous Sinaitic legislation. From the fourth century A.D. Mount Sinai became a favorite place of ascetics and was entirely strewn with monasteries.

young years, withdrew from Mount Sinai into the deserts of Libya,[26] and settled there in a certain desert place called Ammoniac. Here he began to live in complete solitude, caring to please the one God. Once he saw in that desert an elder clothed in a prickly hair shirt. Approaching him, Zosimas wished to bow to the elder and, according to custom, to ask his blessing. But the elder anticipated him, saying:

"Why have you come here, Zosimas? Go away from here, for you ought not to remain here."

Thinking that the elder had known him for a long time, Zosimas, bowing to him and asking his blessing, said:

"I beg you, father, show me this kindness! Tell me, how do you know me?"

The elder answered:

"Two days ago a man, wondrous in appearance, came to me and said: 'Behold, there will come to you a monk from Mount Sinai, named Zosimas; do not give him a blessing to remain in this desert. I wish to entrust to him the church of Babylon, which is in Egypt.'"

Having said this, the hermit withdrew from Zosimas a distance of a thrown stone and stood in prayer, raising his hands to God. He prayed for about two hours; then, finishing his prayer, the elder again approached Zosimas and, embracing him in a fatherly manner, kissed him on the face and said:

"My beloved child, it is good that you have come here. Truly, God has brought you to me so that you may commit my body to the earth, for I am departing to the Lord."

Then Zosimas asked the elder:

"How many years, father, have you dwelt in this place?"

And the elder answered:

"Forty-five years of my dwelling here have now been completed."

At these words of the ascetic, his face shone like fire. Turning again to Zosimas, the elder said:

26. Libya is a province of North Africa, to the west of Egypt. The part bordering the Mediterranean Sea was inhabited, while the part reaching inland was a desert with several oases. It is the easternmost extremity of the known Sahara Desert, which stretches from Egypt almost to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

"Peace to you, child; pray for me!"

And after such words he lay down on the earth and quietly departed to the Lord God.

The blessed Zosimas, having dug a grave, buried the honorable body of the great ascetic, and after remaining in that place two days, returned to Mount Sinai, glorifying God.

During his second stay on Sinai, a certain robber came to him and entreated him in these words:

"Have mercy on me, abba,[27] vouchsafe me the tonsure of the monastic order, that I may in stillness lament my sins. I have committed many murders, and now I have repented of my criminal and sinful life, and I wish to spend the rest of my days in weeping and heartfelt contrition for my countless evil deeds."

The Venerable Zosimas, having instructed this man, clothed him in the monastic order; but after some time, calling the repentant robber to himself, he said to him:

"Child, believe me, it is impossible for you to remain here. If any of the courtiers learns that you are seeking salvation among us, he will seize you. Moreover, someone whom you have wronged may recognize you and inform against you. Therefore, listen to me, and I will lead you to a more remote monastery."

The monk agreed to the Venerable's admonition, and the holy elder led him to the cenobium of Abba Dorotheus, which was near Gaza[28]. Having placed him in this monastery, Zosimas returned to Mount Sinai.

That brother lived nine years in the cenobium of Abba Dorotheus. But afterward, having studied the Psalter and been tested in the labors of monastic life, he returned once more to the Venerable Zosimas and said to him:

27. *Abba* is a Syriac word meaning father. This title was usually given to the heads of monasteries and to the senior brethren. A novice monk, placed under the guidance of some experienced elder for his training, also addressed him with this word, *abba*.

28. The city of Gaza lies on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, at the southernmost extremity of Palestine, not far from Egypt; formerly it was the southern boundary of the Canaanites. In the time of Roman power Gaza was a considerable trading city of Palestine, and this importance was maintained for it for some time also in the later Byzantine period. But in the course of time this flourishing city lost all its significance, and now only sandy hills and miserable ruins bear witness that a great city once existed here.

"Show me mercy, Father: give me back my worldly garments, and take from me my monastic ones."

The Venerable asked him sorrowfully:

"Why, child?"

Then the monk said to him:

"For nine years, Father, as you yourself know, I have dwelt in the cenobium, practicing fasting and every kind of abstinence, laboring with meekness, silence and the fear of God, and obeying everyone, in hope of the boundless mercy of God and the forgiveness of my countless sins. And yet, despite my constant ascetic efforts and labors, I always see before me a child who says to me: 'Why did you kill me?' I see this vision not only in dreams but also while awake: when I stand in church, when I approach the Divine Mysteries, and when I eat something with the brethren at the table. For not one hour do I know peace: even when I walk, I see before me the child, who always says the same thing to me: 'Why did you kill me?' So I have decided, Father, to go to the place where I committed my robberies, that I may be seized and handed over to judgment. I must die for the senseless murder of that child."

Thus, having taken his worldly garments from the Venerable Father, that monk went out into the world. When he came to the city of Diospolis[29], he was seized, and on the very next day he underwent execution, being beheaded with the sword. Thus he departed to the Lord God, having washed away his sins with his own blood.

Soon after these events, the Venerable Zosimas, tormented by an irresistible longing to live in the quiet and stillness of the desert, again resolved to leave Mount Sinai. And so, taking with him his disciple John, the Venerable set out with him into the desert called Porphyrion[30]. Passing through this desert, they met two hermits: one of them was a native of Galatia[31] and bore the name Paul, and the other came

29. Diospolis was a Palestinian city on the northern road from Jerusalem to Joppa (Jaffa).

30. The reference is evidently to the desert near the city of Porphyrgon in Phoenicia, close to Mount Carmel (south of Ptolemais). This desert, and Mount Carmel in particular, were filled with monks.

31. Galatia was a small, mountainous but fertile province of Asia Minor, lying between Bithynia, Pontus and Cappadocia. It received its name from the Galatians, warlike tribes of Gallic or Celtic origin.

from the district of Meletine[32] and was called Theodore, having received the monastic tonsure in the monastery of Abba Euthymius the Great. Both ascetics wore garments of buffalo hide. The Venerable Zosimas settled with his disciple near these hermits, at a distance of about two stadia[33], and lived there two years.

But afterward a serpent bit the disciple of the Venerable Zosimas, John: his whole body was saturated with the serpent's venom, blood gushed from his eyes, nostrils, ears and from every opening and pore of his skin, and John died.

The blessed Zosimas was deeply grieved and went to the two hermits mentioned above. Seeing him in great sorrow, they spoke to him before Zosimas said anything, anticipating him:

"What is it, Abba Zosimas, has your brother died?"

Zosimas, astonished at their foresight, told them the circumstances of his disciple's death, which in any case were already known to the elders.

Then both ascetics rose and went with Zosimas to Brother John. Seeing the dead man lying on the ground, they said:

"Do not grieve, Abba Zosimas: God will help you."

And after these words they called out loudly, addressing the dead man:

"Brother John, arise, for your abba calls you."

The dead man immediately came to life and rose from the ground. Then the elders found the serpent and tore it in two; and then they said to the Venerable Zosimas:

"Abba, we do not falsely declare to you the will of God: go to Mount Sinai, for God wishes to entrust you with the episcopate of the Church of Babylon, which is in Egypt."

Hearing this, the Venerable Zosimas received the blessing of the holy hermits and, taking his disciple John with him, returned again to Sinai.

32. Meletina was a region in the northern part of Lesser Armenia, not far from the River Euphrates. Under the emperor Trajan (98–117) a settlement of the same name as the region grew here to the size of a considerable city.

33. *Stadion* (*poprishche*) — a measure of distance, equal to 690 of our sazhens. Two stadia thus make 1,380 sazhens, or 2 versts.

After some time, the abbot of Mount Sinai[34] sent the blessed Zosimas, together with two other monks, to Alexandria[35] on account of the needs of the Sinai monasteries. The Patriarch of Alexandria loved the blessed elders and, keeping them in the city, ordained them bishops: one to Heliopolis[36], another to Leontopolis[37], and Zosimas to Babylon of Egypt. For in antiquity there were two Babylons: the first, the most famous and most ancient, was in the land of the Chaldeans[38], and in it reigned Nebuchadnezzar and all the Chaldean kings; the other, less known and smaller in extent and in number of inhabitants, was in Egypt. This city was founded on the bank of the river Nile by settlers from ancient Babylon, who named their new settlement after their abandoned homeland.

In this Babylon of Egypt, the Venerable Zosimas, by the will of God and in accordance with the prophecy of the hermits, received the episcopal throne and began to shepherd the flock of Christ. He governed the holy Church well, becoming a pattern for the flock in word, conduct and purity (1 Tim. 4:12). He remained for a fairly long time at the head of the Church of Babylon and instructed many on the path of salvation. When the saint reached deep old age, seeing his bodily weakness and expecting death soon, he laid down the episcopal throne and returned again to Mount Sinai, the place of his former dwelling. Here, having lived a little while, the saint died in the Lord[39], and now stands among

34. The monasteries of Mount Sinai were under the direction of one common superior, the abbot of Mount Sinai.

35. Alexandria was the principal city of Egypt and of the North African provinces. It was founded by Alexander the Macedonian in Lower (Northern) Egypt, at the mouth of the Nile. After Rome, Alexandria was considered the first city in the world, and it served as a center of trade, industry and especially pagan learning, and in the first centuries of Christianity as a nursery of Christian enlightenment. From the fifth century the bishop of Alexandria held the title of patriarch, and all the churches of Egypt, Libya and North Africa were subject to him. The Sinai peninsula, with its monasteries, was also under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Alexandria. At present Alexandria (in Turkish and Arabic, Iskandery) is among the most important trading centers on the Mediterranean, with a population of up to 230,000.

36. Heliopolis was a city in Africa; it lies on the right bank of the Nile, on one of its eastern branches, in the south of Lower Egypt.

37. Leontopolis was a city in central Egypt.

38. Chaldea was situated in Mesopotamia, along the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

39. He reposed at the end of the sixth century.

the choir of holy hierarchs before our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ; to Him be glory forever. Amen.

* * *



THE FIFTH DAY OF JUNE

June 5

5 июня

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

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre

Память святого священномученика Дорофея, епископа Тирского

In the reign of the impious Roman emperor Diocletian[1], St. Dorotheus was bishop of the city of Tyre[2]. When the impious emperor raised a cruel persecution against the Christians, Dorotheus left his see and hid himself in unknown places. But with the accession of the Emperor Constantine the Great, who reigned from 306 to 337, when the Church enjoyed peace, St. Dorotheus returned again to Tyre and to his see, and safely shepherded the flock of rational sheep, bringing many to God from the error of idol-worship. The life of Dorotheus continued into the time of the Emperor Julian the Apostate[3]. Having ascended the throne, Julian at first persecuted the Christians not openly, but commanded the governors who shared his views to harass and torment the Christians in every way. Then St. Dorotheus, seeing that a new persecution was being raised against the faithful, again left the see of the Church of Tyre, thus escaping the hands of the tormentors; for the Lord commanded not to surrender to open dangers at the hands of persecutors, but to flee from them; He said: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another" (Mt. 10:23).

Thus, having departed from Tyre, Dorotheus came to Asia Minor, but here too he did not hide himself from the idol-servants, since God was calling him to the crown of martyrdom. He was seized by the min-

1. Diocletian reigned in the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
2. Tyre was located in Phoenicia and lay on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.
3. Julian the Apostate was emperor from 361 to 363.

ions of the lawless emperor in the city of Udsk[4]. Having endured various torments there, he, amid his sufferings, delivered his blessed soul into the hands of the Lord, having reached one hundred and seven years of age[5].

Having thoroughly studied both secular and spiritual sciences, St. Dorotheus left behind various works of great importance for Christians, in Greek and Latin, for he was very learned in both. Among other things he composed the lives of the prophets and Apostles, as well as other very useful writings and narratives[6]. And now, himself inscribed in the Book of Life, he has been settled in the heavenly dwellings with those saints whose lives he composed during his earthly life.

Kontakion, Tone 5:

Shining with virtues, and with divine teachings brighter than the sun, thou didst shine forth, O blessed one, in sufferings; and thou didst enlighten the earth, O Dorotheus, dispelling the darkness of polytheism and of destructive heresies. Wherefore we brightly keep thy memory.

* * *

Repose of Our Venerable Father Anubius the Confessor, Hermit of Egypt

Преставление преподобного отца нашего Анувия Исповедника и пустынножителя Египетского

Venerable Anubius, who had great faith and love for Christ God, was an Egyptian by birth. During the persecution raised by the impious idolaters against the Christians, he boldly confessed Christ before the pagans, for which he was subjected to torments. But, by God's providence, he was delivered from the hands of the pagans and went out into the desert; laboring and pleasing God, he wandered

4. The city of Ud, or Ud, was located in the Asia Minor province of Moesia. On the site of ancient Ud there now stands the city of Varna.

5. This was about 362.

6. It is not known with precision which works were written by St. Dorotheus; it is thought that he wrote the "Synopsis," or a collection of narratives on the lives of the prophets and apostles; but not all scholars share this opinion.

there until deep old age. His death came about in the following circumstances.

By God's arrangement, in one place on the bank of the Nile River, which waters the land of Egypt, three hermits once met: Abba Sour, Isaiah, and Paul. Having asked one another where each was going, they saw that all three had the same purpose; for each of them was setting out to Abba Anubius. From the place where the hermits had met to the monastery of Anubius the journey was three days and lay by water; moreover, one had to sail upstream, against the current. And so the hermits sat down on the bank to wait, to see whether some boat sailing there would appear, so that they could board it and reach the region where the Venerable Anubius dwelt. And since for a long time no boat appeared, they fell into despondency and said to themselves:

"Let us pray to the Lord, that He, in His mercy, may fulfill our desire and help us overcome the obstacle to the journey we have undertaken."

Isaiah and Paul said then to Abba Sour:

"Pray especially, Father, for we believe that through you God will grant us what we ask."

Sour bade them also kneel with him in prayer, and himself, spreading himself cruciform upon the earth, fell prone before the Lord with his face down. When, after the prayer was finished, the elders rose from the ground, they noticed a boat standing near the shore. Rejoicing, they gave thanks to the Lord and got into it. Setting out, the boat sailed, borne by the wind and guided by an invisible power of God, upstream against the current. It sailed so swiftly that within one hour it covered a distance which would have taken three days to travel with great difficulty.

When the boat put in to shore opposite the monastery of Anubius, the fathers went ashore. Then Isaiah said:

"Lord, show us the man to whom we are going, coming out to meet us and revealing to each of us the secrets of his heart!"

Then Father Paul said to them:

"The Lord has revealed to me that, after three days have passed, He will take Abba Anubius from the world."

After this they went from the shore toward the monastery, and when they had gone a little way from the river, the Venerable Anubius came out to meet them and, greeting them, said:

"Blessed is the Lord, Who has granted me to see you now in the flesh, just as before I saw you in the spirit."

Having received them warmly into his cell, he began to tell each of them of their good deeds, unknown to anyone but the one God, namely, how each was laboring in complete solitude, pleasing his Master, Christ the Lord, and what grace each had from the Lord.

After that Abba Isaiah said to Anubius:

"Since the Lord has also revealed to us, honored father, concerning you, that after three days He will take you from this temporal life, we beg you, tell us also of your desert labors and ascetic feats by which you have pleased God. Do not think that you will fall into vainglory: for, withdrawing from this world, you will leave to posterity the example of your God-pleasing life, so that there may be imitators of you."

Then the elder told them about himself as follows:

"I do not remember that I have done anything great or glorious. This only have I kept in memory, by the grace of my God: from the time when I confessed the name of our Savior before the tormentors, during the persecution against the Christians, not a false word has passed from my lips. For, having once confessed the truth, I did not wish afterward to utter anything false, and having once loved the heavenly, I did not want to love anything earthly for the rest of the time. In this the mercy of God also helped me, for the Lord granted me the strength never to seek any earthly goods. Holy Angels brought the food necessary for me. And my Lord has hidden nothing from me of what takes place on earth. At the same time my heart was always filled with thirst for communion with Him. Striving with all my thoughts toward the Lord Christ, Whom my soul has loved, that I might always behold Him with the eyes of my soul and delight in contemplating Him, I did not sleep either by day or by night. I also constantly see an Angel of God, present with me and showing me all the world-rulers of this age. The light of my mind has never gone out. Whatever I asked of the Lord I received at once. Many times I have beheld the Angelic hosts

standing before God; I have beheld the choirs of holy martyrs and confessors, the assemblies of monks and of all the saints, and above all those who had no other occupation during their life on earth than always to glorify and bless the Lord in simplicity of heart and faith. I have also seen Satan and his angels, given over to eternal fire. And again, on the opposite side I have seen the righteous, enjoying eternal joy."

This and much else like it the Venerable Anubius told the fathers who had visited him during three days; he told it not for vainglory but for the benefit of those who listened. For he spoke with great humility, urged on by the entreaties of those who came. And at the close of the third day he peacefully and joyfully yielded up his spirit to God, and as soon as his spirit parted from the body, hosts of holy Angels appeared, took the soul of the saint and began to bear it up to the heights of heaven. And in the air were heard the sweetest Angelic hymns. Thus the Venerable Anubius, who confessed the name of Christ before the pagans and suffered torments for it, passed from earth to the heavenly dwellings[7]. Now he is glorified before the heavenly Angels in the choir of the confessors of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit honor and glory are offered forever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of Our Venerable Father Theodore the Hermit

Память преподобного отца нашего Феодора Пустынника

Our Venerable Father Theodore was an eunuch from his youth. He left the world, received monasticism, and withdrew into the Jordan desert. Zealous for pleasing God, he labored much here, for which he received from God the gift of working miracles. Once it fell to him to travel to Constantinople. Coming to the sea, he found a ship ready to sail and boarded it. During the voyage it happened that the ship went off course and wandered for a long time, so that all the supplies of drink and food of those on board were exhausted. The sailors

7. The Venerable Anuvius reposed in the 4th century.

and all who were sailing on the ship were in perplexity and great despondency. Then the Venerable Theodore, lifting his hands to heaven, fervently prayed to God, Who saves people from misfortunes. Then, with prayer, he made the sign of the cross over the sea water and said to the sailors:

"Blessed be God! Draw as much water as you need."

They took some and tasted it, and found that the sea water had changed from bitter to fresh, like river water. Afterward they filled their vessels and all the others with fresh water from the sea, and, glorifying God, bowed down to the ground before the elder. But the Venerable one said:

"Forgive me, my lords! It was not for my sake that this wonder of almighty God came to pass, but for your sakes, who were grieved by reason of the lack of water. For God, seeing your sorrow and deathly sadness, had mercy upon you and changed the salt sea water into sweet river water."

Soon after this, through the prayers of the holy elder, the ship swiftly reached the harbor to which it was bound. This Venerable Father Theodore also worked many other miracles, and then reposed in God.[8]

* * *

Account of the Repose of the Blessed Constantine, Metropolitan of Kiev

Повесть о кончине блаженного Константина, митрополита Киевского

Shortly after the Grand Princely throne of Kiev was taken from the Blessed Igor[9] and seized by Izyaslav Mstislavich[10], grandson of Vladimir Monomakh[11], the most holy Metropolitan of Kiev Michael II[12] reposed in the Lord. This occurred shortly before Igor's murder. In

8. The Venerable Theodore practiced asceticism in the 6th century.
9. Igor Olgovich governed Kiev for only two weeks (in 1146). He was numbered by the Church among the saints. – His commemoration is June 5.
10. Izyaslav Mstislavich was Grand Prince of Kiev from 1146 to 1149; then again from 1150 to 1154.
11. Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh ruled Kiev from 1114 to 1125.
12. Metropolitan Michael II occupied the Kievan see from 1131 to 1146.

place of Michael, Grand Prince Izyaslav chose one monk, a man of great learning, Clement the Philosopher[13], who had already taken the schema. Izyaslav brought this monk from Smolensk, and greatly desired that his consecration be performed by the Russian bishops in Kiev, since, on account of the great distance, he did not wish to send him to Constantinople for the blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarch (as had been the custom formerly). Izyaslav convened a council of Russian bishops and commanded them to ordain the schemamonk Clement as Metropolitan of Kiev. However, not all the bishops agreed to this, not daring to ordain without the blessing of the Patriarch of Constantinople. But there were also bishops who, desiring to please the prince, consecrated Clement as bishop with the head of St. Clement, Pope of Rome, which St. Vladimir had brought from Chersonesus to Kiev. The account of this council and of Clement's consecration as bishop is given in more detail in the narrative of the life of St. Nifont, under the 8th day of April (this Blessed Nifont did not consent to that unlawful ordination).

After Izyaslav Mstislavich, the Kievan throne passed to George Vladimirovich[14], son of Monomakh. He would not have Clement as Metropolitan of Kiev, since he had been unlawfully ordained. At this very time, at the request of the Grand Prince, there came to Kiev from Constantinople, from the most holy Ecumenical Patriarch, this Metropolitan Constantine[15], of whom our present word is concerned. This Constantine, by the authority given him by the Patriarch, deposed Clement from the episcopate and from the metropolitan throne, and also removed from ministry all those whom Clement had ordained to this or that clerical rank.

Some years later, the Grand Prince of Kiev George Vladimirovich Monomakhovich died. Great dissensions arose among the Russian princes, both concerning the Grand Princely throne and concerning the metropolitan throne: for some regarded Constantine as their shepherd,

13. Clement governed the Kievan metropolis from 1147 to 1164.
14. George (or Yuri) Vladimirovich Dolgorukiy occupied the Grand Princely throne of Kiev three times: the first time from 1149 to 1160; the second time at the end of 1150, and the third time from 1154 to 1157.
15. Metropolitan Constantine governed the Kievan Metropolis from 1155 to 1158.

others demanded that Metropolitan Clement be restored to the throne; in particular, the son of the late Grand Prince Izyaslav Mstislavich, Mstislav Izyaslavich[16], great-grandson of Vladimir Monomakh, took the side not of Constantine but of Clement. He spoke thus:

"I do not wish Constantine to be Metropolitan of Kiev, because many cursed my father on account of Clement."

As a result of this, the Russian princes were obliged to depose both metropolitans from the throne, both Clement and Constantine. Afterwards the princes sent to Constantinople to the most holy Patriarch a petition that he send them a new metropolitan. The most holy Patriarch, desiring to end the disorders and dissensions among the Russian princes, sent to Kiev a new metropolitan named Theodore. Then the Blessed Constantine, seeing the discord among the princes and desiring to withdraw from the strife, left the throne even before the new metropolitan arrived in Kiev. Leaving Kiev, Constantine went to Chernigov. Here he fell mortally ill. Foreseeing his end, he wrote a letter, sealed it, and handed it to Antony, Bishop of Chernigov; at the same time Constantine took from Antony a solemn promise that, after his death, Antony would break the seal, read the letter, and fulfill all that was written in it.

As soon as the Blessed Metropolitan Constantine reposed,[17] Bishop Antony, taking the letter sealed by the metropolitan, went with it to the Prince of Chernigov, Svyatoslav Olgovich[18]. Breaking the seal here, Antony read the letter in the presence of all.

And in that letter there was written something wondrous and terrible, namely:

"After my death, do not commit my body to burial, but, tying ropes to my feet, drag me out of the city and cast me to be eaten by dogs; I have sinned; because of me a tumult has arisen; let the hand of the Lord be upon me for this; let me suffer, that the Lord may turn away discord and strife from His people."

16. Mstislav Izyaslavich occupied the Kievan throne in 1158; then again in 1168.
17. The repose of the Blessed Constantine followed in 1159.
18. Sviatoslav Olgovich reigned from 1137 to 1165.

Hearing this, all were seized with fear and dread. The prince said to the bishop:

"Act as you find necessary."

The bishop, not daring to disregard the metropolitan's command and not venturing to break his oath, carried out all that was commanded in the letter: dragging the body of the deceased out of the city, he cast it into the field. And the body of the metropolitan lay unburied for three days; all were filled with great fear and dread, seeing so wondrous an occurrence.

On the third day Prince Svyatoslav Olgovich, filled with the fear of God (great fear and dread had fallen upon him after that terrible event), commanded that the cast-out body of God's hierarch be buried with due honors. And they brought his body into the city with great honor, and laid it in the church of St. Saviour in the Red Tower, where the new passion-bearer, the Blessed Igor, Prince of Kiev, slain by the Kievans, had been buried.

In the days when the honorable body of Constantine was cast out of the city of Chernigov, the sun grew dark in Kiev and so great a storm arose that the earth itself trembled; thunder rolled, lightning flashed, so that all the Kievans were struck with great fear and dejection. At this time thunder struck eight people with a single blow: two priests, two deacons, and four laymen.

The Prince of Kiev Rostislav Mstislavich,[19] grandson of Vladimir Monomakh, was at that time at Povary near Vyshgorod; the storm destroyed a tent standing near him. Seized with fear, and recalling the death of the metropolitan (of which the Prince of Chernigov had informed him by a messenger), he sent a trusted man to Kiev, to the church of Holy Sophia and the other cathedrals, with a request to celebrate an all-night vigil in all the churches.

"This chastisement," he said, "the Lord has sent upon us because of our sins."

All these fears and terrors were only in Kiev; in Chernigov, on those days, the sun shone brightly and there were no terrors at all. By night,

19. Rostislav Mstislavich governed Kiev in 1154 (for only one week); afterward a second time from 1158 to 1167.

over the body of the Blessed Metropolitan Constantine, cast out beyond the city, there appeared three pillars of fire, shining brightly and reaching to heaven.

After the honorable body of the Blessed Constantine had been buried, complete calm settled upon Kiev; all, marveling at what had happened, glorified God, to Whom glory is offered by us also, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Marcian, Nicander, Hyperechius, Apollo, Leonides, Arius, Gorgias, Selinius, Irenaeus and Pambo.

Страдание святых мучеников: Маркиана, Никандра, Иперехия, Аполлона, Леонида, Ария, Горгия, Селиния, Ириния и Памвона.

The holy martyrs of Christ Marcian and Nicander, with their company, were from Egypt. For their faith in Christ they were seized by order of the governor of the province, and they were forced to renounce Christ and worship idols, but they did not consent. Then they were first cruelly beaten, then their ribs were burned with candles, and finally, hanging them up, they were scraped with iron claws until pieces of their bodies began to fall to the ground. After this they were thrown, barely alive, into prison, but in prison an Angel of the Lord appeared to them and healed them. After many days they came out of prison whole and again appeared for judgment before the governor of the province. Seeing these wonders, many of the pagans turned to faith in the true God. At the trial the holy martyrs were again condemned to imprisonment, and here, tormented by hunger and thirst, they reposed.[20]

* * *

✠

20. The year of the repose of the holy martyrs is not known with certainty. Most Reverend Philaret ("Lives of the Saints," June, p. 31) assigns the year of their repose to the time of the reign of Maxim, who in 305 received supreme power over Syria and Egypt and cruelly persecuted Christians in his domains. He reigned from 305 to 312.

THE SIXTH DAY OF JUNE

June 6

6 июня

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

Life of our Venerable Father Bessarion

Житие преподобного отца нашего Виссариона

Great among our Fathers, Bessarion was born and brought up in Egypt; from his youth he loved God, and the light of God's grace shone in his heart. He kept himself pure from every stain of sin, striving not to defile the spiritual garment he had received at holy Baptism.

St. Bessarion undertook a journey to the holy places in Jerusalem. There he saw Venerable Gerasimus, who led a life of fasting and solitude by the River Jordan and was served by a lion. He also saw many other ascetics living in various places there, who later shone forth through their virtues. Conversing with them, St. Bessarion gained much profit for his soul.

Upon returning to his homeland, Bessarion found a spiritual father in Isidore of Pelusium. He often visited him, learning virtue and being encouraged to lead a strict life. At last, having distributed to the poor and the monasteries all the property left to him by his parents, Bessarion renounced the world and received the monastic tonsure.

Withdrawing to a desolate place, Bessarion took upon himself a vow of silence. He wore himself out with many labors and mortified his flesh through ascetic struggles, and thus, while still in the body, he became like the bodiless powers. His fasting was without equal: sometimes he ate nothing for an entire week, and at other times he remained without food or drink for 40 days. Once, standing in an open place amid thorns, with his hands and eyes raised to heaven and his mind turned there as well, he spent 40 days and nights in prayer, standing without moving. Throughout those forty days he did not move from his place, taste any-

thing, speak to anyone, or doze; he did not succumb to exhaustion through natural weakness, nor did his mind turn to anything earthly, but, like the bodiless powers, he directed his spiritual eyes wholly toward God. For this the saint was deemed worthy by God of great grace: he was granted the gift of working miracles and became like the holy prophets of old. Thus he became like Moses: just as Moses once turned the bitter water in the wilderness into sweet water by means of the tree God had shown him, to give drink to thirsty Israel (Ex. 17:6), so Venerable Bessarion, by prayer and the sign of the Cross, sweetened the bitterness of seawater, to give drink to his disciple, who was fainting with thirst. Once, as the saint was walking with his disciple along a desolate seashore, the disciple grew weary from the intense heat and, feeling very thirsty, said to the saint:

"Father, I am very thirsty."

The Venerable Father prayed, signed the sea with the sign of the Cross, and said:

"In the name of the Lord, draw water and drink."

The disciple drew seawater into a small vessel he carried with him. When he tasted it, he found the water very sweet[1] and cool, as though it had flowed from a living spring. Having drunk his fill and refreshed himself, the disciple took more water in the vessel for the road. Seeing this, the elder said to him:

"Why have you filled your vessel with water?"

The disciple answered:

"Forgive me, Father! I took water for the road, so that I might not suffer from thirst again."

The elder said:

"God, who is present in this place, is present everywhere; and here, as in any other place, He can give sweet water to the thirsty."

The disciple's name was Dulas.

Venerable Bessarion was also like Joshua the son of Nun: as Joshua, when he was defeating the Amorites[2], held back the sun's course (Josh. 10:12–13), so did this servant of God. Once, as he was

1. As is known, the water of the seas is usually salt.

walking with a disciple to visit an elder, the sun was sinking toward the west, while the way was still long. Then the elder turned to God and prayed thus:

"I beseech Thee, O Lord, command the sun to stand still until I come to Thy servant."

And it came to pass: the sun did not set until the Venerable Father had come to that elder.

St. Bessarion was also like the Prophet Elias. During a drought, he brought abundant rain down from heaven upon the earth (3 Kgdms. 18:1–46); this same thing the Venerable Father did not once or twice, but many times.

He was also like Elisha: as Elisha divided the water with the mantle of Elias and crossed the River Jordan (4 Kgdms. 2:14–15), so this saint, by his prayer, turned water into a dry path and walked upon it. He crossed the great River Nile as though on dry land, and wherever rivers lay in his way, he crossed them as though on dry land.

Once, while the Venerable Father was staying in the skete, a man possessed by a demon was brought into the church. Prayers were offered for him in the church, that he might be delivered from the unclean spirit; but the demon would not leave him, for it was exceedingly fierce. And the clergy said among themselves:

"What shall we do with this man possessed by a demon?"

Some said:

"No one can cast out this demon except Father Bessarion; but if we ask him to do so, he will not come to the church. Therefore let us do this: tomorrow morning he will be the first to come to the church, but we shall arrive before him and seat the man possessed by a demon in his place; then we shall say to the elder, 'Wake the sleeper.'"

The clergy did just so.

When the Venerable Father entered the church, he noticed a man sitting in his place. Unwilling to drive him away, he stood beside him.

2. The Amorites were one of the pagan tribes who inhabited the land of Canaan. "Amorites," in translation from the Hebrew, means "the inhabitants of the heights"; they are contrasted with the Perizzites, "the inhabitants of the lowlands." Shortly before the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, the Amorites seized the eastern Jordan region, which was very fertile. Joshua fought with the Amorites and defeated five Amorite kings (Josh. 10:5–11).

As soon as the church rule began to be read, the clergy said to the elder:

"Father, wake the sleeper."

Bessarion went up to the man, nudged him, and said:

"Rise and leave this place."

At once the demon, driven out by the saint's word, left the man. He rose and began to thank God for delivering him from his possession; from that time on, the man was completely well.

Thus the clergy moved the saint to work the miracle of casting out the demon, for this Venerable Father did not wish to work miracles openly, lest he be glorified by men. Being humble and considering himself a sinner, he avoided human praise.

It happened that a brother in the skete fell into a certain transgression, whereupon the priest ordered him to leave the church, as one unworthy to be in communion with the brethren. Venerable Bessarion arose and went out with the sinner, saying:

"I, too, am a sinner."

Such was the humility of St. Bessarion.

His disciples relate that for 40 years he never lay down on a bed to rest; he allowed himself only a little sleep, and then slept either standing or sitting. The Venerable Father often exhorted his disciples to keep vigil and in every way to beware of the enemy's temptations. He said:

"A monk ought to be as an eye, like the Cherubim and Seraphim. And if anyone lives peacefully, without having temptations, he must be all the more watchful and humble himself before God, lest, becoming proud, he fall into some greater sin. For because of pride many have fallen into battle with the devil; at times God, because of our weakness, does not send us trials, lest we perish utterly."

The life of this holy Father was like that of a bird of heaven, for he never acquired anything earthly, had no cell of his own, nor any place of shelter. He wandered through the wilderness, moving from place to place; he walked over mountains and through forests like a lost traveler. He gave no thought at all to his bodily needs, caring neither for food nor clothing; the garment on his body was most poor, scarcely covering

his nakedness. Though the heat of the sun scorched him by day and the cold assailed him by night, he rarely went under a roof. He walked over the mountains like a bird, seeking solitude, lifting his mind to God alone and fixing his thoughts only upon Him. Tears flowed continually from his eyes, and frequent sighs arose from the depths of his heart, for all the days of his life he spent in tears, ever weeping and lamenting. Having reached a great age, he reposed in eternal life[3] and passed from weeping to everlasting rejoicing with all the saints in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou didst imitate the heavenly powers, O Venerable Father, and live a life like that of the birds, laying aside all things temporal in forgetfulness and ever drawn by desire toward the heavenly beauties of Christ the King, until thou didst attain unto Him, O Bessarion. Pray unceasingly for us all.

* * *

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Hilarion the New

Память преподобного отца нашего Илариона Нового

Blessed Hilarion was the son of Peter the Cappadocian[4], who served at the royal table, and of his mother Theodosia, both pious and God-fearing people. In his youth he was well instructed in Holy Scripture. When he had reached the age of 20, in accordance with the Gospel word (Mt. 10:37; Lk. 14:26), he left his father and mother, his home and his wealth, and became a monk in the monastery of Hesychius near Byzantium. Later he came to the Dalmatian Monastery[5], where he received the great angelic schema and became a disciple

3. The repose of the Venerable Bessarion occurred at the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century.
4. Cappadocia is a region of Asia Minor.
5. The Dalmatian monastery was founded by St. Isaac himself (see his Life under May 30), and was named after Hegumen Dalmatus, Isaac's successor, who governed the monastery for fifty-five years.

of St. Gregory of Decapolis, who was then living there. St. Hilarion labored in obedience, silence, and great humility. He was assigned work in the monastery garden and labored in this obedience for ten years. Reading the account of the virtuous and God-pleasing life of his namesake, Venerable Hilarion the Great, he strove as far as possible to imitate this servant of God through fasting, all-night prayer, and all the other monastic struggles; therefore he was also called Hilarion the New. Having cleansed and illumined his soul like the sun, he received from God authority over unclean spirits, so that he was able to cast them out.

The abbot of that monastery made him a priest against his will, when St. Gregory the Decapolite had already left for other places. Some years later, when the abbot died, Venerable Hilarion learned that the brethren wished to make him abbot, and resolved to withdraw from there. To this end he secretly left the monastery by night, unknown to all, and went to Byzantium, hoping to find there his teacher St. Gregory; but the latter had sailed for Rome and, on returning from there, had settled on Mount Olympus.[6] Hilarion came to a monastery in Byzantium. The monks of the Dalmatian monastery, learning of this, began to beg the Most Holy Patriarch Nicephorus[7] to appoint Hilarion as their abbot, even against his wish. The Patriarch reported this to the Emperor, and the Emperor and the Patriarch, summoning Hilarion, urged him to accept the abbacy of the Dalmatian monastery. Not daring to oppose the will of the Emperor and the Patriarch, Hilarion accepted the authority of abbot and for eight years tended with zeal the rational sheep entrusted to him. Afterwards the scepter of the Greek kingdom passed to the beastlike persecutor Leo the Armenian,[8] who began to trouble the Church of Christ with the iconoclastic heresy,[9] compelling many to adopt his heretical teaching; those who did not obey him he either subjected to torments or banished to distant lands. By his command Venerable Hilarion was brought from the monastery

6. Olympus is a mountain in the Asia Minor region of Mysia, on the border between Phrygia and Bithynia. Here, among other places, stood the monastery "at the Symbols," famed for the strict ascetic life of its inhabitants.
7. Nicephorus I was Patriarch from 806 to 815.
8. Leo V the Armenian reigned from 813 to 820.

to the Emperor, who tried to force him to accept the heretical teaching. The good soldier of Christ not only refused to obey the heretic-emperor, but even boldly rebuked him, called him an impious man and a new transgressor, and thereby provoked the fierce wrath of the Emperor against himself. The wicked emperor inflicted many wounds and various tortures upon the blessed man, and afterwards cast him into prison. After some time, summoning him again and tormenting him greatly, but achieving nothing, the Emperor handed him over to his like-minded fellow, Patriarch Theodotus,[10] surnamed Cassiteras, who had taken the throne after the banishment, for piety, of the Most Holy Nicephorus. This false patriarch Theodotus did to the Venerable the same as the Emperor had done: he confined the saint in a gloomy dungeon and for many days tormented him with hunger and thirst, commanding that he be given neither bread nor water. The monks where the Venerable had been abbot came to the Emperor and begged him:

"O Emperor, return to us our father; in exchange we promise to obey your will."

The Emperor rejoiced at this promise and returned their abbot to them.

The saint, on coming to the monastery, lived there one year; scarcely having had time to rest a little from torments and hunger, the saint again gave himself over to suffering, for the Emperor, awaiting the fulfillment of the monks' promise, realized that he had been deceived,[11] and therefore sent soldiers to the monastery and punished the monks, and taking the Venerable again, cast him back into prison; then he sent him to the monastery of Phaneus[12] and there commanded that the saint be confined in the most cramped dungeon. In this dungeon the

9. The founder of the iconoclastic heresy is considered to be Constantine, Bishop of Nicolia, who lived in the eighth century. Foolishly confusing the veneration of icons with idolatry, the iconoclasts sought by cruel and persistent persecution of icon veneration to root it out of the Orthodox Church. The most zealous defenders of this heresy were the emperors Leo the Isaurian (reigned 717 to 741) and Constantine Copronymus (741 to 775). This heresy was condemned at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in 787 at the city of Nicaea.

10. Theodotus I Cassiteras was Patriarch from 815 to 821.

11. The monks had evidently promised to obey the emperor in general, in all his commands; but commands contrary to the Orthodox faith they, of course, could not carry out.

12. The monastery of Phaneus was situated between Byzantium and Pontus.

saint languished for six months, enduring all manner of hardships and affronts from the cruel abbot of that monastery. Afterwards, by the Emperor's command, he was again brought to Constantinople, where he was again, by various flattering exhortations, urged to accept the iconoclastic heresy. But since Christ's sufferer would not listen to the heretics, the Emperor sent him to another monastery, called that of Kiklovees;[13] here he spent two years and 6 months, languishing in a cramped dungeon and enduring various torments. From here the saint was again brought before the Emperor and, after a severe beating, was confined in the city of Protilia.[14]

The wicked emperor, having destroyed many, himself perished miserably: he was cut down with swords by his own soldiers in the church, on the very spot where, the first time, having insulted the holy icon of Christ, he had cast it down; thus the impious man destroyed his own wretched soul.

Michael the Stammerer,[15] who received the kingdom after him, commanded that all the orthodox be released from bonds and confinement. Venerable Hilarion, together with the others, was freed from the dungeon, but he did not go to his monastery, since the iconoclastic heresy had not yet ceased, and the episcopal thrones were occupied by heretical false teachers and false pastors. Instead he remained with a faithful and pious woman, who on her estate gave him a secluded place, built a cell with a garden, and supplied him with all that he needed.

At this time Venerable Theodore the Studite returned from confinement and departed to the Lord, having likewise endured many sufferings for orthodoxy at the hands of the heretics; his holy soul, borne up to heaven by Angels, was seen by Venerable Hilarion, as is also related in the Life of Theodore. On the day when St. Theodore the Studite departed, the blessed Hilarion, walking in his garden, occupied with work and singing the Psalms of David, suddenly heard in the air some wondrous voices and perceived a marvelous fragrance; astonished, he stopped, looking to see whence all this came. Looking upward, he saw a

13. The location of this monastery is unknown.
14. The city of Protilus, or more precisely the camp of Protilus; its location is unknown.
15. Michael II Travlus (the Stammerer) reigned from 820 to 829.

multitude of Angels in white garments, their faces shining brightly, advancing with hymns to meet someone. Seeing this, the blessed Hilarion fell to the ground in great fear and heard a voice saying:

"This is the soul of Theodore, abbot of the Studite monastery, who suffered to the shedding of blood for the holy icons and was most valiant in his sufferings; and now he has died and is solemnly ascending into heaven, met by the heavenly powers."

Having been granted such a wondrous vision, Venerable Hilarion was filled with great consolation and spiritual joy; for many days he rejoiced in his soul, and his face shone with joy like the face of an Angel.

The Venerable remained with that woman for more than seven years. When after Michael the Stammerer his son Theophilus[16] ascended the throne, he gathered all the confessors and again began to force them, after the example of the earlier wicked emperors, into iconoclasm; those who did not submit to him he cruelly tormented. At this time Venerable Hilarion too was seized and brought before the Emperor; pressed to commit iconoclasm, he did not submit to the imperial command, but again rebuked him as a wicked transgressor of the law who trampled underfoot the true dogmas of the faith; for this the saint received one hundred and seventy blows on his back and was confined on the island of Afusia.[17] A considerable relief for the saint was that he was kept here not in a dungeon and not in fetters, but lived in a cell, though a very cramped one. In this cell he lived until the death of Theophilus. When that impious emperor died, the Empress Theodora gathered all the confessors into the capital city, restored the orthodox faith, and commanded that the holy icons be brought back into the churches; then the Venerable Hilarion too was set free. He again took up the abbacy of his Dalmatian monastery and became famous for miracles. Having lived here three years and having wisely governed his disciples for their soul's salvation, he departed to the Lord.[18] His honorable and holy soul, like the soul of Theodore which he had seen, was borne to heaven by Angels, and in the choir of the holy confessors now

16. Theophilus reigned from 829 to 842.
17. The island of Afusia, or Ophiussa, lay in the Bay of Pasa-Limani, near Constantinople.
18. The repose of the Venerable Hilarion took place in 845.

stands before the throne of the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one God in the Trinity, to whom glory is offered unto ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Within the enclosures of thy life-giving pasture thou didst keep the flock unharmed as a shepherd, and thou didst appear great in the loftiness of thy deeds, O new Hilarion, having endured many torments and sorrows for piety. Therefore, having dwelt in the all-joyful life of heavenly Sion, pray for us, O Venerable Father.

* * *

Sufferings of the Holy Venerable Martyrs Archelais, Thecla and Susanna

Страдание святых преподобномучениц Архелаи, Феклы и Сусанны

Virginity, which overcomes the world and subdues the passions of the flesh, was not known to Eve, the mother of all, for to her God had said: "In sorrow thou shalt bear children; and thy desire shall be for thy husband" (Gen. 3:16). But virginity is free of this; it does not wither with the length of years, but always blooms and adorns the life of those who keep virginity; the virgin becomes the bride of Christ and enters the heavenly bridal chamber of her Bridegroom.

With this honorable and Divine gift, pure virginity, was adorned the blessed Archelaia, who was betrothed to Christ and showed herself a victor over the world. She lived in a certain place near the city of Rome, in a small and unknown monastery, such as could exist in those hard idolatrous times for Christians.

When the impious emperor Diocletian[19] raised a great persecution against the Christians in Rome, the holy virgin Archelaia, fleeing with two sisters in Christ and her companions, Thecla and Susanna, from the pursuit of the persecutors, left Rome and fled to Campania;[20] all of them changed their clothing to men's garments, so that no one would know that they were virgins. There, not far from the city called Nola,[21]

19. Diocletian reigned from 284 to 305.

the holy virgins settled in a remote and desolate place, spending their days and nights in fervent prayer to God, occupied with various God-pleasing works, and healing the sicknesses of the suffering, for by their pure and holy life they were granted the grace of miraculous healing of diseases. Their faces were humble and gentle and at the same time bright, for they always rejoiced in their hearts in the Lord Jesus Christ; in their gaze shone chastity and holiness. Their garments were of hair cloth, plain and coarse, and they had the appearance of hermits and ascetics. The hair on their heads was cut short, as men's is, so that many took them for men and not for women. Little by little the people of the surrounding area began to gather to them, some for healing, others for spiritual instruction, for they, besides the gift of healing, also had the ability of God-inspired teaching; they healed not only bodies but also human souls, and many they converted from pagan impiety to the faith of Christ; the report of them spread throughout the whole land.

Word of the holy virgins also reached the governor of Campania, named Leontius, for soldiers had been stationed in many places to keep watch over the Christians, and it was they who reported these holy maidens to the governor. He commanded that they be seized and brought to him in the city of Salerno[22], where Christians were then being tried and tortured. The holy maidens were taken and brought before him for interrogation in Salerno. They understood that the Lord Jesus Christ, their immortal and incorruptible Bridegroom, was calling them to the crown of martyrdom, that He might receive them into His heavenly chamber adorned not only with virginity but also with blood of suffering, as with royal purple. Filled with great boldness and hope in God, they came without fear before the tormentor and, with a free voice, told him the whole truth about themselves: who they were and

20. Campania was in ancient Italy and bordered on the west by Latium, on the north by Samnium, on the east by Lucania, and on the south by the Tyrrhenian Sea. In this Italian province bells were first cast (from the eighth century), which is why they are called *campanae* in the Church Typikon (previously beaters or iron plates had been in use).

21. The city of Nola lay to the south of Capua; it exists to this day (it is now in the Italian province of Caserta) and has about 15,000 inhabitants.

22. The city of Salerno was situated on the Tyrrhenian Sea; it exists to this day.

whence they came. They concealed neither their manner of life nor their Christian faith, nor the fact that they were virgins betrothed to Christ, who had promised Him to keep themselves pure until the end of their lives. The governor Leontius, looking at them and seeing that the blessed virgin Archelaia was older than the rest and more bold in speech, and noticing also that her face was especially godly, turned to her and said:

"Listen, Archelaia! By what right do you gather to yourself all manner of people, good and evil, and teach them to worship Jesus the Nazarene, who could not save Himself when He was tormented, and still less can He help anyone else? How do you dare to busy yourself with some magical words and beguile people? How have you dared, clothing yourself in men's garments and showing yourself as a man, when in truth you are a vile and harmful sorceress? Perhaps you have taught these two maidens sorcery too. If I do not destroy you now, you will seduce all the inexperienced women and men with your false teaching."

To this the holy maiden answered:

"I trample down the power and authority of the devil by the power of Christ. As for the people, I have taught them what is good: namely, to know the one true God, who created heaven, earth, the sea, and all that is in them. Healing is granted to all the sick in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, through me, His servant. I do not pretend to be a man, for I have now declared myself a maiden and a servant of Christ. And these two sisters of mine in the Lord have been brought up in the faith of Christ from their youth."

And the governor said:

"Whoever does not obey the imperial command will be put to a cruel death."

The saint answered:

"We have a King, our Lord Jesus Christ, for whose sake we have despised the world and all that is in it. We obey His command, and we look for mercy from Him who possesses heaven and earth and all else."

The governor said:

"Our gods hold all things and rule over all. They have many names: Kronos[23], Trismegistus[24], Hermes[25], Aphrodite[26], Hera[27], Athena[28], Zeus[29], who is above all. These divine powers hold and govern the whole universe."

The maiden answered:

"Your gods are blind, and the blind worship them and believe in them."

The governor said:

"Your God is one, and He is not able to defend Himself, for He was crucified on the cross, given vinegar to drink, crowned with a crown of thorns, and pierced with a spear."

The saint answered this:

"Our God endured all this for our salvation, that all who believe in Him might not perish but have eternal life. Your gods neither see, nor hear, nor speak, and therefore they can help neither themselves nor others."

After such words the governor, enraged, ordered the saint to be given to hungry lions to be eaten, thinking they would tear her to pieces at once. But the beasts became gentle as sheep and lay at the saint's feet. She prayed to God, saying:

"Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who until now hast kept my body pure from all defilement! As Thou hast now tamed the beasts and given me strength to overcome the governor, who is more savage than beasts, so be always an unceasing helper to me, Thy servant."

The governor, seeing that the saint had remained unharmed by the beasts, was filled with still greater rage and ordered the soldiers to kill the beasts, and to bind the holy martyr together with her companions

23. Cronus, in Greek mythology, was the youngest son of Uranus and Gaia, one of the Titans. He was considered the patron of sowing and harvests, which is why he was depicted with a sickle in his hand.
24. The title Trismegistus was ascribed to Jupiter, or Zeus.
25. Hermes was the god of prosperity.
26. Aphrodite, or Venus, was the goddess of love and beauty.
27. Hera was the patroness of marriages and childbirth.
28. Athena, or Minerva, was the goddess of wisdom.
29. Zeus, or Jupiter, was the supreme god of the ancient Greek religion, regarded as the progenitor of the other gods and the author of all that exists.

and shut them up in prison. But in the prison an Angel of the Lord appeared to the holy martyrs, illuminating them with indescribable light, and said:

"Do not fear, maidens of Christ! Your prayers have reached God, and crowns are already prepared for you in heaven."

When the guards saw this unusual light in the prison, they said in fear and terror:

"Truly, the God whom these maidens confess is the true God."

In the morning the governor said to his servants:

"Bring me that sorceress who yesterday insulted me and my gods with all kinds of reproaches."

At once the holy martyr Archelaia was brought to judgment, and she said:

"O governor, it is not I but your own evil deeds that bring you reproach and dishonor and prepare for you unquenchable fire, in which you will be tormented forever together with your gods. If you wish to be delivered from eternal torments, then listen to my words that profit the soul and accept my good counsel: believe in God the Father who created you, and in His Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father. He is one God, glorified in the Trinity both on earth and in heaven!"

The governor, taking these words for mockery and madness, answered the saint, saying:

"If you listen to me and believe in my gods, you will be endowed with wealth and honor and will receive no small place among the honorable Roman women. But if you do not listen to me, I will give you over to dishonor at the hands of debauched men, then subject you to cruel torments, and finally deliver you to a cruel death. Your body I will give to be eaten by dogs, beasts, and birds."

The saint answered:

"I have as my helper my Lord Jesus Christ, who is the keeper both of my soul and of my body. He will keep me from the defilement that you are preparing for me, as He kept before me many holy virgins who suffered. I do not fear death, for I hope to receive eternal life from my

Lord, who will grant me endless joy and number me among His holy Angels."

After this the governor commanded that the saint be stripped, that her pure virginal body be scraped with iron instruments and beaten cruelly, and that her wounds be doused with hot oil and pitch prepared for this purpose. The saint's body was scraped and burned to the bone. All who were there, looking on the sufferings of the holy martyr, were greatly astonished and perplexed how so frail a maiden could endure such cruel tortures and remain alive. The saint, raising her eyes to heaven and extending her hands in the form of a cross, said:

"Lord, look down from heaven, from the height of Thy holy throne, upon Thy faithful servant! Quench the burning fire with the dew of Thy grace and give my body comfort in the torments inflicted on me by the governor."

No sooner had the saint uttered these words than light shone over her head and a voice was heard saying:

"Do not be afraid! I am with you."

The governor, seeing the saint unharmed, gnashed his teeth in rage.

Near that place there was a large stone that several men could barely move. The governor ordered it lifted and laid upon the martyr, so that she would be crushed by it. When the servants set about carrying out the governor's command, the Angel of the Lord, who was invisibly present with the holy virgin, swiftly moved the stone to the other side, so that it crushed the tormentor's servants, while the saint remained alive and praised God, singing:

"Blessed art Thou, Lord God of our fathers, who saves those who hope in Thee!"

The people, seeing this, cried out:

"Great is the Christian God, whom this maiden confesses!"

The governor said:

"What shall we do now with this sorceress? She overcomes all tortures. Take her and lead her out of the city; take with her also those two maidens who follow her, and put all three to death by the sword."

The soldiers at once seized the holy martyrs, bound their hands behind them, and led them outside the city.

When they all reached the appointed place, the soldiers were already prepared to cut off the honorable heads of the holy martyrs. At this time they saw Angels and were frightened. The holy Angels, looking on the sufferings of the martyrs, made ready to receive the martyrs' souls in glory. The soldiers, sensing in some manner the presence of these Angels, were seized with terror, trembled, and as if forgot themselves. But the holy Archelaia, having offered a prayer to God, said to the soldiers:

"Carry out what you have been commanded."

The soldiers answered:

"We dare not, lady, for fear has seized us."

Then the virgins all together said to them:

"If you do not carry out the command, you will have no part with us."

The soldiers, hearing this, drew their swords and struck off their heads[30].

Thus the three holy Venerable Martyrs, Archelaia, Thecla and Susanna, pure virgins, accomplished their contest, entered the heavenly chamber, and now stand with the Angels before the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One God glorified in the Trinity, to whom glory is offered forever. Amen.

* * *

30. The death of the holy martyrs took place in 293.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 7

7 июня

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

Suffering of the Hieromartyr Marcellus, Pope of Rome, and Those With Him

Страдание святого священномученика Маркелла, папы Римского, и прочих с ним

Saint Marcellus was a Roman by birth; his father was named Benedict. He received the throne of the Church of Rome after the holy martyr Marcellinus, and held it during the reign of the impious Roman emperors Diocletian[1], Maximian Herculius[2], another Maximian, surnamed Galerius[3], and Maxentius[4], for five years and six months. In those days the following events took place in Rome. The Emperor Maximian, surnamed Herculius, had been appointed co-emperor by Diocletian. Returning to Rome from the African provinces[5], and wishing to please Emperor Diocletian, who had lingered in the East, Maximian began to build in Rome in his honor stone baths, or thermae, which furnished the pagans with a loathsome coolness[6]. Having sought out among the Roman legions a multitude of soldiers who believed in Christ, Maximian deprived them of their military rank and assigned them the same labor that Pharaoh once imposed on the Israelites in Egypt[7]: some he compelled to make bricks, others to make lime, and

1. The Emperor Diocletian governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
2. Maximian Herculius governed the western half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
3. Maximian Galerius governed the East from 305 to 311.
4. Maxentius governed the West from 305 to 312.
5. Under Maximian's authority were Africa, Spain and Italy.
6. It should be noted that the thermae among the ancient Roman pagans were not only baths but also a brothel.
7. In order to oppress and weaken the Israelites, the Pharaoh of Egypt assigned them heavy labors. In a comparatively short time (from the death of Joseph to the departure from (Egypt)) the Israelites built for the Egyptians three cities: Pithom, Raamses and Heliopolis (Ex. 1:1–14).

others to dig the earth and carry stones for the construction of the aforementioned baths. He did all this to terrify the Christians living in Rome, for he knew that many Romans, not only of the common people but also of the noble class, professed the Christian faith, although not openly.

At this time there lived in Rome a certain wealthy and honorable Christian named Frason. Noticing that the Christians were wearied by grievous labor and fainting from hunger, Frason desired to help them secretly with his means. Choosing for this purpose four God-fearing men, he supplied the Christians through them with food, clothing, and everything necessary. These men were named Sisinnius, Cyriacus, Smaragdus, and Largus.

When the blessed Pope Marcellus learned of this, he rejoiced greatly in his heart over the alms being given to the Christians; summoning the four men and learning from them everything concerning Frason's generosity, Marcellus gave great thanks to the latter, and ordained Sisinnius and Cyriacus as deacons of the Roman Church.

One night, as these two deacons were carrying on their shoulders food sent by Frason for the holy martyrs, they were seized by impious pagans and brought before the tribune Exuperius. As soon as they were brought in, the tribune ordered them to be confined in the public prison, and on the third day reported them to Emperor Maximian. The emperor ordered them assigned to the same labor that the other Christians performed, and thus they were joined to those who carried sand for the construction of the stone building.

Among those Christians was a man named Saturninus; on account of his old age he could not carry the heavy burden assigned to him. Then the blessed deacons Sisinnius and Cyriacus began to help this elder, and performed not only their own work but also the work of others; and with their lips they unceasingly praised and glorified God. The guards reported all this to the tribune, and the tribune to the emperor.

Then the emperor ordered Sisinnius to be brought before him, and when he appeared, asked him:

"What is your name?"

"I am a sinner," replied the saint, "and I am called Sisinnius; I am a servant of the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"What are these songs that you sing?" asked Maximian.

"If you knew the meaning of the songs we sing," replied the saint, "you would know your Creator too."

To this the emperor said:

"And who is our Creator, if not the invincible Hercules[8]?"

The holy deacon Sisinnius answered:

"It is an abomination to us not only to name him, but even to hear of him."

"Choose for yourself one of two things," continued the emperor: "offer sacrifice to the god Hercules; otherwise I will burn your flesh in the fire."

"I have long desired to suffer for Christ, my God," replied the saint Sisinnius, "that I may receive the longed-for crown of martyrdom."

Then the emperor, enraged, delivered him to torment to the governor Laodicius.

The latter confined the saint in the Mamertine prison[9], where the martyr remained seventeen days. When this term had expired, the governor ordered the holy deacon Sisinnius to be brought again before him for interrogation.

From the prison the captive was first brought to the keeper of the prison, Apronianus. Looking at him, Apronianus observed that his face shone with a wondrous heavenly light; at the same time he also heard a voice saying:

"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:34).

8. Hercules or Heracles is the national hero of ancient Greece. According to the Greek mythology, Hercules was the son of Zeus and Alcmene, wife of Amphitryon, king of Tiryns. Hercules was ascribed great physical strength, for which reason he was considered the patron god of gymnasts and gladiators.

9. The Mamertine Prison was situated in the northern part of the city of Rome. It was intended chiefly for state criminals, among whom Christians were also counted. According to tradition, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul were imprisoned in this prison. This prison has survived to the present day in a restored (rebuilt) form, and the section of the prison where the Apostles Peter and Paul were confined, as a sacred place, is guarded with particular care by Catholics.

Then Apronianus, in fear and terror, fell at the feet of the holy Sisinnius and said:

"I beseech you by Christ, whom you confess, to baptize me immediately and make me a partaker of your crown."

At once water was brought there.

Then the holy deacon Sisinnius, having instructed Apronianus in the faith[3703], blessed the water; then he ordered Apronianus to enter naked into the vessel filled with water and asked him:

"Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, and in His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit?"

He answered:

"I believe."

"May the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit enlighten you," said the holy Sisinnius.

Then the saint ordered Apronianus to come out of the water.

After this Sisinnius led the newly baptized Apronianus to the holy Pope Marcellus. The latter anointed the newly enlightened man with holy myrrh, and, having celebrated the holy Liturgy, gave to both Sisinnius and Apronianus, and to all the Christians present there, the most pure Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At noon of the same day the governor Laodicius ordered the deacon Sisinnius to be brought before him for interrogation. With him came also the keeper of the prison, the blessed Apronianus, the newly enlightened servant of Christ. Approaching Laodicius, Apronianus cried out loudly, addressing him:

"Why does the devil rouse you against the servants of God, teaching you to inflict such sufferings upon the innocent?"

Astonished at such words from Apronianus, the governor said to him:

"It seems to me that you too have become a Christian."

"Woe is me, wretched one," replied the blessed Apronianus, "that I have wasted my days in impiety, not knowing the true God until now."

"Indeed," cried the governor, "you will now lose your days!"

Then he ordered his head to be cut off, saying:

"If this one does not perish, many others will perish."

After this the soldiers led the holy Apronianus outside the city. Going two miles[10] from the city, the soldiers struck off the head of the holy Apronianus on the Salarian road[11]; so the newly enlightened Apronianus received the crown of martyrdom. The governor ordered the holy deacon Sisinnius, together with the aforementioned elder Saturninus, to be confined in prison, saying to them:

"If you do not offer sacrifices to the gods, I will destroy you, delivering you to manifold torments."

During the time these saints were in prison, many pagans came to them and were fearlessly baptized by them. After forty days the governor Laodicius learned of this; having ordered a place of judgment to be prepared for himself in the temple of the goddess Tellus[12], and having seated himself there, Laodicius commanded the elder Saturninus and the deacon Sisinnius to be brought before him. The prisoners of Christ were led to the tormentor barefoot and in iron fetters.

"Well," the governor asked them, "have you at last abandoned the vain delusion of Christianity? Will you not even now agree to bow down to the gods whom our emperors worship?"

"We, sinners, worship our Lord Jesus Christ," answered the holy deacon Sisinnius, "and we will never bow our heads before the devil or a lifeless stone."

Then Laodicius said:

"Let bronze tripods be brought here, on which incense is burned to the gods."

At once tripods with hot coals were brought. The tormentor began to compel the saints to burn incense to the idols.

---

10. *Milliarium* – the Roman mile, or more precisely the Roman milestone, since at the end of each mile there stood, as a marker, a stone pillar. A milliarium equaled 8 stadia (a stadion being 88 sazhens), which comes to approximately 1.5 of our versts. Milestones were scattered throughout all of Italy; on them was usually inscribed the name of the builder or of the emperor under whom they were erected. The first milestone, from which all the other stones took their beginning and at which all the roads converged, stood by the temple of Saturn. In excavations in Rome the remains of this stone were found.

11. The Salarian Way was one of the largest roads of ancient Rome. It ran along the river Tiber to Cures, passed through Latium, Sabinia, and so on to Ardea. The name of this road is explained by the fact that the Sabines carried salt (*vai*) along it from the seashore into their country.

12. Tellus or Gaia – the Greco-Roman goddess of the earth and fertility.

The holy elder Saturninus said to the tormentor:

"May the Lord turn the pagan idols to dust."

And immediately the bronze tripods melted and flowed like water.

Two soldiers present there, named Papias and Maurus, seeing this, cried out loudly:

"Truly the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Sisinnius and Saturninus worship, is the true God."

The governor Laodicius, burning with rage, ordered the holy martyrs Saturninus and Sisinnius to be hung on the pillory and beaten without mercy with cords and knotted clubs. Being so tormented, the saints cried out, saying:

"We thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast granted us to be partakers with Thy servants who suffered for Thee."

Then the soldiers Papias and Maurus, who had seen the sufferings of the saints, cried out a second time, addressing the governor:

"Why does the devil stir you up against the servants of God, teaching you to torment the innocent without mercy?"

Laodicius, inflamed with rage against these soldiers, ordered them to be struck on the mouth with stones; having broken their lips, he confined them in prison. At the same time he ordered his servants to singe the sides of the martyrs hanging on the pillory with candles. But they, enduring such great sufferings, gave thanks to God with joyful countenances.

On the same day the tormentor issued a sentence of death against the saints. Therefore they were taken down from the pillory, led outside the city along the Numentan road[13], and beheaded with the sword.

The aforementioned pious man Frason, taking the bodies of the holy martyrs together with the presbyter John, buried them on his own land by the Salarian road.

The soldiers Papias and Maurus, who had been confined in the prison, greatly desired to receive holy baptism. Having prayed to the Lord, they went out of the prison through the open doors, unnoticed by anyone. Then, coming to the most holy Pope Marcellus, they received holy

13. The Numantian Way ran from Rome in the direction of the city of Numantia.

baptism from him. After their baptism they again gave themselves up to the soldiers who were seeking them, and were brought before the provincial governor for interrogation. Seeing them, the governor said:

"Now I have learned that you are Christians."

"Yes, we are indeed Christians," answered St. Papias.

"Abandon the vain delusion of Christianity," Laodicius continued, "and bow down to the gods whom our emperors worship!"

"Let all who have lost their souls worship them, if they wish to perish forever," answered St. Maurus to Laodicius.

The provincial governor Laodicius then said:

"If you do not now offer sacrifices to our immortal gods, you will lose your souls. Listen to me and do what I say, if you wish to remain alive."

"Offer sacrifice to them yourself," answered St. Papias, "if you wish to suffer forever!"

After this the governor ordered the saints to be laid on the ground and beaten without mercy with staves. They, though cruelly beaten, uttered nothing but the following words:

"Lord Jesus Christ, help Thy servants!"

Then Laodicius ordered the saints to be beaten with rods of tin. While they were beaten in this manner for a long time, they committed their souls into the hands of God.

The presbyter John, taking the bodies of the saints by night, buried them with honor beside the tomb of the earlier-suffering holy martyrs Sisinnius and Saturninus (he did this by the command of the holy Pope Marcellus).

At that time the emperor Diocletian returned to Rome. The provincial governor Laodicius reported to Diocletian and Maximian all concerning the holy martyrs, saying how he had tormented and put them to death without mercy. The emperors were gladdened by this news and praised the governor for his zeal.

Meanwhile the above-mentioned St. Cyriacus, ordained deacon by the most holy Pope Marcellus, was at this time together with St. Sisinnius in the prison; here Smaragdus and Largus were also confined, as well as the other prisoners of Christ. All of them performed the heavy

labor assigned to them. They were led out to work by day, and at night they were again locked up in the prison. God granted the blessed Cyriacus the grace of healing diseases; many came to him and brought their sick, whom St. Cyriacus healed after prayer to God; so the blind received sight here, the paralytic were made whole, demons were cast out of men, and through the saint's prayers healing was given to the sick suffering from manifold infirmities.

The emperor Diocletian had a daughter named Artemia. By the permission of God she fell into demonic possession and was tormented by an unclean spirit. Learning of it, Diocletian was greatly grieved, so that on that day, because of his sorrow, he did not take food. When he entered the room of his daughter, who was possessed at that time, the demon cried out through the girl's lips:

"I will not come out from here, and no one can cast me out except the deacon Cyriacus."

Then Diocletian ordered that the deacon Cyriacus be sought, and when he was found in the prison and brought to the emperor together with his two friends, Smaragdus and Largus, the emperor begged him to enter his daughter's room and heal her. St. Cyriacus, entering the chamber of the imperial daughter, addressed the unclean spirit tormenting her with these words:

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

The demon answered through her lips:

"If you wish me to come out of her, then show me another dwelling into which I may enter."

"Here is my body," answered St. Cyriacus; "if you can, enter into it!"

"I cannot enter into your body," the demon continued, "for it is shut and sealed on every side."

Then St. Cyriacus said to him:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, come out of this maiden, that she may be a pure vessel for the service of the Holy Spirit."

The unclean spirit then cried out, saying:

"O Cyriacus! If you drive me out from here, I will arrange it so that you will be sent to Persia[14]."

With these words the unclean spirit went out. The maiden Artemia, freed from the demonic torment, said to the saint:

"I adjure you by the God whom you confess: baptize me, for I see from afar the Lord whom you preach."

Here also stood Artemia's mother, the empress Serena, who rejoiced with a double joy: both because of her daughter's healing and because of the manifestation of the power of Christ (for she was a secret Christian).

Having prepared water, on the next day they baptized the maiden Artemia in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, secretly from the emperor Diocletian.

From that time St. Cyriacus gained the favor of the emperor Diocletian, who granted him and his friends, Smaragdus and Largus, their freedom, and gave him a house in Rome near his baths, promising him a peaceful life.

Meanwhile the empress Serena instructed her daughter to love Christ with all her heart and to keep His law unchanged.

After a little time a letter came to Diocletian from the Persian king; in this letter the Persian king asked Diocletian to send him the deacon Cyriacus, for his daughter was possessed, the demon crying out through her lips, saying:

"No one can cast me out except the Roman deacon Cyriacus."

Then the emperor told his wife, the empress Serena, to call Cyriacus to her and beg him to go to Persia to the demon-possessed princess.

When St. Cyriacus was summoned to the empress and learned of the letter from Persia, he said:

"In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ I will go, without hesitation!"

Cyriacus was provided by the empress with everything necessary, after which he set out for Persia together with his friends, Smaragdus and Largus.

---

14. The devil frightens St. Cyriacus with a journey to Persia because in those times travel in general was burdensome, owing to the absence of regular means of communication.

When he came to Persia and was brought to the raging princess, the devil cried out through her lips:

"Well, Cyriacus, did I not make you toil to come here, as I told you before?"

"I have come here," answered Cyriacus, "with the help of my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, to cast thee out also from here. So, unclean spirit, I command thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: come out of this maiden and never return into her again."

"But thou art weary, Cyriacus, and thou must first of all rest from the road," said the demon.

"By the help of God who orders all things I do not feel weariness," answered Cyriacus.

"But see, I," continued the demon, "have done what I desired: I promised to make thee come to Persia, and thou hast come."

"Thou, powerless and accursed one, canst not do what thou wishest; thou canst do only what our Creator permits thee."

Then the demon began to torment the maiden. The saint, falling prostrate on the ground, began with tears to pray to God. Meanwhile the demon cried out to the saint:

"If thou drivest me out from here, show me a vessel into which I may enter."

The saint answered:

"O madman! Nowhere in God's creation wilt thou find a vessel for thyself, for the invincible and almighty power of my Lord Jesus Christ will drive thee out from everywhere."

Then the devil immediately came out of the girl and, fleeing, filled the air with his cries, saying:

"O how terrible for me is the name of Him who casts me out!"

From that time the girl became healthy. Her name was Iovia. She believed in Christ and received holy baptism. Many of the imperial household also believed in Christ and were baptized, about four hundred persons in all. The Persian king offered many gifts to St. Cyriacus. But he took nothing, being content only with bread and water. Having spent forty-five days in Persia, he departed from there, returning from the Persian king to the Roman emperor with a letter of

thanks, which Diocletian respectfully received. The empress Serena and her daughter Artemia greatly rejoiced at Cyriacus's return.

Some time after this Diocletian set out from Rome for the East, and Maximian Herculius for Mediolanum[15], where both of them laid down their imperial dignity. Then another Maximian, called Galerius, whom Diocletian had adopted and to whom he afterwards gave in marriage his daughter Valeria, the elder sister of Artemia, came to Rome and began to persecute and kill the Christians. Among the others he seized the holy deacon Cyriacus, for he was angry with him on account of Artemia, whom Cyriacus had converted to the Christian faith; he put him in prison together with his friends, Smaragdus and Largus; and the tormentor ordered that Cyriacus be led behind him naked and bound in iron chains through all the places to which he went. This he did to terrify the other Christians.

Once, when the tormentor was going to a certain city, he was met by the holy Pope Marcellus, who said to him loudly:

"Why dost thou kill the servants of God who pray for thy kingdom!"

Then the tormentor, enraged, ordered the saint to be beaten with staves without mercy and appointed him to the post of overseer of the animals. Thus the holy Pope Marcellus was set to feeding the animals, and guards watched to see that he fulfilled his duties without negligence. The emperor handed St. Cyriacus and his friends over to his governor Carpasius with the words:

"Persuade these sorcerers, who lead the people astray to Christianity, to offer sacrifices; compel them to do so, even by torments."

Carpasius, having taken the holy man and the Christians who were with him, cast them into prison; then, seating himself on his judgment seat in the temple of Tellus, he summoned to examination the holy martyrs: the deacon Cyriacus, his friends Smaragdus and Largus, and with them a fourth prisoner named Crescentianus, who had also been im-

15. Mediolanum (now Milan) was the most important city of northern Italy, in the region of Lombardy; it was founded in remote antiquity, several centuries B.C. In the history of the Christian Church, Mediolanum is known as the place of the archpastoral labors of Archbishop Ambrose (from 374 to 397), who showed great zeal in the struggle against the Arian heresy (his memory is celebrated by the Holy Church on December 7).

prisoned for confessing the name of Christ. Carpasius addressed the Christians with these words:

"Why do you not obey the Emperor's command and offer sacrifices to our immortal gods?"

Cyriacus and his friends answered:

"We offer ourselves in sacrifice to God who lives forever, and to our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Your old age," said Carpasius to Cyriacus, "has whitened your hair; but now I will turn your old age into youth."

With these words he ordered pitch to be melted and poured over the saint's head. The saint cried out, saying:

"Glory to Thee, O Lord, that Thou deemest us, Thy servants, worthy to enter the gates of Thy heavenly Kingdom!"

As for Crescentianus, the tormentor commanded that he be hung naked on the pillar of shame, beaten with cords and rods, scraped with iron claws, and scorched with fire. In such torments the holy Crescentianus gave up his spirit, continually offering thanks to God.

Then the tormentor commanded that his body be taken and cast out unburied to be devoured by dogs, and the remaining holy martyrs he again imprisoned. But the aforementioned presbyter John, coming by night and secretly taking the martyr's body, buried it together with the other martyrs.

Four days after this, the tormentor summoned Cyriacus alone for examination and asked him:

"Why do you wish to send the days of your old age down to Hades in cruel torments?? Offer sacrifice to the gods and you will remain alive."

"I," answered the saint, "most earnestly desire to be martyred for Christ my God; let those who have not known the true God, their Creator, offer sacrifices to your gods."

In anger, Carpasius commanded that the saint be hung naked on the pillar of shame and tormented in the same manner as St. Crescentianus, with blows from cords and rods, scraping with nails, and scorching with fire.

Meanwhile the martyr of Christ, bearing all this bravely, cried out:

"Have mercy on me, a sinner, O my Lord Jesus Christ! Glory to Thee, O Son of God!"

Carpasius, seeing that by no torments could he compel Cyriacus to offer sacrifice, ordered the torments to cease; then he reported to the Emperor everything concerning Cyriacus and the other martyrs. The Emperor commanded that Cyriacus and all who were with him in prison be put to death.

In that very prison where the holy Cyriacus and his friends had been kept there were twenty-one Christians of both sexes. Leading them all outside the city, the pagans beheaded them together with the holy Cyriacus, Smaragdus, and Largus. At night the presbyter John came to this place together with some Christians; taking the bodies of the holy martyrs, he buried them in the same place where the bodies of the other martyrs had been buried.

At this same time, the blessed princess Artemia, daughter of Diocletian, who was then living in Rome, was also tortured and put to death for confessing the name of Christ. She was put to death by order of the same impious tormentor Maximian. The wretch did not spare even his own kindred blood, for Artemia was the own sister of his wife Valeria, and to himself, as one adopted by Diocletian, she was a sister.

After the slaying of the holy Cyriacus and the other Christians who had been with him in prison, the aforementioned Carpasius obtained from the Emperor the house of Cyriacus, which stood near the Baths of Diocletian; this house had been given to Cyriacus by Diocletian. Entering this house, Carpasius saw in it a most beautiful spring, made by the holy Cyriacus and consecrated by Pope Marcellus; in this spring many pagans who were turning to Christianity had been baptized. To the mockery and insult of the Christians, Carpasius turned that house into a public bath and a brothel, and he often bathed there himself, or rather defiled himself, for feasting there with his friends, he and his associates polluted themselves with abominable carnal sins.

Once he commanded that a feast be prepared for him there, and he came there in the company of nineteen of his friends to eat, drink, bathe, and commit fornication. And as they were indulging in their abominations, suddenly they all fell dead, struck down by the invisible

power of God. All the neighboring inhabitants were struck with great fear by this, and they boarded up that house, for no one dared to enter it.

Meanwhile the impious Emperor Maximian Galerius set out from Rome for the East; the imperial throne at that time belonged to Constantine, [...] to 337 (see his life under May 21).[16] At the same time, the Roman clergy, gathering by night, went to the courtyard where the holy Marcellus had been assigned to tend the livestock, and led their chief pastor out from there.

Having seized the Roman throne by robbery, Maxentius, like his predecessors, began to persecute the Christians.

At this time there lived in Rome two women of noble senatorial family, named Priscilla and Lucina. Both were widows and faithful handmaids of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they served with great zeal. These two women possessed much property, with which they helped the saints in all their needs.

They prepared in their estates very fine tombs for the burial of the bodies of the holy martyrs, for countless Christians were then being put to death for confessing the name of Christ. Priscilla made a tomb three miles from the city on the Salarian Way, and Lucina one at seven miles on the Ostian Way[17]. Secretly by night they gathered the bodies of the martyrs, which the pagans had cast out to be devoured by dogs, beasts, and birds, and buried them with honor in their tombs. And so, when the holy Marcellus had been led out from the courtyard where he tended the animals by his clergy, he went with the blessed Lucina to the place where the holy martyr Cyriacus was beheaded, together with Smaragdus and Largus; digging up their holy relics from the earth and wrapping them in clean linens with fragrant spices, they brought them to the tomb belonging to Lucina and laid them with honor in stone coffins.

At this time the blessed Lucina gave many of her estates to the Roman Church; and her fine house, which stood in the center of the city of

16. The Russian text is garbled here ("g. po 337 g."), apparently omitting the beginning of the date. —Trans.

Rome, she gave to the faithful, that they might make it into a church. The Pope consecrated this house according to the prescribed church rite and celebrated the Liturgies in it, offering the unbloody sacrifice to God, glorifying God day and night. And thus the house of Lucina became the House of God and the cathedral church in Rome.

This became known to the impious Emperor. Enraged at Lucina, he sentenced her to be expelled from the city in disgrace as a great sinner, and he ordered all her property given over to plunder. He also made attempts to draw Pope Marcellus into his impiety, but he did not succeed in the least. Learning that the holy Marcellus had been condemned by his predecessor Maximian to the work of tending the livestock, he made the same decree concerning the saint. Wishing to dishonor not only the Pope but also the Church, he turned Lucina's fine house, consecrated for the Church, into a cattle yard and ordered a multitude of livestock kept there. To the holy Pope Marcellus he assigned, for all the days of his life until his death, while under guard, to tend the livestock in this house.

Thus this most holy shepherd and guide of human souls performed the work of tending livestock for nine months; the great servant of God, like some captive slave, was an object of insult from the impious idol-worshippers. He was constantly occupied with labor, so that he had no rest or repose at all, and suffered great want even of the most necessary things; he had neither sufficient food nor clothing, for the guards did not allow anyone to come to him or bring anything for him. His clothing consisted only of a prickly hair shirt upon his body. Because of such labors, sufferings, and deprivation of the most necessary things, as well as because of the stench of the livestock, the holy Marcellus became very weak in body, fell ill, and gave up his suffering soul into the hands of God[18]. The same presbyter John, taking his body by night,

17. The Ostian road led to Ostia, the harbor of the city of Rome, built at the mouth of the river Tiber. The remains of this harbor can be seen even now; owing to the silting of the shore sand, it lies at a distance of an hour's walk from the shore.

18. The repose of the holy Hieromartyr Marcellus, Pope of Rome, took place in 310. He governed the Roman Church for five years and six months (from 304 to 310). The other martyrs and martyresses mentioned in the Life of St. Pope Marcellus suffered somewhat earlier, in 305 and 306.

carried it to the tomb of Priscilla and, summoning the clergy, gave him here an honorable burial.

Thus ended his life the most holy Roman Pope Marcellus, having first sent on before him along the path of martyrdom his many spiritual children to God, and afterward himself followed them to stand with the holy hierarchs before the throne of the Great High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom glory is offered now and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Cyriaca, Caleria, and Mary

Память святых мучениц Кириакии, Калерии и Марии

The holy Martyrs of Christ Cyriaca, Caleria (or Valeria) and Mary were natives of the city of Caesarea in Palestine[19]. Having been instructed in the Christian faith by a certain Christian, they renounced the loathsome offerings to idols, drew near to Christ, and were baptized. Afterwards they settled in a certain hut, living in silence and praying to God that the deceit of idol-worship might be dispelled, that the faith of Christ might shine throughout the whole world, and that in this way the persecutions of the Christians might cease. As they lived thus in fasting and prayer, they were denounced before the governor of that land by idol-worshippers and were compelled to deny Christ and to worship the idols. But they would not in any wise do this. Therefore they were mercilessly tormented with cruel tortures, and in those torments they committed their souls into the hands of God.

* * *

19. Caesarea in 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 social and political life of the country. – In the history of the Christian Church, Caesarea in Palestine is notable in that here the Apostle Peter, who baptized the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10), first opened the way for the Gentiles into the Church of Christ. Here also took place the final trial of the Apostle Paul (Acts 25 – Acts 27). In Palestine there was another Caesarea, which, to distinguish it from the true one, was called Philippi. It was situated at the sources of the Jordan.

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Marcellinus

Память святого священномученика Маркеллина

Pope Marcellinus ascended the throne in the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, after the repose of the most holy Pope Gaius[20], during the most cruel persecution of the Christians, when in the course of thirty days seventeen thousand Christians of both sexes were destroyed in Rome after manifold tortures. At this time Pope Marcellinus also was seized and brought to examination before Diocletian. But, terrified by the cruel tortures, he burned incense on an idol's altar and offered sacrifice to Vesta and Isis[21]. Wishing to reward him, the emperor clothed him in precious garments and called him his friend.

After this, returning home, Marcellinus wept bitterly and lamented, like the Apostle Peter of old, who denied Christ (Mt. 26:75). Marcellinus began to reproach and upbraid himself, for although he had strengthened many others in the faith and urged them to the ascetic feat of martyrdom, he himself had fallen away from the faith in the most shameful manner. Pondering this, the Pope grieved inexpressibly in his heart.

At that time, in the city of Sinuessa in Campania[22], a local church council[23] was taking place, to which many bishops and presbyters had gathered, a hundred and eighty persons in all. Marcellinus also came to this council. Clothed in a hair shirt, his head sprinkled with ashes, with a contrite heart he entered the council before the Fathers, and standing

20. Gaius governed the Roman Church from 283 to 296.

21. Vesta, or Hestia, was regarded by the ancient Romans and Greeks as the goddess-protectress of the domestic hearth and of the sacrificial fire. A sacrifice was customarily offered to her before the beginning of every important undertaking, whence the saying among the pagans: "to begin with Vesta" arose. In Rome, a temple was built in honor of the goddess Vesta in a grove on the slope of the Palatine Hill. In this temple was an altar on which a fire burned continually, tended by the priestesses of the goddess, the Vestals. The chief festival in honor of the goddess Vesta was celebrated in Rome in the month of June. – Isis was a goddess of fertility. Isis was originally an ancient Egyptian goddess, but in the first centuries A.D. her cult penetrated into Greece and Italy, where numerous temples were built in her honor.

22. Campania is a region of ancient Italy, bounded on the west by Latium, on the north by Samnium, on the east by Lucania, and on the south by the Tyrrhenian Sea. In this Italian region bells first began to be cast (from the 8th century), which is why in the church typicon they are called *campanae*.

23. This Council took place about 300.

before them as one accused, he openly confessed his sin before all. Shedding bitter tears, he begged the honorable Fathers to pass judgment upon him. The Fathers said:

"Condemn yourself by your own mouth: the sin came out of your mouth; let the condemnation also be pronounced by your own mouth. We know that holy Peter too, out of fear, denied Christ, but, having bitterly wept over his sin, he again received the favor of his Lord."

Then Marcellinus pronounced the following sentence upon himself:

"I acknowledge myself deprived of the sacred rank, which I am unworthy to hold. For this, after my death let my body not be given ordinary burial, but let it be cast to be eaten by dogs; let him be accursed who dares to bury it."

Then, returning to Rome after the conclusion of the sessions of the council, Marcellinus took the precious garment he had received from Diocletian and went to him, and casting the garment down before him, he reproved him, condemned his false gods, and called himself a grievous sinner, weeping bitterly. Filled with wrath, the emperor gave him over to torments and afterwards sentenced him to death. And so the blessed Marcellinus was led out of the city together with three Christians, Claudius, Cyrinus and Antoninus, for beheading. Following him was the presbyter Marcellus, who after him occupied the papal throne. Calling him to himself, the martyr of Christ Marcellinus exhorted him to remain steadfast in the faith. He also said concerning his body that no one should dare to bury it in the earth, but that it should be cast to be eaten by dogs:

"I am unworthy," he said, "of human burial, unworthy that the earth should receive me, since I have renounced my Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth!"

When they reached the place of execution, the holy martyr Marcellinus fervently prayed to the Lord Christ, who receives repentant sinners, and readily offered his neck to the sword, and died for Christ, Whom he had at first denied because of fear of torments[24]. Together with him the aforementioned three men, Claudius, Cyrinus and Ant-

24. The repose of St. Pope Marcellinus took place about 300.

oninus, were also beheaded, and their bodies were cast out unburied by the road. However, after some days, the faithful took the bodies of Claudius, Cyrinus and Antoninus by night and buried them; but no one dared to take and bury the body of Marcellinus, since he had bound himself by an oath not to have his body given burial; and the honorable body of the martyr of Christ lay by the road for thirty-six days. When this time had passed, the saint Apostle Peter appeared to the newly ordained Pope Marcellus and said:

"Why until now have you not given burial to the body of Marcellinus?"

"I fear his oath," Marcellus answered, "for he bound himself by an oath not to bury his body."

"Do you not remember," said the Apostle, "what is written: 'he who humbles himself shall be exalted' (Lk. 18:14). Go, then, and bury his body with honor."

Then Pope Marcellus took the honorable relics of the martyr and buried them in the tomb of Priscilla, which lies on the Salarian Way.

Thus the Hieromartyr Pope Marcellinus departed, leaving an example of repentance for many who in that time fell into a similar sin (for then many renounced Christ out of fear of tortures). And we glorify the ineffable mercy of God always and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day is the memory of the holy martyr Theodotus of Ancyra, beheaded by the sword in the year 303 (for his life see under May 18).

NOTES

3703. Catechesis (*oglashenie*) was oral instruction in the truths of the Orthodox faith, given in the ancient Church to all who wished to approach the sacrament of baptism. Having the right to enter the church to hear the Holy Scripture and instructions, and even to be present at the first and second parts of the Liturgy (the Proskomedia and the "Liturgy of the Catechumens"), the catechumens, before the beginning of the third and most important part of the Liturgy (the "Liturgy of the Faithful"), were obliged to leave the church at once; this was announced by the deacon with an exclamation which has

been preserved in the Orthodox Church to the present day in the celebration of the Liturgy. The period of catechesis was not the same; many remained catechumens throughout their whole life. In case of necessity the period of catechesis was shortened to a few days or even a few hours (as, for example, in the present case). – The church rite of catechesis is still performed in the Orthodox Church; it consists of reading prayers over the one approaching baptism and pronouncing an exorcism against the devil; in this the one approaching baptism renounces Satan, unites himself to Christ and confesses his faith by reciting the Creed (this is done at the baptism of infants by the sponsors).



THE EIGHTH DAY OF JUNE

June 8

8 июня

New Calendar June 8 · Old Calendar June 21 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Ephraim, Patriarch of Antioch

Житие святого отца нашего Ефрема, патриарха Антиохийского

St. Ephraim was at first a military commander in the East during the reigns of the emperors Anastasius[1] and Justin[2]. He was afterward appointed Patriarch of Antioch[3], being a pious man who lived a virtuous and God-pleasing life, very merciful to the poor and compassionate toward all who were in sorrow and misfortune. His election as patriarch took place by the good pleasure of God and by a revelation concerning it made to a holy bishop who lived at the time when the city of Antioch was being restored after its devastation.

At that time, because of the various heresies and heretics that had multiplied in Antioch, Nestorians[4], Eutychians[5] and others, blasphemies were uttered against the divinity of Christ, and the honor of

1. Anastasius I reigned from 491 to 518 A.D.
2. Justin I ruled from 518 to 527 A.D.
3. Ephraim was patriarch from 527 to 545 A.D.
4. Nestorianism was founded by Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople (bishop from 428 to 431 A.D.), who taught that Jesus Christ is not true God but only a man, the son of Joseph and Mary, granted by God a special grace for the holiness of his life, and that He saves us not by His redemptive merits but only by the teaching and example of His life. Nestorianism was condemned at the Third Ecumenical Council, held at Ephesus (in 431 A.D.). Despite the conciliar condemnation, the Nestorian heresy existed until the seventh century in Persia, India and China.
5. Eutychianism was founded by Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, who taught that Jesus Christ had only one nature, the divine, whereas the Orthodox Church has always acknowledged and acknowledges in Jesus Christ two natures, unmingled and undivided: the divine and the human. The Eutychians were also called Monophysites (or "single-naturists," from Greek μονος, one, and φυοις, nature). This heresy was condemned at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, held at Chalcedon in 451 A.D., but it existed also in the time of Saint Ephraim (sixth century), and even considerably later.[1*]

the Most Holy Theotokos was held in contempt; therefore the wrath of God broke out upon the city of Antioch. On the twenty-ninth day of the month of May, at noon, on a Friday, a terrible earthquake began there; at the same time fire seized the whole city. The earthquake destroyed stone buildings and the city walls, and the fire consumed everything else; this was to show all the great wrath of God for the sins of men. Antioch was nearly made like Sodom and Gomorrah[6], for the greater part of the city perished, and with it a countless multitude of its citizens, some of whom perished beneath the buildings that fell upon them, others were burned by the fire; among the rest the Patriarch of Antioch, Euphrasius[7], died beneath a fallen column. Then among the survivors there arose weeping and bitter lamentation; and the inhabitants of all the surrounding cities and lands were struck with great fear and terror at all that had happened. This divine wrath, which fell furiously upon Antioch, was foreseen with spiritual eyes by some of the holy fathers who were at a great distance from the city (such as the Venerable Theodosius the Great, who was in Palestine, and the Venerable Zosimas, who was in Caesarea of Palestine). Therefore they began with tears to beseech God not to destroy the city utterly, against which He had justly been angered.

After this terrible earthquake and great fire, the Emperor Justin sent to Antioch the military commander of the East, this blessed Ephraim, with the aim of rebuilding the city with new buildings. Ephraim fulfilled the commission entrusted to him with zeal.

Among those working there was one bishop, then unknown to anyone, who, having laid aside his rank and the dignity of bishop, worked with the other laborers in building, disguised as a beggar.

Once the military commander Ephraim had the following revelation concerning this bishop. Wearied from his labor, the bishop lay down to sleep on the ground; then over him was seen a column of fire reaching up to heaven. The blessed Ephraim observed this not once or twice, but

6. Sodom and Gomorrah were Palestinian cities lying in the Jordan valley, known for their wickedness, for which they were destroyed by God (see Gen. 19:1–28).
7. Euphrasius was patriarch from 523 to 527 A.D.

many times, and was greatly terrified by what he saw, for this miracle was truly fearful and full of dread.

Meanwhile the voivode did not know that this laborer was a bishop, for from his outward appearance it was impossible to tell who he was. He looked like a plain beggar: his head was always in the dust, his clothing was a torn rag stained with mire, and his body was worn down by heavy labors and immeasurable abstinence. Calling this laborer to him, Ephraim began to question him privately as to who he was, whence he came, and what his name was. He answered:

"I am one of the poorest inhabitants of this city; since I have no necessary means of sustenance, I labor for wages, and God feeds me."

Then Ephraim, being inspired by God, said to him:

"Believe me, I will not let you go until you tell me the whole truth."

Being no longer able to conceal himself, the bishop said to the commander:

"Give me your word before God that you will tell no one about me as long as I live."

Ephraim solemnly promised him this. Then the laborer said:

"I was a bishop, but I left the episcopate for God's sake and came here to unknown people; by working here I obtain a modest sustenance by my labor; but I will not tell you my name or the city in which I was bishop. Add to the mercy you show yet another mercy. In these days the Lord will raise you to the episcopal throne of this Church of Antioch, 'to shepherd the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood' (Acts 20:28), our true God. Therefore distribute, as I have told you, abundant alms, and, withstanding the heretics, firmly stand for the Orthodox faith. By such labors you will please God."

Having said this, the unknown bishop withdrew from Ephraim.

Meanwhile the blessed Ephraim, having heard this, was greatly amazed and said to himself: "How many hidden servants God has with Him, whom He alone knows!"

That bishop no longer remained among the laborers, but withdrew somewhere else; he did not wish to be recognized by people, for he shunned vain human glory. His prophecy was soon fulfilled, for after a

few days the blessed Ephraim, by the providence of God, was appointed Patriarch of the great city of Antioch.

How great was the zeal of the most holy Patriarch Ephraim for piety and at the same time for holiness is evident from the following.

Once he was informed about a certain stylite who lived in the vicinity of Hierapolis[8]; it was said to Ephraim that this stylite had entered into communion with the Severian heretics[9]. The great hierarch of God then went to him in person and urged him, and even with tears implored him, to turn away from the error of Severus and join communion with the holy catholic and apostolic Church. The stylite answered the patriarch:

"I will never join your Church!"

"In what way do you wish," asked the patriarch, "to see proof that, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the catholic apostolic Church is free from the error of unbelievers?"

Wishing to frighten the patriarch, the stylite answered:

"Let us command, Lord Patriarch, that a great fire be kindled, and let us both enter into it: the faith of him who comes out of the fire whole and unharmed will be the true one; we shall all follow him!"

The patriarch answered the stylite:

"You ought to listen to me as a father and not attempt anything beyond our strength. But if you wish to test things that surpass the power of my insignificance, then I, trusting in the mercy of the all-powerful Son of God, believe that for the salvation of your soul He will accomplish this."

After this the patriarch said to those standing by:

"Blessed be the Lord! Bring firewood here."

When a great quantity of wood had been brought, the patriarch commanded that an enormous fire be kindled around the pillar, and then said to the stylite:

8. Hierapolis was located in the Asia Minor region of Phrygia.

9. The Severians: heretics who, in a modified form, adopted the Monophysite heresy. The Severians, although, like the Monophysite heretics, they acknowledged only one nature in Jesus Christ, the divine, nevertheless admitted a distinction within it between divine and human properties; thus they maintained that the flesh of Christ, before the Resurrection, was corruptible like ours. This heresy received its name from Severus, Patriarch of Antioch (from 512 to 518).

"Come down from the pillar, and, according to your words, let us both go into the fire."

Meanwhile the stylite marveled at the patriarch's fervent faith and his firm trust in God, and did not wish to come down from the pillar.

Then the patriarch said to him:

"Did you not decide this yourself? Was it not precisely in this way that you wished to test God? Why, then, do you now not wish to enter the fire?"

Thereupon the patriarch, taking off his omophorion and standing near the fire, lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed to God, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who for our salvation didst will truly to become incarnate and be born of our Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary! Show us now the true faith."

Having finished his prayer, the patriarch cast his omophorion into the midst of the flame.

Although the fire burned for about three hours and the wood had fully caught, the patriarch drew his omophorion out of the fire whole and in no way damaged.

Astonished at all that had happened, the stylite recognized that the true faith was the faith of the patriarch; therefore he renounced his impiety, anathematized Severus, turned to the holy catholic apostolic Church, received from the hands of the most holy Patriarch Ephraim the holy Communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and glorified God.

This great servant of God performed many other miracles as well.

After worthily shepherding his flock, he reposed in God[10], Whom he had served in faith and righteousness all the days of his earthly life. He

10. The repose of St. Ephraim took place in 545. St. Symeon of the Wonderful Mountain was informed from on high of his death; at the moment of his death he saw his soul being borne up to God by Angels (more on this may be read in the Life of St. Symeon of the Wonderful Mountain, under the 24th day of the month of May). Patriarch Photius (who governed the Church of Constantinople from 857 to 867, and then a second time from 877 to 886) testifies of St. Ephraim that, although he was a Syrian by birth and by language, he had no little mastery of the Greek language. Almost all the writings of St. Ephraim were composed in defense of the Orthodox teaching concerning the Person of Jesus Christ and the union in Him of two natures, divine and human, against the Monophysites.

entered into the joy of his Lord, and the One whom he piously glorified on earth he now glorifies in heaven with all the saints. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Zosimas

Память преподобного отца нашего Зосимы

The Venerable Zosimas was by birth a Phoenician and was born in the coastal Phoenician village of Sinda, which lay at a distance of twenty stadia from the city of Tyre. Exercising himself in the ascetic labors of monasticism, Zosimas obtained for himself from God, through abstinence, fasting and other virtues that shone forth in him, so great a grace that he not only remained free from all disturbance in his conscience, but also with his spiritual eyes foresaw the distant future as though it were present. His monastery was situated near the village of Sinda in which he had been born.

It happened once that he was in Caesarea of Palestine, where at that time the bishop was the Venerable John, surnamed Hozevite, who had been taken against his will to the episcopal cathedra for his virtuous life from the Hozevite monastery, which was not very far from Jerusalem, on the road leading to Jericho[11]. In that same city of Caesarea there lived a certain noble patrician[12] named Arcesilaus, a pious man adorned with every virtue. The Venerable Zosimas was staying with him, received with honor and joy. At the very moment when Antioch was collapsing in an earthquake[13], the elder suddenly began to groan, to weep bitterly and to utter sighs from the depths of his heart, and he shed a great many tears. Then, asking for a censer and filling it with incense and burning coals, he censed all who were there; after this he prostrated himself on the ground in the form of a cross and began to pray to God with compunction. Then Arcesilaus asked him:

"What is the reason for your grief?"

11. The city of Jericho lay on the western bank of the river Jordan, in a very fertile valley, amid gardens abounding in palm trees, whence it was also called the "City of Palms." Today on the site of ancient Jericho stands the poor village of Riha.

12. The patricians were in Rome the highest estate, something like our nobility.

13. The reference is to the earthquake that took place in Antioch in 526.

He answered aloud:

"Before my hearing there has passed a noise of the terrible destruction and fall of Antioch; this noise is sounding even now in my ears."

Arcesilaus and the others who were there, marveling and terrified, recorded the hour at which the Venerable spoke, and soon afterward they clearly learned that what the elder had said was true, for Antioch had fallen at the very time when the elder, weeping, prostrated himself in prayer and foretold that fall. The Venerable performed many other miracles as well; let us mention some of them here.

It happened once that the aforementioned Arcesilaus came to the Venerable's monastery in Sinda. This monastery lay at a distance of five hundred stadia from Caesarea of Palestine. At that time the wife of Arcesilaus, through carelessness, pierced her eye with a knitting needle and suffered grievously. When the holy Bishop John Hozevite learned of this, he hastened to her to examine the wound, and he saw that her eyelashes had fallen out and the eye had come out of its place. Then he commanded one of the physicians who were there to take a sponge, put the fallen eye back in its place, and then bind the sponge with a cloth.

While all this was taking place, a messenger was hastening toward Arcesilaus to report everything that had happened in his house. Arcesilaus at that time was in the monastery at Sinda, conversing with the Venerable Zosimas. Learning of what had happened in his house, Arcesilaus began to weep bitterly and to tear his hair. The Venerable Zosimas asked him the cause of his weeping, and on receiving his answer he went into his inner cell, in which, as was his custom, he always prayed. Then, soon coming out to Arcesilaus with a cheerful and joyful face, he said: "Go home with joy, for Hozevite, by the grace given him by God, has healed your wife; now both her eyes are perfectly well; the illness has done her no harm, for she has been miraculously healed by Hozevite."

These two miracles were wrought by those two righteous men within the space of one hour. The holy Bishop John healed the woman's pierced eye, and the Venerable Zosimas with his spiritual eyes saw that healing from afar and reported it to Arcesilaus.

Once the Venerable Zosimas set out for Caesarea; he took with him a donkey, on which he had loaded his belongings. On the road a lion met him; seizing the donkey, the beast ran with it into the wilderness. Saint Zosimas followed the beast's tracks.

When the lion, having eaten the donkey, was satisfied, the elder approached him and, smiling, said:

"Here now, friend! Walking is very hard for me, since I am greatly wearied by reason of my old age; I am not able on my aged shoulders to carry the burden that was laid on my donkey; therefore bear this burden yourself, though it is contrary to your nature, if you wish to free yourself from Zosimas; afterward you may again become fierce and savage according to your nature."

Then the lion, as though forgetting his natural fury, began to fawn upon the saint and became gentle as a lamb, and by his very tameness he showed signs of obedience. Saint Zosimas, laying upon him the burden that the donkey had carried, brought him to the gates of Caesarea; then, taking the burden off here, he released the beast again into the wilderness. Here, on the one hand, was manifested the all-powerful might of the Lord, which brings wild beasts into obedience to His servants; and on the other hand it was clearly shown that to the virtuous man who fulfills the commandments of the Lord and serves his God and Creator with all his heart, all the rest obey and serve, even the irrational creatures. And finally, this incident proves beyond doubt to all the sanctity of Zosimas of Phoenicia[14]. To our God be glory for all this, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

* * *

Translation of the Relics of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates[15]

Перенесение мощей святого великомученика Феодора Стратилата

14. The repose of St. Zosimas took place in the middle of the 6th century.

15. *Stratilates* (Greek): a warrior, a military commander. This title is ascribed to St. Theodore because, being a commander of an earthly king, he showed himself a true warrior of Christ, "a very good commander of the Heavenly King," as the holy Church hymns him in the troparion.

The Holy Great Martyr Theodore suffered for the name of Christ under the impious Roman emperor Licinius[16], in the city of Heraclea[17], where the saint was a voivode; the time of his martyric end was the eighth of February. Today we celebrate the translation of his honorable relics from the city of Heraclea to his native city of Euchaita[18], according to his own direction; for the saint gave such an instruction to his servant Varus, who beheld the martyr's sufferings and recorded them:

"Bury my body in Euchaita, on the estate of my parents."

All who desire more detailed information about this saint may read the full account of his sufferings, placed under the eighth day of February. Here we will recall only the marvelous miracle that occurred from his icon. Concerning this miracle bear witness Anastasius the Sinaite and John of Damascus. The miracle was as follows.

Four thousand paces from Damascus[19] there is a place called Karsata; here stood a church built in honor of the holy Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates. When the Saracens took possession of this place and settled here, many of them entered this church and defiled it in every way: for example, they drove their cattle into the church, entered that church with their wives and children, and committed here abominable sinful carnal acts. On one of the walls of that church there was a painted image of the holy Great Martyr Theodore. Once, when many Saracens had gathered in this church and were conversing among themselves, one of them took a bow and an arrow, took aim, and shot at the image of the saint; the arrow struck the saint's right shoulder, and at once blood flowed from the image as from a living man. Seeing so great a miracle, the Saracens were greatly astonished, yet they did

16. Licinius governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 307 to 324. The martyric struggle of St. Theodore belongs to 319.

17. Heraclea was situated in Pontus, the northern province of Asia Minor.

18. The city of Euchaita was situated in the northern part of Asia Minor, not far from Heraclea; today it is the locality of Marsivan.

19. Damascus is the most ancient Syrian city, mentioned in the Bible already in the history of Abraham (Gen. 14:15). It was situated to the northeast of Palestine, in a beautiful and fertile plain lying at the eastern foot of Anti-Lebanon. In the history of the Christian Church Damascus is notable as the place of the miraculous conversion of Saul to Christ (Acts 9:1–22). In 634 it was conquered by the Arabs, and from 1516 it was annexed to the Turkish Empire.

not leave the church, but continued to dwell in it and to commit impure deeds here, after their custom. In all there were twenty Saracens living in this church, each of whom had a wife and children; all of them soon after the miraculous event perished, being suddenly struck by a bitter death; but those Saracens who dwelt outside the church remained at that time healthy and unharmed.

Anastasius the Sinaite says of this image of the saint that he himself saw it and that on the image there was a mark from the blood that flowed from the wound.

This miracle the Lord wrought upon the impious Saracens for their terror, and for us, the faithful, as a reminder that we must venerate the holy icons, for through them and by them the wondrous grace of our God is present and works.

Troparion, Tone 4:

O passion-bearer, true in thy warfare, thou wast a most good voivode of the heavenly King, O Theodore: for thou didst arm thyself wisely with the weapons of faith, and didst vanquish the hosts of demons, and didst appear a victorious sufferer. Wherefore we ever bless thee in faith.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Clothed in the courage of thy soul and in faith, and taking the word of God as a spear in thy hand, thou didst vanquish the enemy, O Theodore, greatest of martyrs: with them cease not to pray to Christ God for us all.

* * *



THE NINTH DAY OF JUNE

June 9

9 июня

New Calendar June 9 · Old Calendar June 22 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria

Житие святого отца нашего Кирилла, архиепископа Александрийского

The great teacher of the Church, St. Cyril of Alexandria, was a native of Alexandria itself. He came of noble parents, both Christians, and was on his mother's side the nephew of the well-known Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria.[3737] Cyril received an education that was, for that age, most brilliant: he thoroughly mastered all the secular wisdom of the Greeks, and he also studied the Divine Scriptures and the Christian teaching well. Cyril's uncle, Patriarch Theophilus, seeing the brilliant abilities and chaste manner of life of his nephew, enrolled him among his clergy and ordained the young Cyril archdeacon. And so St. Cyril was like a fragrant flower planted in the garden of the Church, blooming with lofty purity and making the Church of Christ fragrant with his God-wise teaching.

After the death of Theophilus, the Blessed Cyril was unanimously elected to the patriarchal throne.[1] Once he became patriarch, he at once expelled from the city the heretics called Novatians, who resembled the Pharisees: they justified themselves in the eyes of men and maintained that they were pure and righteous and free of any sin. As a sign of their supposedly blameless life, the Novatians wore white garments, and they taught that a person who had fallen into mortal sin after baptism should not be received into the communion of the Church. Forgiveness of such a person's mortal sin was impossible, they asserted, and his sin could be washed away only by a second baptism.

1. St. Cyril occupied the Patriarchal See of Alexandria from 412 to 444.

This heresy arose from Novatian, who, in the reign of the emperor Decius,[2] was a presbyter at Rome, and who, after the martyric death of Pope Fabian,[3] strove to obtain the papal throne.[4] But despite all his intrigues he did not attain his desire, and the Blessed Cornelius was elected to the papal throne.[5] Envying Cornelius, Novatian began to plot against him and opposed him in everything. At that time the Church was suffering a cruel persecution from the pagans,[6] and many of the faithful, fearing cruel torments, cowardly offered sacrifice to the idols, and afterwards, coming with repentance, confessed their sin with tears. Seeing their repentance, the holy Pope Cornelius received them again into communion with the holy Church, just as Christ received Peter, who wept bitterly. Meanwhile the presbyter Novatian opposed the Pope, asserting that those who had denied Christ and offered sacrifice to demons[7] were unworthy to remain within the fold of the Church of Christ. In doing so he uttered reviling words against the holy Pope, representing him as an accomplice of the idolaters. He himself broke communion with him and, having found some like-minded followers,

2. The Roman Emperor Decius reigned from 249 to 251.

3. Fabian, Bishop of Rome, occupied the Roman See from 236 to 250.

4. Fabian was martyred in January 250, and his See remained unfilled until June of the following year, since the cruelties of the persecution did not permit the election of a new pope to be carried out. Decius is said to have remarked that he would sooner see a pretender to the imperial throne than a new bishop in Rome. During this year-long widowhood of the Roman Church, Novatian, who was distinguished by eloquence and learning as well as by a stern manner of life, enjoyed great influence and could count on election as bishop. These calculations, however, did not come to pass.

5. St. Cornelius was pope at Rome from 251 to 252.

6. This was the seventh general persecution of Christians. It was directed chiefly against bishops and clergy. Among the victims of the persecution were Fabian of Rome, Babylas of Antioch, and Alexander of Jerusalem; at the same time, in the lives of other holy men (such as Cyprian of Carthage, Origen, Gregory the Wonderworker, and Dionysius of Alexandria) this period was marked by exiles and other sufferings. The chief aim of the persecution, however, was not to put Christians to death but to compel them to apostasy. To this end they were subjected to torture, imprisonment and famine, and under such trials the steadfastness of many gave way.

7. At first Novatian showed no intolerance toward the lapsed. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, testifies that he was the author of the letter in which the Roman clergy acknowledged that the lapsed could be admitted into the Church if they were in mortal danger. But after the election of Cornelius he became the leader of a party which held an entirely different view. Novatian taught that although penitent lapsed might be admitted to the divine mercy, and therefore might be exhorted to repentance, nevertheless the Church has no power to grant them absolution and must cut them off from communion forever; otherwise she loses her Christian character and her privileges.

made himself a second pope at Rome.[8] Thus arose the schism of Novatian.[9]

Afterwards the Novatian schism spread everywhere, reached Alexandria, and existed there until the time of St. Cyril. Here the Novatians committed not a few actions contrary to Orthodoxy. Thus they repeated baptism over those who were seduced into the schism and who had previously been baptized in the Catholic Church, and they did not permit second marriage, calling it the sin of adultery. They had other unreasonable innovations as well.

From the very beginning of his patriarchate, St. Cyril expelled these heretics from Alexandria, together with their bishop Theopemptus. Then he armed himself also against the enemies of the human race, the unclean spirits, whom he drove out of their dwelling-places.

At 120 stadia[10] from Alexandria there was a village called Canopus.[11] Not far from it was a place named Manuphin[12] (formerly a village as well). Here stood an ancient pagan shrine that had been the abode of demons; the place inspired terror in everyone, and even Patriarch Theophilus had wished to cleanse it of the demons and consecrate it for the praise of God. But, distracted by other cares, he did not manage to carry out his intention. St. Cyril, having succeeded Theophilus on the Alexandrian see, resolved to fulfil the desire of his uncle and pre-

8. Novatian's consecration as bishop was performed by three bishops of insignificant towns, who had been summoned by his partisans on trivial pretexts and laid their hands upon him in the evening, after supper.

9. Novatianism found many followers in the West, and its beginnings even became stricter than before. The sentence of lifelong exclusion from the community, originally applied only to those who had renounced the faith, was later extended to all who after baptism had committed graver or lesser sins. The Novatians took the name Cathari, that is, "the pure." They rebaptized those who came over to them from the Church, considering communion with her unclean and her priestly ministrations on that account invalid. Some Novatians condemned second marriage, placing it on a level with adultery. As for the principal truths of the Gospel, however, the Novatians were and always remained Orthodox, and many of them even suffered unto death for their faith.

10. A stadion equals 87½ sazhens. Hence 120 stadia make 21 versts.

11. Canopus was situated at the mouth of the Nile, which was called the Canopic branch after it. Before the founding of Alexandria, Canopus was the most important city of this region, but with the rise of this capital of Egypt its significance began to decline, and by the time Christianity was introduced the city had disappeared; afterwards only an insignificant village stood on its site.

12. This place, according to the account of the translation of the relics of the holy martyrs Cyrus and John (see below, on the 28th), lay at a distance of two poprishchas from Canopus, that is, about two versts.

decessor, and he prayed fervently to God that He would grant him help from on high and strength to overcome and expel the unclean spirits from Manuphin. And an Angel of the Lord appeared to the holy man in a vision, commanding him to transfer to Manuphin the honorable relics of the martyrs Cyrus and John, in order to drive out the power of the demons from there. St. Cyril did so: he brought the relics of the saints to Manuphin and built a church there in their name. The unclean spirits were immediately driven out of the place, and the spot became a source of healings through the relics of the martyrs.

Having thus expelled the invisible demons from the outskirts of Alexandria, the saint devoted every effort to cleansing the city itself completely of the visible demons, namely the Christ-hating Jews. For a long time they had lived in that city in countless numbers. Already from the time of Alexander the Great and the founding of Alexandria,[3750] not a few newcomers from Judea had settled there and had grown into a numerous tribe. Hating Christ and the people who bore His name, they openly and secretly inflicted every sort of injury and annoyance upon the Christians. The heretics, the Novatians, mentioned above had been harmful to the city, but the Jews were incomparably more evil and more harmful enemies: they not only stirred up strife within the city, but also carried out numerous murders and bloodshed. Summoning the heads of the Jewish synagogues,[3751] the hierarch of God exhorted them to restrain their people from such crimes. But the Jewish elders not only did not heed the hierarch's exhortations, they rushed into still greater malice.

In the city there stood a large and beautiful church called the Alexandrian, after its founder, Bishop Alexander.[13] One day the Jews armed themselves as for war, and at nightfall they raised a clamor and confusion in the street among the Christian houses, crying: "The Church of Alexander is on fire!"

Hearing the cry, the Christians, one after another, rushed out of their dwellings toward the imagined fire, intending to put it out. And then the merciless Jews struck down with swords, or pierced with

13. This refers to St. Alexander, who was Bishop of Alexandria from 312 to 326, one of the first champions of Orthodoxy, who came out against the heresy of Arius.

spears or knives, whichever Christian came out through the gate of his house, killing them with whatever came to hand. In that night a multitude of Christians was slain.

At daybreak the most holy Patriarch Cyril learned of the slaughter that had taken place. Having recovered from his grief over the slain, he sought justice against the Jews. But the eparch of the city, Orestes, although a Christian in faith, nevertheless, nursing enmity against the saint, helped the Jews and shielded the murderers. Then St. Cyril himself went with a multitude of Christians to the Jewish assembly and drove all the Jews out of the city, laid waste their dwellings, and burned their synagogue.

The eparch, burning with anger at the saint for this, began to inflict harm on the close relatives of the saint and on other prominent citizens who were supporters of the patriarch. Thus he subjected the grammarian[14] Hierax to merciless torture in the public square, having stripped him naked. Between the eparch and the patriarch a great dissension arose, for the most holy patriarch defended the Christians, while the eparch aided the Jews. Each of them wrote on his own behalf to the emperor Theodosius the Younger,[15] until from the latter there went forth a decree forbidding the Jews to reside in the city.

At that time disturbances and rebellions frequently arose in the streets of the city, during which not a few people who had no part in those disturbances perished. In Alexandria there lived a maiden named Hypatia, daughter of the philosopher Theon. She was a believing and virtuous woman who, distinguished by Christian wisdom, spent her days in purity and blamelessness, keeping her virginity. From her youth she had been instructed in philosophy by her father Theon, and she advanced so far in love of wisdom that she surpassed all the philosophers living in those times, as Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais,[16] and

14. *Grammatikos* means teacher. By this name were designated not merely teachers of literacy, but men who in the full sense possessed knowledge of the whole of classical Greek literature, having studied it critically both with regard to the construction of the phrase and with regard to its content.

15. Theodosius II, the Younger, reigned in the East from 408 to 450.

16. The Ptolemais mentioned here was located in Upper Egypt (the Thebaid), on the banks of the river Nile.

the Suda, which praised her with many commendations, relate of her. She did not wish even to marry, partly from a desire to devote herself without hindrance to wisdom and the study of books, but especially she preserved her virginity out of love for Christ. From everywhere all lovers of wisdom flocked to Alexandria to see the wise maiden Hypatia and to hear her judicious discourses, so that she was the teacher of many. She was honored by all, both the spiritual and the secular authorities, and the whole people honored her as well, and many came to her seeking her wise counsel. Desiring to reconcile the eparch with the patriarch, she came to both of them with humility and meekness and by her wise words inclined them toward peace. The most holy patriarch himself sought an occasion to be reconciled with the eparch, but the latter, by his perverse disposition, did not even wish to hear of reconciliation. Once, when Hypatia was returning home from somewhere in a chariot, rebels who hated peace attacked her, dragged her out of the chariot, tore her garments, and beat her to death. But their beast-like fury did not stop at this crime: in the blindness of their malice they went on to mock even the dead body of the maiden. Having hacked it to pieces, they burned it in a place called Cinaron.[17]

When the inhabitants of the city learned of what had happened, all of them, and especially the lovers of learning, greatly grieved for Hypatia. Meanwhile, word of the tumult that had occurred reached the monks of the Mount of Nitria[18]. Filled with sorrow and pity for the innocent victims of the uprising, some five hundred of them gathered and came down from the desert into the city, desiring to defend the patriarch. By chance they encountered somewhere the eparch, who was driving toward them in his chariot. Seeing the ruler, the monks began to shout at him, reproaching him and calling him a pagan and an idolater, because previously he had adhered to the pagan faith[19] and had received baptism only recently in Constantinople. One of the monks threw a stone at the eparch and struck him on the head. When the people sur-

17. *Kinaron*: the name of a city quarter near the cathedral square.
18. Mount Nitria lay to the south of Alexandria, west of the river Nile, near the Libyan Desert. The mountain took its name from the abundance of natron, or nitre, in the lakes adjoining it. Among the other desert regions of Egypt, Mount Nitria was a favorite dwelling place of hermits.

rounding the eparch ran up in great numbers at his cry, the monks withdrew from him; but the eparch's servants seized one of the monks, named Ammonius. The eparch, supposing that the monks had been incited against him by the patriarch, was greatly angered and subjected Ammonius to cruel tortures and torments, in the midst of which he died. Learning of this, the most holy patriarch was deeply grieved in spirit, and, commanding that the body of the martyr be taken up, buried it with honor.

Meanwhile the Jews who had been expelled from the city, establishing for themselves a place of spectacles and games, set up a long cross to mock Christ and to insult the Christians; seizing a certain Christian youth, they crucified him, stretching him out upon the cross. They did not fasten him to the cross with nails, but bound him with cords, and for a long time they reviled him, laughing and spitting upon him. When they had finished their mockery, they beat him until he died upon the cross, and thus the martyr of Christ became an imitator of Christ's sufferings. Saint Cyril, learning of this new crime of the Jews, addressed a letter to the emperor, in which he reported all the circumstances of what had happened; and from the emperor, though not quickly, there came a just decree. By this decree the Jewish leaders who stood at the head of those who had planned the said crime were executed, and the eparch was dismissed from his office.

After this, the hierarch of Christ Cyril, having vanquished the strife, the malice, and the enmity of the foes of the Christian name, peacefully shepherded the rational flock of Christ's sheep committed to him.

But when the disturbances described above had subsided in Alexandria, a still greater agitation arose throughout the whole world, stirred up by the heresy of Nestorius, and Saint Cyril was destined to accomplish a new and still greater labor. In the Church of Constantinople, after the death of Patriarch Sisinnius[20], who had been the successor of Atticus[21], Nestorius[3761], transferred from Antioch[3762], was raised to the

19. The Hellenes were the Greeks. Their religion was a vivid expression of anthropomorphism, that is, the deification of human nature with all its merits and defects, as well as the deification of the various manifestations of human genius. The gods of the Greeks were personifications of the various qualities and manifestations of man's bodily and spiritual nature.
20. St. Sisinnius occupied the episcopal throne in Constantinople from 426 to 427.

patriarchal throne. He was a man believed to be firm in the faith and virtuous in life, but inwardly a secret heretic. He scattered among the faithful the seeds of his heretical teaching, like tares among the wheat, at first not personally but through his like-minded followers. His heresy consisted in blasphemy against Christ God and against the Most Pure Virgin, the Theotokos; for he, the wretch, asserted that from the Virgin Mary was born a mere man, Christ, and not God, since the womb of a woman could contain not God but only a man. According to the teaching of Nestorius, the Word of God was united with the Man Jesus from the very moment of conception only by grace, and dwelt in Him as in a temple. For this reason Nestorius called the Virgin Mary not Theotokos but Christotokos. Nestorius's heresy was spread among the people by his adherents who were with him, namely Bishop Dorotheus and the presbyter Anastasius, whom he had taken with him from Antioch.

Once, on a certain feast, Anastasius, while preaching to the people in the cathedral church of Constantinople, attacked the use of the word "Theotokos," the God-bearer, as applied to the Most Pure Virgin Mary[22]. Namely, he maintained that the Virgin Mary ought not to be called the Theotokos, since she was a human being, and how can God be born of human flesh? The sermon provoked murmuring and uproar in the church. Accusations of heresy rained down upon Anastasius.

When Nestorius himself was asked about this, he openly revealed his madness and poured forth the venom of his blasphemies against Christ God and His Most Pure Mother.

"I cannot," he said, "call a woman who gave birth to a fleshly man of the same nature as herself the God-bearer, for she was the Mother of the tabernacle prepared by the Holy Spirit for the dwelling of the Divine Word. Therefore it is more proper to call her the Christotokos. By

21. St. Atticus ascended the Constantinopolitan throne in 406 and occupied it until 425.

22. The title of the Most Pure Virgin Mary as Theotokos, which was attacked by Anastasius and Nestorius, had been used in the preceding century by Eusebius of Caesarea, Athanasius the Great, Gregory the Great, Gregory of Nyssa and others; it did not mean that the Most Holy Virgin communicated the Divine nature to the Savior, but affirmed only the union of the Divinity and humanity in one Person, "because the Son of God assumed not the person of a man, but only the nature of man."

this word we shall signify her relation to Him in whom the Divinity dwelt."

And so among the people there arose disputes and dissensions: some opposed the heresy and did not wish to have communion with Nestorius, while others, on the contrary, were seduced by the heretical reasoning and accepted the teaching of the heretics. This heresy disturbed not only Constantinople but all the bounds of the earth, for the impious Nestorius, together with his like-minded followers, wrote in defense of his teaching a multitude of works, which he sent to the neighboring cities, to distant lands, and to the deserts, among the monastics[23]. By this he produced the same discord among Christians that was formerly stirred up by the impious Arius[24], who rent the garment of Christ, for many of the clergy and laity followed in the footsteps of Nestorius, just as formerly many had followed in the footsteps of Arius.

Saint Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, learning of Nestorius's heretical teaching and of the success of his preaching, was stirred in spirit, and as a faithful servant and brave warrior of Christ God and of the Most Pure Mother of God, he armed himself against the enemy of Christ and stood firmly for the honor of God and of the Most Holy Theotokos. He showed himself a true shepherd of the sheep of Christ, watchfully guarding his flock and fighting against the wolf. At first Saint Cyril wrote amiably to Nestorius, exhorting him to abandon his false teaching and, by confessing the true faith, to end the disturbance he had stirred up in the Church of Christ[25]. Then, seeing that Nestorius did not amend himself, he wrote to him a stern epistle, exposing his error. Saint Cyril also wrote to the clergy of the Church of Constantinople and to the imperial court[26], urging them not to be seduced

23. Among other things, copies of Nestorius' sermons circulated among the Egyptian monks, and many of them, as a result, ceased to call the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos.

24. The Alexandrian bishop Alexander saw in a dream the Lord appear, wearing torn garments. When he asked the one who appeared: "Lord, who has torn Thy garment?" he heard this answer: "The frenzied and lawless Arius." Soon after this Arius came forward with his heretical teaching concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

25. With such an admonition Cyril addressed Nestorius in his Paschal epistle of 430.

26. St. Cyril wrote two special treatises, one to the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, and the other to the Empresses Pulcheria and Eudocia, of whom the first was the emperor's sister and the second his wife.

by the teaching of Nestorius. He wrote an epistle to Pope Celestine of ancient Rome[27] and to the other patriarchs[28], informing them of the heresy of Nestorius and beseeching them to exhort him to repentance. Moreover, letters were sent by him to all the authorities and bishops of various lands and cities, in which he warned everyone against being carried away by the heresy of Nestorius. Since this heresy had seduced, among others, many monks, he also wrote to them, explaining to them the soul-destroying harm of the heresy and turning them away from its enticements. In a word, Saint Cyril did not cease to cry out against this wolf until he had driven him altogether away from the flock of Christ.

Meanwhile Nestorius not only did not amend himself in response to Cyril's epistles, but he and his adherents rushed on to something even worse. Namely, one of his supporters, Bishop Dorotheus, in the presence of Nestorius himself, stood up on a platform in the cathedral and loudly declared:

"If anyone calls the Virgin Mary the Theotokos, let him be anathema."

And then Nestorius himself began to subject to torments those of the clergy and monks of the Church of Constantinople who resisted him and did not share his heresy. At the same time he fought with fury also against Saint Cyril, vainly and proudly rising up against him and calling him a heretic, although he himself was one. Then, having devised many unjust and false calumnies against the saint and the righteous one, he spread them among the people, reviling and dishonoring the name of Cyril. But the Hierarch of Alexandria paid no attention to these calumnies and cared solely for the salvation of human souls.

Despite such activity by Cyril, the agitation and disturbances continued, and the Nestorian heresy grew day by day and gained ever greater strength. Already many of the bishops had been infected with this soul-destroying heretical teaching and had become followers of Nestorius. Among other things, John[29], Patriarch of Antioch, gave Nestorius some support: though not approving what Nestorius had

27. Celestine I was bishop in Rome from 422 to 432.
28. That is, the patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem.
29. John I, Patriarch of Antioch, occupied the Antiochian see from 423 to 440.

said, he nonetheless asked Cyril not to attach special significance to his words. This, however, could not extinguish the kindled fire. There remained one means of ending the strife: to convene an Ecumenical Council. The opponents of Nestorius and his supporters equally desired the convening of a council, each side hoping that its teaching would triumph. And so Theodosius the Younger, yielding to the general requests, resolved to convene such a council[30].

Having designated as the place of the council the Asia Minor city of Ephesus[31], he invited all the metropolitans and bishops of the empire to gather there by Pentecost of the year 431. At the same time he sent from himself to Ephesus the comes[32] Candidian, to be present at the council as the imperial representative.

Nestorius arrived at Ephesus shortly after Pascha (April 19), accompanied by sixteen bishops; just before the feast of Pentecost St. Cyril appeared at the head of fifty Egyptian bishops. About forty bishops arrived from the neighboring cities of Asia Minor.[33] Pope Celestine, because of illness and old age, could not come, and sent two bishops and a presbyter as representatives of himself and of "the whole Western council," with instructions to be guided by the judgment of St. Cyril. In all about two hundred bishops assembled, but John of Antioch and the other Syrian bishops, who for the most part held with Nestorius, never appeared. The bishops who had gathered for the council waited for them in vain until June 21, and, not waiting longer, at last opened their sessions (June 21, 431). By reason of the dignity of his

30. The decree convening the Ecumenical Council was signed not only by Theodosius, but also by the Western emperor Valentinian III, who reigned from 423 to 455.

31. Ephesus was the chief city of the Asia Minor province of Iconia, near the mouth of the Cayster (now Küçük Menderes); it served as the center for all the trade of Western Asia. It was once renowned for the famous temple of Diana. In Christian history Ephesus is known as the place where the Apostle and St. John the Theologian dwelt at the end of his life. For this reason the Church in Ephesus enjoyed great reverence as one coming from the apostles, and the bishops of Ephesus received patriarchal rights in the fifth century, which, however, they retained only for a short time.

32. *Comes* means "companion." Thus were called persons who were in the retinue of the emperors. In the period described, the title *comes* became an honorary title given to the highest dignitaries of the empire.

33. At the head of these bishops was Memnon, bishop of Ephesus, whose see at this time enjoyed patriarchal rights. Later the bishop of Ephesus, with the title of metropolitan of the province, was made subject to the Constantinopolitan patriarch.

see, St. Cyril took the presidency of this council, its co-presidents being Juvenal of Jerusalem and Memnon of Ephesus. But the impious Nestorius opposed the assembled council and refused to appear at it, on the pretext that he would wait for the arrival of John of Antioch and the Syrian bishops. The fathers of the council three times invited him to appear, but he obstinately refused. Then they proceeded to examine the writings of Nestorius and, after careful investigation, condemned them as heretical. St. Cyril presented to the council his letters to Nestorius and to others, in which he exposed the impious teaching of the heretic, and also presented the decisions of the local council that had earlier been held at Alexandria. The fathers of the council agreed with the teaching of the holy man, acknowledged it as orthodox and God-inspired, and approved the decision of the local Alexandrian council.

Meanwhile John of Antioch arrived at Ephesus with the Syrian bishops. Learning how matters stood, he convened, in defense of Nestorius, a separate council, at which Nestorius and all his partisans took part. Candidian, infected with the heresy, lent his aid to this lawless council, and at it St. Cyril was unjustly accused of the heresy of Apollinarius,[34] which denied the true humanity of Christ and asserted that Christ has no soul but in its place contains within Himself the Divinity. Bringing such an accusation against the holy man, falsely slandering him, the partisans of Nestorius sought to arm the emperor against him. At first they succeeded in attaining their goal. The emperor believed their calumnies and commanded that St. Cyril, together with the blessed Memnon, bishop of Ephesus, be cast into prison.[35] But

34. Apollinaris was bishop of Laodicea in Syria (d. 390). At first he was one of the principal champions of the Nicene Creed; but later, in the struggle against the heresy of Arius, he fell into the opposite extreme. Proceeding from the premise that perfect God and perfect man cannot be united in one Person, and that if Christ were a perfect man He could not remain pure from sinfulness and accomplish redemption, Apollinaris taught that Christ had only two parts of human being, body and soul, and that the third part, the spirit, was replaced in Him by the Divinity. This heresy was condemned at the Alexandrian council of 362.

35. Together with St. Cyril and Memnon, Nestorius too was placed under guard by the emperor's command. This act shows that Theodosius thought by removing the principal representatives of the two opposing tendencies to achieve reconciliation and agreement between the parties. A closer acquaintance with the circumstances of the matter led him to revoke this measure and to give freedom to Cyril and Memnon.

afterwards, having subjected everything to thorough investigation, and seeing on the one hand the innocence of the righteous Cyril and on the other the evident falsehood and malice of his enemies, Theodosius restored the holy and valiant hierarch and his adherent Memnon to their offices, and he praised the patience and meekness of the former; the heretics, however, he commanded to be restrained.

Thus St. Cyril again stood at the head of the holy fathers who had gathered at Ephesus to examine the teaching of Nestorius. At this council was established that dogma of faith: that our Lord Jesus Christ, who became incarnate of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, is true God, and that the Most Pure Virgin Mary, who bore Him, is the true Theotokos. When this decision was proclaimed to the people, there was great joy among all the faithful, and all the citizens of the city of Ephesus solemnly cried out, not as once they had cried, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians,"[36] but with entirely other words: "Great is the Most Pure Virgin Mary, the Theotokos." Nestorius was condemned as a heretic and blasphemer, and was not only deprived of his rank but also cut off from the Church of Christ and given over to eternal damnation. To this conciliar decision John of Antioch with the Syrian bishops afterwards also subscribed. The emperor exiled Nestorius to the most remote country, which was called Oasim.[37] Here, remaining unrepentant, the impious Nestorius ended his life in grievous torments. Indeed, while he was still alive his blasphemous tongue was eaten by worms.

How opposed to Orthodoxy is the reviling of the Mother of God that issued from the heretic Nestorius, the following case bears witness, which the Venerable John relates in his work "The Spiritual Mead-

36. Here is an indication of a well-known incident described in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 19:24–28). The incident took place in apostolic times in the same Ephesus, where there was then the famous temple of Artemis (or Diana, goddess of the hunt), and where the name of this goddess was surrounded by special worship. According to the account in Acts, when the Apostles Paul and Barnabas came to Ephesus and preached here against the vanity of idols, the craftsmen who found a profitable trade for themselves in making models of the temple of Diana raised a popular uprising against the apostles, the crowd shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" However, the uprising was stopped by the city magistrate.

37. The name Oasima is known for an oasis of the Libyan Desert, situated west of Upper Egypt (the Thebaid); it was also called the Great Libyan Oasis. Here from ancient times there had existed a Greek colony, which also served as a place of exile.

ow":[38] "Once," he writes, "we came to the priest of the Lavra of Kolomana,[39] Abba Cyriacus, and he told us the following: 'Once I saw in a dream that before the door of my cell there stood a radiant, most beautiful Virgin, clothed in purple, and with her two radiant men. And I knew that this was our Lady, the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, and that the men with Her were St. John the Baptist and St. John the Theologian. At once I went out of my cell and, bowing down, I besought Her that She would enter in to me and bless my cell, but She did not wish it. For a long time I entreated Her, saying: "Lady! Let not Thy servant depart from Thee humbled and put to shame." And I uttered many other prayers before Her. Then, seeing my earnest supplication, She answered me:

"'You have in your cell My enemy; how, then, can you after that express the desire that I should enter to you?'

With these words She departed. Waking from the dream, I began to weep and grieve, reflecting whether I had sinned in any way before the Most Pure Virgin in my thoughts; for there was no one in my cell but me alone. Examining myself thoroughly, I found nothing by which I could have sinned before Her. Seeing that sorrow was consuming me, I, to divert myself a little in my grief, took up a book to read. It was the book of the blessed Jerusalem presbyter Hesychius,[40] which I had asked of him for a time. Having read the book, I saw at its end the two words of the impious Nestorius, and thus I learned what sort of enemy of the Most Holy Lady had been in my cell. Then, rising, I carried the book to him who had given it to me and said to him:

38. *The Spiritual Meadow* (in Greek *Leimonarion*) is a work of the monk John Moschus (d. 622); it was written at the beginning of the seventh century and contains brief accounts of the ascetics of Palestine, Egypt and Syria.

39. Lavras were monasteries distinguished by their large number of monks and by their significance. *Lavra* in Greek means a part of a city, a lane; thus was called a row of cells enclosed by a fence or wall, arranged around the church or the dwelling of the superior in the manner of lanes of a city. The monks in lavras lived a hermit's manner of life and each labored in his own cell, gathering together only for the Divine Service on the first and last day of the week, and on the remaining days keeping silence. Such an order of monastic life was maintained in many lavras and, in particular, in the aforementioned Lavra of Koloman. This lavra was situated in the Jordanian desert, near the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

40. The memory of Venerable Hesychius, presbyter of Jerusalem, is kept on the Saturday of Cheesefare.

"'Brother, take back your book; I have gained not so much profit from it as harm.'

He asked me how his book had harmed me rather than profited me. And I told him of the vision I had seen. Then he, filled with Divine zeal, cut out the two words of Nestorius from the book and burned them in the fire, saying: "Let there not remain in my cell an enemy of our Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary."

Nor should we pass over how the hierarch of Christ Cyril, that great friend of God, despite his great holiness nonetheless had in himself something reprehensible and contrary to piety, so that we may see its wondrous correction. Without cause he was angered at John Chrysostom, holy man against holy man. This should not surprise us, for perfection belongs to God alone; and of men none can be perfect in himself, unless he has received "of His fullness... grace for grace"[41] (Jn. 1:16) of Christ; therefore even the saints, as men, share in human weaknesses. Such a weakness was also in St. Cyril, namely in his relations with John Chrysostom: he was angered at the holy man not only during his life but even after his death, and would not commemorate him among the saints. Such anger in Cyril arose not from malice but from ignorance. From his uncle, Patriarch Theophilus, on the one hand, and from others who harbored enmity toward Chrysostom on the other, he had heard many unjust slanders against this universal luminary, and in his guilelessness he gave credence to the lie as to the truth. For it is written: "The simple believeth every word" (Prov. 14:15). Atticus, the Patriarch of Constantinople who lived before Nestorius, in his epistles urged him to inscribe the name of St. John Chrysostom in the church diptychs,[42] that is, in the books of the names of the saints. Atticus himself had earlier also been one of the enemies of John Chrysostom, but afterwards, recognizing the innocence of this holy man and at the same

41. A reference to the well-known passage of the Gospel of St. John the Theologian: (Jn. 1:16), that is, from the fullness of the gracious gifts in Jesus Christ we have all received abundantly the working of the grace of God.

42. *Diptychs* were tablets of wood, bone, or metal, bound together with cords, which served the ancient Greeks and Romans as memorial books. In the Christian Church the diptychs were from ancient times books of commemoration, in which were inscribed the names of bishops, martyrs, and all the saints in general.

time his own sin against him, he repented. Having ascended the patriarchal throne of Constantinople after Arsacius, he inscribed Chrysostom also in the diptychs, and as long as he lived he exhorted St. Cyril by letters, in which he asked him to do likewise. But the latter did not heed him, not wishing to overturn the force of the earlier council against John, which had been convened by Theophilus.[43]

Likewise St. Isidore of Pelusium,[44] a kinsman of Cyril, an elderly man, seeing the indignation of many at St. Cyril for excluding Chrysostom from the number of the saints, wrote to him boldly, exhorting him to examine impartially the circumstances of John Chrysostom's condemnation.

"Partiality is short-sighted, and hatred sees nothing at all," so wrote the Pelusiot in one of his epistles to St. Cyril. "Therefore, if you desire to be free of both these faults, do not pronounce hasty judgments, but subject deeds to a just judgment; for God, Who knows all things before they come to pass, mercifully deigned to come down from heaven and see the outcry of Sodom (Gen. 18:20), teaching us to do everything after a careful investigation. For many who were with you at the Council of Ephesus say mockingly that you are gratifying your own enmity, rather than seeking what is Orthodox and what is required for Jesus Christ. They say of you that you are Theophilus's nephew and follow his spirit. Just as Theophilus openly poured out his fury upon the God-bearing and God-loving John, so this man desires to boast, although the situation of the accused has greatly changed, for John has already endured exile and is no longer among the living."

In another epistle, St. Isidore of Pelusium wrote thus to Cyril: "The examples from Divine Scripture terrify me and compel me to write what must be written. For if I am a father, as you yourself say, I fear

43. Evidently the council is meant that was held at Drys, not far from Chalcedon, over which Theophilus presided and at which St. John Chrysostom was condemned and deposed.

44. St. Isidore of Pelusium, a famous ascetic distinguished for the strictness of his life, practiced asceticism near the Egyptian city of Pelusium. He died about the year 436. By his writings he was one of the great Fathers of the Church. His writings consist of letters, the greater part of which are interpretations of Holy Scripture. There are, however, many letters written with the aim of admonishing and instructing various persons of his time, and also with the aim of reconciling those at enmity. The number of all the letters of St. Isidore is said to have amounted to 10,000, but about 2,090 have come down to us.

the condemnation that fell upon Eli for not correcting his sinning sons[45]; and if, as I know more truly, I am a son before you, who bear the image of that great Mark, then I fear the punishment that befell Jonathan for not restraining his father, who sought a sorceress[46]. For since he could have stopped him, he died in battle before the sinner did. Therefore, that I may not be condemned, and that God may not condemn you, put an end to the strife, and do not bring into the living Church the vengeance for your own offense that should be exacted from mortals; under the pretext of piety, do not bring about an everlasting schism in her"[47].

And in yet another place the saint wrote thus to Cyril: "You ask me about the circumstances of the exile of the holy man John; but I will not write about this in detail, lest I appear to be a man who censures and condemns others, for the numerous injustices men committed against the saint have exceeded all measure. I will briefly recall to you the stiff-necked disposition of Egypt, which is near you[48]: it renounced Moses, gave itself over to Pharaoh, afflicted the humble with wounds,

45. The reference is to the high priest Eli, who lived in the time of the prophet Samuel. He was distinguished by his kindness, but his kindness bordered on weakness. This was especially evident in his relations with his children, the priests Hophni and Phinehas, who permitted themselves various abuses in the tabernacle. Eli, weak of character, did not give due attention to this, despite the repeated admonitions of God. Then the judgment of God did not tarry to reveal itself upon the house of Eli. War with the Philistines broke out, and when during the war the Ark of the Covenant was carried out to the Hebrew army by the sons of Eli, a catastrophe occurred: the sons of Eli were slain, the ark was taken captive, and Eli, hearing of this, fell from his seat and died (1 Kgdms. 4:1–22).

46. Jonathan was the son of Saul, king of the Hebrews. When God turned away from Saul and during the war with the Philistines did not give him a revelation concerning the outcome of the war, he resolved to have recourse to superstition and went to a sorceress who lived at Endor, a small town in the tribe of Issachar. Here he summoned the shade of Samuel and sought to learn of his impending fate. In the battle that followed, the army of Saul suffered defeat, and his three eldest sons were slain before his eyes; Saul himself fell upon his sword and killed himself.

47. After the death of Chrysostom, great disagreements arose concerning him. While the official representatives of the Churches of Constantinople and Alexandria did not acknowledge him as a saint, in other Churches, for example the Roman and Antiochene, he was inscribed in the diptychs and numbered among the host of saints. But even in the first two Churches there were many supporters of Chrysostom who did not share the views of their official representatives and regarded him as a saint. On this ground disputes and dissensions took place. In Constantinople the supporters of John Chrysostom were called Johannites. This schism was here brought to an end only in the year 438.

48. Alexandria, situated on the very shore of the Mediterranean, and as a city of Greek origin, is here regarded as though lying outside of ancient Egypt proper.

embittered the laborers, built cities, and did not pay the workers their wages[49]. Practicing such deeds, it brought forth the lawless Theophilus, who regards gold as God[50]; with his like-minded followers he rose up against St. John, the God-loving man who preached about God. Nevertheless, the house of David is established and multiplied, while the house of Saul, as you see, grows weak[51]."

Such were the letters of St. Isidore of Pelusium to St. Cyril. They had such an effect upon him that, having read them, he began to recognize his sin. He recognized it especially, and fully repented, when he was terrified by the following vision. It seemed to him that he was in a very beautiful place, filled with inexpressible joy. Here he saw wondrous men—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other saints, both of the Old Testament and of the New. At the same time he saw there a very spacious and bright church, whose beauty human speech cannot describe, and heard in it the singing of sweet-sounding voices. Entering this church and marveling at its beauty and splendor, Cyril beheld in it, in the radiance of glory, the Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos, surrounded by a multitude of Angels. Among those standing around the Theotokos, in an honored place, was also St. John Chrysostom, shining with wondrous light like an Angel of God and holding in his hand a book of his writings; a multitude of wondrous men surrounded him like servants. All of them were armed, as if prepared to attack. And when Cyril wished to fall at the feet of the Theotokos and worship Her, St. John and the armed attendants with him immediately rushed upon him, forbidding him to approach the Most Pure Mother of God and driving him out of the wondrous church. Cyril, seeing John angered against him and himself being driven out of the church, was seized with trembling. But suddenly he heard the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos interced-

49. Here is an indication of the great oppressions which were carried out in the time of the Egyptian pharaohs against the slaves who built the pyramids and other Egyptian structures, and among them, the Jews. Worn down by unbearable labor, they were poorly fed and received no payment for their toil.

50. The predecessor of Cyril on the Alexandrian see, his uncle Theophilus, was distinguished by greed, as is seen from the Life of St. John Chrysostom (14 November).

51. A figurative expression, pointing to the triumph of the righteous Chrysostom after his death, when he was acknowledged as a saint in many Churches and had a great number of followers and admirers.

ing with John and asking him to forgive Cyril and not drive him out of the church, since he had sinned against him not out of malice but out of ignorance. But John seemed unwilling to forgive Cyril. Then the Most Holy Theotokos said: “Forgive him for My sake, for he has labored much for My honor—he has glorified Me among men and named Me the Theotokos.”

While the Most Pure Theotokos was speaking these words, John immediately showed mercy and answered the Theotokos:

"At Thy intercession, O Sovereign Lady, I forgive him." Then, approaching Cyril in a friendly manner, he embraced and kissed him, and thus they were reconciled to each other in the vision.

After this vision, St. Cyril often repented and condemned himself for having until then vainly held anger against so great a servant of God. Afterward, gathering all the Egyptian bishops, he celebrated a solemn festival in honor of St. John Chrysostom and inscribed him in the church books in the assembly of the great saints. In this way the stain that lay upon the holy man Cyril, who had been at enmity with St. John, was removed, and the Most Pure Mother of God Herself dispelled the discord between Her servants. From that time, as long as St. Cyril lived, he extolled St. John Chrysostom with praiseworthy speeches.

The rest of his life St. Cyril spent in great ascetic labors, caring not only for his own salvation but also for the salvation of others, and guiding many onto the path of righteousness. There is a story told of such an occurrence from the life of the holy servant of God Cyril. In Lower Egypt there then lived a certain elder, known for his holy life. Nevertheless, being an uneducated and simple man, he held to one mistaken opinion; namely, out of his ignorance the elder maintained that Melchizedek was the Son of God[3793]. Word of this error was reported to the most holy Cyril, and he invited that elder to come to him. Knowing that the elder worked miracles and was so pleasing to God that God fulfilled his every request, and that he thought wrongly about Melchizedek only out of simplicity, the patriarch employed such wisdom as would lead him onto the path of truth. Addressing the elder gently, he said:

"Abba, I beg you to help me resolve a perplexity: on the one hand, reason leads me to the conclusion that Melchizedek is the Son of God, but on the other hand something tells me that this is not right, and that he is an ordinary man and a hierarch of God. And so I am in doubt and perplexity, not knowing what conclusion to reach. Therefore I have summoned you on purpose, that you might pray to God concerning this, asking Him to reveal it to you. And whatever God reveals to you, do not refuse to tell me."

Trusting in his God-pleasing life, the elder boldly answered St. Cyril:

"Permit me, vladyka, to withdraw into seclusion for three days, after which I will inquire of God about this and tell you what is revealed to me."

Then the elder withdrew to his cell and shut himself in for three days, praying to God to reveal to him concerning Melchizedek. Having received what he asked, he came to St. Cyril and said:

"Melchizedek is a man, and not the Son of God. And let it be known to you, vladyka, that this is indeed so."

St. Cyril rejoiced greatly that he had saved the soul of that elder, and having given thanks, he dismissed him. The elder, departing, began to preach to everyone that Melchizedek is a man and not the Son of God. Thus did the servant of God wisely lead the ignorant man onto the path of truth.

Having remained on the Alexandrian patriarchal throne for thirty-two years, and having during his life cleansed the Church of Christ of all the heresies then existing and written many works profitable to the soul[3794], St. Cyril reposed in peace in the Lord[52]. At his repose the Most Pure Mother of God Herself was present, for he had labored faithfully for Her and valiantly contended for Her honor. He was rightly numbered among the saints together with St. John Chrysostom, and together with him, burning with a love that never fails, stands before Christ God and the Most Pure Mother of God, dwelling in Her glory

52. The repose of St. Cyril took place on 27 June 448.

near Her throne and praising the Most Blessed Virgin with the true God born of Her unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

Thou didst clearly pour out for us the abyss of the teachings of theology from the springs of the Savior, O blessed Cyril, drowning heresy and saving the flock unharmed from the storms; for thou art a teacher to all lands, O Venerable Father, manifesting the things of God.

* * *

Commemoration of the Venerable Alexander, Abbot of Kushta

Память преподобного Александра, игумена Куштского

This venerable man was a native of the town of Vologda, and he received monastic tonsure in the Kamenny Monastery[53] under Abbot Dionysius[54]. Fleeing the glory of men, he left that monastery, came to a river called Kushta, near Lake Kubensky, and with the blessing of Archbishop Dionysius of Rostov[55] built a church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos, of her honorable and glorious Dormition. The Yaroslavl princes Demetrius and Simeon[56], learning of the saint, were overjoyed and gave him considerable assistance for the needs of the church and monastery; and after the death of Prince Demetrius, his consort, Princess Maria, seeing the saint's labors, bestowed upon him, in memory of her husband, a village with its peasants for the maintenance of the monastery. After this, St. Alexander redoubled his labors.

53. The Stone or Kamensky monastery was situated on an uninhabited island of Lake Kubena in the present Vologda province.

54. Dionysius, a tonsured monk of Athos, is known for having introduced the strict Athonite rule into the Spasokamenny monastery, and by the example of his life he attracted many to this secluded monastery. Venerable Alexander received the tonsure from him.

55. Dionysius, from abbot of the Spasokamenny monastery, was elevated to the rank of Archbishop of Rostov in 1418.

56. Prince Demetrius Vasilyevich was not a prince of Yaroslavl but a prince of Zaozersk or Kubena, and his residence was the township, now the village of Kubenskoye Ustye, which was located 3 versts from the monastery of St. Alexander; the prince of Yaroslavl, however, was Demetrius's brother, Simeon Vasilyevich, who died about 1320.

Together with the brethren he himself tilled the land and gathered an abundant harvest.

The venerable man lived sixty years, two months and two days from his birth, and he reposed unto eternal life in the year 1439, on the 9th day of the month of June[57]. He was of middle height, very spare of body, had a head of medium size, a round face, meek eyes, a thick, round beard reaching to his breast, and hair of dark blond with gray.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the holy martyrs Thecla, Martha and Mary, who suffered in Persia in 346.

On the same day, the repose of the Venerable Cyril, Abbot of Belozersk, in 1427.

NOTES

3737. Theophilus occupied the Patriarchal See of Alexandria from 385 to 412. He is known in history chiefly for his enmity toward St. John Chrysostom. Ambitious, he sought to bring the Archbishop of Constantinople under his influence, and therefore, after the death of Nectarius, who occupied the Byzantine See from 381 to 397, he intrigued that a person devoted to Theophilus should be elected to that See. When, contrary to Theophilus's plans, St. John Chrysostom, who had previously been a presbyter in Antioch, was elected Bishop of the capital, Theophilus harbored malice against him and became a pillar of the party opposed to Chrysostom. He took an active part in the complicated intrigue against the Hierarch of Constantinople, the result of which was the latter's deposition and twofold exile from the capital. At the council at the Oak, assembled by Chrysostom's enemies for the purpose of deposing him, Theophilus presided. In general, his relations with Chrysostom were of such a character as to cast a dark stain upon his name. In other respects, however, Theophilus was a fairly wise hierarch and did much that was useful for the Church of Alexandria.

3750. Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, who subjected all the cultured East to his rule, lived at the end of the 4th century B.C. The city of Alexandria in Egypt was founded by him in 332 B.C. to establish Greek dominion. Having become one of the richest and most flourishing cities of the East, it soon after its founding began to attract enterprising settlers from other lands, and among them, from Palestine, from the Jewish pop-

57. The veneration of Venerable Alexander began in the 16th century. His relics are in the Kushta monastery, which in 1838 was attached to the Spasokamenny monastery.

ulation there. The Jews of Alexandria formed a rather considerable colony, and the Jewish quarter was very densely populated. Philo, a Jewish writer who lived in the 1st century B.C., says that in his time there were more than a million Jews in the land of Egypt, chiefly in Alexandria. After the capture of Jerusalem, Ptolemy I settled a numerous colony of Jews in Alexandria and gave them rights equal to those of the Greeks. The Romans confirmed these rights to them, and Augustus established a special Jewish council to manage Jewish affairs under the authority of the imperial prefect. However, under Caligula they lost the greater part of their privileges.

3751. The synagogue was the place of religious gatherings of the Jews. These were open buildings intended for the conduct of public Jewish worship. By law such worship was to be performed in the tabernacle and afterwards in the Temple at Jerusalem. But during the Babylonian captivity the Temple had been destroyed, and therefore there arose a need for special places of assembly. Thus synagogues came into being. Synagogues could be established in any place where a sufficient number of faithful Jewish worshippers were found. Therefore already in the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles they were spread wherever Jews lived. There was some resemblance between the arrangement of the synagogue and that of the Temple. In the central hall of the synagogue stood a cabinet in which were kept the scrolls of the Law of Moses, which were presented for reading to the people. In the middle of the synagogue there rose a low lectern or pulpit. Some of the seats were set higher than the rest and were assigned to the elders, that is, the aged or influential persons of the community. The elders formed a council to which the supreme governance of the synagogue belonged. The president of this council was called the ruler or chief of the synagogue (Mk. 5:22; Acts 13:15). The rulers of the synagogue had power to excommunicate from the community transgressors of the Law and to subject them to scourging. Various judicial matters were also decided in the synagogues.

3761. Nestorius occupied the Constantinopolitan see from 428 to 431. Before his election as bishop of the capital, he had been a presbyter in Antioch (see below concerning it). He was distinguished by an ascetic manner of life and began his activity in the Church by taking monastic tonsure. Besides this, Nestorius had a propensity for learning and was renowned for his fluent and sonorous oratory; but at the same time he was accused of pride and ambition, and it was said that the love of glory led him to resort to a show of holiness in his life and to a bombastic style in preaching. Be that as it may, before his election to the Constantinopolitan see he enjoyed a good reputation. In addition to his personal fame, a particular confidence in his name was inspired in Constantinople by the circumstance that he had come out of the same church as the highly honored John Chrysostom. Having become bishop of the capital, Nestorius at first showed himself a zealous champion of Orthodoxy. Preaching in the cathedral church on the day of his entry into office, he addressed the emperor with the words: "Give me a land cleansed of heretics, and in turn I will give you the Kingdom of Heaven." These words were met with loud approval, but subsequent events showed that Nestorius himself was not firm in Orthodoxy and was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

3762. Antioch in Syria was one of the most ancient and wealthy cities of Syria, its capital city; it lies on the river Orontes, about 10 versts from its mouth in the Mediterranean Sea. It was founded 300 years before Christ by Seleucus Nicator and named after Antiochus, his father. For the Christian Church, Antioch had special importance as the second great center of Christianity after Jerusalem, and as the mother of the Churches from among the pagans. The very name "Christians" was first given to the followers of the Lord Jesus in Antioch; here too Christian missions first arose, because from here the Apostles Paul and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey and returned there (Acts 13:1–4, 14:26). Their second journey began there as well, although they no longer set out together (Acts 15:39–40). There too the second journey of the Apostle Paul ended and the third journey began (Acts 18:22–23). In later times many notable councils were convened in Antioch on occasion of heretical disputes. The Church of Antioch from ancient times enjoyed special privileges alongside the Churches of Alexandria, Jerusalem and Rome. From ancient times there arose at it a special theological school, distinguished by a sober, rational direction, a clear exposition of the consistent course of the development of Divine Revelation, and the introduction of the historico-grammatical method for interpreting Holy Scripture (that is, by means of historical and grammatical references). The school owed its origin to the Antiochian presbyter Lucian and his contemporary Dorotheus, who lived in the third century. From it there later came John Chrysostom, Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and others. Nestorius also belonged to this school, but he carried its sober, rational principles to extreme limits, and in his striving to bring the mystery of the Incarnation closer to our understanding, he fell into heresy.

3793. Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, is mentioned in the book (Gen. 14:18) (cf. Ps. 109:3; Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15). When Abraham was returning from victory over the king of Elam and his allies, who had plundered Lot, Melchizedek met him with bread and wine and blessed him in the name of God Most High. Abraham received this blessing with such great esteem and reverence that he gave Melchizedek a tenth part of all his spoil. Who Melchizedek was remains a mystery. Most probably he belonged to the tribe of the Amorites, who then lived in Palestine, for among them he was king and high priest. Salim, it is thought, is the same as the later Jebus, and then Jerusalem (Ps. 75:3). It may be surmised that Melchizedek was an extraordinary, renowned servant of the true God throughout all Palestine. Holy Scripture has concealed the particulars about him, presenting him as a figure of Christ. The prefigurative significance of the priesthood of Melchizedek was pointed out already by the king and prophet David, when speaking of the Son of God: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 109:4). But the prefigurative meaning of Melchizedek was revealed most clearly and in detail by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 7:1–28).

3794. The writings of St. Cyril of Alexandria, by their content, are divided into exegetical, apologetic (in defense of Christianity), dogmatic, and moral. Among Cyril's exegetical works, the best is the commentary on the Gospel of Luke, which, though brief, is distinguished by the exactness of its explanation of the words of Scripture. Remarkable also are his explanations of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Corinthians. Among the

interpretations of the Old Testament, one should note the explanations of the Song of Songs, then of the prophet Isaiah and the minor prophets. Excellent is St. Cyril's work against Julian, composed in refutation of the work which Julian, with the help of pagan philosophers, wrote in defense of paganism and against Christianity. The greater part of Cyril's dogmatic writings were composed in connection with the case of Nestorius. Such are the five books against Nestorius. Here the Alexandrian hierarch, without naming Nestorius, examines his teaching. Concerning the extensive work on the Holy Trinity, known under the name *Thesaurus*, Blessed Photius (Patriarch of Constantinople) says that it was distinguished by its thoroughness and tended to overthrow the heretical teaching of Arius and Eunomius. It surpasses all the others in clarity. Two not very lengthy dogmatic works on the Holy Trinity and the work on the Incarnation constitute a kind of catechetical teaching: these works are important for the precision of the exposition of the Orthodox teaching. Deserving of particular attention here is the teaching concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit. The work against anthropomorphism was written by St. Cyril for certain Egyptian monks who, through ignorance, imagined God in human form. St. Cyril composed many homilies. Remarkable is his word on the departure of the soul, both for the depth of feeling of a contrite heart and for the thoughts on the state of souls separated from the body. It is included in the Slavonic Following Psalter and in the Greek Horologion, as very edifying for Christians.



THE TENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 10

10 июня

New Calendar June 10 · Old Calendar June 23 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Vassian, Bishop of Lodi[1]

Житие святого отца нашего Вассиана, епископа Лодийского

To describe now the lives of the saints, who bravely armed themselves with the help of God against fleshly lusts, and to hand down their memory to succeeding generations, is useful for two reasons. First, in remembering the valiant deeds of the saints we believe that the saints also remember us before God; second, in describing the deeds and courage of the saints we thereby encourage ourselves and others to imitate these deeds. Keeping this in mind, we shall endeavor to describe briefly the life and deeds of St. Vassian, Bishop of Lodi and Confessor; through the help of this servant of God we shall set forth an account of his labors, for the sake of which he was deemed worthy to be a partaker of the Heavenly Kingdom.

This holy man was from his early years an elder, not by the number of his years, but by wisdom and good morals. His father Sergius, ruler of the land of Syracuse[2], adhered to pagan impiety.

He sent his son to Rome to study pagan philosophy, so that he might be the successor to his father's authority and a skillful ruler of the citizens. Wise and discerning by nature, Vassian applied himself diligently to the study of philosophy and made progress in his learning. At this time he heard the name of Christ and of the life of Christians[3], and at that very moment he desired with all his heart to exchange pagan philosophy for the saving Christian wisdom; therefore he began to

1. Lodia or Lavda was located near Mediolanum (see below, p. 384).
2. Syracuse was one of the first Greek colonies on the eastern coast of the island of Sicily, founded in the 8th century B.C.; afterward it became the largest and richest city of the island.

consider to which of his father's servants (to whose charge he had been entrusted) he might disclose the secret of his heart.

But the Lord, not wishing to delay for long His warrior from the labor appointed to him, three times revealed in a dream to a certain pious presbyter the desire and intention of the youth Vassian to become a Christian. Awaking from sleep, the presbyter began to go round all the schools of the city of Rome, seeking to find in them the youth whom the Lord had pointed out to him in the dream. At length, after long search, the presbyter, with the help of God, found the one he sought and asked him whence he came, who his parents were, and why he lived in Rome.

The presbyter was astonished at the wise and discerning answers of the youth Vassian, when he told him everything about himself in detail, and understood that this was indeed the youth whom he had been seeking.

Like a loving father, the presbyter embraced the youth and kissed him; then he took him home with him, where he related to him the vision which he had received from God; after this they both glorified God. Thereupon Vassian fell at the feet of the presbyter and besought him to make him a Christian as quickly as possible. The presbyter first began to instruct the youth in the truths of the holy faith and explained to him the mysteries of the Christian law. The youth, hearing this teaching, was moved and kindled with love for Christ. Then the presbyter admitted him to the catechumenate[4] and taught him how he ought to conduct himself during holy baptism. From this time Vassian began often to come to the honorable presbyter together with one of his elder ser-

3. From the further narrative it is evident that St. Vassian had heard of Christians already in childhood (the Life relates that Vassian, while still an infant, traced the sign of the cross on the ground); but in Rome Vassian became more thoroughly acquainted with Christianity and had the opportunity to observe the very life of Christians personally.

4. Generally all who approached baptism in the ancient Church were first subjected to catechesis, that is, oral instruction in the truths of the Christian faith. Catechumens were permitted to be present only at the performance of the first (the Proskomedia) and second (the Liturgy of the Catechumens) parts of the Divine Liturgy; before the third part (the Liturgy of the Faithful) the catechumens had to leave the church, which was announced by the deacon's exclamation: "Catechumens, depart." The term of catechesis varied: it lasted from several days or weeks to several months and even years.

vants, who was faithful to him in all things, learning Christian wisdom from the God-inspired lips of his spiritual teacher.

After his catechesis Vassian began to lead an austere life: by day he fasted and prayed, and by night he remained either in prayer or in reading books, giving himself to sleep only for a short time. Of the food set before him he ate only a third part, and the remaining two parts he distributed to the poor.

Meanwhile a fairly long time passed; at length the hour of Vassian's baptism came. Vassian, together with his faithful servant, went to the house of the presbyter, where holy baptism was performed. When Vassian, according to the usual order of baptism, had entered the holy font, he saw a youth of beautiful countenance, shining like the sun; this youth ministered at the baptism and held the garment in which the newly baptized was to be clothed upon coming out of the font. The blessed Vassian ventured to ask him:

"Who are you? Whence are you?"

"I have long been sent to you," the youth answered, "to help you fulfill your holy purpose and to drive away all that is contrary to this purpose."

Having said this, the youth became invisible. After the youth's departure, the room was filled with a wondrous fragrance, which was perceived for about half an hour, so that all who were there thought they were not on earth but in heaven.

After holy baptism Vassian began to lead an even more strict life, mortifying his young body and subjecting it to the spirit. The attendants and servants, whom the ruler Sergius had commanded to guard Vassian as the apple of his eye, not knowing Vassian's secret[5], were greatly astonished, even disturbed, seeing his unusual abstinence; they wondered why he took so little food and drink, why he spent the nights without sleep, why his face grew pale and his body wasted. Seeing all this, they asked one another in perplexity: "Why does our master wear himself out so?"

But the elder servant, faithful to the holy Vassian and knowing his secret, said to them: "Do not wonder at this, for philosophical teaching

can be grasped only by such disciples as have despised all passions and are content with only what is necessary to sustain life. Therefore know that our master, desiring to learn the highest wisdom, has taken upon himself such abstinence and vigil."

But the servants were not satisfied with this answer; moreover they recalled that Vassian, while still an infant, sometimes wrote the sign of the cross in the sand or arranged straw in the form of a cross, for which his nurse often scolded him. At length, after various inquiries and following where Vassian went, the servants began to suspect that their master had accepted the Christian faith and was living in accordance with Christian teaching. This threw them into no small confusion and fear, for they dreaded the wrath of Vassian's father, Sergius. Finally they became convinced that Vassian was a Christian by the following incident.

Once, after an all-night vigil and nocturnal labors, the blessed youth, being weary, fell into a deep sleep. During his sleep he began to utter words of prayer, calling upon God, One in Trinity, and asking Him to direct him on the way to the glory promised to all who love Him. At the end of the prayer a voice was heard from on high: "Rejoice and be glad, most faithful warrior of Christ, Vassian! Thy prayer has been accepted by God, and a better place in heaven has been prepared for thee."

After this event the servants were fully convinced that Vassian was a Christian; therefore they secretly, one after another, set out back to Syracuse to their old master, the ruler Sergius, with unwelcome tidings; they reported to the ruler that his son Vassian had accepted the Christian faith.

Sergius, being an idolater, was greatly grieved at this and began to consider how he might turn his son away from Christianity: by caresses or by threats.

Thus little by little all the servants left Vassian at Rome; there remained with him only one old and faithful servant, who was also a Christian. In place of those who had departed, Vassian's father desired

5. That is, not knowing that he was a Christian.

to send new servants, so that they might take Vassian from Rome and bring him to him.

At this time it befell the holy Vassian to enter, at night, at the first crowing of the cocks[6], the church of St. John the Evangelist the Theologian. Here, praying according to custom, he saw an honorable man, adorned with gray hair, who said to him the following:

"Know, faithful Confessor of Christ, that it is necessary for thee, together with thy faithful servant, to go from here to the city of Ravenna[7], for thy father, who begot thee to fleshly life, intends to hinder the salvation of thy soul; flee from here, lest he lead thee away from the right path. For this reason the merciful God, who does not forsake His servants, has sent me, His apostle, to announce this to thee, so that those sent by thy father, finding thee here, may not hinder thee from escaping hence."

After these words, the holy John the Theologian departed from Vassian.

The blessed Vassian, greatly rejoicing in heart at the apostolic appearance, began to make many prostrations with prayer to God, asking Him not to forsake him with His help. After prayer Vassian related all that he had seen and heard to his servant. The next morning they gave away all their possessions to the needy and, having received the blessing of their spiritual father Gordian, in the evening they left Rome and set out for Ravenna.

After several days on the road, the holy Vassian saw a doe with two fawns; the animals were already exhausted and weakened from the pursuit of hunters who were chasing them. The hunters had almost overtaken the deer. Seeing this, the saint took pity on the doe and her fawns and said to her: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I command thee to come to me without fear."

6. The first Christians, following the example of the ancient Jews, divided the night into four parts (of 3 hours each), called watches. The crowing of the cocks, which took place in the third watch, was called the cock-crow or the rooster-call.

7. Ravenna was situated in the so-called Cispadane Gaul, on the shore of the Adriatic Sea. Nature and art made of this city a strong, almost impregnable fortress, for which reason Ravenna was considered the bulwark of Italy. The Roman emperors, beginning with Honorius (395–423), chose it as their place of residence.

The doe at once, as though understanding the words, became gentle, stopped, and without fear came to the saint with her fawns. Vassian began to stroke her with his hand, as though the animal had long been accustomed to him; and the doe licked his feet.

When the hunters who were pursuing the doe ran up and saw that the doe stood before the traveler gentle and that he was stroking her with his hand, they were greatly astonished, wondering how the wildness of the animal could have been changed into gentleness so quickly. Thereupon one of the hunters, ill-tempered and cruel, said to his companions: "Fools! Why do we delay, and why do we not take our prey?"

Having said this, he began to snatch the doe from the saint's hands.

"It is not I but the Most High God who commands thee," said the holy Vassian to the hunter, "do no harm either to this wild animal or to its young."

The hunter, in anger and boldness, dared to push away the hand of the servant of God; but at once, for this audacious deed, a demon fell upon that cruel hunter and began to torment him severely. In his torment he fell to the ground, began to cry out with a terrible wail, foamed at the mouth, and, growing numb, became as if dead. Then the other hunters were struck with terror and trembled with fear, and, falling at the saint's feet, begged his forgiveness with tears, fearing lest a similar fate befall them as well. Vassian bade them withdraw from that place, and he himself prostrated himself in the form of a cross for prayer, and, turning his whole mind toward God, began to pray: "O God, wondrous Creator of all, merciful God, Savior of the fallen human race, who rejoicest not in the death of the dead but in the salvation of the living: forgive the one who lies in misfortune, who has sinned in ignorance and angered Thy goodness!"

With such and similar tender words the saint prayed. Rising from prayer, he went to the man lying on the ground, took him by the right hand, and said to the demon within him: "Devil! He who cast thee down from the heights of heaven into the abyss commands thee to leave

at once the image of God, this man, and withdraw into the tartarus[8] prepared for thee, where thou shalt be tormented forever."

The saint had not yet finished these words when the enemy of the human race had already come out of the man, whom he had tormented for even a short time so severely that he was nearly at the point of death. When the hunter began to come to himself, he could see nothing with his eyes and lay motionless on the ground.

The saint again began to pray to God, and after the prayer he signed the hunter's eyes with the sign of the Cross, and they immediately opened, so that the hunter began to see. Then Vassian signed him all over with the sign of the Cross and bade him rise, and the hunter rose healthy, as though he had suffered no harm at all.

The other hunters, standing at a distance, gazed with trembling at this miraculous event; then they came up to the saint and bowed to him. Together with them the one who had received healing also bowed, asking the saint's forgiveness and diligently giving thanks to his healer. After this all went their separate ways: the hunters to their homes, the hind with her young was set free, and the saint Vassian himself, with his servant, set off on his further journey.

Arriving at the city of Ravenna, Vassian went to the bishop of that city, Ursus, who was his relative. The bishop, seeing his kinsman, rejoiced greatly, and especially when he learned that he believed in Christ and, for love of Christ, had renounced everything and become a wanderer. At Vassian's wish the bishop assigned him a quiet place outside the city, at the church of the holy Hieromartyr Apollinaris, the first bishop of the city of Ravenna, who had been ordained by the holy chief Apostle Peter and who suffered under the reign of Vespasian[9] for the name of Christ. Near this church there was a very suitable place for Vassian: here, living in solitude, having renounced the world and all worldly things, he could diligently labor for God, struggling in fasting and prayer.

The Lord soon glorified His servant: He granted him the wondrous grace of healing bodily sicknesses by prayer and spiritual infirmities by

8. Under the name of Tartarus the ancient Greeks understood the dark abyss situated in the depths of the earth.

God-inspired teaching. For all this he won respect, love, and glory from all around him.

At this time a command came from the emperor Valentinian[10] to the governor of the city of Ravenna and to all its citizens: to put to death the city judge named Vifimnius; this happened because slanderers had accused Vifimnius before the emperor of great crimes supposedly committed by him. Vifimnius was bound and brought to the place where he was to be beheaded. Here he remembered the holy Vassian and said to himself: "Servant of God Vassian! By the grace given thee by God, be my helper!"

The governor of the city himself and a multitude of people were present here, wishing to see Vifimnius's death. And now Vifimnius had already bowed his neck for the stroke, and the executioner, holding a two-edged sword, raised it to strike with force upon Vifimnius's neck. But at that moment an unexpected event occurred. The sword fell from the executioner's hands and dropped far from that place. The executioner again took the sword, and, grasping it more firmly than before, raised it to behead Vifimnius, but as soon as he swung, the sword again, as before, fell from his hands and dropped at a distance. The executioner again seized the sword in anger, but the same thing happened once more. All were struck by this wonder. The governor of the city, thinking that the executioner was sparing the condemned man for the sake of a reward he hoped to receive, dismissed this executioner and ordered another to strike off Vifimnius's head. But the same thing happened with the other: the sword was snatched from the executioner's hands three times by an invisible power and fell at a distance. After this the governor of the city, marveling and fearing at what had happened, ordered the condemned man led away from the place of execution, all the more so as the people demanded Vifimnius's release, for the power of God was protecting him from death.

Vifimnius was put into prison, and word was sent to the emperor that two executioners had been unable to strike off the condemned man's head. Upon this report a gracious command immediately came

9. Emperor Vespasian reigned from 70 to 79.
10. Emperor Valentinian II reigned from 383 to 392.

from the emperor to release Vifimnius from the death penalty and to pardon his guilt.

Vifimnius did not conceal but, on the contrary, spoke of his protector before God, the holy Vassian, whom in his prayer he had called upon for help. Freed from prison, he went to the saint and, kissing his feet, gave thanks to him, but the holy servant of God bade him give thanks to God alone, who had delivered him from death. From this time all the inhabitants of the city began to regard the saint with great reverence, looking upon him as an Angel of God and turning to him for help.

The clergy and the noble citizens together began to ask the bishop to persuade the holy Vassian to accept the priesthood, so that the God-pleasing prayer of Vassian, offered by him during the celebration of the unbloody sacrifice, might then be more powerful before God. Thus the servant of God, though against his own desire, was ordained to the priesthood, in which he spent a fairly long time.

At this time a faithful servant of Vassian's, who had come with him from Rome, died. The holy Vassian began to offer the unbloody sacrifice for his repose. On the seventh day after the servant's repose, during the liturgy, the Venerable One, praying diligently for the repose of the soul of the newly departed, heard a voice from heaven informing him that the soul of the deceased had received mercy from God and had been numbered among the saints. Vassian told Vifimnius, who was in the church for the liturgy, about this news, and then both of them rejoiced in spirit over the salvation of the soul of the departed.

About this time the bishop died in the city of Laudi, in Liguria[11]. The inhabitants of that city imposed upon themselves a three-day fast and prayed fervently to the Lord, asking Him to send a worthy man who, ascending the episcopal throne, might govern the Church of Christ successfully.

During the general fast and prayer, a certain shining man appeared in a dream vision to one of the presbyters of the cathedral church, named Clement, a virtuous and honorable man who had fallen asleep after his church labors, and said: "Know all of you that the presbyter

11. Liguria in Italy was the name of a region inhabited by the Ligurians, a tribe of Celtic origin. Liguria bordered on Gaul.

Vassian, dwelling in the city of Ravenna and adorned with God's gifts, has been appointed by God as bishop for you."

Waking from sleep, Clement at once summoned the most honorable men from among the church clergy and the laity, to whom he related what had been told to him by the Lord in the vision. Then they chose noble men and sent them to Ravenna with a request that the holy Vassian come to them at Laudi and accept the episcopal throne.

To the holy Vassian, even before the envoys came to Ravenna, God revealed in a night vision their coming and bade him, without refusing, go with them.

In the morning the envoys from Laudi came to the saint and declared to him what they had been commanded. The saint addressed the envoys with these words: "God created man immortal, so that he might always obey the will and directions of his Creator. But man, transgressing God's command given him in Paradise, made himself mortal, and in the same way made his descendants mortal. Therefore man ought not to resist the will of his God or break His commandments, but each must, with all diligence, strive to fulfill what is pleasing to God and commanded by Him. In view of this, I too, not from a desire for honors but for the needs of my brethren in the faith, by God's command, do not refuse to accept the yoke laid upon me."

Having said this, the holy Vassian invited the travelers to rest after their difficult journey. But the envoys, rejoicing at the Venerable One's consent, did not think of staying and resting, but desired to bring the priceless treasure to their city as soon as possible, and hastened to return on the road, and begged the saint to go with them quickly; therefore in the evening the Venerable One and the envoys set out on their way.

When they drew near to Laudi, the whole people went out with joy and gladness to meet their shepherd, given them by God.

At this time there was in the crowd a man who was paralyzed and had lost the use of his tongue. Together with the people this sick man, though with great difficulty, approached the saint and kissed the holy right hand of the servant of God. At once he regained strength in his body; his tongue was loosed, and he began to glorify the greatness of

God. The people redoubled their joy, seeing what a holy shepherd and wonderworker God had given them.

For the consecration of St. Vassian to the episcopal rank, St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and the aforementioned kinsman of St. Vassian, Ursus of Ravenna, arrived in Laudi. On the first day of January the consecration of the man chosen by God, Vassian, as bishop took place, which brought great joy and a great celebration to the whole city.

St. Vassian, having become a bishop, began to teach his flock by word and deed, but chiefly by the example of his virtuous life. He showed great love toward St. Ambrose in the Holy Spirit, and received from Ambrose the same love, which was expressed in frequent affectionate letters passing from one to the other.

After some time, the hierarch of Christ, Vassian, built in the eastern suburb of the city a magnificent church in the name of the holy Apostles, and for the consecration of this church he invited St. Ambrose of Milan and Philax of Comana[12] (Ursus of Ravenna had already reposed in the Lord at this time).

While the bishops were consecrating the church, among the people gathered for the consecration there was a demon-possessed young girl, through whose lips the devil began to cry out loudly: "Why have you, men of God, unjustly risen up against me? Why have all three of you armed yourselves with invincible weapons against me alone? Is it not enough for you that you have taken from us the power to harm any of you? Now you drive us out even from those over whom we had authority. If you drive me out from here, I will take with me two or more (demons) and depart to another place, where you will not come."

The servants of Christ, hearing the devil's outcry, knelt down and began to pray more fervently to the Lord. During the prayer, the demon, unable to endure the power of their prayer, threw the girl to the ground and came out of her with a terrible cry. Then the hierarchs approached the girl and, raising her from the ground now healthy, gave her to her parents, charging them to give thanks to the Lord for the deliverance of their daughter from the demonic torment.

12. The city of Comana was located in the province of Pontus, in the northeast of Asia Minor. Today the village of Gümenek stands on the site of this city.

After the consecration of the church, a meal was prepared to the glory of God, during which the hierarchs conversed about what was useful for the Church of God. After the meal and friendly conversation, the bishops who had arrived departed to their own places, and St. Vassian escorted each of them with honor.

Once, during the harvest, a youth was gathering sheaves among the reapers; a serpent stung him, and he died. His parents, weeping inconsolably over his death, brought him for burial into the church in honor and glory of the holy Apostles, newly built by the blessed Bassian, where at that time the God-pleasing bishop Bassian himself happened to be. He often came to this church and performed services in it. During the singing of the customary funeral canon, the weeping of the parents over the youth began to drown out the voices of the singers. The bishop of God, pitying the weeping ones, commanded everyone to leave the church; then he remained alone, prostrated himself on the ground before God with tears, and besought Him that the Lord would command the soul of the youth to return to the body. During the saint's prayer, the body of the dead youth began to move, at first slightly, and then more and more. The saint rose from prayer, took the youth by the hand, and commanded him to stand up. The youth, as if awakening from sleep, opened his eyes, began to call his mother, and stood up. The parents and people who were outside the church, hearing the youth, could not remain in place for joy; they immediately opened the church doors and entered the church. Seeing the youth raised from the dead, all were amazed and struck with awe, and, falling down before the saint, joyfully kissed his hands and garments. The saint, having given thanks to almighty God and delivered an exhortation, dismissed everyone in peace.

Some years after this, the hierarch of Christ, Ambrose, fell mortally ill. The God-pleasing bishop Vassian, learning of the illness of his beloved father and friend in the Holy Spirit, hastened to go to Milan to visit the sick man. Here, seeing Ambrose on his sickbed, he remained to attend him, to pray together with him, and to comfort him with the hope in Christ.

St. Ambrose had the following vision: it seemed to him that he saw our Lord Jesus Christ coming toward him with a radiant countenance and smiling kindly at him.

St. Ambrose told St. Vassian, who was near him, about this vision. Then Vassian, understanding that the hour of St. Ambrose's death was drawing near, began to weep and at the same time to rejoice. He rejoiced that the holy man was departing to Christ, who was calling him, but he wept because he was losing his beloved friend in this temporal life; yet he had a firm hope in Christ of seeing him again in the future life and of being together with the departed in the rank of hierarchs.

After the death of St. Ambrose, Vassian and all the inhabitants of Milan mourned the hierarch and buried his holy body with honor. After this Vassian went to his city, where he began to offer the unbloody sacrifice before the Lord, with prayer for the repose of Ambrose, although he was fully convinced that his soul was at rest with the saints; but prayer and the Unbloody Sacrifice offered even for the saints are not fruitless. If a prayer for a saint cannot benefit him in anything, it returns to the bosom of the one who prays and profits the latter, as David says: "My prayer returned into my bosom" (Ps. 34:13).

After a considerable length of time, St. Vassian again had to go to Milan on church business. Entering the city, he saw in the square a weigher who was weighing various goods on a scale. This weigher was unrighteous, cheated many, and sought in this way to gain profit for himself. The saint saw on the scale a demon in the form of a little Ethiopian, pulling down the scale, and the unrighteous weigher was making use of this. The saint asked those with him: "Do you see anything strange?" They answered that they saw nothing unusual. Then the saint prayed that the eyes of the others might also be opened to see what he saw, for a trustworthy testimony. And indeed the spiritual eyes of the presbyter Clement and the deacon Elvonius were opened: they saw the same thing the bishop of God had seen, namely, the little Ethiopian sitting on the scale and carrying out the weigher's commands. They told the saint what they had seen and confirmed the words of David, who says: "The sons of men are a lie; laid in the bal-

ances, they are altogether lighter than vanity" (Ps. 61:10). The saint called the weigher and asked him:

"By what unrighteous measure do you increase the weight and cheat the merchants?"

"I do no unrighteousness," answered the weigher, and with an oath confirmed that his weight was correct.

Then the hierarch pointed out to him the Ethiopian of hell on the scale and said:

"This Ethiopian will immediately enter into you, crush your body, and tear your soul out of you with terrible torments."

The unrighteous weigher trembled with fear and, falling at the saint's feet in repentance, promised to give up his unrighteousness. The saint admonished him from Holy Scripture and commanded him to distribute to the poor everything he had gained by unrighteousness. After this the saint, by prayer, drove the demon away from the scale and went on his way.

Returning to his city, the servant of God occupied himself with the customary works of piety and the care of his flock. He lived in the episcopal rank for five years and departed in peace to the Lord, whom he had faithfully and truly served, being ninety years of age[13]. The faithful sheep buried their shepherd with honor in the Apostolic church he had built, and they wept much, having lost such a father. The saint reposed in the reign of Honorius[14] in the West and of Theodosius[15], son of Arcadius, in the East. Both during his life and especially after his death he was a wonderworker: from his tomb healings were miraculously granted to the sick through his holy prayers and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, honor and glory are offered, now and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

13. The repose of St. Vassian took place around 409.
14. Emperor Honorius governed the West from 395 to 423.
15. Emperor Theodosius II governed the East from 408 to 450.

Memory of Venerable Theophanes

Память преподобного Феофана

St. Theophanes was born of pagan parents. When he reached youthful age, he was married to a maiden, but she soon died, and Theophanes believed in Christ and was baptized. Then, forsaking everything, he enclosed himself in a hut near that city and lived there for a fairly long time, teaching those who came to him to keep the commandments of God and to live a chaste life. Learning about a harlot who had destroyed many by her beauty, St. Theophanes came out of his enclosure and, dressing in bright garments, asked his father for nine litrae of gold, as if desiring to take that woman as his own. Then, coming to the harlot, he gave her the gold and, persuading her to change her life, baptized her. After this, St. Theophanes built another hut near his own, where he enclosed the said woman. Thus he made her, who had formerly been a vessel of sin, a dwelling of the Holy Spirit, and he distributed the gold to the poor. Both of them pleased the Lord and on the same day departed to the heavenly mansions[16].

* * *

Memory of the holy Hieromartyr Timothy, Bishop of Prusa

Память святого священномученика Тимофея, епископа Прусского

In the city of Prusa, situated on the borders of Bithynia, Phrygia, and Lydia[17], near Mount Olympus[18], St. Timothy was bishop. For the purity of his life and his holiness, he received from God the gift of working miracles. Once he slew a huge serpent that had taken up its abode in a cave beneath a cypress tree and was causing great harm to animals and people. The saint slew it by casting into its mouth the veil with which the consecrated Bread (the Lamb) is covered upon the Divine Table. On another occasion he healed a certain king named Arita,

16. The repose of St. Theophanes took place in the second half of the 4th century.
17. Bithynia, Phrygia and Lydia are regions of Asia Minor.
18. Mount Olympus was located in the northeast corner of Asia Minor, on the borders of Phrygia, Mysia and Bithynia.

who was suffering from a grievous illness and was already drawing near the gates of death. In like manner, he not only restored a certain queen from death to life, but also turned her from the darkness of idol worship to the light of the true faith. Besides this, through the grace bestowed upon him by God, St. Timothy healed various diseases and performed many other wonders by the power of Christ. By his preaching he enlightened all his flock and brought many unbelievers to Christ. But when the emperor Julian[19] ascended the Roman throne, who had denied Christ, began to worship idols, and raised up a cruel persecution against the Church of God, St. Timothy began to labor with special zeal in preaching the word of God, strengthening the faithful and rebuking the pagans for their errors. When the impious emperor Julian heard of the saint, he ordered him to be seized and brought before him, and then cast him into prison. Many people came there to the saint, and he preached to them of Christ, the true God. Julian was informed that the Christian bishop imprisoned there was teaching his faith to those who came to him. Julian then sent him an order not to teach concerning the name of Jesus Christ. But St. Timothy did not obey the command of the impious and lawless ruler, and continued fearlessly to do what was proper to him as a Christian bishop: to teach the people. When the emperor Julian again learned that St. Timothy continued fearlessly to preach Christ, he grew angry and sent an executioner to behead the saint in prison.[20] After the blessed repose of the Hieromartyr, the faithful took his holy body and buried it with honor. From his tomb many wondrous healings of various diseases were granted, to the glory of Christ our God.[21]

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Alexander and Antonina

Страдание святых мучеников Александра и Антонины

19. Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363.
20. The repose of St. Timothy took place in the second half of the 4th century.
21. The precious relics of St. Timothy were in Constantinople, in the church bearing his name, built near the Melandesian Gate (in the 12th district of Constantinople).

During one of the persecutions against Christians, when many believers in Christ had been put to death after various torments, a considerable time after the persecution had begun, a Christian maiden named Antonina, who came from the city of Crodamna,[22] was seized and brought before the cruel ruler Festus. For her pious and virtuous life, the Lord vouchsafed her to undertake the contest of martyrdom, to the shame and defeat of the cunning devil.

When the maiden Antonina was brought before the cruel ruler Festus, he began to tempt her with many deceitful words, saying: "Lady Antonina, I wish to make you, a pure and chaste maiden, a priestess of the goddess Artemis,[23] to give you many gifts and honors, and to make you the steward of all my possessions."

For a long while St. Antonina made no reply to this proposal of Festus; but at last she said: "Why do you promise me vain gifts? Rather, you yourself, Festus, share my riches with me, that through faith in my Lord Jesus Christ you may receive the treasures of eternal blessings."

"May that never be," Festus replied. "May the gods preserve me from it, lest I believe in such a God—or, better said, a Man—who was nailed to a cross and died upon it!"

St. Antonina answered Festus:

"I do not conceal that our Lord Jesus Christ was nailed to the Cross and, after His death, laid in a tomb; but I also proclaim concerning Him that He rose from the dead on the third day and now sits at the right hand of God His Father, as it is written in our books: 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool' (Ps. 109:1)."

"All your lengthy speeches are false," said Festus. "Why do you refuse to obey me and sacrifice to our gods, so that you may enjoy all the good things that exist in the world?"

"I will not worship such soulless gods," the holy maiden answered, "for they are demons, as it is also written in the law of my Lord: 'For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens' (Ps. 95:5)."

22. The city of Krodamn was located in the Asia Minor region of Thrace.
23. Artemis, or Diana, is the Greco-Roman goddess of light and the moon.

"How dare you," Festus cried, "call our gods demons?"

"Yes, I call them so," St. Antonina replied, "because there is no power in them; you will receive no help from them. Truly, they are not gods, but demons."

At these words of St. Antonina, Festus fell into a great rage and ordered the soldiers to strike her hard upon the cheeks, that she might not be so bold. Then he addressed her again, saying:

"I swear by the gods that if you do not fulfill the imperial command, after the cruelest torments I will order you taken to a brothel, and thereby condemn you to the greatest shame. Therefore I give you three days to consider whether you will utterly refuse to obey my command, or whether you wish to repent and sacrifice to the gods. For many who share your faith acted at first just as you do, but afterward changed their minds and worshipped our gods."

Then St. Antonina said to the ruler:

"Do what you will, impious tormentor!"

After this, the saint was committed to the custody of four soldiers, with whom she went to prison gladly in spirit and with a joyful countenance. The ruler, however, secretly summoned the chief of the prison guard and ordered him to do no harm to the holy maiden, but to persuade her with gentle words to renounce the Christian faith and sacrifice to the idols; for, Festus added, it was very difficult to make Christians renounce their faith. When the chief of the prison guard had placed the saint in prison, he came to her and began to persuade her, saying:

"Pure maiden Antonina, why are you so obstinate? Why do you refuse to change your mind? Sacrifice to our gods, that you may escape the torments awaiting you."

But she answered him nothing, so that the prison guard was greatly astonished and wondered why the holy maiden had not replied to him a single word. Meanwhile, St. Antonina knelt upon the ground and prayed to the Lord God day and night, remaining without food all the while.

When the three days of St. Antonina's imprisonment had passed, a loud thunderclap suddenly sounded; the prison bolts were broken and

the doors opened of themselves. Within, a brilliant light illuminated the whole prison, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying:

"Rise, Antonina, and strengthen yourself with food; eat bread and drink water. Be courageous and fear the impious ruler Festus not at all, for I am with you."

When the saint had finished her prayers, she said:

"Amen."

Then she rose from her knees, ate bread and drank water, and lay down to sleep for a little while.

The next day, the ruler took his seat upon the judgment seat and said: "Bring me that insolent woman, that we may learn her thoughts."

The soldiers obeyed the ruler's command and brought the saint before him. As the holy maiden was being led to judgment, she lifted her eyes to heaven and prayed:

"I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou fulfillest Thy will in me. I beseech Thee, forsake me not, even unto my death."

And suddenly a voice was heard from heaven, proclaiming:

"Go on your way without fear, for I am with you!"

When the holy maiden Antonina was brought before the judgment seat where Festus sat, she laughed.

Seeing that she had laughed, Festus asked her:

"Why did you laugh?"

The saint answered him:

"I will tell you the reason for my laughter, for I see that the seat upon which you sit will soon be destroyed, and you will perish; that is why I laughed."

Seeing that she was mocking him, the ruler ordered her to be beaten with whips. The saint lifted the eyes of her soul to heaven and prayed thus: "I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast vouchsafed me, wretched and sinful as I am, to share the lot of Thy saints; but cast this lawless man, who sheds innocent blood, down to the depths of hell speedily, that he may know the weakness of his false gods, in whom he places all his hope."

Hearing these words, the ruler, who thirsted for human blood, fell into an even greater rage and said to the soldiers: "This evil and in-

solent woman not only dares to revile our gods, but threatens us ourselves. Therefore take her to a brothel, to be defiled."

The soldiers then took the saint and led her to a separate house. Left alone in a private room, St. Antonina began to pray fervently to God. At that time the Angel of the Lord appeared to one of the ruler's soldiers, a young man of twenty-three years, whose name was Alexander. Appearing to him, the Angel said:

"Go to the ruler and ask him to allow you to enter Antonina's presence. When you go in to her, put your cloak around her, and let her leave that house, so that the wicked ruler may not recognize her."

The valiant soldier of Christ, obeying the Angel's command, went to the ruler and began to entreat him: "Allow me to go in to Antonina; and if I persuade her, then set her free, but if not, do with her as you please."

The governor agreed to fulfill his request and said to him: "Do with her whatever you desire." Then Alexander entered the chamber where the holy virgin was, fell at her feet, and began to speak to her thus: "Servant of the Lord, Virgin Antonina! The Lord has sent me to you to reveal to you (as He has made known to me) that your virginity will be preserved."

The saint was afraid. But suddenly a strong light illumined the room, and a voice was heard saying: "Fear not, Antonina! He who has called you to this struggle is generous and most merciful, and He calls this Alexander also to the same martyr's struggle. Put on his cloak, bow your head, hide your face, and so go out from here, that the governor may not recognize you in such a state. I will so conceal you that he shall not know you!"

Then the holy Antonina took Alexander's cloak and put it on, covered her head, and, going out of the house, made a sign with her hand to the governor, as if to say: do as you wish. Thus the holy virgin of Christ, like a hind that has escaped the nets, went her way, rejoicing in her deliverance. The governor, however, thinking that it was Alexander who had come out of the house, sent four more soldiers to Antonina, saying to them: "Go to her and do with her what you please, and,

when you have dishonored her, bring her out, that she may receive great shame, and that we may all laugh at her."

The soldiers, carrying out the governor's command, entered to defile the virgin, but did not find her; they saw only Alexander. Greatly astonished, they asked him: "Where is that woman? Why are you alone?"

Then, taking him, they brought him to the governor and said: "We found only him in that room; the maiden was not there."

The governor was also greatly astonished at what had happened, and began to question Alexander: "Tell us, faithless deceiver, how did you dare to deceive us? Where is that impious harlot? You dishonored her, and then, dressing her in your cloak, let her go, wishing to take her to yourself as a wife; but this shall not be, and you shall not escape my wrath."

When Alexander made no answer to the governor, the governor thought for a long time, and then commanded that he be hung up for torment and beaten without mercy. When the governor's command was carried out and St. Alexander was being beaten, the governor again asked him: "Where is that impious woman with whom you went in?" Alexander again made no answer, but only raised his eyes to heaven.

And suddenly a voice was heard from heaven, speaking to the governor:

"Cruel Festus, why do you torment an innocent man?"

Hearing this voice, the governor commanded that the torment of the saint cease, and, taking the martyr down from the tree, had him led to prison, and commanded that the holy virgin Antonina be sought everywhere.

After five days the governor again ordered Alexander brought before him for judgment, and began to question him:

"What have you decided? Will you offer sacrifice to the gods, or not?"

St. Alexander answered the governor:

"Can I change my mind, O impious and cruel tormentor!"

"And where is that woman with whom you went in?" asked Festus.

"I do not know where she is," answered Alexander.

Meanwhile, as they were speaking thus, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appeared to the holy virgin Antonina and said:

"Take courage and go to where the unjust and cruel governor is."

Then the saint went, and, appearing fearlessly before the governor, said to him:

"Impious and cruel Festus, whom are you seeking? Is it not me? Behold, I myself come to you, to put to shame and to destroy your power."

Seeing the saint, Festus fell into a violent rage and commanded the soldiers to hang her, beat her severely, and ask:

"Are you a virgin or not?"

The saint, under the heavy blows, did not utter a single groan. When she was taken down from the tree, the governor himself asked her whether she still remained a virgin or not. Then the holy martyr answered the governor:

"O impious and cruel tormentor! We Christians are not at all enslaved by your unclean lust, for the Lord our God, in His mercy, has kept me also undefiled."

Physt looked at her with astonishment and said:

"If you are still a virgin, then come together with Alexander, offer sacrifice to our gods, and you will remain unharmed."

To this proposal of the governor the holy martyrs of Christ, Alexander and the virgin Antonina, answered the governor as though with one voice:

"There are no tortures, cruel Festus, by which you could compel us to worship your abominable gods, who have neither reason nor power."

After such an answer of the holy martyrs, the governor commanded that their hands be cut off. The valiant and noble soldiers of Christ then stretched out their hands for the cutting and said:

"First of all, impious and cruel tormentor, let it be known to you that by no tortures can you overcome our pious thoughts; deal with us as you desire!"

The soldiers drew their swords and cut off the hands of the holy martyrs. They, as if not feeling pain, glorified the Lord, and, turning then to the governor, said to him:

"Cruel and most vile governor! We feel not at all the torments which you have inflicted upon us; but you yourself our Lord, whose servants we are, will shortly cast into the fiery Gehenna, where you will be tormented eternally with unceasing torments."

From such rebukes of the holy martyrs the governor fell into the utmost fury and commanded that a deep pit be dug; and first, hanging the holy sufferers, to beat them until they should feel pain from the blows inflicted on them. Into the pit he commanded that a great quantity of wood and brushwood be thrown, so that it would be filled to the top, and that the holy martyrs be burned in it. Meanwhile they, despite the severe beatings, felt no pain, as though it were not their bodies that were subjected to such torments, but they gave praise to the Lord Jesus Christ. Seeing this, the governor commanded that they be tormented with new sufferings, burning their ribs with lit candles. Then the holy martyrs Alexander and Antonina cried out in a loud voice to the governor: "Impious Festus! We endure our sufferings for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, firmly believing that in the future life, after this temporal one, we shall receive an eternal reward in the Kingdom of Heaven, while our Lord and God will soon deliver you to perdition for making His innocent servants suffer so greatly!"

Festus, hearing these words, in violent anger gave this command to his servants: "Light the wood that is in the pit, so that these people may quickly be cast into the fire."

When the governor's command had been carried out by the soldiers, the cruel tormentor commanded them to pour pitch over the holy martyrs and cast them into the pit that was blazing with fire. At the same time he commanded that dry pitch be laid on the wood above them, so that the martyrs might be utterly consumed and even their bones turned to dust. When the execution was completed, the governor commanded that the pit be filled in with earth, saying: "Let it not be possible for the women to gather even their bones, as is the custom among the Christians!"

By Festus's command the holy martyrs were cast into the fire and the pit was filled in. Then Festus returned to his house, but could take neither food nor drink, and became mute, for an evil spirit sent against

him by the holy Angels tormented him for seven days. After the grievous seven days of demonic torment, the governor gave up his impious soul. Thus he died, and the persecution of the Christians in those places ceased. The blessed repose of the holy martyrs Alexander and Antonina took place on the third day of the month of May[24], on Saturday, at the ninth hour of the day, in the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom honor and glory are offered forever. Amen.

* * *



24. The repose of the holy martyrs took place on 3 May 313, but the account of their lives is placed under 10 June because it is entered under that date in the Prologues. Their precious relics were afterwards translated to Constantinople and laid in the monastery of Maximus.

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 11

11 июня

New Calendar June 11 · Old Calendar June 24 (civil dates)

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew

Житие и страдания святого апостола Варфоломея

The Holy Apostle Bartholomew was one of the twelve Apostles of Christ. After receiving the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire (Acts 1:13; 2:1–4), the lot fell to Saint Bartholomew, together with the Apostle Philip, to go and preach the Gospel in Syria and in Asia Minor. There they both went, now preaching together, now separating and going to different cities, and then coming together again and bringing people to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

While preaching the Gospel in Asia Minor, Saint Philip for a time separated from Saint Bartholomew and turned to Christ the wild and disobedient inhabitants of Lydia and Mysia.[1] At that time, Saint Bartholomew, who was preaching Christ in neighboring cities, received a command from the Lord to go to the aid of Saint Philip. Joining him, Saint Bartholomew, together with him, labored unanimously in apostolic toils and exploits. Philip was followed by his sister, the virgin Mariamne, and all together they devoted themselves to the work of the salvation of the human race. Passing through the cities of Syria and Mysia and proclaiming the word of God, they endured from unbelievers many afflictions, beatings and sorrows; they were cast into prison and stoned, but despite all persecutions, by the grace of God they remained alive for the labors that lay ahead in spreading the faith of Christ.

In one of the Lydian villages they met the beloved disciple of Christ, Saint John the Theologian, and together with him set out for the land

1. Lydia and Mysia are the north-western regions of Asia Minor.

of Phrygia. Entering the city of Hierapolis,[2] they preached Christ there. This city was filled with idols, which all its inhabitants worshipped; among the other false deities there was a huge viper,[3] for which a special temple had been built; food was brought to it there and numerous and varied sacrifices were offered; the madmen also honored other reptiles and vipers. Saint Philip, first of all, together with his sister, armed himself with prayer against the viper, and Saint John the Theologian, who was with them at that time, helped them in this. All of them together, with prayer as with a spear, overcame that viper, and by the power of Christ killed it. After this, John the Theologian parted from them, leaving them Hierapolis for the preaching of the word of God, and himself went to other cities, spreading the holy Gospel everywhere. Saint Philip, with Bartholomew and Mariamne, remained in Hierapolis, zealously striving to destroy the darkness of idolatry, so that the light of knowledge of the truth might shine upon those who had gone astray; they labored over this day and night, teaching the unbelievers the word of God, admonishing the foolish, and guiding the erring onto the true path.

In that city there lived a man named Stachys, who had been blind for forty years. The holy Apostles, by the power of prayer, enlightened his bodily eyes, and by the preaching of Christ enlightened his spiritual blindness. Having baptized Stachys, the saints remained in his house. And the report spread throughout the whole city that the blind Stachys had regained his sight. Crowds of people began to gather at his house. The holy Apostles instructed all who came to them in faith in Jesus Christ. Many sick people were also brought there, and the holy Apostles healed them all by prayer and cast out demons, so that a great number of people believed in Christ and were baptized.

The wife of the ruler of that city, whose name was Nicanor, had been bitten by a serpent and lay sick, near death. Having heard of the holy Apostles who were in the house of Stachys, that they healed every

2. The city of Hierapolis (from the Greek, "sacred city") was situated in the Asia Minor region of Phrygia. Hierapolis once had a bishop who was present at the First Ecumenical Council in 325. At present only ruins remain here, and the site serves as a refuge for lepers.

3. The echidna is a poisonous serpent more than a sazhen in length; its bite is very dangerous and in most cases ends in rapid death.

sickness with a single word, she, in the absence of her husband, ordered her servants to carry her to them, and received a twofold healing: bodily, from the serpent's bite, and spiritual, from demonic deception, for, taught by the holy Apostles, she believed in Christ. When the city governor returned home, the servants told him that his wife had been taught to believe in Christ by some foreigners who lived in the house of Stachys. Greatly enraged, Nicanor ordered the Apostles to be seized at once and the house of Stachys to be burned, which was carried out. A multitude of people gathered; the holy Apostles Philip and Bartholomew, and the holy virgin Mariamne, were dragged through the city with blows, mocked, and at last thrown into prison. After this, the ruler of the city sat down in the judgment seat to try the preachers of Christ; and all the idol priests and the priests of the perished viper gathered before him, bringing complaints against the holy Apostles and saying: "Ruler! Avenge the dishonor of our gods, for since these foreigners appeared, the altars of our great gods in our city have been abandoned, the people have forgotten to bring their customary sacrifices, our famous goddess-viper has perished, and the whole city is filled with lawlessness. Put these sorcerers to death!"

Then the ruler of the city ordered the clothing to be stripped from Saint Philip, thinking that charms of sorcery were contained in it; but, having stripped him, they found nothing. They did likewise with Saint Bartholomew, and found nothing in his garments either. When they approached Mariamne with the same intention, to strip her garments and expose her virginal body, suddenly, in their eyes, she turned into a fiery flame, and the impious men fled from her in fear. The holy Apostles were condemned by the governor to crucifixion.

Saint Philip suffered first. Having pierced the soles of his feet and passed ropes through them, the tormentors crucified him on a cross head downward before the doors of the viper's shrine, and at the same time threw stones at him. Then they crucified Saint Bartholomew by the wall of the temple. And suddenly a great earthquake occurred: the earth opened and swallowed the city governor with all the priests and a multitude of unbelievers. All who remained alive, both believers and pagans, were seized with great fear and, weeping, begged the holy

Apostles to have mercy on them and to entreat their One True God, that the earth might not swallow them as it had swallowed those others. They hastened to take the crucified Apostles down from the crosses. Saint Bartholomew had been hanged not high, and he was soon taken down. But Philip could not be quickly removed from the cross, because he had been hung high, and especially because it was the particular will of God that His Apostle, through these sufferings and crucifixion, should pass from earth to heaven, toward which his steps had been directed all his life. Hanging thus, Saint Philip prayed to God for his enemies, that the Lord would forgive them their sins and enlighten their minds to the knowledge of the truth. The Lord inclined to his prayer, and immediately commanded the earth to bring forth alive the victims it had swallowed, with the exception of the governor and the priests of the viper. Then all, with loud voices, confessed and glorified the power of Christ, expressing the desire to be baptized. When they wished to take Saint Philip down from the cross, they saw that he had already yielded up his holy soul to God, and they took him down dead. His own sister, Saint Mariamne, who had watched the suffering and death of her brother Philip the whole time, lovingly embraced and kissed his body taken down from the tree, and rejoiced that Philip had been made worthy to suffer for Christ.[4] Saint Bartholomew baptized all who had believed in the Lord and ordained Stachys as bishop for them. The newly baptized honorably buried the body of the holy Apostle Philip. In the place where the blood of the holy Apostle had flowed, a grapevine grew within three days, as a sign that Saint Philip, for the blood he shed in the name of Christ, enjoys eternal blessedness with his Lord in His Kingdom.

After the burial of the Apostle Philip, Saint Bartholomew and the blessed virgin Mariamne remained for several days in Hierapolis, establishing in the faith of Christ the newly founded church, and then each set out on his own way. Saint Mariamne went to Lycaonia, and there, amid the successful preaching of the word of God, peacefully fell asleep in the Lord.[5] And the holy Apostle Bartholomew went to the Indian

4. The memory of the holy Apostle Philip (one of the Twelve) is celebrated on November 14.
5. The memory of St. Mariamne is celebrated on February 17.

lands, where he remained for a rather long time, laboring in the proclamation of Jesus Christ, passing through cities and villages and healing the sick in His name. Having enlightened many of the pagans by his preaching and established churches, he translated into their language the Gospel of Matthew, which he had carried with him and handed to them. Among them he also left the Gospel written in the Hebrew language, which after a hundred years was brought to Alexandria by Pantaenus, a Christian philosopher.[6] From India Saint Bartholomew went to Greater Armenia.[7] At his appearance there, the idols, or rather the demons dwelling in the idols, fell silent, crying out loudly the last words that Bartholomew was tormenting them and would soon drive them out. And indeed, unclean spirits were cast out not only from idols but also from people merely at the approach of the Apostle; and because of this many were converted to Christ.

The king of that land, Polymius, had a demon-possessed daughter, through whose mouth the demon cried out: "Bartholomew, you are driving us out even from here!"

The king, hearing of this, ordered that Bartholomew be found at once; and when the Apostle of Christ came to the demon-possessed girl, the demon immediately fled from her, and the princess received healing. After this the king, wishing to reward the saint, sent to him camels laden with gold, silver, pearls and other precious gifts. The Apostle, filled with spiritual poverty (cf. Mt. 5:3), kept nothing of what had been sent, returning everything to the king with the words: "I do not acquire these things, but I seek human souls; and if I acquire them and bring them into the heavenly dwellings, I shall appear as a great merchant before the Lord."

King Polymius, moved by such words, believed in Christ together with his whole household. He received Baptism from the holy Apostle himself, together with the Queen, his daughter who had been healed,

6. Pantaenus (who lived in the third century) was one of the famous teachers of the Alexandrian school, in which many of the Fathers of the Church received their Christian education.

7. Greater Armenia is a mountainous country between the river Kura and the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates; it was called Greater Armenia in contrast to Lesser Armenia, the region between the upper reaches of the Euphrates and the Halys, which formed part of the kingdom of Mithridates of Pontus, and from 70 A.D. part of the Roman Empire.

and a great multitude of nobles and a great number of people from among the common folk. For as many as ten cities and more, following the example of the king, received holy Baptism at that time.

Seeing this, the priests of the idols were enraged against the holy Apostle, grieving bitterly that their gods were being destroyed, that idol-worship was vanishing, and that their shrines, from which they had drawn their livelihood, were falling into desolation. They approached the king's brother, Astyages, and taught him to destroy Bartholomew and avenge the insults to their gods. He, seizing a convenient moment, laid hold of the holy Apostle and, in the city of Albane,[8] crucified him on a cross head downward. The holy Apostle, however, suffered gladly for Christ, and while hanging on the cross he did not cease to proclaim the word of God. He strengthened the believers in the faith and exhorted the unbelievers to come to know the truth and to turn from the darkness of demons to the light of Christ. The tormentor could not endure to hear this, and he ordered the Apostle's skin to be flayed off. The saint, bearing these torments with great patience, did not fall silent but continued to teach all about God and to offer praises to Him. At last the tormentor commanded that the head of the holy Bartholomew be cut off together with the skin. Then his God-speaking lips fell silent, and his body, once the head had been taken from it, remained hanging on the cross with its feet turned upward, as though showing thereby the Apostle's ascent to heaven. Thus died the Apostle of Christ Bartholomew, passing after many sufferings and labors into painless rest, into the joy of his Lord.[9] The believers who were present at the saint's death took down his body, head, and skin from the cross, placed them in a tin coffin, and buried them in the same city, Albane, in Greater Armenia.^*^ And from the Apostle's relics came miraculous healings for the sick, on account of which many of the unbelievers turned to the Church of Christ.

After a rather long time, the cruel persecutors who had seized that country, darkened by idol-worship, having heard from others and seen

8. Albanus (or Albanopolis, also Abarnopolis) is a city on the western shore of the Caspian Sea—the present-day Baku.
9. The holy Apostle Bartholomew died in 71 A.D.

with their own eyes the miracles that were worked from the saint's relics, and not wishing to acknowledge the power of God, took those holy relics in the tin coffin and cast them into the sea. The tin coffin, floating on the water like a light boat, came ashore at the island of Lipari.[10] There the local bishop, Agathon, learned by revelation in a dream that the holy relics had arrived at their island. He went out with the clergy and all the people to the seashore. Seeing the relics of the holy Apostle, the bishop and all who had come were greatly astonished that the tin coffin had not sunk in the water but had sailed so distant a sea-route more lightly than a boat. And all glorified God, who works such wondrous and marvelous deeds. Taking the coffin with the holy relics, they carried it with great joy and with psalm-singing into their church.[3835]

It is not fitting to pass over in silence the following account of the holy Apostle Bartholomew, which is found in the Life of the Venerable Joseph the Hymnographer.

Once, while in Thessaly, the Venerable Joseph received from a certain virtuous man known to him a portion of the relics of the holy Apostle Bartholomew. Bringing it to his monastery, which was near Constantinople, and having built there a special church in the name of the holy Apostle Bartholomew, Joseph laid a portion of his holy relics in it with honor. Cherishing great love and faith toward the holy Apostle, he was often granted to see him in dreams, and he therefore wished to adorn the feast of the holy Apostle with hymns of praise. However, he did not dare to do so, doubting whether this work would be pleasing to the holy Apostle, and he earnestly besought God and the Apostle of God to reveal this to him and to grant him wisdom from above for the composition of verses worthy of the holy Bartholomew. With fasting and tears the Venerable Joseph prayed for forty days, and when the day of the Apostle's commemoration drew near, on the eve of the feast he saw that in the sanctuary the holy Bartholomew had appeared, clothed in white garments, and had opened the sanctuary veil, calling him to himself. When the Venerable Joseph drew nearer, the holy Apostle took the Holy Gospel from the Holy Table and laid it upon

10. Lipari is one of the Aeolian islands between Italy and Sicily.

Joseph's breast, saying: "May the right hand of the almighty God bless thee, and may the waters of heavenly wisdom be poured out upon thy tongue. Let thy heart be a temple of the Holy Spirit, and let thy hymns delight the whole world."

Thus spoke the holy Apostle Bartholomew, and he became invisible. The Venerable Joseph, perceiving within himself the grace of wisdom, was filled with ineffable joy and thanksgiving. From that time he began to write church hymns and canons, with which he adorned the feast not only of the holy Apostle Bartholomew but also of many saints; above all, he honored the Most Pure Mother of God and St. Nicholas with many canons. He richly adorned the holy Church with hymns, for which he received the name "hymnographer." For all this, to Christ our Savior be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Some think that Bartholomew is one and the same person as Nathanael, whom Philip brought to Christ (Jn. 1:45). They hold that the name of this Apostle of Christ was Nathanael, and that by surname, or rather by patronymic, he was called Bartholomew, that is, son of Tholmai. For the word "bar" in Hebrew means "son," as the Lord Christ also said to the Apostle Peter elsewhere: "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonah" (Mt. 16:17), that is, son of Jonah. And the blind man of Jericho was called Bartimaeus, that is, son of Timaeus. Thus it is also explained of Bartholomew that by his father he was called Bartholomew, son of Tholmai; for Tholmai was an ancient and frequently used name among the Jews, and the true name of Bartholomew, they suppose, was Nathanael. They base this supposition on the following grounds. First, nowhere in the Gospel is the calling of Bartholomew to the apostleship mentioned, unless one takes the name Nathanael in its place. Then, the first three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who relate about Bartholomew, say nothing about Nathanael, while the evangelist John, who relates about Nathanael, does not mention Bartholomew; and speaking of the fishing at the appearance of the risen Savior, he names Nathanael among the persons close to the Apostles. For he says: "Simon Peter, and Thomas, and Nathanael, and the sons of Zebedee were together" (Jn. 21:2). But

some commentators do not agree with this, and, following the Prologue, they hold that Simon the Zealot is one person with Nathanael, while some hold that Nathanael is one of the seventy disciples of Christ.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou didst appear as a great sun to the whole world, shining with teachings and with awesome miracles, enlightening those who honor thee, O Bartholomew, Apostle of the Lord.

* * *

Life and Passion of the Holy Apostle Barnabas

Житие и страдание святого апостола Варнавы

The holy Apostle Barnabas belongs to the choir of the seventy holy Apostles. His original name was Joseph, but afterward he came to be called Barnabas, as we shall say in its place. He was born on the island of Cyprus[11] of Jewish parents, who descended from the tribe of Levi. From his Levitical lineage also descended the ancient great prophets of God: Moses, Aaron, and Samuel.

Barnabas's forebears had removed from Palestine to the island of Cyprus because of the wars that took place in Palestine. His parents were very wealthy and had their own village near Jerusalem, abounding in gardens and various fruits and adorned with a large building, for here they had their house. For from the time that the holy prophet Isaiah wrote: "And they shall build houses and dwell in them, for they shall be a seed blessed by the Lord" (Is. 65:21–23), the Jews who lived in distant lands, not understanding the spiritual meaning of these words, strove to have their own houses in Jerusalem; for this reason also Barnabas's parents had their own house and their own village near Jerusalem.

When the one of whom our account speaks was born, they named him Joseph and raised him in book learning. When the youth reached full age, they sent him to Jerusalem to the most famous teacher of that

11. The island of Cyprus lies in the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea.

time, Gamaliel, so that he might teach Barnabas a more perfect understanding of the Jewish books and of the whole law of God. Here Joseph had among his age-mates Saul, who was afterward called Paul; and both of them studied under the one teacher, Gamaliel, advancing in understanding, in comprehension of the books, and in a virtuous life.

Joseph went daily, morning and evening, to the Temple of Solomon and prayed there diligently to God, spending the days of his youth in frequent fasting and great abstinence. Desiring to keep his virginity in purity, he avoided the company of disorderly youths, and by no means wished to hear those words by which a young man's mind might be darkened. Rather, watching carefully over himself, he constantly instructed himself in the law of the Lord, day and night.

At that time our Lord Jesus Christ, thirty years after His Incarnation, having begun to reveal Himself to the world, came from Galilee. Here He taught in the temple and worked many wondrous and glorious miracles; all marveled at Him. From every side they flocked to Him, that they might behold His holy countenance and hear His divine words, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. The youth Joseph also saw Him, and, listening to the instructions that issued from His most pure lips, he was moved in heart and greatly wondered at the miracles which He performed. Seeing how He healed the paralytic at the Sheep Pool by His word (Jn. 5:1–15), and having also seen many other wondrous works of Christ, Joseph was inflamed with heartfelt love for the Lord. Approaching Him, he fell prostrate at His feet and besought the Lord to bless him and to receive him among His disciples. The Lord, who sees into the secrets of human hearts, perceiving that Joseph's heart burned with divine love, graciously blessed him and did not forbid him to follow Him. Joseph first hastened to the house of his aunt, named Mary, the mother of John, who was afterward called Mark, and said to her: "Come and see Him whom our fathers greatly desired to behold; for a certain prophet, Jesus of Nazareth of Galilee, teaches in the temple and performs great miracles, so that many consider Him to be the Messiah whom all have awaited."

No sooner had the woman heard this than, leaving everything, she hastened to the temple. Seeing the Lord Jesus Christ, she fell prostrate

at His feet and said with entreaty: "Lord! If I have found grace before Thee, enter into the house of Thy handmaid, that by Thy coming Thou mayest bless all who dwell in my house."

Seeing her faith, the Lord came to her house and blessed her and all who were in her house. The Lord was received by Mary with great honor, with much joy and reverence. From that time on, whenever He came to Jerusalem, the Lord always entered the house of Mary together with His disciples.

When the Lord set out from Jerusalem to return to Galilee, Joseph followed Him together with the other disciples. And when the Lord desired to send His apostles to preach "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 10:6), He saw that they were few, and therefore said: "The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Mt. 9:37). For this reason the Lord also revealed to the world seventy other disciples, whom He sent two by two before His face into every city and place (Lk. 10:1). Among these seventy disciples of the Lord was St. Joseph, one of the first, who was renamed by the holy apostles Barnabas, that is, "son of consolation," because by his preaching concerning the Messiah who had come into the world he comforted people who were waiting with great impatience for the coming of the Messiah. Just as the sons of Zebedee were called "sons of thunder" (Mk. 3:17), because they were to resound throughout the universe with their preaching like thunder, so this holy Joseph was called "son of consolation," for his apostolic labors were to bring great joy to the elect of God. And St. Chrysostom, explaining the reason for his renaming, says (Acts 11:1–30): "It seems to me that he received his name according to his merits, for he was fully capable of being a son of consolation."

After the Lord's ascension into heaven, the holy apostles lived together in Jerusalem, as is written also in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles: "And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did any of them say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet" (Acts

4:32–35). At that time also St. Joseph, named by the apostles Barnabas, sold the aforementioned village, which lay near Jerusalem and had come to him as an inheritance from his parents. He brought the money he received to the feet of the apostles, keeping nothing for himself, for he desired to be enriched in God, in Whom he indeed became rich, as is testified: "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts 11:24). It often happened that Barnabas met Saul, and he disputed with him from the Scriptures concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and he exerted all his efforts to turn Saul to the holy faith. But Saul was a very zealous defender of the traditions of the fathers, and therefore he mocked St. Barnabas as a deluded man, even uttering blasphemous words against the Lord Jesus Christ, calling Him the son of a carpenter, a man of lowly rank, delivered to a shameful death. When, after the Jews had put to death the holy protomartyr Stephen, Saul began to persecute the Church, "entering into the houses of believers, haling men and women and committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3), St. Barnabas greatly mourned for him and fervently prayed to God, lifting up his pure hands, that He would enlighten the spiritual eyes of Saul, that he might come to know the truth. He greatly desired to have Saul as a friend in the Christian faith, just as he had had him as a friend in the school of Gamaliel.

The tears and prayers of Barnabas were not in vain. When the time of God's mercy came, Saul was converted to Christ, being called by the voice of the Lord from on high, on the road to Damascus.[12] The wolf became a sheep; the blasphemer of the name of Christ began to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ; he who had formerly been a persecutor became a defender of the Church. For after receiving holy baptism, Saul at once went to the Jewish assemblies and began to preach about Jesus, saying that He is the Son of God, and he also rebuked the Jews dwelling in Damascus. When Saul returned to Jerusalem, "he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26). Then St. Barnabas, meeting him, said: "How long, O Saul, wilt thou not cease to be a blasphemer of the

12. The account of the conversion of Saul is set forth in Acts 9:1–19. The city of Damascus lies to the north-east of Palestine, at the eastern foot of Anti-Lebanon.

great name of Jesus Christ and a persecutor of His faithful servants? How long wilt thou resist the dread mystery foretold of old by the prophets, and now fulfilled for our salvation?"

Saul, falling at his feet, answered him with tears: "Forgive me, teacher of truth, Barnabas! Now I have understood that all that thou hast said to me about Christ is the truth. Him whom I formerly blasphemed, calling Him the son of a carpenter, Him Himself I now confess as the Son of God, the Only-begotten, co-eternal with the Father and co-beginningless, 'who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person' (Heb. 1:3), in these last days 'made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant' (Phil. 2:7), becoming perfect man, born of the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos Mary, accepting voluntary sufferings and the cross; then He rose on the third day, appeared to you His apostles, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father; He shall come again in His glory to judge the living and the dead, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

Hearing such words from the former blasphemer and persecutor, St. Barnabas marveled; weeping for joy and embracing Saul, he said:

"Who has taught thee, O Saul, to speak such God-inspired words? Who has persuaded thee to confess Jesus the Nazarene as the Son of God? Whence hast thou learned such perfect knowledge of the divine dogmas?"

Then Saul, with tears and a contrite heart, answered: "The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, whom I, a sinner, blasphemed and persecuted, He taught me all this; for He appeared to me as to one born out of due time, and even now I still hear His divine voice in my ears. When a wondrous light from above shone around me and I fell to the earth in fear, I heard a voice saying: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' And I, in fear and dread, said:

"Who art Thou, Lord?"

And He, with meekness and compassion, answered me: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Greatly marveling at His long-suffering, and having prayed, I said:

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?"

Then He taught me all that I have told thee (Acts 9:3–6)."

After these words, St. Barnabas took Saul by the hand and led him to the apostles, saying:

"Here is he who persecuted us; now he is ours. He who opposed us now thinks with us about our Lord; he who was formerly our enemy is now our friend and fellow-laborer in the vineyard of Christ. Behold, I present to you a meek lamb, who was formerly a fierce beast."

Saul then related to the apostles how he had seen the Lord on the road and what He had said to him; he also told how he had labored in Damascus for the name of Christ.

The apostles, hearing all this, marveled, rejoiced, and glorified God. And Saul was with them; together with them he went in and out of Jerusalem, laboring for the name of Christ and boldly rebuking the Jews and the pagans. The latter greatly wondered how a man who so recently had persecuted all who called upon the name of Jesus now himself preached Jesus; and they sought to kill him. The brethren, perceiving this intention of the unbelievers, led Saul out of Jerusalem to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus,[13] his homeland, that he might there preach the Lord Jesus Christ.

At this time the holy faith in the Lord our Jesus Christ began to spread in Antioch of Syria, a great and famous city. For when the holy first martyr Stephen had been slain, on that day a great persecution arose against the Church of Jerusalem, so that all the believers were scattered throughout the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. Some of those who had been scattered made their way "as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but the Jews" (Acts 11:19). But afterwards they began to preach the Lord Jesus also to the pagans: "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21). The Church of Jerusalem heard of this, and therefore the Apostles sent the holy Barnabas to Antioch of Syria, that he might learn more fully of all that had happened there and confirm the newly converted. When he came there and saw the grace of God, he greatly rejoiced and comforted all with the word of the Lord, exhorting them all to cleave unto

13. Tarsus was a large city in antiquity, situated in the Asia Minor region of Cilicia. Remains of this city are preserved even now.

the Lord with steadfast purpose. While the holy Barnabas was preaching there for an insufficient time, a very great multitude joined themselves to the Lord. Since the disciples were increasing every day, while the teachers were few, so that the great harvest had no laborers, the holy Barnabas, leaving Antioch for a time, set out for Tarsus, desiring to find his friend Saul. Having found him, he brought him to Antioch, and the two of them labored in turning human souls to Christ God, bringing Jews and pagans to faith in Christ. They spent a whole year in Antioch, gathering in the church and teaching the people. Here for the first time their disciples began to be called Christians.

After a year had passed, Barnabas and Saul resolved to return to Jerusalem in order to report to the holy Apostles how the grace of God had worked in Antioch. At the same time each of the Antiochians, according to his means, sent with Barnabas and Saul what was needed for their brethren who dwelt in Judea, who were impoverished and needy, for there was then a great famine in Judea, in accordance with the prophecy of the holy Agabus. This Agabus was also among the seventy Apostles.[14] Having gathered sufficient alms, the Antiochians sent them to the elders through the agency of Barnabas and Saul.

When Barnabas and Saul, who was now called Paul, arrived in Jerusalem, they greatly gladdened the Church, reporting the increase of believers in Antioch and bringing the generous alms from them.

At this time a great disturbance suddenly arose in the Church of Jerusalem, for "King Herod stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church" (Acts 12:1), and "he killed James the brother of John with the sword" (Acts 12:2). Noticing that this pleased the Jews, he ordered Peter to be seized and cast him into prison, from which the Apostle Peter was led out by the holy Angel. All this time, until the disturbance caused to the Church by the persecutors had abated in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Saul were hiding in the house of the aforementioned

14. The famine foretold by the prophet Agabus did indeed occur in Palestine, in the 44th year, under Caesar Claudius (Acts 11:28). Many secular writers of that time also bear witness to the severe famine that raged in Palestine then, such as Josephus Flavius, Suetonius, Tacitus and others. Later, during the Apostle Paul's stay in Caesarea, he also foretold to him his imprisonment (Acts 21:10–11). The memory of the holy prophet Agabus is celebrated by the Holy Church on April 8.

Mary, Barnabas's aunt, to whom the holy Peter also came after the Angel had led him out of prison. Afterwards Barnabas and Saul, having completed their work in Jerusalem, returned again to Antioch, taking with them the son of Mary, named John, called Mark. After they had all spent sufficient time in Antioch, laboring in fasting, prayer, the service of the Divine Liturgy, and the preaching of the word of God, it pleased the Holy Spirit to send them to preach to the pagans. The Holy Spirit said to the prophets and teachers who were in Antioch: "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then they, having fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, sent them away" (Acts 13:2, 3). First they went to Seleucia,[15] from there they sailed to Cyprus and stopped at Salamis.[16] Wherever they went, they proclaimed the word of God; they had as their attendant the aforementioned John, later called Mark, the son of Mary. Traversing the island as far as Paphos,[17] they met a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew named Elymas, at the court of the proconsul Sergius, a man of great understanding. Here they enlightened the proconsul with the holy faith, while Elymas the sorcerer, who opposed them, they struck blind by the word. Departing from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia. Their attendant John, who was also Mark, seeing the great sufferings they endured for the preaching of the name of Christ (for they did not in the least fear death), was afraid to go with them on account of his youth; therefore, leaving them, he returned to Jerusalem to his mother. Barnabas and Paul, passing through Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia (a city distinct from the great Antioch of Syria). Being driven out from here, they shook the dust from their feet and arrived at Iconium;[18] but here too the Jews and pagans intended to stone them; they, learning of this, hastened to the cities of Lycaonia,[19] Lystra and Derbe,

15. Seleucia was a seaport city in Syria on the shore of the Mediterranean, not far from the mouth of the river Orontes, 25 versts from Antioch. This city was founded by the Syrian king Seleucus Nicator some 300 years before Christ.

16. The city of Salamis was situated on the eastern side of the island of Cyprus. Its ruins lie near the village of Famagusta.

17. The city of Paphos was situated on the shore of the island of Cyprus opposite Salamis. Paphos was the chief city of the island and the residence of the proconsul.

18. Iconium was a city in Asia Minor. Now Konya.

19. Lycaonia was a region of Asia Minor.

and their surroundings, and preached there. Here they healed a certain lame man, who had been infirm from the time of his birth and had never walked; the Apostles raised him to his feet, so that he began to walk quite freely. The people, taking them for gods, resolved to offer them sacrifices; the people called Barnabas Zeus[20] and Paul Hermes,[21] and the holy Apostles scarcely persuaded the people not to offer sacrifices to them. Then the same people, having been instructed by the Jews, raised a tumult against the holy Apostles: stoning Paul, the people dragged him out of the city, thinking that he was dead; but he rose and entered the city, and on the following morning he and Barnabas went out of the city and set out for Derbe. Having preached the gospel sufficiently in this city and converted many to Christ here, the holy Apostles undertook the return journey to Antioch of Syria, passing through the same cities and villages. Everywhere along their way they strengthened the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to remain in the faith and teaching them that we must enter the Kingdom of Heaven through many tribulations. Having ordained presbyters in all the churches and prayed with fasting, they commended their disciples to the Lord in whom they had believed. Having been in Perga and proclaimed the word of the Lord there, the Apostles set out from here for Attalia,[22] then sailed to Antioch of Syria, from where they had been sent by the Holy Spirit to preach the word of the Lord to the pagans. Arriving in the city and gathering all the faithful, they told them all that God had done with them, and how many pagans they had converted to Christ, and they remained in Antioch for no small time.

Soon after this a dispute about circumcision arose between the believing Jews and pagans, for some of the Jews said that those who were not circumcised according to the law of Moses could not be saved. The believers from among the pagans, however, regarded circumcision as a great burden for themselves. Barnabas and Paul opposed the Jews

20. Zeus, or Jupiter, was the supreme god of the Greco-Roman religion.
21. Hermes, or Mercury, was regarded by the ancient Greeks and Romans as the patron of commerce and industry.
22. The city of Attalia was situated in the Asia Minor province of Pamphylia, near Perga, not far from the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Today there is here the small town of Antalya with 800 inhabitants.

and defended the pagans from circumcision. But since the strife and contention over this question did not cease, it became necessary for Barnabas and Paul to set out again from the Church of Antioch to Jerusalem, to the Apostles and elders, in order to ask them about circumcision. Moreover, it was necessary for Barnabas and Paul to report to the Apostles that God "had opened the door of faith to the pagans" (Acts 15:4). Barnabas and Paul, sent by the (Antiochian) Church, passing through Phoenicia and Samaria, everywhere proclaimed the conversion of the pagans, at which the faithful greatly rejoiced.

When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received here with love by the holy Apostles and elders; all listened gladly to Barnabas and Paul, who reported all the wondrous signs and miracles which God had worked by their hands among the pagans. As for circumcision, the Apostles, having taken counsel together in a council, decided to abolish it forever for believers, not only from among the pagans but also from the Jews, as superfluous under the new grace. At the same time the Apostles deemed it necessary to send from among themselves some Christians together with Barnabas and Paul to Antioch, to the believing pagans; for this purpose they chose Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, men most esteemed among the brethren, and wrote thus: "The Apostles and presbyters and brethren to the brethren from among the pagans who are in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with their words and unsettled your souls, saying that one must be circumcised and keep the law, which we did not charge them to do: we, having assembled, have unanimously resolved, having chosen men, to send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have given up their souls for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who will also tell you the same by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no further burden than this necessary thing: to abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication, and not to do to others what you would not have done to yourselves. If you keep these, you will do well. Farewell" (Acts 15:23–29).

With such an epistle, the holy Apostles Barnabas and Paul set out on their way, and with them Judas and Silas, journeying from Jerusalem to Antioch. At this time the aforementioned John, called Mark, son of Mary, the aunt of Barnabas, not daring to approach the holy Paul, came with repentance and tears to his uncle, the holy Barnabas, grieving that he had left them when they were preaching to the pagans. John began to beg the holy Barnabas to take him with them again, promising to go without fear to all sufferings and even death itself for the Lord. Barnabas took him, as his nephew. Together they all came to Antioch. Gathering the faithful, the Apostles delivered the epistle to them; when it was read, all rejoiced greatly. Judas and Silas, for their part, comforted the brethren by their words and strengthened them in the Lord. After some time Judas returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained there. Paul and Barnabas lived in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord to others.

Some time after this, Paul said to Barnabas: "We must visit our brethren again; we must pass through all the cities in which we preached the name of the Lord, that we may see how the brethren are living."

The holy Barnabas agreed to this. Barnabas wished to take with him John, called Mark, his nephew; Paul, however, did not wish this, saying: "Why should we take with us a timid youth, who earlier left us in Pamphylia, unwilling to go with us to the work to which we were sent, and, having departed from us, returned to his kin?"

A dispute arose between them, since Barnabas wished to take John and Paul did not; therefore they parted from one another, each intending to go his own way.

All this came to pass by the providence of God, so that, going separately, they might save a greater number of souls. It was quite enough for one great teacher to preach where two great teachers had intended to go; each, preaching apart, would make a twofold gain for the Church, one in one land and the other in another, converting to the faith of Christ different peoples. The holy Paul, taking with him the holy Silas, set out for Derbe and Lystra, while the holy Barnabas sailed to Cyprus with his nephew John[23].

Arriving at the island of Cyprus, his fatherland, the holy Barnabas undertook no small labors, for he converted to Christ many people here. Having increased the number of believers in Cyprus, Barnabas went to Rome and, as some say, was the first to preach Christ in Rome. Then, having founded and established an episcopal see in the city of Mediolanum[24], Barnabas returned again to Cyprus. As he was teaching here about Christ, in the city of Salamis, some Jews from Syria came there and began to oppose him and stir up the people, saying that all that Barnabas preached was contrary to God and the law of Moses. These Jews reviled the honorable name of Barnabas with many blasphemies and plotted to kill him, stirring up many against him. The Apostle, however, foreseeing his martyr's death, gathered all the faithful who lived in that city; having sufficiently instructed them in faith and good works and having persuaded them to be courageous in confessing the name of Christ, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and communed all of them with the Mysteries of Christ. Then, taking aside Mark, his companion, he said to him: "On this day I will end my life, receiving death at the hands of the unbelieving Jews, as the Lord has told me; you, however, take my body, which you will find outside the city on the

23. Acts 15:36–41, 16:1. Some suppose that the holy Apostle Barnabas, after preaching on the island of Cyprus and elsewhere, again joined the holy Apostle Paul and shared his missionary labors; they also think that it was precisely Barnabas who was the brother sent by the Apostle Paul together with Titus to the Corinthians, who, in the words of the Apostle Paul, is praised in all the churches for the preaching of the Gospel (2 Cor. 8:18).

24. Mediolanum, or Milan, an Italian city in the province of Lombardy. In the history of the Christian Church it is known as the place of the archpastoral labors of St. Ambrose, the most renowned father and teacher of the Western Church, who lived in the fourth century. The Church commemorates him on December 4.

western side, bury it, and go to my friend, the Apostle Paul; tell him all that you know concerning me."

The holy Barnabas had with him the Gospel of Matthew, written with his own hand; he bequeathed to the holy Mark that he should bury him together with that Gospel. Then, giving the last kiss to his kinsman, the holy Mark, Barnabas went to the Jewish assembly. When he began to speak there from the prophetic books about Christ, the Jews who had come from Syria rose up against him, stirred up the other Jews as well, and, laying their murderous hands upon him, led him out of the city to the western side and stoned him there; then, having kindled a fire, they cast the body of the holy Apostle upon it to be burned. But when afterwards the holy Mark came there secretly, unknown to all, together with other brethren, he found the body of the holy Apostle Barnabas unharmed, wholly untouched by the fire; taking it, he buried it in a cave five stadia from the city, and, in accordance with the Apostle's testament, placed the Gospel upon his breast[25]. Then he set out to seek the Apostle Paul; having found him in Ephesus[26], he told him everything about the death of the holy Apostle Barnabas; the holy Paul mourned the death of Barnabas, but kept Mark with him.

After the murder of the holy Barnabas in the city of Salamis, a great persecution was raised by the Jews against the believers; therefore all fled from that city and hid wherever they could. From that time the place where the honorable relics of the Apostle Barnabas had been laid fell into oblivion. Many years later, when the faith of Christ had spread to all ends of the earth, when the Greco-Roman kingdom was ruled by Christian emperors, and when the island of Cyprus shone with piety and orthodoxy, it pleased the Lord to glorify the place where the relics of the Apostle Barnabas rested. Many wondrous miracles began to occur in this place. Thus at first a sick man who spent the night in that place received health. The same thing happened to another invalid. When the faithful learned of this, they came purposely to that place, spent the night there, and received healing from their infirmities. Thus

25. The repose of the holy Apostle Barnabas took place about the year 62.

26. Ephesus, a city of Asia Minor lying between Smyrna and Miletus, on the river Cayster, not far from the place where it flows into the Icarian Sea.

the place became known everywhere; therefore many infirm and paralyzed people were brought there, and all received full healing from their ailments and returned home healthy. Those possessed by demons were also brought there, and at once the unclean spirits fled from the people with loud cries. Here the lame received the power to walk, the blind received sight, and in general whoever was afflicted with any malady received healing here. The inhabitants of the city of Salamis rejoiced greatly at this, although they did not know why such great wonders were being wrought in that place, for no one knew anything about the relics of the Apostle; therefore they named the place "the Place of Health." But it is necessary to know how the honorable relics of the holy Apostle were discovered.

A certain evil heretic, Peter the Fuller, called Cnaphaeus, an opponent of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of the holy Fathers[27], which took place in the city of Chalcedon[28], and a defender of the heresy of Eutyches, as well as an accomplice of the Apollinarian error[29], in the reign of Zeno[30], by cunning seized the throne of the Antiochene patriarchate and did very great harm to the Church of Christ by his false teaching. But he was not satisfied with the Antiochene eparchy assigned to him, in which he persecuted and harassed Christians, subjecting them to many torments; he desired to seize under his power also the island of Cyprus, long free, in order to sow in it his false doctrine and to persecute all who should oppose him (it should be noted that the Cypriots, being orthodox Christians, rejected his false reasoning that the Godhead suffered on the Cross).

27. The Fourth Ecumenical Council took place in 451. It was convened to condemn the heresy of Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople, who taught that in Jesus Christ the human nature had been wholly absorbed by the divinity, and who therefore acknowledged in Him only one nature, the divine.

28. Chalcedon, or Kalchedon, was originally a Megarian colony on the shore of the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara). Under the Christian emperors Chalcedon was the capital of the Asia Minor province of Bithynia.

29. Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea, wrongly taught that the Son of God, when He became incarnate, assumed not a complete human nature, but only a human soul and body, while the divinity took the place of the human mind in Him. This heresy was condemned at the Second Ecumenical Council, which took place in Constantinople in 381.

30. Zeno reigned from 474 to 491.

But he strove in every way to draw them to his side, saying thus: "Since the word of God came to Cyprus from Antioch, for this reason the Cypriot Church must be subject to the Patriarch of Antioch."

Because of all this, the Archbishop of Cyprus, named Anthimus, fell into great sorrow, for he knew that this Peter, enjoying the favor of the emperor, could very easily attain whatever he might desire. And indeed, in a short time an imperial order came to Cyprus, commanding the Archbishop of Cyprus to come to Constantinople to answer before the council, before the Patriarch, to the Antiochenes, who demanded the subjection of the island of Cyprus to the Antiochene eparchy.

The Archbishop did not know how to act, for he did not dare to disobey the imperial command, and he feared to go to Constantinople. Although he led a holy life, he did not possess the gift of eloquence, and he feared that he would be defeated in dispute by his opponents. Therefore he began to fast and pray zealously, asking with tears for help, protection, and useful counsel from God Himself.

One night, when Anthimus dozed off from great labor in prayer, there appeared before him a certain Godlike man in a bright sacred vestment, illumined with heavenly rays. The one who appeared said: "Why, archbishop, have you become so saddened and grieved? Do not fear, for you will not suffer at all from your opponents."

Having said this, the man who had appeared suddenly became invisible. The archbishop, awakening from sleep, was filled with dread; then he prostrated himself on the ground in the form of a cross for prayer and began to pray with many tears, saying thus: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God! Do not forsake Thy Church, but grant it help for the sake of the glory of Thy holy name. If this vision was from Thee, arrange it, I beseech Thee, that I may see it once more, and a third time, so that I, a sinner, may be fully assured that Thou, my Helper, art with me!"

On the following night the archbishop had the same vision; the same most radiant man appeared to him and said: "I have already told you that you will not suffer at all from your opponents; therefore, fearing nothing, go to Constantinople."

Having said this, the one who appeared became invisible.

Archbishop Anthimus, again giving thanks to God and telling no one what he had seen, added prayer to prayer and tears to tears, that he might be granted this vision a third time and that it might be revealed to him who had appeared.

On the third night the same man appeared and said: "How long will you not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in the coming days? Go without fear into the imperial city, for from there you shall return in glory, having suffered nothing at the hands of your opponents; God Himself, for my sake, His servant, shall be your defender."

Then the archbishop ventured to say to the one who had appeared: "I beg you, my lord, tell me who you are, who speak these words to me."

He answered: "I am Barnabas, a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Holy Spirit sent together with His chosen vessel, the holy Apostle Paul, to preach the word of God to the Gentiles. So that you may be assured of the truth of my words, here is a sign for you: go out of the city to the west, five stadia, and in the place called 'the Place of Health' (for there, for my sake, God miraculously grants health to the sick), dig up the earth beneath the tree that bears carob pods; there you shall find a cave and a coffin in which my relics are laid; you shall find also the Gospel, written with my own hand, which I copied from the holy evangelist, the Apostle Matthew. And when your opponents, who intend to bring this church under their authority, begin to say that Antioch is the Apostolic See, you shall answer them and say: 'My city also is an Apostolic See, for I have an apostle resting in my city.'"

When the holy Barnabas had said this to the archbishop, he at once became invisible. The archbishop, filled with great joy and giving abundant thanks to God, called together the clergy, the city authorities and all the people, and told them all of the threefold appearance that had been granted him and of the words of the holy Apostle Barnabas; then he set out with psalmody to that place, in procession with the Precious Cross. When they arrived at the appointed place, they began to dig up the earth beneath the tree, as the Apostle had told in the vision; having removed the earth from above, they found a cave closed with stones; removing the stones, they saw a coffin and perceived a great

and ineffable fragrance; opening the coffin, they saw in it the venerable relics of the holy Apostle Barnabas, whole and uncorrupted, and they also saw the Gospel lying upon his breast.[31] All, in great joy and gladness, gave glory to God and with reverence bowed down before the venerable relics, touching them with faith and love. At that time many miracles took place: everyone who was afflicted with any infirmity received health after touching the venerable relics. Then Archbishop Anthimus, not daring to take the coffin with the apostolic relics from that place, sealed it with tin and commanded that a body of clergy remain beside the coffin and perform the customary psalmody at the apostolic tomb day and night. He himself went to Constantinople; standing before the council, he answered his opponents as he had been taught by the Apostle Barnabas. The Emperor Zeno greatly rejoiced that in the days of his reign so great a spiritual treasure had been discovered, and at once ordered that the island of Cyprus should not be subject to the patriarch but should be governed independently by its own archbishop; he also ordered that the Archbishop of Cyprus should be consecrated by his own bishops.

Such freedom was granted to the island of Cyprus for the sake of the relics of the holy Apostle Barnabas: from that time the see of the Cypriot archbishopric began to be called an apostolic see, like the other patriarchal sees. The blessed Anthimus, Archbishop of Cyprus, was rewarded with great honors by the Emperor and by the whole ecclesiastical council. The Emperor asked for the Gospel found upon the apostle's breast: receiving it, he adorned it with gold and precious stones and placed it in the imperial palace church; to the archbishop he gave a very great sum of gold for the building of a beautiful church on the very place where the venerable relics of the Apostle Barnabas had been discovered.

Thus the archbishop returned home in glory and honor, and in a short time built a great and beautiful church in the name of the Apostle; he placed the venerable relics of the holy apostle in the holy sanctuary, on the right side, and established the commemoration of the

31. The precious relics of the holy Apostle Barnabas were uncovered between 485 and 488.

holy Apostle Barnabas on the eleventh day of the month of June (the day on which his venerable relics were discovered), to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thou wast a wholly true servant of the Lord, and thou didst appear as the first of the seventy Apostles: together with Paul thou didst illumine thy preaching, proclaiming to all Christ the Savior; wherefore, O Barnabas, we celebrate with hymns thy divine memory.

* * *

NOTES

3835. Under the emperor Anastasius, about 508, the relics of St. Apostle Bartholomew were translated from Albanus to the city of Dara (in Mesopotamia). When, in 574, the Persians seized that city, some of the Christians of Dara took the holy relics of the apostle and withdrew with them to the shores of the Black Sea, where they were overtaken by enemies, who cast the venerable relics into the sea; but they did not sink, and miraculously floated to the island of Lipari. Later the island was taken by the Arabs, who scattered the relics of the Apostle Bartholomew, but they were miraculously gathered together again; St. Bartholomew appeared to a monk and indicated the place where they might be found. After this the relics of the holy apostle were transferred to the Neapolitan city of Benevento (in the ninth century), whence (at least part of the holy relics) they were carried to Rome in the tenth century. The translation of the relics of the holy apostle to the island of Lipari is commemorated by the Church on August 25.

THE TWELFTH DAY OF JUNE

June 12

12 июня

New Calendar June 12 · Old Calendar June 25 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Onuphrius the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Онуфрия Великого

Venerable Paphnutius[3857], who labored in one of the hermit monasteries of Egypt, has left us an account of how he found in the desert Venerable Onuphrius the Great, as well as other hermits. He begins his account thus:

Once, while I was living in silence in my monastery, a desire came upon me to go into the inner desert[1], to see whether there was a monk there who labored for the Lord more than I did. Rising, I took with me a little bread and water and set out on the way. I left my monastery, telling no one anything, and made my way into the innermost desert. I walked for four days, tasting neither bread nor water, and came to a certain cave, closed on all sides and having only one small window. I stood at the window for an hour, hoping that, according to the custom of monks, someone would come out of the cave and greet me in the name of Christ. But since no one spoke to me or opened the door, I myself opened the door, entered, and gave a blessing. In the cave I saw an elder sitting as though asleep. I again gave him a blessing and touched his shoulder, intending to wake him, but his body was like earthly dust; touching him with my hands, I was convinced that he had died many years before. Seeing a garment hanging on the wall, I

1. Egypt was the customary place of dwelling of many ascetics. Monasteries of monks were found both in Lower and in Middle Egypt. The Nitrian desert, which lay in Lower Egypt, beyond the river Nile, inland, was especially renowned in Egypt. The inner or skete desert lay several days' journey beyond the desert of the coenobitic monasteries. It was a wild sandy desert where only occasionally springs of water were met; there was not even a beaten road to it, and the way was directed by the course of the stars.

touched it, and it too was like dust in my hand. Then I took off my own mantle and covered the body of the dead man with it; then, digging with my hands a pit in the sandy ground, I buried the body of the ascetic with the customary psalmody, prayer and tears. Afterwards, having tasted a little bread and drunk some water, I strengthened my powers and spent the night at the grave of that elder.

On the next day in the morning, having offered prayer, I set out further on my way toward the inner deserts. Walking for several days, I came upon another cave; hearing human voices near it, I thought that someone had probably lived in that cave. I knocked at the door, but receiving no answer, I went inside the cave; finding no one there, I went outside, reflecting to myself that one of the servants of God, who had gone off into the desert at that time, probably lived there. I resolved to wait in that place for that servant of God, since I wished to see him and greet him in the Lord; and I spent the whole day in waiting, all the while singing the psalms of David. That place seemed to me very beautiful: a date palm with fruit grew there, and a small spring of water flowed; I greatly marveled at the beauty of that place and wished to live there myself, if it were possible for me.

When the day had already begun to decline toward evening, I saw a herd of buffaloes coming toward me, and also saw a servant of God walking among the animals (it was Timothy the hermit[2]). When the herd drew near me, I saw a man without clothing, covering the nakedness of his body only with his hair. Coming to the place where I stood, and looking at me, that man took me for a spirit and an apparition, and began to pray, for many unclean spirits tempted him with apparitions in that place, as he himself later told me.

I said to him:

"Why are you afraid, servant of Jesus Christ our God? Look at me and at the traces of my feet, and know that I am a man just as you are; assure yourself by touch that I am flesh and blood."

Looking at me and becoming convinced that I was indeed a man, he was comforted, and, giving thanks to God, said:

2. His memory is on the same day.

"Amen."

Then he came to me, kissed me, led me into his cave, and offered me date-palm fruit to eat; he also gave me clean water from the spring, and himself partook for my sake. Then he asked me, saying:

"How did you come here, brother?" And I, disclosing to him my thoughts and intentions, answered:

"Desiring to see the servants of Christ who labor in this desert, I left my monastery and came here; and God did not deprive me of the fulfillment of my intention, for He has granted me to see your holiness."

Then I asked him:

"How did you come here, father? How many years have you labored in this desert, what do you feed on, and why do you go naked and clothe yourself with nothing?"

Then he told me about himself as follows: "At first I lived in one of the Thebaid cenobia[3], leading the monastic life and diligently serving God. I occupied myself with weaving. But a thought arose in me: leave the cenobium and live alone, labor and struggle, that you may receive from God a greater reward; for from the fruit of your hands you can not only feed yourself, but also feed the poor and give rest to wandering brethren. Lovingly heeding this thought, I left the brotherhood, built myself a cell near the city, and exercised myself in my handiwork; I had everything sufficient for me, for by the labor of my hands I gathered all that I needed; many came to me asking for the products of my hands and brought everything necessary; I gave shelter to strangers, and what was superfluous I distributed to the poor and needy. But the enemy of our salvation, the devil, who always wars against everyone, envied my life; wishing to destroy all my labors, he put it into the mind of a certain woman to come to me for my handiwork and ask me to prepare linen; having prepared it, I gave it to her. Afterwards she asked me to prepare more linen for her; and conversation arose between us, boldness came; having conceived sin, we gave birth to lawlessness; and I remained with her for six months, sinning all the while. But at last I

3. Coenobia (from the Greek: common, and life) are the cenobitic monasteries, in which the brotherhood is maintained at the monastery's expense and in exchange offers its labor for the common benefit of the monastery.

reflected to myself that today or tomorrow death would overtake me and I would suffer eternally. And I said to myself: 'Woe is me, my soul! It is better for you to flee from here, that you may be saved from sin and at the same time from eternal torment!'

"Therefore, leaving everything, I secretly fled from there and came to this desert. Arriving at this place, I found this cave, the spring, and the date palm, which had twelve branches; each month one of the branches bears such a quantity of fruit as is entirely sufficient for my sustenance for thirty days. When the month ends and the fruit on one branch is finished, then another branch ripens. Thus, by the grace of God I am fed, and I have nothing else in my cave. And my garments, having grown old through long time, wore out and perished; after many years (for I have already labored in this desert for thirty years) hair grew on me, as you see; it replaces clothing for me, covering my nakedness."

Having heard all this from the ascetic (Paphnutius relates), I asked him:

"Father! At the beginning of your labors in this place, did you experience any obstacles or not?"

He answered me:

"I endured countless assaults of demons. Many times they joined battle with me, but they could not overcome me, for the grace of God helped me; I resisted them with the sign of the Cross and with prayer. Besides the assaults of the enemy, my labors were hindered also by bodily illness; for I suffered greatly in the stomach, so that I fell to the ground from severe pain; I could not perform my customary prayers, but, lying in my cave and rolling on the ground, I performed the chanting with great effort, and had no strength at all to go out of the cave. I prayed to merciful God that He would grant me forgiveness of my sins for the sake of my illness. Once, when I was sitting on the ground and suffering grievously in my stomach, I saw an honorable man standing before me, who said to me:

"What do you suffer from?"

I could scarcely answer him:

"I suffer, lord, in my stomach."

He said to me:

"Show me where it hurts."

I showed him. Then he stretched out his hand and laid his palm on the sore place; I was at once healed. He said to me:

"Now you are well; do not sin, lest it go worse with you, but work for the Lord and your God from now until the ages."

From that time on I have not been ill, by the mercy of God, glorifying and praising His compassion."

In such conversation (says Paphnutius) I spent almost the whole night with that venerable father; in the morning I rose for my customary prayer.

When day came, I began earnestly to beseech that venerable father to allow me to live either near him or somewhere apart, nearby. He said to me: "You, brother, will not endure the demonic assaults here." For this reason he did not allow me to remain with him. I also asked him to tell me his name. And he said: "My name is Timothy. Remember me, beloved brother, and pray to Christ God for me, that He may show me to the end the mercy which He grants me."

I, says Paphnutius, fell at his feet, asking him to pray for me. He said to me: "May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you, keep you from every enemy temptation, and guide you on the right path, that you may attain holiness without hindrance."

Blessing me, Venerable Timothy dismissed me in peace. I took from his hands date-palm fruit for my journey, drew water from the spring into my vessel, then, bowing to the holy elder, I departed from him, glorifying and thanking God that He had granted me to see such a servant of His, to hear his words, and to receive his blessing.

On the return journey from there, after several days, I came to a monastery in the wilderness and stayed there, in order to rest and remain for a time. With sorrow I pondered within myself: What manner of life was mine? What were my ascetic struggles? My life could not even be called a shadow when compared with the life and struggles of this great servant of God whom I had just seen. I spent many days in such reflections, wishing to imitate that righteous man in pleasing God. By the mercy of God, who moved me to care for my soul, I was not

slothful, but set out again into the inner desert by an impassable way—that road where dwelt the barbarous people called the Mazices. I greatly desired to learn whether there was yet another hermit who served the Lord in such a manner. I greatly desired to find him, that I might receive benefit for my soul from him.

Setting out on the desert journey I had undertaken, I took with me a little bread and water, enough for only a short time. When I had consumed the bread and water, I was sorrowful, for I had no food; yet I took courage and walked on for four more days and four nights without food or drink, until my body was utterly exhausted. I fell to the ground and began to await death. Then I saw a man, holy in appearance, fair and shining exceedingly, who came up to me; he laid his hand upon my mouth and became invisible. At once I felt strength within me, so that I had no desire either to eat or to drink.

Rising, I again went into the inner desert and walked on for four more days and four nights without food or drink; but soon I began once more to grow faint with hunger and thirst. Lifting my hands to heaven, I prayed to the Lord, and again I saw the same man. He came up to me, touched my mouth with his hand, and became invisible. From this I received new strength and set out on my way.

On the seventeenth day of my journey I came to a certain high mountain; wearied by the way, I sat at its foot to rest a little. At that time I saw a man approaching me, very fearful in appearance; he was covered all over with hair like a beast, and his hair was white as snow, for he was gray with age. The hair of his head and beard was exceedingly long, reaching down to the ground and covering his whole body like a garment; his loins were girded with leaves of desert plants. When I saw this man approaching me, I was afraid and fled to a rock at the top of the mountain. He, having come to the foot of the mountain, sat in the shade, intending to rest, for he was greatly wearied both by the heat and by old age. Looking up at the mountain, he saw me and called to me, saying: "Come down to me, man of God! I am a man just as you are; I dwell in this desert, striving for God's sake."

I (says Paphnutius), hearing this, hastened to him and fell at his feet. But he said to me:

"Rise, my son! For you also are a servant of God and a friend of His saints; and your name is Paphnutius."

I rose. Then he bade me sit, and I gladly sat beside him. I began earnestly to beg him to tell me his name and describe his life: how he struggled in the desert and how long he had lived there. Yielding to my persistent entreaties, he began his account of himself thus: "My name is Onuphrius; I have lived in this desert for sixty years, wandering over the mountains; I have seen no man, and today I see only you. Formerly I lived in a certain venerable monastery called Eriti[4], situated near the city of Hermopolis, in the Thebaid region. A hundred brethren dwell in that monastery; all live in perfect concord with one another, leading a common life in harmony and love for our Lord Jesus Christ. They share their food and clothing; in peace they lead a quiet life of fasting, praising the Lord's mercy. In the days of my childhood, as a novice, I was there instructed by the holy fathers in earnest faith and love for the Lord, and was also taught the rules of monastic life. I heard them speak of the holy Prophet of God Elijah, how, strengthened by God, he lived fasting in the desert; I also heard of St. John the Forerunner of the Lord, to whom no man has ever been equal (Mt. 11:11), and of his life in the desert until the day he was revealed to Israel. Hearing all this, I asked the holy fathers: 'Does this mean, then, that those who strive in the desert are greater in the eyes of God than you?'"

They answered me: "Yes, child, they are greater than we; for we see one another daily, and joyfully perform the church's common chanting together. If we wish to eat, we have bread already prepared; likewise, if we wish to drink, we have water ready. If one of us should fall ill, he receives consolation from the brethren, for we live together, helping and serving one another for the love of God. But those who dwell in the desert are deprived of all this. If some trouble befalls a desert-dweller, who will comfort him in his sickness? Who will help and serve him if satanic power assails him? Where will he find someone to encourage his mind and give him instruction, when he is alone? If he has no food, where can he obtain it without toil? Likewise, if he thirsts, he will find

4. Or Erati.

no water nearby. There, child, the toil is incomparably greater than among us, who live together. Those who undertake the desert life begin to serve God with greater zeal; they impose upon themselves a stricter fast, expose themselves to hunger and thirst and the noonday heat, and patiently endure the cold of night. They stoutly resist the wiles brought against them by the invisible enemy, striving in every way to overcome him; they earnestly endeavor to pass along the narrow and sorrowful way that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven. For this reason God sends holy Angels to them, who bring them food, bring water from the rock, and strengthen them, so that the words of the Prophet Isaiah are fulfilled concerning them: 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint' (Is. 40:31). And even if one of them is not vouchsafed a vision of the Angels, in any case he is not deprived of the invisible presence of God's Angels, who guard such a hermit in all his ways, protect him from the snares of the enemy, aid him in his good works, and bring the hermit's prayers before God. If some unexpected assault of the enemy befalls a hermit, he lifts up his hands to God, and help is at once sent to him from on high, and all assaults are driven away for the sake of the purity of his heart. Have you not heard, child, what is said in Scripture, that God does not disregard those who seek Him, for 'the poor shall not be forgotten for ever: the hope of the poor shall not perish for ever' (Ps. 9:19)? And again: 'Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses' (Ps. 106:6); for the Lord recompenses each according to the labor he takes upon himself. Blessed is the man who does the Lord's will on earth and serves Him zealously: such a one is served by Angels, even if invisibly; they gladden his heart with spiritual joy and strengthen him at every hour while he remains in the flesh."

All this I, the humble Onuphrius, heard from the holy fathers in my monastery, and my heart was sweetened by these words, for they were sweeter to me than honey, and it seemed to me that I was in another world. For within me arose an irresistible desire to go into the desert. Rising by night and taking a little bread, scarcely enough for four days, I left the monastery, placing all my hopes in God. I took the road that

led to the mountain, intending from there to go into the desert. As soon as I began to enter the desert, I saw before me a brightly shining ray of light. Greatly frightened, I stopped and began already to think of returning to the monastery. Meanwhile the ray of light drew nearer to me, and from it I heard a voice saying: "Fear not! I am the Angel who has walked with you from the day of your birth, for I was appointed by God to guard you; I received a command from the Lord to lead you into this desert. Be perfect and humble of heart before the Lord, and serve Him with gladness; and I will not depart from you until the Creator commands me to take your soul."

Having said this from the shining ray, the Angel went before me, and I followed him gladly. After walking about six or seven millaria[5], I saw a rather spacious cave; at that moment the ray of the Angel's light vanished from my sight. Coming up to the cave, I wished to learn whether anyone was there. As I approached the entrance, following the monastic custom, I called out: "Give the blessing!"

And I saw an elder, venerable and comely in appearance; the grace of God and spiritual joy shone upon his face and in his gaze. When I saw this elder, I fell at his feet and bowed down before him. But he raised me with his hand, kissed me, and said: "Is it you, Brother Onuphrius, my fellow-laborer in the Lord? Enter, child, into my dwelling. May God be your helper; abide in your calling, performing good works in the fear of God."

Having entered the cave, I sat down and stayed with him for many days. I strove to learn his virtues from him, and in this I succeeded, for he taught me the rule of the hermit's life. When the elder saw that my spirit was now enlightened enough to understand what deeds are pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ, and saw too that I had grown strong for the fearless struggle against the hidden enemies and the terrors that

5. A milliarium was the Roman mile, or, more precisely, the Roman milestone, because at the end of each milliarium a stone pillar stood as a marker. A milliarium equaled 8 stadia (a stadium being 88 sazhens), which amounts to approximately 1 1/2 of our versts. Milestones were scattered throughout all of Italy; upon them was usually inscribed the name of the builder or of the emperor under whom they were erected. The first milestone, from which all the others took their beginning and where all the roads converged, stood in Rome, by the temple of Saturn. In excavations in Rome the remains of this stone were found.*

the desert holds, he said to me: "Rise up, child. I will lead you to another cave, located in the inner desert. Live there alone and labor for the Lord, for it was for this that the Lord sent you here, that you might be a dweller of the inner desert."

Having said this, he took me and led me into the innermost desert. We walked four days and four nights. At last, on the fifth day, we found a small cave. That holy man then said to me: "This is the very place that God has prepared for your labors." The elder stayed with me thirty days, instructing me in good deeds. When the thirty days had passed, he commended me to God and went back to the place of his labors. From then on he came to me once a year; he visited me each year until his repose in the Lord. In the last year he departed to the Lord while he was with me, as was his custom. I wept very much, and I buried his body near my dwelling.

Then I, the humble Paphnutius, asked him: "Honorable father! How many labors did you undertake at the beginning of your arrival in the desert?"

The blessed elder answered me: "Believe me, beloved brother, that I undertook such heavy labors that many times I despaired of my life, considering myself close to death. For I was weakened by hunger and thirst. From the very beginning of my arrival in the desert I had no food or drink, except that I occasionally found desert herbs, which were my food. My thirst was relieved only by the dew of heaven. The sun's heat burned me by day, and at night I shivered with cold; my body was wetted by the drops of heavenly dew. What else did I not endure, what labors and feats did I not undertake in this impassable desert? It is impossible to recount all the labors and feats, and it is not fitting to proclaim what a man must do in solitude for the love of God. But the good God, seeing that I had devoted myself wholly to ascetic feats, condemning myself to hunger and thirst, commanded His Angel to care for me and to bring me daily a little bread and water to strengthen my body. Thus was I nourished by the Angel for thirty years. After thirty years had passed, God gave me more abundant nourishment, for near my cave I found a date palm that had twelve branches. Each branch bore its fruit separately from the others, one in one month, another in

another month, until all twelve months were finished. When one month ends, the fruit on one branch ends; when another month comes, the fruit begins to grow on another branch. Moreover, by God's command, a spring of living water began to flow near me. And so for another thirty years I have labored with this abundance, sometimes receiving bread from the Angel, sometimes eating date fruit with desert roots, which by God's providence seem to me sweeter than honey. I drink water from this spring, thanking God. And most of all I am nourished and refreshed with the sweetness of the words of God, as it is written: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God' (Mt. 4:4). Brother Paphnutius! If you fulfill the will of God with all diligence, you will receive from God all that is necessary; for in the holy Gospel it is said: 'Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Mt. 6:31–33)."

When Onuphrius said all this, I (Paphnutius relates) greatly marveled at his wondrous life. Then I asked him again: "Father, how do you partake of the most pure Mysteries of Christ on Saturday and on the Lord's Day?"

He answered me: "An Angel of the Lord comes to me, who brings with him the most pure Mysteries of Christ and gives me Communion. The Angel comes with the Divine Communion not to me alone, but also to the other desert ascetics who live in the desert for God's sake and do not see the face of man. In giving Communion, he fills their hearts with ineffable joy. If any of these hermits desires to see a man, the Angel takes him and lifts him up to the heavens, so that he may see the saints and rejoice, and the soul of such a hermit is enlightened like light and rejoices in spirit, having been granted to see the heavenly blessings. Then the hermit forgets all his labors undertaken in the desert. When the ascetic returns to his place, he begins to serve the Lord even more diligently, hoping to receive in heaven what he was granted to see."

All this Onuphrius spoke with me (Paphnutius relates) at the foot of the mountain where we had met. I was filled with great joy from such conversation with the venerable one, and I too forgot all the labors of my journey, with its hunger and thirst. Strengthened in spirit and body, I said: "Blessed is the man who has been granted to see you, holy father, and to hear your beautiful and sweetest words!" He said to me: "Let us rise, brother, and go to my dwelling."

And rising, we went.

I (Paphnutius says) did not cease to marvel at the grace of the venerable elder. After walking two or three millaria, we came to the holy cave of the saint. Near the cave grew a rather large date palm, and a small spring of living water flowed there. Stopping near the cave, the venerable one prayed. Finishing the prayer, he said: "Amen."

Then he sat down and invited me to sit beside him as well. And we conversed, telling each other of the mercies of God.

When the day began to decline toward evening and the sun was already turning to the west, I saw pure bread lying between us and water prepared. And the blessed man said to me: "Brother, eat the bread lying before you and drink the water, that you may be strengthened; for I see that you are exhausted from hunger and thirst and from the labors of the journey."

I answered him: "As the Lord lives! I will not eat and drink alone, but only together with you."

The elder, however, would not consent to eat. I entreated him for a long time and could barely persuade him to grant my request. Stretching out our hands, we took the bread, broke it, and ate. We were satisfied, and there was even some bread left over. Then we drank water and gave thanks to God, and we spent that whole night in prayer to God.

When day came, I noticed that after the morning prayer chant the elder's face had changed, and I was greatly frightened. He, perceiving this, said to me: "Do not be afraid, brother Paphnutius, for God, merciful to all, has sent you to me so that you may bury my body. Today I will end my temporal life and pass to endless life, into eternal rest with my Christ."

It was then the twelfth day of the month of June. And the venerable Onuphrius bequeathed to me, Paphnutius, saying: "Beloved brother! When you return to Egypt, remember me to all the brethren and to all Christians."

I (Paphnutius says) said to him: "Father! After your departure I would wish to remain here in your place."

But the venerable one said to me: "Child! God has sent you into this desert not in order to labor in it, but in order to see the servants of God, to return and to tell the brethren about the virtuous life of the desert dwellers, for the spiritual benefit of their souls and to the glory of Christ our God. Go, child, to Egypt, to your monastery, and also to the other monasteries, and tell all that you have seen and heard in the desert. Tell also what you will yet see and hear. And you yourself, labor in good deeds, serving the Lord."

When the venerable one had said this, I fell at his feet, saying: "Bless me, most honorable father, and pray for me, that I may find favor before God. Pray for me, that my Savior may grant me to see you in the age to come, as He has granted me to see you in this life."

The venerable Onuphrius, raising me from the ground, said to me: "Child Paphnutius! May your petition not be neglected by God, but may God fulfill it. May God bless you and establish you in His love, and enlighten the eyes of your mind for the vision of God. May He deliver you from every misfortune and from the snares of the adversary, and may He continue the good work you have begun. May His Angels keep you in all your ways (Ps. 90:11), guarding you from invisible enemies, so that these shall not be able to accuse you before God at the hour of the dread trial."

After this the venerable father gave me his last kiss in the Lord. Then he began to pray to the Lord with tears and heartfelt sighing. Kneeling and praying for a rather long time, he lay down on the ground and uttered his last word: "Into Thy hands, O my God, I commend my spirit!" As he was saying this, a wondrous light shone upon him from heaven, and in the radiance of this light the venerable one, his face rejoicing, breathed forth his spirit[6]. And at once the voice of the Angels

was heard in the air, singing and blessing God; for the holy Angels, taking the soul of the venerable one, bore it with joy to the Lord.

And I (Paphnutius narrates) began to weep and sob over his honorable body, grieving that I had so suddenly lost the one whom I had so lately found. Then, taking off my clothing, I tore the lower hem from it and covered the body of the saint with it, and I dressed myself again in the upper garment, so that I might return to the brethren not naked. I found a large stone in which, by God's providence, a hollow had been made resembling a tomb; into this stone I laid the holy body of the great servant of God, with psalmody fitting to the occasion. Then, gathering many small stones, I covered the body of the saint with them.

After all this I began to pray to God, asking Him to permit me to dwell in that place. I was already about to enter the cave, but at that very moment, before my eyes, the cave collapsed, the date palm that had nourished the saint was torn up from its root, and the spring of living water dried up. Seeing all this, I understood that it was not pleasing to God that I should live there.

Intending to depart from there, I ate the bread left over from the previous day and also drank the water that was in the vessel. Then, lifting my hands to heaven and raising my eyes upward, I began to pray again. Then I saw the very man whom I had seen earlier while journeying through the desert; it was that same man who, having strengthened me, walked before me.

As I departed from that place, I was exceedingly grieved in soul, lamenting that I had not been granted to see the Venerable Onuphrius alive for a longer time. But then I rejoiced in soul, reflecting that I had been granted to enjoy his holy conversation and to receive a blessing from his lips; and so I went on, glorifying God.

After four days' journey I came to a certain cell standing high on a mountain, which had a cave. Entering it, I found no one. Sitting there for a little while, I began to think to myself: "Does anyone live in this cell, to which God has brought me?"

6. The repose of the Venerable Onuphrius took place in the 4th century.

While I was thinking thus, there entered a holy man, gray-haired; his appearance was wondrous and radiant. He was clothed in a garment woven of willow branches. Seeing me, he said:

"Is it you, Brother Paphnutius, who buried the body of the Venerable Onuphrius?"

I, understanding that a revelation from God concerning me had been given to him, fell at his feet. He, comforting me, said: "Rise, brother! God has granted you to be a friend of His saints; for I know, by God's providence, that you were to come to me. I shall reveal to you, beloved brother, also about myself: that I have spent sixty years in this desert and in all that time I never saw a man who came to me, except the brethren dwelling here with me."

While we were conversing with one another, three other old men, like the saint, entered. And at once they said to me: "Bless, brother! You are Brother Paphnutius, our fellow-worker in the Lord. You have buried the body of the Holy Onuphrius. Rejoice, brother, that you have been granted to see the great grace of God. The Lord has told us of you, that you would come to us today. The Lord has commanded you to remain with us one day. Behold, we have already dwelt in this desert for sixty years, each living separately; but on Saturday, toward the Lord's Day, we gather here. We have seen no man; only now do we see you alone."

After we had talked about the Venerable Father Onuphrius and the other saints, two hours later those old men said to me: "Take, brother, a little bread and refresh yourself, for you have come from afar; it is fitting that we rejoice with you."

Rising, we offered to God a united prayer, and we saw before us five pure loaves, very tasty, soft, warm, as though just baked. Then those old men brought some of the fruits of the earth. Sitting down together, we began to eat the bread. And the old men said to me: "Behold, as we told you, we have dwelt in this desert for sixty years, and always, by the command of God, only four loaves were brought to us; but now, on account of your coming to us, a fifth loaf has been sent. We do not know whence these loaves are brought, but each of us, entering his

cave, finds one loaf there every day. When we gather here on the eve of the Lord's Day, we find here four loaves, one for each of us."

After partaking of that meal, we rose and gave thanks to the Lord.

Meanwhile the day was drawing toward evening; soon night was to fall. Having begun prayer from the Saturday evening, we spent the whole night without sleep, praying until the morning of the Lord's Day.

When morning came, I earnestly began to beg those fathers to allow me to remain with them until my death. But they said to me: "It is not the will of God that you should remain in this desert with us; you must go to Egypt, so that you may tell the Christ-loving brethren all that you have seen, in memory of us and for the benefit of those who hear."

When they had said this, I earnestly began to ask them to reveal their names to me. But they were unwilling to tell them to me. For a long time I entreated them with great zeal, but I achieved nothing in my request: they said only: "God, who knows all things, knows our names too. Remember us, that we may be granted to see one another in the heavenly dwellings of God. Strive in every way, beloved, to avoid the temptations and snares of the world, lest you be overcome by them; for they have drawn many into perdition."

Having heard these words from those venerable fathers, I fell at their feet, and having received their blessing, I set out on my way in the peace of God. Those fathers foretold to me certain events, which indeed came to pass.

Departing from there, I walked in the direction of the inner desert for one day; reaching a certain cave beside which was a spring of living water, I sat down there to rest and admired the beauty of that place; for that place was very beautiful. Around that spring grew many garden trees laden with fruit. After resting a little, I rose and walked among those trees, marveling at the abundance of their fruit and thinking to myself: who had planted all this here? There were various fruits of trees here: dates, citrons, large red apples, figs, peaches and grapevines[7] hung with large clusters; many other fruit-bearing trees grew

7. It should be noted that Egypt, especially in places lying near the river Nile, was very rich in its plant world. There grew in abundance: the date palm, acacias, mulberry trees, cotton, sugar cane, indigo, and others.

here as well; their fruits were sweeter than honey; a great fragrance flowed from them, and the spring that ran there watered all those plantings. Seeing all this, I thought that this was the paradise of God.

While I was marveling at the great beauty of that place, I saw four comely youths coming toward me from afar through the desert. The youths were girded with sheepskins. Coming up to me, they said: "Rejoice, Brother Paphnutius!"

I, falling face down to the ground, bowed to them.

They, raising me up, sat down beside me and began to converse. The faces of these youths shone with the grace of God; it seemed to me that they were not men but Angels come down from heaven. The youths were very glad at my coming, and taking fruits from the trees, they offered me to taste them; and my heart rejoiced because of their love. I stayed with them seven days, feeding on the fruits of those trees. Among other things, I asked them: "How did you come here? Where are you from?"

They answered me: "Brother! Since God Himself has sent you to us, we shall tell you of our life. We are from the city of Oxyrhynchus[8]; our parents were the magistrates of that city, and wishing to teach us the books, they gave us to a single school, where we soon learned simple literacy (reading). When we began to make progress also in more perfect learning, then we all came to share one common and harmonious conviction, for the Lord aided us: we resolved to study the higher spiritual wisdom. From that time, gathering together daily, we urged one another to zeal in the service of God; having a good intention in our hearts, we desired to find somewhere a quiet, secluded place and to remain there for some days in prayer, so as to learn God's purpose concerning us. Each of us took a little bread and water, exactly as much as should suffice for seven days; then we went out of the city. Walking for several days, we reached the desert; entering the desert, we were struck with terror, for we saw before us a certain radiant man, shining

8. The city of Oxyrhynchus was situated in Upper Thebaid. It was renowned for the piety of its inhabitants; according to the testimony of the historian Rufinus (who lived in the 4th century), it contained within its bounds up to ten thousand virgin men and up to twenty thousand virgin women. Today it is the village of Behnesa.

with heavenly glory; taking us by the hands, he led us, as you see, to this place; then he handed us over to a man already advanced in years, who served the Lord. And so we have been living here for the sixth year now. With that old man we labored for one year, and he taught and instructed us how we should serve the Lord. After a year had passed, our father reposed in the Lord, and from that time we have lived here alone. Behold, beloved brother, we have told you who we are and whence we came. In all those six years we have eaten neither bread nor any other food except the fruits of these garden trees; each of us dwells apart from the others in silence. When Saturday comes, we all gather in this place, see one another, and find comfort in the Lord. Having stayed together two days, Saturday and Sunday, each of us again departs to his own place."

Hearing all this from them, I, humble as I am, says Paphnutius, asked them: "Where, then, do you partake of the Divine Mysteries of the most pure Body and Blood of Christ our Savior on Saturday and Sunday?"

They answered me: "For this reason we gather here every Saturday and Sunday: the holy Angel, sent by God, comes to us and gives us the holy Communion."

I, greatly rejoicing at hearing this, desired to wait with them until the Sabbath, that I might see the holy Angel and receive the Divine Communion from his hands. And I remained there until the Sabbath. They also remained together in one place for my sake, not withdrawing each to his own cell. And we spent those days in praising God and in prayer, eating the fruits of the garden and drinking water from the spring. When the Sabbath came, the servants of Christ said to me: "Prepare yourself, beloved brother, for now the Angel of God will come and bring us the Divine Communion. Whoever is deemed worthy to receive the holy Communion from his hands obtains forgiveness of all his sins and becomes terrible to the demons, so that the temptation of Satan cannot approach him."

While they were saying this to me, I smelled a wondrous fragrance, as though from a strong censing of incense, and I was greatly aston-

ished, for I had never smelled such a wondrous fragrance. I asked the youths:

"Whence comes so ineffable a sweet fragrance?"

They answered me:

"The Angel of the Lord is drawing near with the most pure Mysteries of Christ."

Immediately rising to prayer, we began to sing and to glorify Christ the King, our God. Suddenly a light shone upon us from heaven; we saw the Angel of God descending from on high, shining like lightning. I fell prostrate upon the ground from fear. Those youths raised me up and told me not to be afraid. Then I saw before us the Angel of God, in the form of a beautiful youth; his beauty was difficult to describe; he held in his hand a holy chalice (cup) with the Divine Gifts. Those servants of God approached him one by one and communed. After them I too approached, sinful and unworthy, with great trembling and awe, and at the same time with unspeakable joy, and I was deemed worthy to partake of the most pure Mysteries of Christ from the hands of the Angel. During the communion I heard the words of the Angel:

"Let the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, our God, be to you imperishable food, unending gladness, and eternal life."

We answered:

"Amen."

After the holy Communion we received the blessing of that glorious Angel. Then before our eyes he ascended into the heavens, and we, falling to the ground, bowed down to God, thanking Him for His great mercy toward us. Our hearts were filled with great joy, so that it seemed to me I was not on earth but in heaven; from that great joy I was as if in an ecstatic state. Then those holy servants of God brought vegetables and offered them to me, and, sitting down, we ate them.

Meanwhile the Sabbath ended and night came; we spent it without sleep, in psalmody and praise of God. On Sunday we were deemed worthy of the same grace of God as on the Sabbath; for the Angel of God came to us in the same manner and in the same form, and, having communed us, filled our hearts with great joy. I, taking courage, began to beg the Angel of God to allow me to dwell there with the holy ser-

vants of God until the end of my life. But he said to me: "It is not pleasing to God that you should live here; He commands you to go at once to Egypt and to tell all the brethren what you have seen and heard in the desert, so that the rest of the brotherhood may also strive to lead a good life and to please Christ God. Especially tell everyone in more detail about the holy life and blessed repose of the Venerable Onuphrius, whom you buried in the stone. Tell the brethren also all that you heard from his lips. Blessed are you, that you were deemed worthy to see such wondrous great works of God manifested in the saints of God. Trust in the Lord that He will also number you in the age to come among those saints whom you saw and with whom you conversed. Now go on your way, and the peace of God be with you."

Having said this, the Angel ascended into heaven.

I (Paphnutius relates), was filled with such great fear and at the same time joy from the Angel's words that I could not stand on my feet, and I fell to the ground as one unconscious. The holy servants of God raised me up and comforted me; then, offering vegetables, they ate together with me and gave thanks to God.

Finally, having greeted the saints, I set out on my way. Those honorable youths gave me vegetables for the journey and accompanied me for five miliaria. I earnestly asked them to tell me their names. They said: the first was called John, the second Andrew, the third Heraclamon, the fourth Theophilus; and they told me to tell their names to the brethren for their commemoration. I asked them also to remember me in their prayers. Then, having once more exchanged the kiss of peace in the Lord, we parted; they returned to their place, and I went toward Egypt.

Going out into the desert, I was sorrowful but at the same time joyful; I grieved because I had lost the sight and sweet conversation of such great servants of God, of whom the whole world would not be worthy; I rejoiced that I had been deemed worthy of their blessing and of the beholding of the Angel, and also of communion from the hands of the Angel.

I walked for three days; then I came to a skete; there I met two brothers living in solitary ascetic life. I stayed with them for ten days

and told them all that I had seen and heard in the desert. They listened to me with great tenderness and joy; then they said: "Truly, Father Paphnutius, you have been deemed worthy of the great mercy of God, for you have seen such great servants of God."

Those two brothers led a most virtuous life and loved God with their whole heart; they wrote down everything they heard from my lips. Having greeted them, I went to my monastery. The record of my narrative they sent to all the holy fathers and brethren who lived in the skete; all, reading and hearing it, received great spiritual benefit and glorified God, who manifests His great mercies upon His servants. Then they placed the record of what I had related in the church, so that all who wished could read it, for it was very edifying and taught contemplation of God. I, the least servant Paphnutius, having been deemed worthy of such grace of God (of which I am by no means worthy), both orally and in writing proclaim to all what I was commanded to proclaim to the glory of God, for the memory of the saints of God and for the benefit of those seeking the salvation of their souls. May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, through the prayers of our holy Venerable Fathers who pleased Him, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Illumined, O God-wise one, by the radiance of the All-holy Spirit, thou didst leave the vain talk of life, and, having reached the desert, O Venerable Father, thou didst gladden God, the Creator of all. Wherefore Christ glorifies thee, O blessed one, great bestower of gifts.

* * *

Life of our Venerable Father Peter of Athos

Житие преподобного отца нашего Петра Афонского

The Venerable Peter was by birth a Greek, by rank a warrior and by office a voivode. He embraced the monastic life on the following occasion.

Once Peter, together with other soldiers, was sent to Syria[9] for war[10]. The Greek army suffered defeat at the hands of the enemy; Peter was taken captive[11] and, together with many other captives, led to Arabia[12], to the city of Samara, located near the river Euphrates[13]. There he was cast into prison and bound in heavy iron fetters. While in prison and carefully reflecting on his former life, Peter recalled that he had many times thought of renouncing the world and taking up monasticism. He then understood that God had punished him with this heavy captivity for not having made an effort to fulfill his good intention. Repenting of his negligence and bitterly lamenting his former life, Peter patiently bore the sufferings which, as he was conscious, he had fully deserved.

Having spent a long time in prison and not hoping to receive deliverance from any man, Peter began to offer fervent supplications to almighty God, who by His ways, unknown to men, could free him from prison, as once He brought Adam up from hell (1 Pet. 3:18–19) and as He freed the Apostle Peter, imprisoned by Herod (Acts 12:1–25). At the same time Peter called upon and asked for the mighty intercession before God of the great wonderworker, St. Nicholas, the swift helper of those in distress: Peter had long had, after God, great faith and love for St. Nicholas and had often turned to him for help. To his prayer Peter added this vow: if he should be freed from his bonds, he would no longer return to the world, nor would he even go to his own home, but would at once set out wherever God should direct him for the accomplishment of the monastic ascetic feat. He had thought, if only God should free him from his bonds, to go to Rome, that there, at the tomb of the holy chief Apostle Peter, he might be tonsured and make a vow of renunciation of the world. Praying for this, St. Peter imposed a fast upon himself: he took food every two or three days, and that in small

9. Syria is a region on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.
10. With the Arabs.
11. In 667.
12. Arabia is the vast southwestern peninsula of Asia, separated from the Asian mainland by the Persian Gulf and connected with solid land by the plains of the Syro-Arabian desert.
13. The greatest river of Asia, which, in conjunction with the Tigris, constitutes its principal water system.

amounts, and at last he abstained from it altogether for a whole week. When this week was drawing to its end, St. Nicholas, the hierarch of Christ, appeared to St. Peter in a dream and said: "I have heard your prayer, received the sighing of your heart, and have interceded for you before the merciful and loving-kind God. But since you yourself were not swift in fulfilling His commandments, He does not wish to free you from your bonds quickly, ordering for you what is better for salvation. Nevertheless, by the assurance of the merciful Lord, who encouraged us in the holy Gospel with the words: 'Ask, and it shall be given you... knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Lk. 11:9), do not cease to offer prayers and to knock at the doors of His mercy, that the Lord, in His compassion, may free you from your bonds and open for you the doors of the prison. Only be patient in prayer, awaiting the mercy of God."

Having said this, St. Nicholas commanded the prisoner Peter to strengthen his body with food, and became invisible. When Peter arose from sleep and had eaten, he began to pray again, more earnestly still, by day and by night, with good hope of deliverance, continually calling upon his helper, St. Nicholas.

After some time, St. Nicholas appeared again to St. Peter in a dream, in the likeness of a man who seemed sorrowful, and addressed him in quiet and gentle words: “Brother, be assured that I have not ceased to implore God’s goodness on your behalf; yet I know not for what judgments and what reasons the Lord delays your deliverance. Nevertheless, do not despair of His mercy: the merciful Master is accustomed to delay the fulfilment of our requests for our own benefit, lest anyone who receives what he asks for too quickly should slight His grace. Moreover, the Lord desires prayers for you from others who have pleased Him. I will name to you a great intercessor; if you call upon him for help, you shall have him as your advocate, and I believe that if we pray together for you, the Lover of mankind will hear us.”

“Who, then, holy vladyka,” Peter asked St. Nicholas, “can more readily entreat God than you? Through your intercession the whole world is saved; for the whole Christian people, having recourse to you, receive deliverance from their afflictions through you.”

"Do you know, Peter," St. Nicholas asked, "the Righteous Simeon, called the God-receiver, because he took into his arms Christ the Lord, brought into the temple on the fortieth day after His birth?"

"I know him, holy Hierarch of God," Peter replied, "that righteous man who is mentioned in the Holy Gospel (Lk. 2:25–36)."

"We shall both move him to pray," St. Nicholas continued, "and then all that remains unfinished shall come to a good end. Righteous Simeon has great power and boldness before God, beside whose throne he stands, together with the Most Pure Lady, the Virgin Theotokos, and St. John the Forerunner."

Having said this, St. Nicholas departed.

Peter, having arisen from sleep, again gave himself to fervent prayer and immoderate fasting, calling for help both upon St. Nicholas and upon St. Simeon the God-receiver.

When the most good God, entreated by His great servants, desired to deliver the sufferer from his bonds, then, by the Divine will, Christ's Hierarch Nicholas appeared to Peter for the third time—not in a dream-vision, as before, but while he was awake, and not alone, but together with St. Simeon the God-receiver.

"Take courage, brother Peter," said the Hierarch, "and lay aside your sorrow; tell our common advocate and my fellow-intercessor of your vows, and render thanks to him after God."

Peter lifted his eyes and saw the venerable St. Simeon, surrounded by radiance, with a golden staff in his hand and clad in the Old Testament priestly ephod.[14] At the sight of this wondrous elder, Peter was filled with fear. St. Simeon said to him: "Are you the one who earnestly entreated brother Nicholas to free you from your bonds?"

Peter could scarcely open his mouth for fear and answer St. Simeon:

"I am, servant of God—the one who has gained you also as an advocate before God."

14. The ephod was the upper garment of the high priest, consisting of two pieces of cloth woven of gold, fine linen, and wool of three colors: hyacinth, purple, and scarlet; the pieces of cloth were joined on the shoulders by two shoulder-pieces, on which the names of the tribes of Israel shone upon 12 stones; below, the ends of the ephod were tied together with ribbons. The ephod of ordinary priests was of plain linen.

"Will you fulfil your vow," St. Simeon said to him, "to become a monk and lead a virtuous life?"

"Yes, Master," Peter replied, "with God's help I shall fulfil it."

The saint said:

"If you promise to do this, then you may leave this place unhindered and go wherever you wish: no obstacle can hold you here."

Then Peter showed the saint his feet, bound in iron; and as soon as St. Simeon touched the fetters with his golden staff, the iron melted at once, as wax melts in fire. After this Peter stood up and, seeing the prison open, went out and followed Sts. Simeon and Nicholas. When they were already outside the city, Peter, reflecting upon his situation, said:

"Can all that I see be happening in a dream?"

Then St. Simeon turned to him and said:

"Why do you regard the mercy of God, plainly wrought for you, as a dream? Do you not see clearly where you are and whom you are following?"

Having said this, St. Simeon entrusted Peter to St. Nicholas, and Peter followed the Hierarch. When day came, St. Nicholas asked Peter:

"Have you taken anything to eat on the journey?"

"No, sir, I have taken nothing," Peter replied. Then St. Nicholas commanded him to enter a garden that lay not far from that place, and said:

"There you will see a man who will give you fruit. Take as much as you wish for the journey, and follow me."

Peter did indeed meet a man in the garden, who supplied him with fruit. Having taken it, Peter again followed St. Nicholas, in whose company he soon reached the Greek land. Then St. Nicholas said to Peter: "Behold, brother, you are in your own land, and have time at liberty to fulfil your vow. Fulfil it soon, lest you fall once more into the prison of Samara."

After these words Christ's Hierarch Nicholas became invisible. Peter gave praise to God and to his advocates, St. Nicholas and St. Simeon, and desired to fulfil his intention without delay. He did not go to his house to see his relatives, but set out for Old Rome[15], in order to "pay his vows unto the Most High" (Prov. 7:14) and fulfil all that his lips had spoken in the days of his sorrow. Christ's Hierarch Nicholas took Peter under his protection and never left him anywhere; and just as before, when Peter travelled from Arabia to Greece, he accompanied him visibly, so also during his journey from Greece to Italy he remained with him invisibly. Christ's Hierarch constantly watched over him, showing him kindness as a loving father does his child, or as a merciful tutor, watchful guardian, and unfailing protector.

When Peter was approaching Rome, St. Nicholas appeared to the pope at night in a dream-vision, holding a man by the hand. Pointing him out to the pope, he related in order how he had freed him from the prison of Samara, and also mentioned that this man had promised to receive the tonsure at the tomb of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles. The Hierarch told him the man's name and commanded the pope to receive him and fulfil his desire soon. When he awoke and reflected on the vision, the pope went to the church of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, wishing also to see in waking life the man whom he had seen in his dream. But since it was a Sunday, many people had gathered in the church, and the pope could not pick out from the great assembly the man he sought. After searching for a long while, the pope cried aloud:

"Peter, who came from the Greek land, whom St. Nicholas delivered from prison in Samara—come to me!"

Peter immediately came out of the crowd, approached the pope, and, falling at his feet, said:

"Here I am, your servant, Master."

Peter expressed to the pope his amazement that he had called him, Peter, by name, although the pope had never known or even seen him, and Peter himself had told no one of his deliverance.

15. This was the name given to Rome, situated on the river Tiber in Italy, in distinction from New Rome, that is, Constantinople.

The pope answered him:

"Do not wonder at this, Peter: the great Hierarch Nicholas told me everything concerning you."

After this, the pope lovingly received Peter and tonsured him at the Apostle's tomb, as he had promised. After the tonsure, the pope kept Peter with him for a considerable time, teaching him and guiding him in the way of salvation; then, by God's command, he sent him away from Rome with these words:

"Go, child, wherever God may will to direct you. May His mercy be with you, guiding you on your way and preserving you from the wiles of the devil."

Blessed Peter fell at the pope's feet and said:

"Farewell—farewell, venerable father; farewell, disciple of Christ and companion of my surety, St. Nicholas, and pray for me, a sinner."

Having received the pope's blessing and taken leave of all the clergy, Peter departed from Rome, hoping in God's intercession and desiring to return to the Greek land. When he reached the seashore, he saw a ship bound eastward, went aboard, and set sail. The wind was favourable, and the voyage began well.

They sailed for a long time without stopping, and only a shortage of bread compelled the sailors to put in near a certain village. The sailors then went to one of the houses in the village to bake bread, and found the master of the house and all his household sick. There they baked bread; and, as they tasted it, they said to one of their number: "Take a warm loaf and carry it to the ship for the helmsman and the father."

Hearing mention of the father, the master of the house asked the sailors what father was sailing with them. The sailors told him that the monk Peter was travelling with them from Rome.

"I beg you, my lords," the master of the house then entreated the sailors, "persuade that father to come to my house, pray for us who are sick, and bless us. For you see that we are almost dying from this terrible illness."

The sailors set out and reported this to the Father. Peter at first, out of humility and not wishing to reveal himself, refused to go to that man; then he went, persuaded by entreaties and moved by love for man-

kind, for he knew that death was indeed near to the man in question. Entering the door of the house, he said: "Peace to this house and to those who dwell in it" (cf. Mt. 10:12). At Peter's word the master was at once healed of his grievous sickness, and, feeling himself well, he quickly rose from his bed of sickness as if from sleep, and, with tears of gratitude, fell at the feet of the Venerable Father, kissing them. All who saw the miraculous healing were struck with awe and glorified God. The master, who had received healing, took the Venerable Father by the hand and went with him through all the beds where the sick lay. The Venerable Father signed each of the sick with the sign of the Cross, and they were healed of their infirmity. After this, St. Peter hastened back to the ship, where all who were on board bowed to him as to a great servant of God. The man who had been healed, together with all his household, took bread, wine and oil and came to the ship to give thanks to the Venerable Father for the healing he had received. The Saint praised his zeal, but bade him give thanks not to him but to God; he did not wish to accept the offerings. Then the man, falling at the feet of the Venerable Father with tears, said: "Beloved servant of Christ, if you do not accept this small offering from our hands, there will be no joy in our house."

At this, the sailors too begged the Venerable Father to take the gifts. Only then did the Venerable Father reluctantly consent to receive them; then, after blessing him, he dismissed the man and those who had come with him, and gave what had been brought to the sailors, tasting nothing of it himself. In the further voyage the Venerable Peter's food was an *ungia* of bread, and that only in the evening; his drink was a small cup of sea (bitter) water, which the Lord transformed for him into fresh water.

Once the Venerable Peter dozed off and in a vision saw the Most Pure Lady, the Virgin Theotokos, shining brighter than the sun with the light of heavenly glory, and beside Her St. Nicholas standing before Her in awe. St. Nicholas, pointing to Peter, said to the Theotokos: "Lady! Thou didst deign to free Thy servant from grievous bonds; Thou Thyself show him the place where he may end the time of his life."

"On Mount Athos[16]," answered the Theotokos, "he shall have rest. This place is My lot, given Me by My Son and God, so that here those who have renounced the turmoil of the world and have taken up spiritual labors according to their strength, calling upon My name with faith and love, may pass this temporal life without sorrow and, for the sake of their God-pleasing deeds, inherit eternal life. I love that place very much and desire to increase the order of monks, from whom the mercy of My Son and God shall never depart, if they keep the saving commandments. I shall extend the monastic dwellings on that mountain to the south and to the north, and the monks shall possess this mountain from sea to sea, and their name shall be glorified throughout the whole world; I shall be the protection of those who patiently labor in fasting on Mount Athos."

Such a vision was vouchsafed to the Venerable Peter. Rising from sleep, he gave thanks and praise to Christ God, to His Most Pure Mother and to the great Father Nicholas. The ship, with a favorable wind, sailed swiftly. But as soon as they drew near the edge of Mount Athos, the ship stood still, although the wind swelled the sails and the place was deep. Then the sailors began to ask one another in terror: “What does this mean?”

Peter, seeing their perplexity, said:

"Children, tell me, what is this place called?"

"This is Mount Athos," the sailors told him.

“I think that the ship has stood still for my sake,” said the Saint to them. “Take me to the shore and leave me there. If you do not do this, you will not sail from here.”

The sailors, unwilling to resist the will of God, with sorrow parted from the holy Father. They drew near the shore, and, bringing the

16. Mount Athos (Athos), in Greek, the Holy Mountain: a narrow, mountainous peninsula jutting into the Archipelago (the Aegean Sea), known as the center of monastic life for the Greek East. Monastic life appeared here in ancient times, though somewhat later than in Syria and Palestine. For the Russian Church, Athos had great significance until the seventeenth century. Here the father of Russian monasticism, Venerable Anthony, was tonsured; from here the Studite Typikon was brought by Venerable Theodosius for his (Kiev Caves) monastery, and from there it passed, according to the chronicler, to other monasteries as well; and here, in the rich monastic libraries, our monks who went to Athos received the broadest religious education available at that time (for example, Venerable Nilus of Sora).

Saint out of the ship, they left him there, saying with weeping and sobbing:

"Today we are losing a great protection and help."

“God is loving toward mankind,” the Saint consoled them. “He is present everywhere and fills all things; He will be your Companion and will keep you from all evil.”

Having said this, the Venerable Father gave the sailors a farewell greeting in the Lord, signed the ship with the sign of the Precious Cross, blessed them all and dismissed them in peace on their way. He himself went into the rocky places, passing through many marshes, precipices and forests, until he found for his dwelling one very dark cave, where there were many reptiles and even demons. How many afflictions the Venerable Father endured there from the demons, and how many calamities he bore, cannot be told. Here we recall, for edification, only some of them.

The Venerable Peter, settling in the aforementioned cave, spent day and night in prayer, refusing food entirely for two weeks. The devil could not bear such ascetic endurance: he gathered all his hosts and, arming them as for war with arrows and bows, swords and spears, entered the cave in fury, with a terrible and mighty outcry, desiring to drive the Saint out of it. Then some of the demons, straining their bows, frightened the Saint with arrows, others with spears; some, drawing their swords, meant to pierce his ribs; and some hurled large stones with such force that the earth shook and the cave might collapse. The Venerable Father, not expecting to remain alive, only repeated: "I shall die here, if so it pleases my God."

Then, lifting his eyes on high and raising his hands, he cried out thus: “Most Holy Theotokos, Virgin Mary, help me, Thy servant.”

As soon as the demons heard the name of the Theotokos, terrible and dreadful for them but sweet and dear for us, they at once vanished with a clamor, while the Saint, calling aloud at the same time upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—“Lord Jesus Christ, forsake me not”—drove off the fleeing ones as with a scourge or a sling. From then on the snares of the demons ceased for a time, and St. Peter, abiding in peace, glorified God and the Most Pure Theotokos. In the first period of his

dwelling on the mountain, the Venerable Father's food was the bread which he had taken in small quantity from the ship, and afterwards, when the bread ran out, the wild herbs of the desert and the fruits of wild trees growing on that mountain. So St. Peter sustained himself until the Angel began to bring him manna from heaven, of which we shall speak later. Now let us proceed in order.

After fifty days had passed from the aforementioned hostile assault, the devil again armed himself, with his numerous force, against the invincible warrior of Christ, as he had done the first time. For this purpose the devil caused every beast and every creeping reptile that were on that mountain to come to the cave where the Venerable Father dwelt; and he himself came there with his companions, likewise transformed into various beasts and reptiles. Then something terrible and dreadful was revealed: some of the beasts crawled at the Saint's feet, others hissed with a dreadful voice, and some, opening their jaws and rushing upon the Saint, seemed as if they would swallow him alive. The Venerable Father, signing himself with the sign of the Cross and calling upon the name of Christ God and the Most Pure Theotokos, destroyed their power and drove them far from himself, rejoicing and exulting in God, his Savior.

The Venerable Father had to pass the first year of his hermit life in frequent struggles with the demons. Then the devil began to tempt the Venerable Father by other means.

Thus he took the form of one of Peter's servants, who had attended him when he was a voivode in the world. In the likeness of this servant the devil came to the Venerable Father and fell before him, wishing to kiss the saint, though he was full of abomination. Then, weeping, he began to speak: "We have heard, our lord, how you were taken in war, led away to Samara, and there cast into a dreadful prison; and how God, through the prayers of our father St. Nicholas, freed you from that prison and brought you to the land of the Greeks. Learning this, we, your household, weeping and sobbing, sought you everywhere, passing through many cities and villages and inquiring after you. Not finding you and not knowing where you were, we offered fervent prayers with tears to St. Nicholas, that he might reveal to us where you,

our hidden treasure, dwell. St. Nicholas, a swift helper to all, did not despise our prayers, but revealed everything about you to us, and we, your servants, rejoiced. I, outstripping all the others, hastened to you, my master; rise, and return to your house, that all who desire to see your face may behold you and glorify God, who wondrously delivered you from bonds and captivity. As for the silence, do not grieve, for there too are monasteries and suitable places for the silence of hermits, and you may settle in whatever monastery you wish. Moreover, judge for yourself in all justice: which does God love more of the two, the solitary life in the desert, in the gorges of the mountains, which benefits only the hermit himself, or the life of a God-pleasing and God-inspired man, who by his teaching turns many to God and guides them on the path of salvation? Truly the second is better, as God Himself testifies in Holy Scripture: 'If thou shalt bring forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth' (cf. Jer. 15:19). For you know that in our city many have sunk into the depths of passions and need a man who is able to call them to repentance. Greater reward will be appointed to you by God, my lord, if you, coming, turn them to God. And why do you also disdain us, your servants, who love you with all our heart, withdrawing from us and hiding in the desert?"

The demon spoke this and much that was similar with tears, so that the saint was somewhat disturbed; and, shedding tears, he said to him: "It was not a man nor an Angel who led me here, but God Himself and the Most Pure Theotokos; and unless they command me to leave this place, I will not depart from it."

The demon, hearing the name of God and of the Theotokos, immediately vanished. The saint marveled at the snares of the demons, but, signing himself with the Cross and fixing his mind on God, he remained in peace.

After seven years the cunning enemy again transformed himself into a bright Angel and, with a drawn weapon in his hand, standing near the cave, called out:

"Peter, servant of Christ, come to me, and I will announce to you good tidings."

"Who are you," the saint answered, "who wish to announce good tidings to me?"

"I am the commander of the Lord's host," answered the cunning deceiver, "sent to you. Take courage, be strong, rejoice and be glad, for a glorious throne and an unfading crown are prepared for you by God. Now leave this place and go into the world, that you may benefit many. For the spring of water near you has dried up by God's command, so that all the beasts that frightened you may perish from lack of water."

Saying this, the cunning enemy sent another demon to stop, by God's permission, the course of the stream. But St. Peter, in his humility, answered the flattering words of the devil thus:

"Who am I, like a stinking dog, that the commander of the Lord's host should appear to me?"

"Do not be surprised at this, servant of the Lord," answered the demon. "At this time you have surpassed Moses, and Elijah, and Daniel, and Job: Moses and Elijah you have surpassed by fasting, Daniel by the reptiles and beasts whose mouths you have stopped, Job by your patience; therefore you shall be called great in heaven. Rise and look: the water has already dried up. Go to the monasteries which are in the world; I will be with you and through you will save many, says the Lord Almighty."

"Let it be known to you," answered the saint to the demon, "that I will not depart from here until my Helper, the Most Holy Theotokos, and the warm intercessor in my afflictions, St. Nicholas the Hierarch, shall show me so."

The demon, hearing the name of the Theotokos and of St. Nicholas the Hierarch, immediately vanished. The saint, recognizing the deceit of the devil, and together with it his powerlessness, turned to God, saying: "O Lord Jesus Christ, my God! This my enemy, like a roaring lion, walks, seeking to devour me (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8); but Thou with Thy sovereign hand dost guard me, Thy servant. I thank Thee, for Thou hast not withdrawn from me; I pray to Thee, most merciful Master, forsake me not to the end."

After that day, at night, in a dream-vision, the swift helper of Christians, the Lady full of love for mankind, the Most Holy Virgin

Theotokos, appeared to the Venerable Peter together with St. Nicholas the Hierarch, and said:

"Now do not fear the snares of the devil, for the Lord is with you. The Angel of the Lord will visit you in the morning and bring you manna for food, for by God's command he is to bring it to you every forty days throughout your life, for your sustenance."

Showing the manna to St. Peter, the Most Pure Theotokos said:

"Here is this food, which shall be brought every forty days of your life."

Having said this and bestowed peace upon St. Peter, the Lady departed from him. Peter, falling prostrate, kissed the place where the feet of the Theotokos and of St. Nicholas had stood. In the morning there appeared the Angel of God, as the Theotokos had foretold; he brought Peter heavenly food, gave it to the Venerable Father, and departed. Then Peter gave thanks to God and the Most Pure Mother of God, then partook of the manna brought by Angelic hands, and was so strengthened by it that he could remain without food for forty days. After this, at the end of each forty days, the Angel brought the Venerable Father manna, and St. Peter was sustained by it for forty days. Thus the Venerable Father spent fifty-three years in silence, fasting and prayer. During this time all the snares of the devil ceased, which at first had especially often troubled Peter: apparitions, delusions, fears were driven away from him by God's help. Having lived on the mountain for so many years, the Venerable Father did not see a human face; he had no clothing to cover the nakedness of his body, and nothing of what is necessary to human nature; only the sky was his covering and the earth his bed. In summer the heat of the sun scorched him, in winter he froze from the cold. All this he endured for the love of God and for the future reward.

When the Lord willed to reveal His servant to men, then, by His special providence, the following circumstance occurred. A hunter, taking his bow and quiver, set out to hunt on Mount Athos. Passing rocky places and deep valleys crossed by high and frequent hills, he came to the place where the Venerable Peter led the Angelic life. As the hunter drew near this place, he saw a great stag come out of the forest, which,

playing, ran before him in the distance. Seeing the beautiful stag, the hunter pursued it, striving to shoot it, all day long, until the stag, by God's providence, reached the cave of the Venerable Father, over which it stood motionless. The hunter, following the stag, then saw, to the right of the beast, a naked man with a thick beard and hair reaching to his loins, his body overgrown with it like that of wild beasts. Seeing the Venerable Father, the hunter was terribly frightened and ran back. Then St. Peter, noticing that the hunter had turned back, called out to him in a loud voice, saying: "Brother! Why are you afraid and fleeing from me? For I am a man like you, not a demonic apparition, as you thought. Return and come to me, and I will tell you all about myself, for the Lord has sent you here."

The hunter, hearing the voice, stopped and, in fear, approached the Venerable Father who had called him. The saint encouraged the hunter, embraced and kissed him in the Lord, and, sitting down, began to converse with him, relating in detail everything about himself: how, being a voivode, he had been seized in war, how he had been confined in the Samara prison, how by the appearance of St. Nicholas and of St. Simeon the God-receiver he had been delivered from bonds, how he had come to Rome and returned from there, how he had settled on this mountain, how he had struggled, what he ate, and how many years he had lived in solitude; in a word, he told the hunter his whole life. The hunter, listening to the saint's account, marveled, was struck with awe, and said with tenderness: "Now I understand that the Lord has visited me through Your mercy: He has granted me to behold His hidden servant, you, Father. From this day on I shall always remain with you, servant of God."

"Let it not be so, child," the Venerable Father said to him in reply. "First return to your house and test yourself: can you accomplish the ascetic and hermit labors? Test yourself thus: abstain from meat, wine, cheese, and oil, and above all from your wife; distribute your property to the poor, pray diligently and fast, examining yourself with a contrite soul. Spend a year thus, and after it has passed come to me, and whatever is pleasing to God, that you will have to fulfil."

Saying this, the saint gave the hunter, as a pledge, a prayer and a blessing. Then, sending him back to his own people, he said to him as a parting word: "Child! Go in peace, and reveal the mystery entrusted to you to no one: a treasure known to many may be stolen."

The hunter bowed to the saint and withdrew, glorifying and thanking God that He had granted him to see in the flesh and to converse with such a servant of His. Returning home, the hunter did all that the saint had told him.

After a year had passed, the hunter, together with two monks and his brother, set out by ship and came to a halt opposite the place where St. Peter had dwelt. Disembarking, they went straight into the upper desert. On the way to the place where the saint lived, the hunter, moved by ardent love, outran them all and hastened to the cave. He found the Venerable Father lying dead upon the ground: his hands were folded crosswise upon his breast, his eyes were decently closed, and the rest of his body was honorably and neatly composed[17]. Seeing this, the hunter was struck with terror, and he began to weep bitterly over the body of the Venerable One. When his companions came and saw such a wondrous corpse and their friend weeping over it, they asked: "Who is this dead man you have found, and why do you weep so bitterly over him?"

Then the hunter, with tears and sobbing, told them in detail the life of the Venerable One, as he himself had heard it from the lips of the Venerable One the previous summer. The account of the wonderful deeds of the departed Father moved the hearts of those who listened: they wept bitter tears, grieving that they had not been counted worthy to see alive so great a servant of God and to converse with him. The hunter's brother, possessed by an unclean spirit, was healed at once upon touching the relics of the servant of God. The demon threw him to the ground with a loud cry: "O Peter! Is it not enough for you that you drove me out of my den; and now you are driving me out of my present dwelling as well!"

With these words he came out of the man's mouth like smoke, and the man lay as though dead. After a short time he rose up, sound in

body and soul, and said to his brother: "I thank you, brother, for you have brought me here for my own good." Then, drawing near to the relics of the Venerable One, the healed man kissed them with joy and gratitude. After this they took the honored relics of the servant of God, carried them to the shore, and, placing them in their boat, conveyed them to a fairly well-known village that lay under Macedonian rule. Hearing of the many healings flowing from the relics of the saint, the bishop of the city, together with his clergy, took the healing remains of St. Peter, transferred them with honor to his episcopal see, placed them with aromatic spices in a precious reliquary, and committed them to burial in the church, after three days and three nights of public praise to the Most Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, God, glorified by all creation, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having put away human company, thou didst dwell in stone caves and clefts, through divine desire and love of thy Lord, O Peter, from Whom thou didst receive the crown; intercede unceasingly that we be saved.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day, the repose of the Venerable Arsenius of Konevets, Wonderworker of Novgorod, in the year 1447.

On this same day, the repose of the Venerable Onuphrius of Malsk in the year 1492.

On this same day, the memory of the Venerable Onuphrius and Auxentius of Vologda, who labored at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century.

On this same day, the memory of the Venerable Vassian and Jonah of Pertominsk, who drowned in the White Sea in the year 1561.

17. St. Peter reposed about 734.

NOTES

3857. It is not known with certainty, St. Demetrius of Rostov observes, which Venerable Paphnutius it was who found the Venerable Onuphrius in the desert, for in the Church histories and in the Paterikons we meet several saints bearing the name Paphnutius. One Paphnutius was bishop of the Upper Thebaid, one of the Egyptian countries, who suffered in the times of the impious Roman emperor Maximian (305–311), and his right eye was gouged out. Afterwards, in the reign of the great Constantine (306–337), he was present at the first Ecumenical Council, convened in the city of Nicaea (in 325). When the holy fathers wished to establish as law that priests and deacons should not have wives, he stood up in the midst of the council and loudly declared: "Do not lay a heavy burden and yoke upon the ministers of the Church." And this Paphnutius opposed all the holy fathers in this matter most zealously, although he himself was a virgin from his mother's womb. No one could say anything against him, and therefore the question was left to the free decision of each; consequently the presbyters and deacons of the Eastern Church to this day accept blessed marriage. This is related by the Greek historians Socrates (book 1, ch. 8), Sozomen (book 1, ch. 22), and Nicephorus (book 8, ch. 19). The memory of this Paphnutius is placed in the Roman Menologies on the 11th day of the month of September; in the Russian Menologies, as well as in the Prologues, he is nowhere commemorated. Another was Paphnutius the Martyr, who also labored in the Egyptian deserts and suffered in the reign of Diocletian (284–305), having been crucified on a date palm. An account of him is found in the Prologue for the 25th day of the month of September, from Alexandria, an Egyptian city, the father of the Venerable Euphrosyne, whose memory is celebrated on the 25th day of September. Another was Paphnutius, likewise an Egyptian, who converted to repentance the harlot Thais, whose memory is celebrated on the 8th day of October. Another was Paphnutius, a disciple of the Venerable Macarius of Alexandria, who tells how the beast hyena brought its blind whelp to the Venerable Macarius for healing. Another was Paphnutius, surnamed Cephalas, mentioned in the book of Rufinus (a historian of the 4th century), *Verba seniorum*, and in the book of Palladius, the *Lausiac History* (ch. 91), who walked for eighty years in one garment. In the Prologues there are also words about several other Paphnutiuses; thus on the 25th of November there is an account of the monk Paphnutius, how he saved a robber by drinking a cup of wine; on the 9th day of March there is an account of the monk Paphnutius, who prayed God to make known to him to whom he was like, and he received the revelation that he was like the elder of a village; about this same Paphnutius, under the 27th of the same month, there is an account that he was like a piper. Concerning that Paphnutius who found the Venerable Onuphrius, we have no information whatever.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 13

13 июня

New Calendar June 13 · Old Calendar June 26 (civil dates)

Passion of the Holy Martyr Akylina

Страдание святой мученицы Акилины

In the Palestinian city of Vivlos,[1] where Christians have been found since the time of the holy Apostles, there lived a Christian named Eutolmius, whose honorable marriage the Lord blessed with the birth of a little daughter, who was named Akylina. Four months after the infant's birth, her mother brought her to Bishop Euphalius, who admitted the child to the catechumenate, signing her with the sign of the Cross; then, after two months had passed, he baptized the maiden. In the second year of her life Akylina lost her father, who had departed to the heavenly dwellings, and she remained in the care of her mother; the latter raised her daughter, instilling in her the rules of a godly, Christian life, and by the age of seven the maiden had thoroughly made these teachings her own. As she grew older, Akylina was more and more filled with the Holy Spirit, adorned with the grace of Christ, and she was so penetrated by it that, in the small and still imperfect years of her youth, she bravely overcame, as a thing of no account, the decrees of the impious emperors concerning the compulsory worship of idols for all. It is of this that we are now to speak.

When Akylina, who unceasingly called upon God in prayer, had reached the age of ten, in the seventh year of the reign of Diocletian,[3876] there assumed authority over the land of Palestine a certain Volusian, more a child of the devil than a man. Not acknowledging the true God, the Creator of all that exists, Volusian with insatiable malice began to persecute the pious followers of Christ the Savior, and many valiant

1. Byblos, or Biblus, a city properly in Phoenicia.

soldiers of Christ, who bravely endured sufferings, were granted unfading crowns.

In those days the blessed maiden Akylina, filled with the knowledge of God, often addressed her peers with this exhortation:

"What benefit do you derive from honoring mute and insensible idols? Do you not know that those who worship them in faith flatter themselves with an idle, destructive, diabolical hope? These are dead and powerless gods; can they bestow benefits?"

"Whom, then, do you worship as God?" asked her companions of Akylina.

She answered:

"I worship and honor the one God, worthy of worship, who created heaven, earth, the sea, and all that fills them. From the beginning He bestows His benefits upon all who believe in Him and hope in Him, and, as the Almighty, He will pour out His blessings upon those who call upon Him until the end of the world."

"We have heard," her interlocutors objected to Akylina, "that the God of whom you preach died on the cross, crucified by the Jews."

"Death has no power over Him," said the saint in reply, "for He not only rose Himself, but also raised the dead, redeeming them with His honorable Blood. Seeing that man had turned aside from the true path, He was pleased to become incarnate, to become man, so that, destroying the delusion of the devil and bestowing upon us grace together with truth, He might raise up and set the fallen human race upon the path of salvation."

"But who is He of whom they say that He was crucified?" the companions continued to press Akylina.

"The Savior of all, who loved the human race," she answered. "He willingly endured sufferings, so that from the old man, by water and the Spirit,[2] He might make a new man; He mounted the Cross, desiring to save not only those living on earth, but also to free from the bonds of death those held in Hades; by His three-day Resurrection He pro-

2. That is, by the water of baptism, which regenerates to a new life, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit strengthens in it (cf. Jn. 3:5–6).

claimed, as an unfailing truth, that at His second coming there will come a resurrection of the dead for all."

"But if," wondered those who questioned Akylina, "He of whom you speak has bestowed such great benefits upon the world, why do the Jews, His own kinsmen, not honor Him as God?"

"This people," the holy maiden explained, "has always turned aside from the right path; having a soul stubborn in its hardness and blinded by malice, it usually rejects what is true and righteous. That is why the Jews rejected the One who did them good, handing Him over to Pilate to be condemned to death by crucifixion."

Such conversations of the blessed Akylina with her companions were often heard by one of the slaves of the governor of the province, named Nicodemus, who finally reported to his master that in the city there lived a maiden who called the gods, insignificant in her opinion, demons, and who did not obey the decrees of the emperors concerning the honoring of these gods, and who, by preaching about some crucified God, turned some away from the religion of their fathers. Hearing this, the governor sent servants to seize the maiden. The holy martyr Akylina was taken for suffering in the second year of Volusian's rule over the province, in her twelfth year of life. When she was brought before the impious tribunal, Volusian, looking at her, asked:

"Is it not you who oppose the emperors' decrees, leading others astray so that they do not honor our gods but worship the Crucified Man? Are you unaware of the emperors' command to subject those who confess the name of Jesus to every kind of torment, ending in death? Therefore renounce the Crucified One and offer to the immortal gods the honor and sacrifices due to them, so that we are not compelled to hand you over to torments."

"If you, governor,"[3] answered the holy Aquilina, "condemn me to bitter torments, you will thereby grant me the incorruptible crown which I hope to receive from my Savior, since I confess His name, which I will never deny, even amid the most cruel tortures. So do not

3. That is, the governor of a province.

delay; devise for me whatever torments you wish, and you will be convinced by deed that I, armed with faith, do not fear your torments."

Then Volusian began to exhort the holy maiden with kindness:

"Seeing your early youth and beauty, I pity you, for if I hand you over to torments, your unformed limbs will at once be shattered; the cruel torturers will then deliver you to a bitter death after savage torments, and in your youth you will lose your life, and the Christian God whom you confess will not help you."

"I do not ask for your pity," Akylina replied to Volusian, "for you, thinking to show me mercy, harm me all the more by trying to tear me away from the true God. I beg you, do not pity me, but deal with me with the most merciless cruelty, and then from my endurance you will learn that those who hope in Christ are not overcome."

The governor, convinced that no exhortations could make the servant of Christ renounce the confession of Jesus, ordered her to be struck on the face, saying:

"Here is the beginning of the torments; is it sweet and pleasant to you?"

"Inhuman tormentor!" exclaimed Akylina, "since you have dared to strike the face made in the image of God, know that He whose image I bear will not forgive you on the day of His judgment."

"I think," said the judge, "that our great gods, who now hold in their hands the salvation of the whole world, will also have power over the salvation of all in the age to come."

After these words he ordered the maiden to be stripped, and two soldiers were to strike her while she was stretched out, adding to the torture such words:

"Where is your God now, Akylina, of whom you said that He would not grant me forgiveness at His judgment? Let Him come here and deliver you from my hands."

Then Volusian commanded the strikers to stop and said to the holy Akylina:

"Listen to me, who wish you well: abandon your madness, and if you wish to be spared torments, renounce the Christian heresy. Has even one of those who trusted in Him who did not save Himself when He

was crucified come out of my hands delivered? Which of those who worship Jesus have our emperors left alive on earth?"

"Do you really think, merciless executioner," answered the holy Akylina, "that I feel the torments you inflict on me? Know that my God will grant me strength and endurance far greater than those contrivances which you devise against me at the prompting of your father, the devil."

Volusian, bewildered by such courage in the blessed maiden, said to her:

"I will leave you several days for reflection, so that, after sober consideration, you may bow down to the gods and thereby preserve your life, and at the same time receive from the emperors a worthy reward."

"And for how many days do you grant me respite?" asked the holy Akylina.

"For as many as you wish," answered Volusian.

"Then I ask you," said the martyr, "not to leave me even an hour for such reflection; from my childhood I have been taught to worship only the One God, coming to Him who, dwelling in heaven, looks with merciful eye upon His earthly children."

Seeing the maiden's steadfast love for God, Volusian said to himself: my exhortations and labors are in vain! And in irritation he commanded them to pierce the saint's head through the ears with red-hot iron rods. As the red-hot rods passed through the maiden's brain, it flowed out with the blood through her nostrils. But even in such great sufferings the martyr prayed to God: "O my Lord, Jesus Christ! You who from the days of my childhood have guided me, enlightened the secret thoughts of my heart with the rays of Your truth, and strengthened me in the battle against the devil by Your mighty and invincible power; You who reveal to believers the depths of true and great wisdom, bring my struggle to its end and keep the lamp of my virginity unquenched, that I, together with the wise virgins, may enter Your pure chamber and there be counted worthy to offer glory to You, the Fulfiller of my desires."

After this prayer, St. Akylina, from her unbearable sufferings, fell to the ground as one dead. The proconsul, thinking that she had indeed

died, ordered her to be cast outside the city to be devoured by dogs; he did not consider the martyr, as a transgressor of the imperial commands and a blasphemer of the Roman gods, worthy of ordinary burial. And St. Akylina lay all day, cast down by the roadside. At midnight an Angel of the Lord appeared to the blessed maiden, and, touching her, said: "Arise and be whole! Go and rebuke Volusian, for both he himself and his intention are nothing before God."

Immediately St. Akylina rose up unharmed and, offering praise to God, said: "I thank Thee, Creator of my life, who restorest to me my health and deliverest Thy servants from impiety. Thou, O Lord, art everlasting, and there is no God beside Thee. Of one thing I humbly beseech Thee: when I have finished the course of my suffering, crown me with the crown of Thy glory, that, enjoying the fulfilment of Thy promises, I may then sing Thy praises among the choir of saints who suffered for the confession of Thy name."

The Lord from on high answered the prayer of His humble handmaid: "Go; what thou askest shall be fulfilled." Hearing this, the blessed maiden went into the city with a feeling of inexpressible joy. When she reached the city gates, they opened of their own accord; guided by the Angel of the Lord, St. Akylina reached the palace of Volusian and, entering it without hindrance, stood before the sleeping proconsul. The latter, awakening, noticed the one standing before him; in terror he called his cubicularii[4] and asked them: "Who is this standing before my eyes?"

The cubicularii, raising their lamps, said: "Without doubt it is Akylina, whom, after her death from tortures, you ordered to be cast to the dogs to devour."

The proconsul was even more terrified on hearing the cubicularii; nevertheless, he commanded that the maiden be kept under guard until morning.

With the coming of day, Volusian again demanded St. Akylina before his tribunal. He began with a question addressed to the maiden:

"Is it you, Akylina?"

4. That is, bedchamber attendants.

"Can it be that you, lawless one, having the eyes of your soul blinded by your father the devil, do not now see even with your bodily eyes?" asked the blessed maiden in turn.

"Indeed, I, the servant of the Lord standing before you, am Akilina."

In great perplexity, rubbing his eyes, the proconsul reasoned with himself: "What tortures can harm her, if she has not died, despite the fact that the brain flowed out of her burning head?"

Thinking this, he issued the following sentence concerning the beheading of the maiden: "Akilina, the defender of the impious Christian heresy, young in years but a great sorceress, who does not honour the immortal gods and does not obey the imperial commands, we have for a long time diligently admonished; yet we could not turn her from her madness. Therefore, after many tortures, which did not in the least touch this sorceress, we determine to deliver her to death outside the city by the cutting off of her head."

After the sentence of death, St. Akilina was led to the place of execution; when they reached it, the blessed maiden asked for time to pray. Lifting her eyes to heaven, the martyr prayed in these words:

"Almighty Lord and my God! I thank Thee, who hast brought me to the end of my struggle. I praise Thee, my God and Creator of all, that I have not fruitlessly completed the course of my martyr's path. I bless Thee, Maker of all, that Thou hast put the tormentor to shame and dost count me worthy of the incorruptible crown. Receive my spirit in peace, that, leaving the earthly, I may attain the heavenly."

In answer to the blessed one's prayer, a voice was heard from heaven: "Come, chosen virgin, who hast trampled down the tormentor's rage and blunted by thy struggle the devil's sting, and receive the reward prepared for thee."

And immediately, following the voice, the holy martyr of Christ fell into the sleep of death before the executioner raised his sword over her head. The executioner, though he saw this, yet not daring to violate the proconsul's command, cut off the head of one already dead with his sword, whereupon from the wound, instead of blood, milk flowed out. The Christians present at the execution took the martyr's relics as a treasure beyond compare: anointing the remains with precious spices

and wrapping them in new linen, they honourably buried them in a tomb in the city of Vivlos itself. And many healings flowed to the sick from the tomb of the holy martyr Akilina, to the glory of Christ our God, who is glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages. Amen.[5]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Having first purified thy soul by the goodness of thy virginity, thou didst ascend by torments to the heights, O all-honourable Akilina, wounded by love for thy Bridegroom Christ, with Whom thou standest and rejoicest among the Angels. Cease not to pray with them for us all.

* * *

Life of Our Holy Father Triphyllius, Bishop of Leucosia

Житие святого отца нашего Трифиллия, епископа Левкусийского

A native of Constantinople, St. Triphyllius received his secular education at Berytus,[6] but he had as his teacher in piety St. Spyridon, Bishop of Trimythous. St. Triphyllius was preordained and foreshown by the Lord Himself to be a bishop: not yet invested with this great dignity, he was revealed in a vision to the emperor Constantius as already a hierarch, as the Life of St. Spyridon relates as follows.

After the death of Constantine the Great, the rule over the Greco-Roman state passed to his sons; when it was divided, the eldest of

5. The holy martyr Akilina died in the year 283, on June 13. Her holy relics, or part of them, were transferred to Constantinople, and her memory was solemnly celebrated in the church of her name. That church burned in 532, in the reign of Justinian, but was restored. Mention of this church is found in the verse prologue of the twelfth century.

6. Berytus in antiquity was a Phoenician harbor; it then passed into the hands of the Egyptians, and Antiochus III took it from the Ptolemies; in 140 B.C. it was destroyed by the Syrian Diodotus Tryphon, but under the Roman emperor Augustus the city was restored again. Caesar Claudius greatly adorned the city, and the emperor Theodosius II made it a metropolis. Under the later emperors Berytus was famed for its school of rhetoric, of politics, and chiefly of law. Today Berytus is Beirut, the principal city of the Turkish-Asiatic vilayet (governor-generalship) of Syria.

them, named Constantius,[3882] received the East to govern. Once it fell to him to visit Antioch,[7] and there he suddenly fell ill so grievously that the sickness did not yield to the efforts of physicians. Then, abandoning hope in the latter, the sick emperor turned in prayer to God, who heals bodies and souls: he earnestly besought Him for healing, and behold, in a dream he saw an Angel, who showed him a whole host of hierarchs, and among them two, standing out from the ranks of the rest as if they were their leaders and chiefs; and the Angel told the emperor that they alone could grant him deliverance from his sickness. Awakening and pondering the vision, the emperor could not recognize which bishops had appeared to him; indeed, how could he know those whose names and places of birth were unknown to him? Especially if one takes into account that one of those shown to him in the episcopal rank was not yet a bishop, but was only to become one. The emperor long puzzled over this and at last came to this wise resolution: gathering to himself bishops from all the surrounding cities, he tried to find among them the two who had been shown to him in the vision, and did not find them. Then the emperor summoned many bishops, even from more distant lands, but among them too the persons he needed were not to be found. After this he sent a decree throughout all the provinces of his empire, commanding the bishops inhabiting them to assemble before him. Such a command, or rather request, of the emperor came also to the regions of Cyprus[8] to Spyridon of Trimythous, to whom God had revealed all that had happened with the emperor. Having gathered, St. Spyridon set out for the emperor, taking with him his disciple Triphyllius, with whom he was shown to the emperor in the vision—St. Triphyllius, as already noted, was not yet a bishop. Having reached Antioch, the travellers went to the emperor. St. Spyridon was poorly clothed, had a date-palm staff in his hands, and on his head a most simple, almost beggarly mitre; on his breast hung a clay vessel in which, according to the custom of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he carried oil from the holy

7. Antioch, the most ancient city of Syria, lies on the river Orontes between the mountain ranges of Lebanon and Taurus; it was founded 300 years B.C.

8. The island of Cyprus lies at the northeastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, near the shores of ancient Phoenicia. Christianity was planted here by the holy Apostle Paul on his first missionary journey.

Cross. Therefore, when he entered the emperor's palace, one of the palace servants, taking the holy bishop for an ordinary beggar, not only laughed at him, not allowing him to go further, but even struck him on the cheek. Being without malice, St. Spyridon, fulfilling the Lord's command, offered the other cheek to the one who struck him. The latter, realizing that the one before him was a bishop, understood his transgression and humbly asked forgiveness, which he received. No sooner had St. Spyridon entered to the emperor than the latter recognized him, recalling the vision he had had; rising from his place, the emperor went up, bowed to the servant of God, and besought the bishop with tears to pray to the Lord for healing from his sickness. The man of God touched the emperor's head, and the latter at once became well, rejoicing in his healing, granted by the Lord through the prayers of the saint. The emperor showed the hierarch great honour and spent that whole day with him in joy, entertaining his good physician. St. Triphyllius, however, greatly marvelled at the glory of the imperial court —the beauty of the palace, the majestic appearance of the seated emperor attended by nobles, the sumptuous garments of the servants, and the other rich and unusual features of palace life. Noticing this, St. Spyridon said to his disciple: "Why do you marvel, brother? Does pride and imperial glory make the emperor more righteous than other Christians? Does not the emperor die in the same way as the last beggar and, like him, yield to the earth? Does he not stand, together with all, before the impartial and terrible Judge? Why then do you regard the temporal as eternal and make the worthless an object of wonder, when one ought to strive after the immaterial and eternal, and love only the unshakable heavenly glory?"

Some time later, Saint Tryphyllius was ordained Bishop of the city of Leucosia on the island of Cyprus. Even as a bishop, however, he did not break off his communion with his father and teacher, Saint Spyridon, and for the good of his soul he often visited him, as the following shows. Once Saint Spyridon was walking from Trimythous to the city of Kirina, and Saint Bishop Tryphyllius accompanied him. As they passed over Mount Pentadactylos and came to a place called Parimna, which, by the beauty of its nature, abounded in gardens and vine-

yards, Saint Tryphyllius, delighted by the nature around him, desired to own some vineyard in Parimna himself, and for a long time he pondered in his soul how he might fulfill his wish. This did not escape the far-seeing eyes of Saint Spyridon: discerning the thoughts of his disciple, he said: "Why, Tryphyllius, do you incessantly dwell on vain things, desiring to possess fields and vineyards, which in truth have no worth and beguile the hearts of men with their illusory value? We have an inalienable possession in heaven, a dwelling not made with hands; seek that, and meanwhile, in thought of God, take delight in the heavenly goods, which do not pass from one to another but remain forever with him who becomes their possessor."

Instruction of this kind brought great benefit to the soul of Saint Tryphyllius, so that afterward, by his life, he became, like the Apostle Paul, a chosen vessel of Christ, filled with countless divine gifts.

The Greek historians Nicephorus[9] and Sozomen[10] further report the following both of Saint Tryphyllius and of Saint Spyridon. Once, for the needs of the Church, a gathering of all the bishops of the island was held on Cyprus. Saint Spyridon and Saint Tryphyllius, a man learned and well read, for in his youth he had studied for a long time at Berytus, were present at this gathering; the fathers of the council therefore asked Saint Tryphyllius to deliver an address to the people in the church. In the course of his sermon he had to cite the words of Christ addressed to the paralytic, recorded by the holy Evangelist Mark: "Arise, take up thy bed" (Mk. 2:11), but Saint Tryphyllius altered the literal words of the Gospel and called the bed a couch: "Arise and take up thy couch." Saint Spyridon, unable to bear the alteration of Christ's words, said to Tryphyllius: "Are you then better than He who said 'bed,' that you are ashamed of His word?"

Immediately after this he openly left the church before everyone. There was nothing blameworthy in this act of Saint Spyridon: being an unlearned man, he shamed Tryphyllius, who took pride in his eloquence, by his rebuke, and taught him humility and meekness.

Saint Tryphyllius pleased God by his life, as the liturgical hymns composed in his honor by the Church bear witness: they affirm that

Saint Tryphyllius had a merciful soul, a pure intention, a guileless heart and right faith, unfeigned love, outstanding feats of virginity, of grace-filled and penitential tears and of fasting that astonished the bodiless; that, going about the surrounding lands, he enlightened by the teaching of Christ, as with the rays of the sun, those darkened by sins.

Having shepherded his flock in love and truth, he departed hence, that there, in heaven, in the host of hierarchs, he might stand before Christ our Savior, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.[11]

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Having received, through the excellence of thy life, the purity of virginity, O Tryphyllius, thou didst appear as the first-throned of Leucosia, and thereby thou didst show thyself a herald and a teacher of divine wisdom. Wherefore we joyfully cry to thee: Rejoice, adornment of hierarchs.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the repose of the Venerable Andronicus of Moscow, in the year 1395.

NOTES

3876. In the reign of Diocletian (284–305) four edicts were issued against Christians. The first was promulgated in February 303. This edict prescribed the destruction of churches and the burning of sacred books; at the same time Christians lost their civil rights, honor, the protection of the laws and their offices; Christian slaves lost the right

9. Nicephorus Callistus, a monk of the Monastery of Holy Wisdom, died about 1350.

10. Sozomen, a church historian of the fifth century.

11. While Bishop of Leucosia, Saint Tryphyllius built a monastery at his mother's expense; he died a very old man about the year 370. His signature is found in the Acts of the Council of Sardica (347). Blessed Jerome, father of the Western Church (d. 420), speaks of Saint Tryphyllius: "Tryphyllius, Bishop of Cyprus, the most eloquent in his age and most famous under Constantius. I have read his commentaries on the Song of Songs; they say he composed many other things as well, which have not come down to us." Saint Tryphyllius wrote the life of his teacher, Saint Spyridon of Trimythous. At the beginning of the twelfth century, our Russian hegumen Daniel, who traveled through the holy places, saw the relics of Saint Tryphyllius on the island of Cyprus.

to freedom if, having obtained it by some circumstance, they remained in Christianity. Soon a second edict was issued, ordering that the presiding bishops of the churches and other clergy be cast into prison; thus this edict concerned clergy alone; the latter were accused before the emperor as instigators of the uprising in Syria and Armenia, which, to the misfortune of Christians, had begun following the appearance of the first edict. In the same year, 303, a third edict followed: all those imprisoned under the second edict were to be compelled to sacrifice, under penalty of torture for resistance. Finally, in 304, the last, fourth edict was published, proclaiming a general persecution of Christians. More Christian blood was shed because of this edict than any other: it remained in force for a full 8 years, until 311, when Emperor Galerius, by a special edict, declared Christianity a "permitted religion." The persecution of Diocletian was the last; in it Christianity, after nearly three centuries of struggle, won its final victory over paganism.

3882. Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, after his father's death received the administration of the East, Asia and Egypt; in 351, 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 Christians to convert into churches; several times he issued a law, under penalty of death, forbidding pagan worship. But by his sympathy for the Arian heresy Constantius greatly increased the church strife of that time: he persecuted orthodox bishops, removed them from their sees and even subjected them to imprisonment; under him the Arians occupied the highest positions in the state. Constantius died in 361 during a campaign against his cousin Julian, who had been proclaimed emperor by the troops in Gaul, where Constantius himself had appointed him commander-in-chief. Gregory of Nazianzus reports that before his death Constantius repented of his persecution of the Orthodox.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 14

14 июня

New Calendar June 14 · Old Calendar June 27 (civil dates)

Life and Miracles of the Holy Prophet Elisha

Житие и чудеса святого пророка Елисея

The holy prophet Elisha was the son of Shaphat, of the tribe of Reuben.[1] He was born in the city of Abel-meholah[2] (3 Kgdms. 19:16), and was a great wonderworker. His very birth was accompanied by miraculous signs: in the city of Shiloh, which lies far from Jerusalem, there stood a golden calf, which the Israelites who had fallen into idolatry worshipped as God and to which they offered sacrifices. At the very hour of Elisha's birth, this lifeless calf cried out so loudly that its roar was heard even in Jerusalem. When everyone marveled greatly at this, a certain priest, filled with the Holy Spirit, said: "The great prophet of God has been born today, and he shall overthrow the idols and crush the mighty!"

When Elisha reached mature age, having spent his life in virginal purity in order to please God the more, God called him to the prophetic ministry. The call came about in this way. One day Elisha was plowing the field with twelve yoke of oxen. The holy prophet Elijah, who at that time was on Mount Horeb[3] in converse with God, received a command from God to anoint Elisha as prophet in his own place. And so, when Elisha was in the field, the holy prophet Elijah drew near to him, laid upon him his mantle[4], and, having conveyed to him the will of the Lord, appointed him a prophet and bade him follow after him. Elisha at once

1. But according to other accounts he was of the tribe of Manasseh.
2. The city of Abel-meholah was situated not far from the river Jordan.
3. Horeb is a mountain in the Arabian desert, the western height of the same mountain range, whose eastern part is formed by Mount Sinai.
4. A mantle (*milot*) is an outer garment, a cloak.

forsook everything and was ready with all zeal to follow the holy prophet of God, Elijah, and only asked his permission to go home for a short time to take leave of his father and mother. At home he took the pair of oxen on which he had been plowing, slaughtered them, broke up the plow for firewood, placed it on the fire, and, roasting the meat over it, made a feast for the people and neighbors who happened to be there. After this, having kissed his father and mother, Elisha immediately followed Elijah and served him, learning from him the knowledge of God's mysteries; by the grace of God he became a prophet, not less than his teacher and mentor, the holy Elijah. When it pleased God to take His servant Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, in a fiery chariot (4 Kgdms. 2:1–15), and to transfer him to paradise, Elijah asked Elisha what gift he desired from God, which he, Elijah, would obtain for him by his prayer.

"Ask," he said, "what I shall do for you before I am taken from you."

Elisha did not ask for anything earthly and temporal, for he, who had left all for God and was poor in spirit, regarding everything as nothing, needed nothing on earth; he did not ask Elijah either for bodily health or for length of days, for, looking forward to the inheritance of eternal life, he did not desire a long sojourn in this temporal life; rather, he asked for the grace of the Holy Spirit, doubled in comparison with that which rested upon the holy Elijah.

"Let it be," he said, "that the gift of prophecy and the gift of wonderworking which are in you be twice as much in me! That I may be able to teach misguided people who have turned aside to the service of Baal with a prophetic word, confirming my instruction by wonderworking, and through this bring them back again to the one true God."

Elijah agreed to what Elisha asked, but on the condition, saying to him: "If you see me taken from you, it shall be so for you." And so, as they went on their way and conversed, a fiery chariot and fiery horses appeared, which separated them from one another, and Elijah was carried up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha looked and cried out: "My father, my father! The chariot of Israel and its horsemen!"[5]

At last, when Elisha could no longer see the fiery chariot, which had gone far away from him together with Elijah on high, he began to weep for him as for a father, rending his garment in two. But then he saw Elijah's mantle let down from above, which covered him, and he received it as a sign of the doubled spirit of Elijah that he had obtained, and found consolation in his grief for him. He kept it by him as a great treasure, or as a precious royal purple, and with this mantle he performed a miracle like that which Elijah had earlier performed. Desiring to cross the river Jordan, he struck the water with the mantle; the water parted, and Elisha crossed on dry ground. The prophetic disciples who lived in Jericho and saw this miracle were convinced that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha, and, coming to him, they bowed down before him.

The holy Elisha came to Jericho and stayed there, in order to remain in it for some time. The inhabitants of the city came to him and said: "The location of our city is good, as you yourself see; but the water is bad, and because of it the land is barren!"

Elisha required that they bring him a new water-jug and pour salt into it. When this had been done, he took the jug and went to the place where the springs were, and, pouring the salt out there, he said:

"Thus says the Lord: 'I have made this water wholesome; it shall no longer be a cause of death and barrenness.'"

After this, Elisha went from Jericho to the city of Bethel, whose inhabitants, Israelites who had turned away from God, worshipped idols. As he approached the city, little children who were playing here on the road, meeting him and seeing his bald head, began to laugh at him and to cry out: "Go up, baldhead! Go up, baldhead!"

Elisha, passing by, looked around, and seeing that they were following him, continuing to mock and shout, cursed them in the name of God. And two she-bears came out of the forest and tore forty-two of the youths to pieces; the rest barely escaped into the city. By this punishment the prophet of God, by righteous judgment, chastised those

5. The kings of other peoples in war used horses and chariots. Therefore Elisha called the great Elijah "the chariot of Israel and its horsemen," since he alone was sufficient to strike down the enemies and grant victory to his kinsmen (Blessed Theodore, Question 8).

children for their mockery and cut short their lives, so that, reaching manhood, they would not become more evil men; their parents, meanwhile, were punished by this for their idolatry, and at the same time received a bitter lesson to bring up their children in the fear of God and to instruct them in reverent honor of the servants of God. From Bethel Elisha went to Mount Carmel[6] and from there returned to Samaria.

At that time war was beginning between the Israelites and the Moabites. The king of Moab, whose land abounded in flocks, used to send each year to the king of Israel a tribute of one hundred thousand lambs and one hundred thousand sheep with their fleece.[7] But after the death of Ahab, king of Israel, Mesha, king of Moab, revolted from the kingdom of Israel and ceased sending the customary tribute.

Then Joram, son of Ahab, who reigned over Israel in Samaria and held to the impiety of his father, gathered his military force and, inviting to his aid Jehoshaphat, the pious king of Judah from Jerusalem, as well as the king of Edom subject to him, set out against the Moabites through the wilderness of Edom. By God's providence the holy prophet Elisha was also among the troops. For seven days the three kings marched with their armies, and there was no water either for the people or for the cattle; all were fainting from thirst. Joram, king of Israel, said with a sigh:

"The Lord has gathered us three kings together, to deliver us into the hands of the Moabites."

But the king of Judah asked:

"Is there not here among the troops some prophet through whom we might inquire of the Lord?"

A servant of the king of Israel reported that Elisha, son of Shaphat, who had served the prophet Elijah by pouring water on his hands,[8] was among the troops. And King Jehoshaphat bore witness concerning Elisha, saying:

6. Carmel is a mountain in the tribe of Issachar; here the prophet Elijah often dwelt (3 Kgdms. 18:19).

7. A fleece (*runo*) is wool, a hide.

8. "Poured water on the hands of Elijah," i.e., was the constant attendant of the prophet Elijah, and therefore is a prophet worthy of full trust, as the Judean king Jehoshaphat said of Elisha (4 Kgdms. 3:12), evidently having already heard of him.

"The word of the Lord is in this man."

And so the three kings came to the holy Elisha and asked him to pray to the Lord for them, that He might reveal to him what awaited them.

But the holy Elisha answered Joram, king of Israel:

"What have I in common with you? Go to the prophets of your father Ahab and of your mother Jezebel, and ask them, that they may tell you what awaits you."

But Joram, king of Israel, said to him humbly:

"Has the Lord indeed gathered us three kings to deliver us into the hands of the Moabites?"

Elisha answered him:

"I call to witness the Lord of hosts, before whom I stand, that were it not that I respect Jehoshaphat, the pious king of Judah, I would not desire even to look upon you, an idolater."

After this, Elisha asked that a singer[3896] be brought to him. And when a Levite singer appeared, who knew how to sing the psalms of David beautifully, and sang, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Elisha, and prophesying, he said:

"Dig deep trenches, for thus says the Lord: you shall not see wind or rain, yet the trenches shall be filled with water, which you and your cattle shall drink; and the Lord will also deliver the Moabites themselves into your hands, and you shall conquer their strength and destroy all their fortified cities, cut down every fruitful tree, and block up every water-spring with stone and earth, and lay waste the whole land of Moab."

And all the words of the prophet came true. In the morning, when the pious Jehoshaphat, king of Jerusalem, according to his custom was offering sacrifice to God by the hands of priests, the people saw water flowing along the road from Edom, which first reached the place where the troops of Jehoshaphat stood, and, spreading over the surrounding country, filled all the trenches and ravines of the streams throughout the valley, and the whole land was soaked with water and was moist. The people quenched their thirst and, strengthened, marched against the Moabites and inflicted a grievous defeat upon them; they took cap-

tive their whole land, and by the command of the prophet gave it over to devastation, and after this returned in triumph to their own country.

Once a certain widow of one of the prophetic disciples came to Elisha in grief and said: “Your servant, my husband, is dead, and you know him well as a God-fearing man. And now the creditor is coming, to whom my husband owed a great deal, and he finds nothing in my house to take, for I have absolutely nothing; and so he wishes to take my two sons into his service, who remain to comfort me in my widowhood and are dear to me as the apple of my eye.”

Thus the widow cried bitterly to the prophet of God. According to some accounts, this widow was the wife of the prophet Obadiah, steward of the house of Ahab, who hid one hundred prophets of God from the sword of Queen Jezebel and maintained them at his own expense, spending on them all his possessions and running into debt to his creditors.[9] Dying, he commended his wife and children to the providence of God, bidding them place their firm hope in the Lord. The holy prophet Elisha, moved with compassion for the widow and her children, asked her:

"What do you wish me to do for you? Tell me, what do you have now in your house?"

She answered:

“Your handmaid has nothing in the house except a vessel with a little oil in it.”

Then Elisha said to her:

"Go, borrow for yourself vessels from all your neighbours, as many as possible, empty vessels; then shut yourself in the house with your sons and pour out the oil from your jar into all these vessels, and they shall be filled."

The widow did as the prophet of God commanded. She gathered empty vessels from her neighbours, set them in the house, shut the door behind her, and poured oil from her jar into the vessels that had been borrowed; her sons, helping their mother, handed her the vessels

9. 3 Kgdms. 18 et seq. The creditor's intention to sell the widow's children into slavery was justified by the letter of the law (Lev. 25:39; Ex. 21:2) and by the harsh practice of life (Mt. 18:25).

and poured oil into them, and the oil did not fail in her jar but flowed as from a spring. When all the vessels were full, the woman said to her sons: “Bring me yet another vessel.”

But the sons said there was no empty vessel left, and the oil ceased flowing from the widow's jar. The widow, with great joy, hastened to the man of God and told him of this miracle. Elisha bade her go, sell the oil, pay her husband's debt, and live on the remainder with her sons.

It happened that the holy prophet Elisha was passing through the city of Shunem.[10] There a wealthy woman urged him to come to her and eat bread, and with all diligence she entertained the man of God. The prophet Elisha very often had occasion to pass through that city on his journeys from Carmel to the Jordan, or to Gilgal, or to Jericho, and to return from there to Carmel; after the woman's invitation he regularly went into her house to eat bread, because she was pious and virtuous. Once the woman said to her husband: "I am persuaded that the man of God who often passes by us is a holy man. Let us build him a small upper chamber and furnish it with a bed, a table, a chair and a lampstand, so that when he comes to us from the road he may rest."

And so they did. And the holy prophet stopped in this chamber each time he happened to be in that city. Once the man of God, resting in the chamber prepared for him, pondered how he might repay this hospitable and virtuous woman. He bade his servant Gehazi call the woman to him. When she came in, the man of God said to her:

"You have taken such care of us; how can I repay you for this? Have you no request to make of the king, or of the prince, or of the commander of the army?"

She answered:

"I have no request to make of them, for I dwell among my own people."

When the woman had gone out, the holy man turned to Gehazi and asked his counsel as to how they might repay that woman for her kindness. Gehazi answered him:

10. The city of Sonam, or Shunem, was located in the tribe of Issachar (Josh. 19:18), opposite the mountains of Gilboa (1 Kgdms. 28:4), near Carmel.

"This woman has no children, and her husband is old; pray to God that He give her a son and heir."

The servant of God did so. He fervently offered a hot prayer to God on behalf of the woman, and, receiving word from Him, bade her be called to him a second time. When she came in and stood in the doorway, the man of God told her that she would conceive and bear a son. The woman bowed to him, and as though not believing for joy, begged the saint to assure her of it. The saint persuaded her to believe steadfastly in the infallible word. The woman did conceive, and in due time bore a son, whom she nursed at her own breast. Once, when the boy had grown, in the summer at harvest time he went out to his father in the field where the reaping was. Having stayed there a little while, he fell ill with a headache and cried out: "My head aches, my head aches!"

The father bade a servant carry the sick son home. At home the sick boy lay on his mother's knees only until noon, and died.[11] The mother took the dead child, carried him up to the prophet's chamber, laid him on the bed, shut the door, went out, and called her husband. Saying nothing to him about the death of their son, she asked him to send her a servant and a donkey, since she had to go to the man of God on Carmel, and would soon return.

Her husband asked her: "Why will you go to him? Surely today is neither the new moon nor the sabbath?"

(On these days the people gathered about the holy prophet Elisha, who lived on Mount Carmel, for the praise of God and for instruction.) But the wife answered that although today was neither the sabbath nor the new moon, she had to go; and she set out in haste to the saint. When she approached Mount Carmel, the man of God, foreseeing her coming, said to his servant Gehazi:

"That is the Shunammite woman. Run to meet her and ask: Are you well? Is your husband well? Is your son well?" She said to Gehazi, who met her:

"We are well."

11. The illness of the son of the pious woman was evidently a sunstroke (Judith 8:2–3; Ps. 120:6).

But when she came to the saint on the mountain, she fell at his feet. Gehazi wished to push her away from him, but Elisha said:

"Leave her, for her soul is now in sorrow; and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not revealed it to me."

The woman said:

“Did I ask my lord for a son? Was it not you yourself, my lord, who asked God to grant him to me? Did I not say: ‘Do not deceive me’? And now my son is dead.”

The man of God was moved with pity for her, and, giving his staff to Gehazi, bade him go quickly and lay the staff upon the dead boy. But the mother of the dead boy was not satisfied with this, and, falling before the holy prophet, said to him: “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you.” Then the holy Elisha arose and went with her. Gehazi, arriving before him, laid the staff upon the face of the boy, but the boy showed no sign of life. Then Gehazi returned, and meeting the man of God told him that the boy had not risen. At last the holy prophet Elisha himself arrived in the city, and, entering the woman's house, went up into the chamber. There on his bed lay the dead boy. Holy Elisha shut the door, and after praying to the Lord he stretched himself upon the boy, placing his mouth upon the boy's mouth, his eyes upon the boy's eyes, and his hands upon the boy's hands, and his knees upon the boy's knees, and breathing on him; and the body of the boy began to grow warm. The prophet arose, walked about the room, and again stretched himself upon the boy. So he did up to seven times, after which the boy opened his eyes. Elisha called Gehazi and bade him summon the boy's mother. When she came in, Elisha said to her:

"Take up your son!"

The woman fell at the feet of the man of God, and, taking her living son, rejoicing, offered praise to God.[12]

12. The prophet's actions in raising the dead child are very similar in essence to the actions of the Prophet Elijah in raising the son of the widow of Zarephath (3 Kgdms. 17:19–23). The Prophet Elisha "applied his own organs of sense to the organs of sense of the dead child, so that the dead child might partake of the life of the living, evidently by the action of the spiritual grace which gives life" (Blessed Theodore, Question 18). This miracle prefigured the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. (The narrative 4 Kgdms. 4:8–37 is read as the twelfth Paremia at Vespers on Great Saturday.)

After this the prophet of God Elisha came to Gilgal, the place where in ancient times the Israelites, on their way to the promised land, crossed the river Jordan. Here the prophet Elisha remained for a long time. And then a famine came upon that land. With the prophet were also his disciples, who spent their lives in imitation of him, in purity and poverty, like the monks of the new grace. The man of God and his disciples dwelt in a special, uninhabited place. Elisha commanded his servant to set a large cauldron on the fire and to boil a broth for the prophetic disciples, who numbered one hundred men. One disciple went out into the field to gather herbs and found a wild fruit, similar in appearance to a grape, called the colocynth, very bitter, for which reason it was also called the gall of the earth. This fruit is very harmful to health; although it is used in medicine, its consumption in large quantities causes death. The one who gathered it did not know the full harm of this fruit, and so he filled his garment and poured it into the cauldron to cook. When the food was served to the disciples and they began to eat, they at once felt the bitterness and fell ill.

"Death is in the pot, O man of God!" they cried out in fear, turning to Elisha, and they ceased eating, for it was impossible to eat.

Elisha commanded that some meal be poured into the cauldron (not in order to neutralize the food, but to conceal his miracle-working); the food became pleasant and harmless, and those who ate it were satisfied and healed.

At this time a certain pious man from the city of Baal-Shalishah[13] came to the holy prophet Elisha and brought twenty small loaves of barley bread from the first harvest of barley. The man of God bade that the loaves be distributed to those present. But his servant said that these small loaves would not suffice for a hundred men.

Elisha answered him:

"Give to all, let them eat; for thus saith the Lord: they shall all be satisfied, and there shall be some left over."

13. Baal-Shalisha (cf. 1 Kgdms. 9:4) is a city, presumably in the tribe of Ephraim.

And indeed the hundred men were satisfied, and, according to the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of the prophet, there remained many pieces.

At that time, Naaman, the celebrated commander of the king of Syria, was stricken with leprosy[14]. He was renowned for his courage and military victories, and therefore held in great honor by the king. Having suffered for a long time, Naaman could find no physicians who were able to heal him. Once the Syrian soldiers brought from the land of Israel a little girl taken captive, and gave her to serve Naaman's wife. The girl had heard from her parents about the holy Prophet Elisha and the great miracles accomplished through his prayers, and she told this to the lady whom she served.

"Would that my lord," said the girl, "might go to the prophet of God who is in Samaria! He would cleanse him of his leprosy!"

Naaman's wife repeated the girl's words exactly to her husband. Naaman went to his king and asked him to let him travel to the land of Israel, to Samaria, to the prophet of God, for healing. The king not only permitted him to go, but gave him a letter to Joram, king of Israel, the son of Ahab. Taking gifts for the man of God—ten talents of silver, six thousand gold coins, and ten changes of costly garments—Naaman came to the land of Israel and presented to King Joram the letter from his own king. It was written in the letter:

"From this letter which you will receive, learn that I have sent my servant Naaman to you, that you may cleanse him of his leprosy."

When Joram, king of Israel, read the letter of the king of Syria, he was greatly distressed and, tearing his garments, said:

"Am I God, who alone can put to death and give life, that he has sent me a leprous man to cleanse him of his leprosy? Do you not see that he is seeking a pretext to begin war against me?"

The holy Prophet Elisha, learning that the king was greatly distressed and had torn his garments, sent to tell him: "Why are you dis-

14. Leprosy is the most terrible and repulsive contagious disease; it prevails chiefly in countries with a hot climate, especially in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Arabia, India, and in the East generally. As this disease develops, the skin becomes white, then swells, dries, and becomes covered with scabs and ulcers with a repulsive odor; then the limbs fall off, and for the most part those afflicted with this disease die in the end in terrible torments.

tressed, and why have you torn your garments? Let Naaman come at once, and he shall know that there is a prophet of God in Israel."

Naaman came with horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. The holy prophet spoke to him through a servant whom he had sent, saying:

"Go, wash seven times in the Jordan, and your body shall be as it was before, and you shall be cleansed.[15]"

Naaman felt offended by these words of the prophet and went away, saying: "I expected that he himself would come out to me and, standing over me, call upon the name of his God, touch the leprous places of my body with his hand, and cleanse the leprosy; but he commands me to go to the Jordan. Are not the rivers of Damascus, Abana and Pharpar[16], better than the Jordan and all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be cleansed?"

So Naaman went back from Samaria in great anger. But on the way his servants advised him to obey the command of the prophet of God, saying: "If the prophet had commanded you to do some very difficult thing, would you not have done as he commanded? But he has only said to you, 'Wash in the Jordan, and you shall be cleansed,' and even this you are unwilling to do."

Naaman heeded the counsel of his servants, went to the Jordan, descended from his chariot, and washed seven times in the river, as the man of God had commanded him. At once his body was cleansed, and he came up from the river vigorous and healthy, like a youth. Naaman returned with all who accompanied him to holy Elisha and, standing before him, said:

"Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel; therefore accept from your servant these gifts which I have brought you."

15. When Naaman arrived at the house of the Prophet Elisha, "he, keeping the law, as those who live under the law, did not consent to see Naaman as a leper (according to the law of Lev. 13:14), but ordered him to wash himself seven times in the river Jordan" (Blessed Theodore, Question 19).

16. The Syrian rivers Abana and Pharpar, according to common opinion, flowed from the mountains of Antilebanon and watered Damascus.

And with these words he offered the man of God gold, silver, and garments. But holy Elisha said to him:

"As the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will take nothing from you."

Naaman urged the prophet to accept what he had brought, but he remained firm and took nothing.

Then Naaman made a request of the holy prophet, saying:

"Allow your servant to take some earth[17], as much as two pairs of mules can carry. When I bring it home, I will make an altar to the Lord God of Israel; for from this time your servant will offer sacrifices to no gods but the One True God."[18]

Holy Elisha allowed him to take what he had asked for and sent him away in peace. When Naaman had departed from Elisha, the man of God, his servant Gehazi began to reflect: "Behold, my master has brought great joy to Naaman the Syrian, yet he took not one gift from his hands. I will run after him, catch up with him, and take something from him."

So he arose and hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw Gehazi hastening after him, he descended from his chariot and went to meet him. When they had come together, Gehazi greeted him and said:

"My master has sent me to say to you that just now two disciples of the prophets have come to him from Mount Ephraim, and he asks you to give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments."

Naaman said:

"Take two talents."

At once he ordered the silver to be put into two bags, and gave Gehazi two of his servants to carry what he had sent; besides this, he gave him two garments. When Gehazi reached home with those servants in the evening twilight, he took from them what they had brought, sent

17. Naaman's request to the prophet, that he be given a certain quantity of earth from the land of Israel, is explained by Naaman's profound reverence for Jehovah: he considers the very earth of the land of His worship to be holy, and takes a portion of earth sanctified by the blessing of the prophet of Jehovah, Elisha.

18. Besides this, Naaman the Syrian told the prophet of God that, by the duty of a royal servant, he must accompany his sovereign into the temple of Rimmon and there bow down together with the king, who prostrates himself on the ground before the idol, leaning on his hand; and now Naaman asked Elisha whether the Lord would forgive him that he bowed down in the temple of Rimmon? Elisha reassured him, and he departed (4 Kgdms. 5:18–19).

them back, and hid the things he had taken in the house; then he presented himself before his master.

Holy Elisha asked him:

"Where have you come from, Gehazi?"

Gehazi answered:

"Your servant went nowhere."

Then holy Elisha said to him:

"Did not my heart go with you and see how that man descended from his chariot and came to meet you, and how you received silver and garments from him? Do I not know that you intend to buy with this silver olive trees and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants? Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your descendants forever."

And Gehazi went out from Elisha, covered with leprosy and white as snow.

Once the disciples of the prophets said to Elisha:

"Behold, the dwelling in which we live with you is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, and let each of us bring a beam, and let us build ourselves a dwelling there."

The holy man let them go. One of the disciples gently invited him to go with them as well, saying to him, "Come, father, you too, with your servants." The man of God arose and went with them. When they came to the Jordan and began cutting beams, the axe of one of those who were chopping slipped from its handle and fell into the water, and he cried out: "Alas, my master! I borrowed this axe from a friend."

The man of God asked him where the axe had fallen, and when he pointed out the place, Elisha cut off a piece of wood, cast it into the water, and the axe floated to the surface. The holy man told the woodcutter to take it, and he reached out his hand and took it. So great was the power granted to the holy man that he could even lessen the natural heaviness of iron, so that an iron axe floated upon the water like a leaf fallen from a tree.

The holy Prophet Elisha foresaw events taking place far from him with such clarity that it was as though they were all happening before his eyes. The king of Syria, who was warring against the Israelites, of-

ten took counsel with his attendants about how to set an ambush for the king of Israel, and designated one place or another where the detachment appointed for the ambush was to lie in wait.

But holy Elisha, foreseeing this, would send warning to the king of Israel, saying: "Beware of passing through this place, for the Syrians are lying in wait there."

The king would send to learn whether this was true, and, having confirmed it, would act cautiously and not approach that place, but would send his own soldiers, who would suddenly attack the Syrians and strike them down. This happened several times. When the king of Syria heard of it, he was troubled; and summoning his subordinates, he said to them: "Why do you not tell me who reveals my secrets to the king of Israel and delivers me into his hands?" One of them answered him: "No one, my lord the king, and this is not done by any of us! But there is a prophet among the Israelites, Elisha, who tells the king of Israel even the words that you speak in your bedchamber."

The king said:

"Find out where that prophet is. I will send soldiers to seize him and bring him here."

The soldiers made inquiries and told him that Elisha was dwelling in Dothan[19]. The king sent cavalry, chariots, and a large force there, and by night they came and surrounded the city. Early in the morning, Elisha's servant went out of the house and saw the Syrian troops, with horses and chariots, surrounding the city in great numbers. He ran in to Elisha and cried out:

"What shall we do, my master?"

Holy Elisha answered:

"Do not be afraid: those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

And Elisha turned to God in prayer, saying:

"O Lord! Open the eyes of Thy servant, that he may see Thy power."

And God opened the eyes of Elisha's servant, and he saw that the whole mountain was filled with horses and fiery chariots surrounding

Elisha. Holy Elisha went out of the city with his servant to meet the Syrians, and they came toward him. Elisha prayed to the Lord, saying:

"O Lord, strike this people with blindness."

And the Lord struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked. Then Elisha said to them:

"This is not the road, and this is not the city to which you must go; but follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek."

And he brought them to Samaria. When they arrived in Samaria, Elisha prayed to God and said:

"O Lord, open their eyes, that they may see where they are."

And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw that they were in Samaria. The king of Israel, learning of their arrival and seeing them, asked holy Elisha:

"Shall I command them to be put to death, father?"

But the holy man answered:

"No, do not put them to death, for it was not you who brought them here, nor did you take them captive with your sword. Instead, set food before them, that they may return to their lord."

The king made a great feast for them, and they ate and drank, and they were sent away to their master the king; and after this the Syrian raids on the land of Israel ceased.

A fairly long time passed, and Ben-hadad, king of Syria, began war with Joram, king of Israel. He gathered all his army and surrounded Samaria, the capital city of the kings of Israel, where the holy prophet Elisha was then also dwelling. A severe famine began in the city, so that the poorest inhabitants ate their own children. Once, when the king of Israel was walking along the city wall, a woman approached him and, crying out, said:

"Help me, my lord, O king!"

The king answered her:

"If the Lord does not help you, how can I help you? Shall I give you provision from the threshing floor or from the winepress? But tell me, what do you need?"

19. Dothan is a city on the trade route from Gilead to Egypt, north of Samaria; here Joseph was once sold (Gen. 37:17, 25).

She began her complaint against another woman, saying:

"This woman said to me: Come, let us eat your son today, and tomorrow mine. So we boiled my son and ate him. On the next day I said to her: Come, let us eat your son too; but she hid her son."

The king of Israel, hearing this terrible account from the woman, tore his garments and was greatly angered against the prophet of God Elisha, because the prophet by his counsel had restrained him from submitting to the king of Syria and surrendering the city to him, and had told him to await the help of God.

"May God punish me and add still more to my punishment if the head of Elisha remains on his shoulders today!" said the king in wrath.

And at once an executioner was sent to cut off the prophet's head. The man of God was at home, and there were the elders of Israel with him.

"Do you know," he said to the elders, "that this son of a murderer, King Joram, the son of Ahab who unjustly killed Naboth, has sent an executioner to take off my head at once? But shut the doors fast and do not let him in here until his lord comes, for I hear the sound of his lord's feet, because he is hastening right behind him."

The saint had not yet finished these words when the king came up and halted the executioner; for after his evil decision the king repented, and himself hurried after the messenger to prevent the carrying out of the cruel order, since the king knew of the holiness of the prophet Elisha and of his innocence, and of all his benefactions to the kingdom of Israel and to many people. Entering the prophet's presence, the king said:

"Behold what a great calamity has been sent upon us by the Lord! What more can I look for from Him? I will give the city to the king of Syria and submit to him, so that we all do not die of hunger; it is better, by submitting to him, for all of us to remain alive, than to perish of hunger by resisting."

But the holy Elisha, turning to the king and to all who were present, said:

"Hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord: At this very hour tomorrow, at the gate of Samaria[20], a measure of fine flour will be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel."

One of the officers, the one nearest to the king, on whose hand the king leaned, said to Elisha in reply:

"Even if the Lord were to open the heavens, what you say could not happen."

The holy Elisha answered him:

"You yourself will see it with your own eyes, but you will not taste of that bread."

Somewhat reassured, the king withdrew to his tent. And that night, while the holy Elisha was praying to the Lord God for the deliverance of the city, God sent a great panic upon the Syrian army: the Syrians heard a loud noise of weapons and the neighing of horses, as if from a large assembled army, and they concluded among themselves that the kings of the Hittites and of Egypt, hired by the king of Israel, had come to his aid with their forces.

"Let us flee from here, let us flee!" they cried in great fear.

And that night, together with their king, they fled back, leaving their tents, horses, asses, and everything they had in the camp, saving only their lives. That same night four lepers were sitting by the city gate, and conferring with one another they said: "Why do we sit here waiting for death? If we go into the city, we shall die of hunger; if we stay here, we shall also die. Let us go to the Syrian camp; if they spare us, well, and if not, it is better to die by the sword than to endure the unbearable torments of hunger."

Agreeing, they rose and went to the Syrian camp, which was still shrouded in the darkness of night. Entering the camp, they found not a single person, and going through to the middle of the camp, seeing no one, they greatly marveled at this. They entered one of the tents, and ate and drank, and took from it silver, gold, and garments, and went out and hid them. Returning, they entered another tent and took from

20. The prophet speaks to the king and the elders of the people about the coming extraordinary cheapness of bread, namely: "at the gate of Samaria" — at the gate, where in the East all public life was concentrated, including, among other things, trade.

it all they wished and as much as they could carry, and again hid it. After this they began to consult together, saying: "We are doing wrong; this day is a day of good tidings, and we are keeping silent; if we remain here until dawn, we shall be guilty of a great sin. Therefore let us hasten to the city and inform the royal court."

They hastened to the city, and approaching the city gates, they said to the watchmen: "We went to the Syrian camp and saw there not a single man, and did not even hear a human voice; only the horses tethered and the asses remain there, and the tents stand in their places, filled with wealth."

Immediately they informed the king of everything. The king rose in the night, gathered his counselors, and began to consult with them; and, suspicious, he said to them: "I will reveal to you the treacherous design of the Syrians, which they have devised against us. They have learned that we are suffering from hunger; therefore, having left the camp, they have hidden somewhere in the field, intending, when we come out of the city driven by hunger, to seize us alive and enter our city."

The servants of the king advised sending someone to reconnoiter. Two horsemen were sent, who, arriving at the Syrian camp and finding no one in it, rode after the traces of the Syrians as far as the Jordan. The whole way was strewn with garments and weapons, which the Syrians threw away in their great fear. The messengers returned and informed the king and the people of everything. The people rushed out of the city and plundered the whole Syrian camp; and a measure of fine flour and two measures of barley were sold for a shekel, as the Lord had said through the prophet. The aforementioned officer, the one on whose hand the king leaned, received from him the order to stand at the city gates to keep order. And when he wished to direct that the people should not crowd in the gates, the throng pressed upon him and trampled him to death, just as the man of God Elisha had foretold, when this officer, not believing the word of the Lord spoken by the prophetic lips concerning the abundance of bread, objected: "Even if the Lord were to open the heavens, this could not come to pass" (1 Kgdms. 6 ff.).

Glorious was this great servant of God also in his other wondrous prophetic gifts and deeds, as is related at length in the books of Kingdoms. He foretold a seven-year famine in the land of Israel (4 Kgdms. 8:10). Foreseeing the death of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, he foretold the passage of the Syrian kingdom into the hands of Hazael. Anointing Jehu, one of the princes of Israel, to the kingdom (4 Kgdms. 9:3), he stirred him to destroy the God-hating, idolatrous house of Ahab. Jehu killed two idolatrous kings: Joram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah, the grandson of the pious king Jehoshaphat, who, not imitating his grandfather, turned to impiety. He put to death Jezebel, the impious wife of Ahab and mother of Joram, and slew all the priests and magicians of Baal. In all these deeds the blessings and prayers of the holy prophet Elisha assisted him. After Jehu's death his son Jehoahaz reigned in Israel, and Jehoash, the grandson of Jehu, succeeded him. In the reign of Jehoash, the man of God who dwelt in Samaria, now a very old man, fell ill. Jehoash, king of Israel, came to visit him, and weeping over him, said:

"O father, father, the chariot of Israel and its horses!"

Elisha said to him:

"Take a bow and arrows, open the window toward the east, where Syria is, and draw the bow with an arrow."

The king did so. And the prophet of God, laying his hands upon the king's hands, said: "Shoot the arrow toward Syria."

And the king shot the arrow. The prophet said:

"This arrow is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and you will conquer Syria."

And again he bade the king take the bow and arrows in his hands. The king took them. The prophet said to him:

"Strike the ground with the arrows."

The king struck three times and stopped. The man of God was angered with him, saying:

"If you had struck five or six times, you would have conquered Syria completely; but now you will inflict upon it only three defeats"[21].

Thus prophesying to the king, the holy Elisha reposed and was buried with honor[3910].

Not only during his life did the prophet Elisha work miracles; he also showed himself a wonderworker after his death. A year after his death, a certain dead man was being carried out beyond the city for burial. At that time a band of Moabites appeared, who were raiding the land of Israel. Those carrying the dead man saw the enemies from afar and threw the corpse into a nearby cave. This was the cave in which the remains of the prophet Elisha lay. As soon as the dead man touched the bones of the prophet, he at once came to life, and going out of the cave, walked to the city[22].

Thus even after death God glorified His servant[23]. For all this, glory, honor, and worship be to our God now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen[24].

---

21. To the question, "Why did the Prophet Elisha announce the future victory by means of a bow and arrow?" (4 Kgdms. 13:15), Blessed Theodoret (Question 42) answers: "They believed not so much the words as the predictions by means of deeds. In this case the symbolic action directly expressed the reality of war and victory that it signified. The placing of Elisha's hands upon the king's hands (4 Kgdms. 13:16) could indicate the prophet's prayerful help, and therefore also that of Jehovah to the king of Israel in the coming struggle with the Syrians. The direction of the shot to the east referred to the Syrians, who had occupied the cities and regions of the Israelite kingdom east of the Jordan (4 Kgdms. 10:33)."

22. According to Blessed Theodoret, the posthumous miracle of the prophet had this meaning: "The prophet, even after death, raised a dead man who was brought to him, so that this miracle also might bear witness to the double grace, beyond that of his teacher, that he had received." Besides this, the temporal purpose of the miracle could be to inspire Israel to struggle against its enemies, and its eternal and essential purpose: to witness to the truth of the general future resurrection of the dead. In particular, here is proved the truth of the Orthodox Church's veneration of the relics of the holy saints of God. Thus the power of God that was upon the Prophet Elisha during his life was communicated, in this miracle, to his relics.

23. Besides many prophecies, miracles and benefactions bestowed upon men, the Prophet Elisha greatly contributed to the development and elevation of the schools of the prophets (4 Kgdms. 2:1–25, 3:1–27, 5:1–27, etc.), and without doubt most of those prophets, who were so numerous in the times of the kings and who partly by word of mouth, partly in writing, supported faith and piety among the people, came out of these schools.

24. Jesus the son of Sirach, in his praise of the Prophet Elisha, says the following: "Filled with the spirit of Elijah, Elisha did not tremble in his days before a prince, and no one overcame him; nothing overpowered him, and after his death his body prophesied; as in his life he performed wonders, so after death his deeds were marvelous" (Sir. 48:12–16). In the New Testament the Lord Himself mentions Elisha as a great prophet of God, showing in his miracles and healings the wise ways of the providence of God. "There were many lepers in Israel in the time of the Prophet Elisha," He said, rebuking the unbelief of His countrymen, "and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian" (Lk. 4:23–27).

Troparion, Tone 4:

An angel in the flesh, the foundation of the prophets, the second Forerunner of the coming of Christ, glorious Elijah, sending down upon Elisha the grace to drive away diseases and to cleanse the lepers: wherefore he poureth forth healings upon them that honor him.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

O prophet of God, thou hast appeared, receiving a double grace, truly worthy of thee, O blessed Elisha: for thou wast the fellow-dweller of Elias, and with him thou dost pray to Christ God without ceasing for us all.

* * *

Life of our Holy Father Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople

Житие святого отца нашего Мефодия, патриарха Константинопольского

A native of Sicily,[25] the Hierarch of Christ Methodius in his youth took upon himself the monastic habit, advancing in a virtuous life.

During the reign of Leo the Armenian,[26] the iconoclast, he held the office of apocrisiarius[27] under the most holy Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople. Patriarch Nicephorus sent St. Methodius to the Pope in Rome[28] with a commission concerning ecclesiastical affairs; here, in Rome, he intentionally delayed for a rather long time, because the impious Leo, having deposed the most holy Nicephorus from the patriarchal throne, had set up in his place the heretic iconoclast Theodotus of Melissa, surnamed Cassiteras.[29] After the death of Emperor Leo and of

25. Sicily is one of the large islands of the Mediterranean Sea; it is separated from the mainland by the Strait of Messina.
26. Leo V the Armenian reigned in 813–820.
27. Apocrisiarii were temporary or permanent representatives of the bishops of the most important churches at the court of the sovereign, who managed all the relations of their church and its representatives with the supreme authority.
28. Rome, the principal city of the Roman state, is located in the central part of Italy and lies on both sides of the river Tiber, where it flows into the sea.
29. Theodore I Cassiterus was patriarch in 815–822.

the false patriarch Theodotus, St. Methodius returned from Old Rome to New Rome.[30] In the rank of presbyter he served the Lord in righteousness and holiness, tirelessly contending against the iconoclastic heresy, which had grown especially strong at that time: after Leo the Armenian, another iconoclast heretic, Michael Balbus or Travlos,[31] ascended the imperial throne; in his days the patriarchs were men of impious life. And the blessed Methodius undertook a great labor, disputing with the heretics and putting them to shame. For such activity the impious emperor tormented St. Methodius with torture and imprisonment, as the Greek Zonaras relates:[32] he reports that Michael Travlos at the beginning of his reign showed himself a merciful ruler: he freed from bonds and confinement many holy fathers imprisoned by Leo the Armenian for venerating icons, but later, after a considerable time had passed, Michael revoked this good deed, which had been prompted by hypocrisy, and, not concealing his malicious impiety, raised a persecution against the Orthodox. He angrily set himself against St. Methodius and against Euthymius, Bishop of Sardis—we need not speak of the many others who suffered greatly at his hands. He sent Euthymius into exile for venerating icons, and imprisoned St. Methodius in a dungeon in Acrita.[33] The same Zonaras describes the impiety of Michael Travlos as follows: he imitated in everything, so he said, the emperor Copronymus;[34] favoring the Jews, he ordered a fast on Saturday; not believing in the resurrection of the dead, Michael mocked the hope of blessed life beyond the grave; he subjected to ridicule even the prophecies of the holy prophets, asserted that demons do not exist, and did not regard impure carnal deeds as sin: honoring Judas the traitor as a saint, Michael thought that he would be saved. He hated book learning

30. That is, Tsargrad, or Constantinople.
31. Michael II the Stammerer reigned in 820–829.
32. John Zonaras was a Byzantine historian and canonist, a contemporary of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus (1080–1118). First place among the literary works of Zonaras, by reason of its worth, belongs to his commentary on the complete text of the church canons. Another major work of Zonaras is his "Epitome of Histories" — a chronological account of the events of world history from the creation of the world to the accession of the Emperor John Comnenus (1118). Besides this, there remain from Zonaras letters, lives of saints, a hymn, and so forth.
33. Probably near the Cape of Akrites.
34. Constantine Copronymus occupied the throne in 741–778.

and hindered parents from giving their children to Orthodox schools, so that, having studied Holy Scripture, they would not expose his madness, but, remaining ignorant and unlettered, would follow his heretical error. So says Zonaras. St. Methodius steadfastly opposed the heretical emperor, as a wise shepherd, versed in Divine Scripture, the Orthodox dogmas and the traditions of the holy fathers; for this, as a confessor of the truth, he endured not only bonds and dungeons, but even wounds.

After the death of Michael Travlos his son Theophilus[35] ascended the throne—heir not only to the throne but also to his father's heresy. Theophilus tortured many for the honorable veneration of the holy icons; yet, loving learning, he renewed the schools of Constantinople, which had been falling into desolation, and ordered that instruction in them be resumed. He also freed St. Methodius from confinement, as the Greek historian Michael Glycas relates: "In an unheard-of and wonderful manner," he says, "God delivered Methodius from the dark prison. Theophilus, out of love for learning, often spent time reading books. Once there fell into the emperor's hands a book whose content was little intelligible to him; one of his attendants remarked to Theophilus that Methodius, imprisoned in the dungeon in Acrita, was known for his skill in explaining passages in books that are hard to understand. Immediately the emperor sent an order to bring St. Methodius to him from prison; having met him, after conversation, he understood that St. Methodius was a wise man, and out of respect for him he set him free."

Having received his freedom, St. Methodius again entered into verbal combat with the heretics, teaching that the holy icons be accorded the honor and veneration due them; by this he again drew upon himself the wrath of the iconoclasts. The activity of St. Methodius in defense of Orthodoxy became known to the emperor, who was greatly angered against the servant of God, concealing his displeasure until a more convenient time. In those days the Greeks were waging war with the Saracens,[36] and it was necessary for the emperor himself to be present with the army. Setting out for the regiments, the emperor took St. Methodius with him, partly as if for the sake of prayer, partly for

35. Theophilus reigned in 829–842.
36. Saracens — otherwise, Arabs.

conversations from Scripture and for the resolution of perplexing questions, which, as the emperor had been convinced, St. Methodius was skilled at explaining. In reality, however, the emperor took the servant of God with him out of fear that, if St. Methodius remained in the capital, a popular uprising against the iconoclasts might arise: the people loved the venerable man as a holy and instructive teacher, excellently versed not only in spiritual but also in civil governance; therefore the emperor did not leave him in the capital during his absence, but took him along. But then, by God's permission, the Ishmaelites defeated the Greeks, destroying nearly all of the emperor's army, so that the latter barely escaped by flight with the small remnants of his regiments; then the impious emperor revealed against St. Methodius the wrath which he had until then concealed in his heart:

"It is for this reason," Theophilus said, "that God has granted victory to our enemies: because among us are idol-worshippers."

To this St. Methodius replied:

"The Lord, reviled by Christians in His holy icon, was angered against them and permitted our enemies to gain the victory over us."

Filled with fury, the emperor, after cruel scourging,[37] exiled St. Methodius to confinement on an island: here he ordered him to be shut up together with two robbers in a deep sepulchral cave, into which not even sunlight penetrated. Thus St. Methodius became a living dead man, like Jonah in the belly of the whale, dwelling in the bowels of the earth and giving thanks to God. A certain fisherman was charged with bringing him food, and that so meager that he would only not die of hunger; the tormentors wished to prolong the life of the servant of God, and with it his sufferings in that tomb.

During this confinement of St. Methodius, Emperor Theophilus cast into torment two holy confessors, Theodore and Theophanes, for venerating the honorable icons: on their faces an inscription testifying to their veneration of the holy icons was burned in with red-hot iron, after

37. Theophilus ordered St. Methodius to be struck on the cheeks, and his jaw was broken to such an extent that St. Methodius was left with an unsightly scar for the rest of his life. Being patriarch, St. Methodius cut the ends of his klobuk and tied them around his jaw to conceal the scar, out of respect for the confessor; and all the monks, following his example, began to wear the klobuk with slits.

which the emperor sent the martyrs into confinement. Their way lay past the island where St. Methodius was languishing, shut up in the sepulchral cave. Chancing to meet the fisherman who supplied the prisoner, the holy confessors learned from him everything in detail about the servant of God. Being unable to see St. Methodius, since the men conducting them into confinement were very strict, Theodore and Theophanes wrote to him the following greeting, which the same fisherman undertook to deliver to its destination:

"To the living, who sits in a tomb as one dead, to the earthly one who traverses the heavenly regions, and to the bearer of bonds, write those in fetters whose faces are 'inscribed'."

Having read this greeting, sent with the fisherman, and having learned from him of the exploits of the holy passion-bearers, St. Methodius gave thanks to God, who had granted them such courage. Then in turn he answered their greeting with this letter: "He who was buried before death and bound with chains greets those prisoners, each of whom, with an 'inscribed face', is written above in the book of life."

During his imprisonment in the tomb-like cell, St. Methodius remained there until the death of Emperor Theophilus; and when one tomb received the dead man in truth[38], then another tomb, like the whale that cast Jonah the Prophet out of its belly, gave to the world a "living dead man"[39]. When death closed the eyes of Theophilus with the earth of the grave, and sealed his impious lips, laying silence upon his blasphemous tongue, then the glorious Confessor saw the light of day again and once more opened his mouth to preach piety. After the death of Theophilus, his son Michael III came to the throne, and during his minority his mother Theodora governed[40]. The first care of the regent was for the peace of the Church, wholly disturbed by iconoclasm: from the days of the first iconoclast emperor, Leo the Isaurian[41], until the death of Theophilus, one hundred and twenty years had passed; during this time the icon of Christ had been dishonored by Christians, and

38. That is, the Emperor Theophilus.
39. That is, St. Methodius.
40. 842–855. Michael III the Drunkard reigned in 855–867.
41. Leo III the Isaurian reigned in 716–741.

God, angered by it, had brought no small calamities upon the Christian empire. In these years the Saracens, having seized many Christian lands, led many of their inhabitants away into their own country as captives. At that same time the Greco-Roman state was divided into two kingdoms: whereas formerly the emperor of New Rome, the Greek emperor, had also held Old Rome, so that East and West were united under the scepter of one Greek emperor, now, because of the spread of the iconoclastic heresy, joined with the cruel and bloody tortures of many confessors of piety, the West broke away from the rule of the Greek emperors and set up its own emperor. Therefore the Greek emperor was compelled to govern only Greece, and even that not in its entirety, since Palestine with the holy city of Jerusalem, Syria, Arabia, and also Egypt with the regions subject to it, had been taken by the Saracens. All this God permitted because of the sins of Christians who had fallen from piety into heresy and had dishonored the holy icons. Taking this circumstance into account, the pious Empress Theodora, filled with God-inspired wisdom, applied every effort to uproot the accursed iconoclastic heresy in the Christian empire and to establish orthodoxy, restoring to the Holy Church, the bride of Christ, the veneration of the venerable icons as a precious adornment. She ordered that all the confessors of piety be released from bonds and imprisonment, and recalled from exile, that they might come to a council in Constantinople which would restore the holy icons to the churches with fitting honor. By this decree St. Methodius too was freed from the confinement of the tomb. On the patriarchal throne, however, as an abomination of desolation in the holy place, there still remained the false patriarch John, surnamed Annius[42], a heretic and sorcerer, set up on the throne by Emperor Theophilus; and since the holy fathers did not wish to have communion with him, the pious Empress Theodora, depriving the aforesaid false patriarch of his throne, cast him out of the Church like a wild boar out of a vineyard. By the good pleasure of God, St. Methodius, the holy confessor, was raised to the patriarchal throne, to the ineffable joy of all the Orthodox.

42. He was patriarch in 832–842.

This elevation of St. Methodius, which came about more by the election of God than by human choice, had been foretold earlier by the Venerable Ioannicius the Great, as his Life tells it thus: Eustratius, abbot of the monastery of Agavros, once asked the Venerable Ioannicius:

"Father, how long will the holy icons be trampled upon, and how long will this state of affairs continue, in which the churches are not restored, the persecutors grow in number, and the flock of Christ is torn apart by wild beasts?"

The holy father answered:

"Wait a little while yet, brother, and you will see the power of God made manifest: someone named Methodius will receive the government of the Church; illumined by the Divine Spirit, he will guide the Church in truth, will destroy the heresies, will establish the Church in the Orthodox dogmas, will create tranquility and unanimity; and the right hand of the Most High will humble those who oppose him."

This prophecy of the Venerable Ioannicius was fulfilled manifestly in St. Methodius. After the death of Emperor Theophilus he was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople, as a man worthy of so great a dignity, as a firm pillar of orthodoxy and an unshakable foundation of piety, as a soldier of Christ adorned with martyrdom, foreordained by God and foretold by a prophetic man for the great archpastoral service. St. Methodius, together with the pious Empress Theodora, convened in Constantinople a local council, which confirmed the dogmatic definitions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, convened under Constantine and Irene at Nicaea against the iconoclasts[43]. Those who did not accept the dogmas of this Ecumenical Council were again anathematized by the local council assembled under St. Methodius. Having brought joy to the Orthodox, and having turned the church turmoil into peace, storm and agitation into tranquility, the fathers of the council, with great solemnity during the first week of the Holy Great Lent, carried the venerable icons into the church of the Lord. And there was great joy not only in Constantinople, but in all those places under heaven where Orthodox Christians dwelt.

43. He was in 787.

While Orthodox Christians everywhere celebrated the spiritual triumph, envy tormented the hearts of those in whose souls the iconoclastic heresy was rooted: such were the aforementioned false patriarch Annius, deposed from the throne, and his brother Areabor, who held the rank of senator and sat in the imperial chamber; such were also some others among the eminent courtiers and persons of lesser rank. Not knowing what to do, they maliciously devised how they might slander the most holy Methodius. For gold, the heretics hired a woman of noble birth who shared their views, whose son was a hypatos[44] in Smyrna, so that she, following their instruction, would go to the empress and to the tutors of the young emperor and report to them that the newly appointed Patriarch Methodius had committed fornication with her. The slanderers acted thus in the hope that it would be more convenient for them to revile both the teaching of St. Methodius, who defended the veneration of the venerable icons, and the icons themselves, if they could bring the patriarch into disrepute by spreading an evil rumor about him among the people and thus dishonoring his name. The woman, incited by the heretics, went to the empress and to the tutors of the young emperor, and openly before everyone slandered St. Methodius, lodging a complaint against a man who was in no way guilty. So that her slander might be accepted as truth, she shed tears, as though she had suffered violence at the hands of the newly appointed patriarch. They marveled at such conduct by the primate, which gave rise to great scandal; at once the rumor spread through the whole city, troubling the Orthodox and bringing gladness and triumph to the impious. The heretics mocked the Orthodox: "Behold what kind of patriarch you have, whom you follow!"

When the slander reached the most holy Methodius himself, he wondered from what source it could have arisen. But, having a clear conscience, he rejoiced in his heart at the undeserved affliction; at the same time the patriarch grieved, seeing so great a scandal among the people and the mockery of the heretics against the Orthodox. How then did this great hierarch act, a man innocent in his deeds and pure in

44. A consul is a chief.

heart, who from his mother's womb had kept the purity of his body unblemished? Desiring not so much to clear himself of the false accusation as to remove the scandal from the Church and to stop the lying mouths of the heretics, the patriarch resolved, sacrificing his own shame, to reveal an infirmity hitherto unknown to anyone, from which he suffered, and which manifestly showed the incapacity of the primate for sinful carnal union. Sending to the imperial chamber, the patriarch asked for a just judgment which would examine the case between him and the aforesaid woman. Standing before a court composed of honorable persons, the patriarch, unwilling to dispute with the shameless woman, and desiring to bear witness indisputably to his innocence, and moved besides by the necessity that had arisen to set aside natural modesty, the observance of which was especially obligatory for a man of his rank, the most holy Methodius uncovered the "secret place" of his body, afflicted by disease, so that "the flesh of his own" was as though dead; and all learned how false the woman's slander was, since they saw that so infirm a man could not commit the sin of the flesh. And the Orthodox rejoiced that the scandal in the Church was destroyed and the reproach was taken away from the sons of piety. But the heretics were covered with shame and their impious mouths were stopped; their affliction turned back upon their own heads, and their mockery brought them disgrace and ruin.

When the judges asked the Most Holy Methodius how his affliction had come upon him, he, disclosing his infirmity, also revealed its cause, which until then he had told to no one. "When," he said, "I was sent by the Most Holy Patriarch Nicephorus to the Pope in Rome and was detained there, at that time, through the working of the defiler of the flesh, Satan's Angel, a strong carnal desire, joined with the arousal of the members of the flesh, fell upon me. For many days and nights I struggled with lustful passion, wearing myself down by fasting and vigil and putting myself to death by every kind of labor. Since the passion nonetheless did not leave me, and it seemed to me that I was already close to falling, I prostrated myself in tears before the holy supreme Apostle Peter, committing myself to his help and asking him for relief. I begged him, by the grace-filled power given him by God, to deliver me

from the battle of the flesh and not to allow my body, hallowed for purity, to be defiled. When in my sorrow I fell into a brief sleep, the holy Apostle Peter appeared to me and touched with his right hand the secret parts of my body. From this touch I felt a sharp pain, as if someone had burned the afflicted place with fire, and I groaned loudly. The Apostle Peter said to me: 'Henceforth you will no longer experience the carnal sinful battle.' I immediately awoke from sleep and found myself with the injury that you have already seen."

This account of St. Methodius moved his judges: they acknowledged him to be innocent. The woman, however, they ordered to be subjected to punishment, so that she would say who had taught her to slander the innocent and pure hierarch of God. And at once the executioners appeared to take her for torments. She, seeing the drawn sword, the prepared fire, and the sharp thorn rods, was greatly frightened, and, without the matter coming to execution, she disclosed the truth: she named by name all who had hired and instructed her, reported also the large sum of gold received from her instigators, and indicated the place in her house where it was laid. The judges sent trustworthy servants to the woman's house; they went and indeed found the gold in the place the woman had indicated, and brought it to the judges. The judges pronounced a sentence of death both upon the woman and upon those who had instructed her to slander St. Methodius. But the Most Holy Patriarch, being by his guilelessness a faithful and true follower of the Lord, not only did not permit the death sentence to be carried out, but freed his enemies even from the wounds awaiting them; he imposed upon them only one penalty: that on all the feast days they should come in orderly fashion, with lit candles, from the Blachernae[45] Church of the Most Pure Mother of God to the cathedral church of St. Sophia, and there at the doors of the church hear the anathema pronounced, which was done. Then the blasphemous heretical mouths were silenced, and the iconoclastic heresy was completely destroyed in Constantinople by the grace of God, through the prayer and unceasing zeal of the God-

45. Blachernae — a locality in Constantinople.

pleaser, the Most Holy Patriarch Methodius, who emerged from the undeserved calamity inflicted upon him with still greater glory.

His enemies were not granted what David asks of God for sinners: "Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Thy name, O Lord" (Ps. 82:17). Blinded by malice, with hardened hearts, they added to their first evil deeds new ones, no less grievous. The aforementioned false patriarch John, also called Annius, the author of all evils, was sent on a pilgrimage to a certain monastery. During his stay there, seeing the holy icons of Christ the Savior, of the Most Holy Mother of God, and of the holy Angels, renewed by pious zealots after the iconoclastic destruction, Annius ordered his deacon to put out the eyes of those holy icons. The deacon carried out the order. This was reported to the pious Empress Theodora. Zealous for Christ our God, she commanded that the eyes of the false patriarch himself be put out; but afterward, moved by the entreaties of certain senators, she replaced the first punishment with scourging: the Empress ordered two hundred blows with hard whips to be inflicted upon the false patriarch, who deserved countless torments and many deaths; for during his power he had tormented many Orthodox to death, and even while in confinement he did not cease to heap dishonor upon the holy icons.

The Most Holy Patriarch Methodius, after all the church disturbances and after the many misfortunes he endured for the icon of Christ, spent the remainder of his life at the helm of the Church in peace and quiet, adorning the patriarchal throne in Constantinople with his angel-like face and angelic life, guiding the flock of Christ's rational sheep to the truth and feeding them in the pastures of God-inspired teachings. Under his influence the veneration of holy icons grew, in which, properly speaking, the persons depicted on them were honored; at the same time he took care that in Constantinople the honorable relics of the God-pleasers should again be given their due honor as before. In the days of the rule of the iconoclasts the honorable relics had been dishonored as the icons had been: they were spat upon, trampled underfoot, dragged dishonorably through the streets, thrown into swamps and dung, and sometimes destroyed by being burned or drowned; only those relics remained untouched which the pious had hastened to hide

in the earth, shielding them from the hands of the impious. All this led to the disappearance in Constantinople even of the very report of the relics of the holy God-pleasers; therefore the hierarch of Christ Methodius applied every effort to enrich Constantinople again with honorable relics and to teach the Orthodox their fitting veneration. First of all he solemnly transferred from the place of their first burial to the capital the relics of the Venerable Theodore the Studite, which had remained incorrupt even after eighteen years from the day of his repose to God. Then he transferred to Constantinople the honorable relics of Patriarch Nicephorus, which rested at the place of his confinement; concerning this translation of the relics of his lord by Patriarch Methodius, whose apocrisiarius he had been and who had sent him to Rome, it is told in detail on the 13th day of the month of March. Finally, he was preparing as a precious treasure for the Church of Constantinople his own laborious, much-suffering body, hallowed by purity, to become incorrupt relics: he had already drawn near to his end, which he himself foresaw and about which he had received a prediction from the Venerable Ioannicius. Having foretold to him at the beginning his patriarchate, Ioannicius later foretold to him his death. Both of them, endowed by the Holy Spirit with foresight, foresaw each other's repose, as is told in the Life of the Venerable Ioannicius. In the fifth year of the reign of Michael, the Most Holy Patriarch Methodius, foreseeing the approaching departure to the Lord of the Venerable Ioannicius, came to him with all his clergy, asking for the last blessing and prayers. The Venerable Ioannicius, having conversed sufficiently with St. Methodius and having instructed those who had come with him in the Orthodox faith, prophesied to Patriarch Methodius that he too, after his death, would not be long in passing from the temporal to the eternal life; then, after prayer and the last farewell, they parted. The Patriarch returned to his own residence, while the Venerable Ioannicius remained in his cell, praying and preparing for his death. On the third day after the Patriarch's departure, our Venerable and God-bearing Father Ioannicius passed to the Lord (4 November); seven months later, on the 14th day of June, the Most Holy Patriarch Methodius also fell asleep in the Lord[46]. Thus

the prophecy of the Venerable Ioannicius was fulfilled, that the Patriarch would not be long after his death in also passing into eternity.

After the repose of the Most Holy Methodius, great lamentation and weeping arose throughout the whole Constantinopolitan Church, which had lost so great a father and universal luminary; he was buried with honor befitting a hierarch so high in life and service. St. Methodius shepherded the Church of Christ for four years and three months, and then passed into a life not diminished by time; numbered among the choir of holy hierarchs, he stood before the Shepherd-Chief and great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, our Lord Jesus Christ, God glorified by all the saints, to Whom with us sinners be honor and glory, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou didst labor upon earth as one bodiless, and didst inherit the heavens, O Methodius, having proclaimed the veneration of icons unto the ends of the earth; for having persevered all the more in labors and sufferings, thou didst not cease boldly rebuking those who rejected the icons of Christ.

* * *

NOTES

3896. That the Prophet Elisha, in order to prepare his spirit to receive a revelation, or to calm his spirit after his anger at King Joram (4 Kgdms. 3:13–14), had recourse to stringed music, after which "the hand of the Lord was upon him" (cf. 3 Kgdms. 18:16; Jer. 1:9), reveals, first, a custom known from antiquity of resorting to music (cf. 1 Kgdms. 16:16) to draw the spirit away from the outer world and to calm and rouse it; and second, the use of music (with the singing of hymns) in the schools of the prophets (1 Kgdms. 10:5), with which the Prophet Elisha was closely connected. In the words of Blessed Theodoret, "the priests under the law of Moses used trumpets, and the Levites used harps, psalteries, cymbals and other musical instruments. Among them, there was

46. He died in 847; he governed the Church for 4 years and a little over 3 months. St. Methodius composed rules for those turning to the faith, which the Church has adopted as a guide: three rites concerning marriages, penitential rules, and several church songs; after St. Methodius there remained several pastoral instructions.

also used at this time the spiritual psalmody of David. The prophet ordered one of these singers to be summoned. And when the singer sang, the grace of the Spirit indicated what was to be done" (Question 12 on 4 Kgdms.).

3910. St. Elisha the Prophet died in deep old age, about 100 years old. He came forward in the prophetic ministry under Ahab (3 Kgdms. 19:19), about 900 B.C., and he died under Joash, in the thirties of the ninth century. According to Blessed Jerome, the tomb of the prophet was pointed out near Samaria (cf. 4 Kgdms. 5:9, 6:32). The holy relics of the Prophet Elisha, in the time of Blessed Jerome, together with the relics of the holy prophet Obadiah and of John the Baptist at Sebaste or Samaria, drove out demons; in the time of Julian they were burned, but the remains were preserved from the fire by the faithful, and a part of them was transferred to Alexandria. In Constantinople a church was dedicated to the holy prophet, and in Palestine a canon was written by St. John of Damascus. The feast in honor of the holy prophet Elisha on June 14 is the most ancient and common to all peoples of East and West.



THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 15

15 июня

New Calendar June 15 · Old Calendar June 28 (civil dates)

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Amos

Память святого пророка Амоса

The Holy Prophet Amos, a native of the city of Tekoa, which lay in the land of Judah, not far from Bethlehem, was born of a family that was neither noble nor wealthy: he spent his days tending flocks. The Lord, who regards not the rich and mighty but the humble and poor, took him, as He had taken Moses and David, from the pasturing flocks to the prophetic ministry (see Ex. 3:1–22; 1 Kgdms. 16:1–23). He commanded him to leave the land of Judah and go to the land of Israel, there to turn people who had grown corrupt through idolatry to repentance by prophetic preaching. It should be noted that after the death of Solomon (954 B.C.), Jeroboam (953–931 B.C.), together with the ten tribes of Israel, broke away from the son of Solomon, Rehoboam (954–937 B.C.), who reigned in Jerusalem; from the tribes that had seceded there arose a separate kingdom of Israel, whose first king was Jeroboam (3 Kgdms. 12:1–33). From the days of this Jeroboam the Israelites, having fallen away from the true worship of God, worshipped idols. Jeroboam, seeking to strengthen his power over the Israelites and fearing that they, going up to the feasts at the Temple in Jerusalem, might again join themselves to the king of Judah, overthrow and slay him, made two golden calves. He knew the inclination of his subjects toward idolatry, for their forefathers, coming out of Egypt through the Red Sea into the wilderness, had melted down golden earrings to make a calf (Ex. 32:1–35). Having made the said golden calves, Jeroboam set one of them in Dan and the other in Bethel, cities of his realm; at the same time he commanded the Israelites not to go up

to Jerusalem but to worship and offer sacrifices to the golden calves, celebrating solemn festivals in their honor, and the king said to the people: "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (3 Kgdms. 12:28).

Thus did Jeroboam lead the Israelites astray. And although the Lord sent His holy prophets to the Israelites to reprove them and bring them back to the right way, only a few of them were corrected and returned to the true God; others worshipped both the true God and the golden calves. Among these prophets the Lord sent, with terrible warnings, His servant, the holy Amos. This prophet of God was simple and unskilled in speech, but not in understanding, for in him acted and spoke through his lips the same Holy Spirit who acted in all the prophets. The holy Amos carried out his prophetic ministry in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, 809–758 B.C., whose capital was Jerusalem, and of Jeroboam, king of Israel, whose capital was in Samaria; but this was not the Jeroboam who, breaking away from the scepter of Judah, made the golden calves, but another, later in years;[1] nevertheless, like his predecessor of the same name he was an idolater who served the golden calves. The holy Amos began to prophesy in the days of these kings, two years before the terrible earthquake in Palestine, the cause of which, according to the reports of ancient writers, was as follows: the king of Judah, Uzziah, called Azariah,[2] in his pride presumed to enter the sanctuary of the Temple and offer incense on the altar of incense according to the priestly order; when the priests opposed this, he threatened them with death, and at that very moment a terrible earthquake began in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine, so that not only were many buildings destroyed, but some mountains were even moved from their places;[3] and the roof of the Temple was rent at the top, and through the opening a ray of sunlight fell upon the king's face; immediately after this the king's brow and his whole body were covered with

1. 789–737 B.C.

2. That is, lepers.

3. The Jewish historian Josephus (d. 2nd century A.D.) reports, among other things, that by an earthquake on the west of the Temple half of a mountain was torn away, which, rolling eastward over a distance of four stadia, buried the royal gardens in its path.

leprosy. Thus the Lord did not suffer violence to be done to His altar, nor the dishonor inflicted on His priests.

In his prophetic discourses, set out in detail in the book bearing his name, the holy Amos threatened terrible calamities that were to come from God not only upon Israel but also upon the surrounding lands, cities and peoples: Syria, the Philistines, Tyre, Edom, the Ammonites and the Moabites, and especially the Israelites, because, having come to know God, they had turned away from Him. The Lord is not so greatly angered by the sins of pagans who do not know Him as by the sins of those who have known Him and enjoyed His benefactions. And what benefactions did the Lord not bestow upon the ungrateful Israelite people? He freed them from slavery in Egypt, led them through the sea as if on dry land, rained manna upon them when they hungered in the wilderness, brought water from the rock for those who thirsted, drove out the nations before them and brought them into the promised land, flowing with milk and honey. Yet in honor of the golden idols, fashioned in the form of calves, they celebrated solemn festivals, crying out: "Behold thy gods, O Israel!" These feasts were celebrated with especial pomp and especially often at Bethel, on a high mountain, where the golden calf stood. Therefore the holy Amos came most often here, and raising his voice to the people, he frightened them with the coming chastisements of God, begging and admonishing them to abandon their impiety, but few listened to the prophet. At that time in Bethel there was a priest who served the said calf; seeing that the prophet of God, Amos, reviled the idol, scorning the sacrifices offered to the calf and turning people away from the unclean festivals by pointing to the terrible judgment of God upon those who worshipped it, the priest slandered him to Jeroboam, king of Israel: "Amos," he reported, "is stirring up rebellion against thee in the midst of the house of Israel; the land cannot bear all his words, for thus Amos says: Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of its land."

By this denunciation the priest Amaziah wished to rouse the king's anger against the prophet Amos, but the king paid little heed to the priest's words: although an idolater, he nevertheless revered the proph-

et of God and did not wish to molest him. The priest, convinced that he could not turn the king against the man of God, began himself to drive him away by violence: repeatedly he beat the holy Amos and drove him away from Bethel, forbidding him to come to the festivals in honor of the golden calf or to turn the people from the festal sacrifices and merriment. But the holy prophet disregarded the priest's prohibitions and the wounds he received from him; he came again to Bethel and again addressed the people with the prophetic word of teaching and exhortation, and again the priest seized him and subjected him to blows. Once the crafty priest said to the holy Amos with entreaty: "O seer! Go, flee into the land of Judah; there eat bread and there prophesy, but in Bethel prophesy no more, for it is the king's sanctuary and the royal house."

And Amos answered and said to Amaziah: "I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; I was a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit.[4] But the Lord took me from following the flock and said unto me: Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord. Thou sayest: Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. Therefore thus saith the Lord: When the Assyrians come into the land of Israel, they shall take it and lay it waste, overthrow its cities and take this city; then before thine eyes shameless soldiers shall defile thy wife with adultery, for thou too hast contributed to the error of Israel before the all-seeing eyes of God and hast taught these people to perform unclean deeds in the defiled temple of the golden calf, thy god; thy sons and daughters shall die before thee by the sword, and thou thyself shalt perish in a heathen land; and Israel shall be led into captivity out of its land" (cf. Amos 7:12–17).

These words of the holy Amos stirred the greatest anger in the priest, and he began to beat the prophet of God without mercy; at last the priest's son, the savage Uzziah, in a fury struck the holy Amos with all his strength between the eyebrows with a heavy club and mortally wounded him. But he did not die at once: barely alive, he was carried to the land of Judah, where after some days he died[5] in his homeland, in

4. The sycamore or sycomore is a fig tree; by its fruit it belongs to the inferior variety of figtrees.
5. About 783 B.C.

the city of Tekoa; there too he was buried with his fathers. Whoever wishes to see the prophecies of the holy Amos may find them in his book; and we glorify God, who enlightened him, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having cleansed thy luminous heart by the Spirit, O Prophet, glorious Amos, thou didst receive the gift of prophecy from on high, and didst cry aloud in the lands: Behold our God, and there is none other beside Him.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyr Doulas

Страдание святого мученика Дулы

At the time when the sons of the devil served him, and idolatrous sorcery and error grew ever stronger, under the rule of Maximus, governor of Cilicia,[6] a certain servant of Christ named Doulas,[7] a man of the same Cilician region, was condemned before this ruler. He was a righteous and God-fearing man, and by the testimony of all the people he strove to lead a virtuous life and in all things to keep righteousness.

Once it was reported to the governor that Dula was a confessor of the Christian faith, and after this the servant of Christ was at once cast into prison; and the notary[8] said to the governor:

"Ruler, in accordance with your command, your commanders have traversed all the land of Cilicia as far as the Zephyrite cities,[9] and during this time they have seized a certain follower of the impious Christian faith, and him we have now brought before your righteous and most radiant tribunal."

6. Cilicia – in antiquity a region in the south-east of Asia Minor, probably named after the Semitic tribe of the Cilicians, and early attracting Greek settlers by its fertility.
7. In Greek, it means slave.
8. Notary – an official whose duties included, among other things, supervising the exact observance of the laws in the courts; junior notaries conducted the correspondence in such cases.
9. That is, as far as the district of the Cilician seaport city of Zephyrium.

To this the governor said:

"When I myself go around those cities, I will command that the prisoners now held in the dungeons be led after me, and during that time, on the road, in places specially arranged for the purpose, I will torment them."

Shortly after this, he went to one of the cities in the Zephyritan country called Pretoriada[10]. Here the eparch took his seat on the judgment place and first ordered that the Blessed Doulas be brought before him. The servant of Christ, going to torture, prayed to the Lord thus: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, fount of all mercy, Thou didst once say through Thy prophet David: 'Open thy mouth, and I will fill it' (Ps. 80:11); and in Thy Gospel Thou sayest: 'Take no thought how or what ye shall speak' (Mt. 10:19). Therefore send Thy holy Angel and give me a word when I speak, so that, standing before the most impious Maximus, I may convict his impiety. And if I am to suffer, I will not fear the torments, for I shall have Thee before my eyes, and I shall willingly give up my body to torment. For if I do not give up my body to burning, what blessings can I obtain? What crown shall I receive? And what wounds can I then show Thee, my Lord, so that Thou, seeing them, mayest show Thy mercy upon me and grant forgiveness for my transgressions?"

When Doulas had prayed thus, the soldiers stripped him of his outer garment and, bound, presented him to the eparch.

And the eparch Maximus said to him:

"Tell me, what is your name?"

The saint answered:

"I am a servant of Christ."

To this the eparch objected:

"Tell us your real name, not your Christian name; this name cannot bring you any justification or relief."

Then the Blessed Doulas said:

10. Pretoriada – properly, one of the small localities of Cilicia, not far from the city of Zephyrium.

"Have I not plainly stated my name before you? My true name is Christian; the name by which men call me is Doulas, and I am so called because I truly am a servant of Christ."

To this the eparch said:

"You have not yet experienced fear of the court and of every torment, and therefore you speak so boldly with us. Tell us then: from what country, from what village and family are you?"

The saint answered:

"I am by birth from this Cilician region, from the Zephyritan city of Pretoriada; I come from a noble family, and from my earliest years I have been regarded as a Christian."

Then the eparch said:

"If you come from a glorious family, you must obey the invincible emperors. Therefore go now to the temple and zealously offer sacrifice there to the gods, and then you will be exalted by us and will receive great and most glorious honor from the great emperors."

The saint answered:

"Your honors and all the power that emperors bestow upon men may remain with you and with all those who do not honor the true God. But may the Lord my God keep all this far from me, so that I may be enriched in nothing but faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hearing these words of the blessed one, the eparch ordered him to be laid on the ground and beaten with iron rods; and at the same time he said to his servants:

"Persuade him to abandon his madness."

But the saint Doulas, suffering from the blows, cried out at this time to the Lord:

"I thank Thee, O Christ, that Thou hast granted me to endure all this for the sake of Thy holy name!"

Hearing such words from the martyr, Maximus began to reproach the saint Doulas and said to him:

"How can Christ help you now, when you are all covered with wounds? Or can you not yet understand this, you madman?"

The martyr answered:

"Did not the teacher of our faith, the holy apostle Paul, say that no one can be crowned 'unless he strive lawfully' (2 Tim. 2:5)?"

Then the eparch asked him:

"So you, who are now being tormented, shall afterward be granted a crown?"

The saint answered:

"I am now contending against your father, the devil; and if I overcome the satanic host, that is, you, the servant of the demon, I shall receive in heaven an incorruptible crown."

The tormentor said:

"Why do you rave so, believing in a Man nailed to a cross?"

To this the saint Doulas answered:

"Which is better: to believe in stone and wooden idols, which are the work of human hands, or in the living God-man and the true Lord, who of His own will was crucified for us?"

Then Maximus said:

"O lawless one! Do you think that the great god Apollo[11] is the work of human hands?"

To this the saint answered:

"You have rightly called Apollo by that name, for it means 'destroyer'[12]. By applying your heart to him, you destroy your soul, and not only your own soul but also those whom you compel to worship him. But know that the true God, who dwells in heaven, will require at your hands the souls of those whom you have destroyed by forcing them to worship idols. And what the impious Apollo was like, I shall now tell you: he was, as you are now, intemperate and consumed by unclean love for a woman named Daphne[13]. He gave her much gold, but did not receive what he had been promised from her. So I ask you: tell me, what kind of god is he, if, seized by carnal love, he could not win the fa-

11. Apollo, in Greek mythology, the god of light, namely of solar light, with all its beneficent and harmful influences.

12. The word Apollo derives from the Greek verb: ..., which means to destroy, to put to death.

13. Daphne, in Greek mythology, the daughter of the river-god Ladon and Gaia (the earth), who was beloved both by Apollo and by Leucippus. The latter, disguised as a maiden, followed Daphne among her companions, but was killed by Apollo. Then Daphne's mother, Gaia, transformed her into a laurel tree.

vor of the woman whom he loved so much? How can you hope for anything from him? Truly, all this that is related among you is worthy of laughter, and much of it is worthy even of tears. Indeed, tell me, do you worship as a god that Apollo whom even a vile harlot, full of every impurity, reckoned as nothing and spat in his face? See how worthy of tears are your impious deeds!"

Hearing this, Maximus said to the servants who were beating the martyr:

"Turn him on his back and beat him on the belly."

Then Athanasius, commander of the military guard, said to the saint:

"Submit to the governor. Do you not feel how your whole body is covered with wounds?"

The saint said to this:

"Rather, listen to me, counselor of the devil and his servant, and rather give counsel to yourself and to your eparch: how quickly to persuade the harlot Daphne to agree to live in lewdness with your god Apollo and to fulfill his desire, lest he, inflamed with love and not obtaining the fulfillment of his desire, perish by a cruel death. As for me, I have one counselor: our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then the tormentor ordered an iron plate to be brought and said to the servants:

"Heat it well on the fire and lay this blasphemer of our gods upon it."

The blessed one, hearing this, said:

"Your Apollo, who is in Gehenna, thanks you for intensifying still more the Gehennan fire in which he now suffers. He will repay you for this, so that you too will be cast with him into outer darkness. Then I too shall laugh at you, impious benefactor of Apollo."

When those who tormented the blessed one, having almost burned him entirely, still achieved nothing, and could neither seduce the servant of God with flattering counsel nor persuade him by torments to abandon his faith in Christ, then the eparch ordered the soldiers to lead the saint, already so tormented, into a separate prison chamber and to leave him there entirely alone, without any care for him. And he added:

"Let none of the impious Christians call him blessed, for, having lawlessly insulted our gods, he has now been subjected to great torments."

But the saint Doulas remained in that prison, ceaselessly glorifying God and praying that He would grant him to accomplish a good struggle of martyrdom.

After five days, Maximus, again taking his seat on the judgment place, asked:

"Is the utterly malicious follower of the impious Christian teaching still alive? Bring him here!" The military commander Athanasius answered:

"He is very firm in confessing his teaching, and moreover he is so vigorous that it is as though he had not a single wound on his body."

And he ordered the martyr to be brought in. The eparch, seeing that the whole body of the saint Doulas was unharmed and that his face shone, said to the soldiers:

"O wretched guards! Did I not order you not to heal him and not to care for him?"

To this Pigasius, chief of the notaries, answered:

"We swear by your majesty that, according to your command, we kept him in the innermost part of the prison, and that an iron image of Hercules[14], weighing three hundred litrae[15], hung on his neck the whole time. How then he is now completely well, none of us knows."

Then the holy martyr said:

"Mad eparch! It was my Christ who healed me and gave my body health and strength to endure even those tortures to which you will now again subject me. He did this so that you might know that our God is a Physician who wondrously heals those who hope in Him, and also so that I might receive the double crown of martyrdom, while you would be subject to a double eternal torment. For if you, for the sake of

14. Hercules, or Heracles. Heracles – the national Greek hero – was regarded by the ancients as the ideal of physical strength and might.

15. A litra equalled our 72 zolotniks. Consequently, a weight of more than 5 poods hung upon the neck of the martyr.

your Apollo, had endured such torments, could then this your god heal you as my Christ healed me?"

To this the eparch, enraged, answered:

"Since this man does not cease to revile our gods with malice, pour oil on his head and set him on fire."

The martyr said to this:

"If you burn my brain, what will you gain by it? Devise rather some other torments."

After this the eparch ordered many mustard seeds to be put into the martyr's nostrils.

Then the saint Doulas said:

"I laugh even now at all your tortures!"

After this the eparch ordered the servants to strike the saint as hard as possible on the back with iron claws, and at the same time to pour strong vinegar on his wounds and rub them with sharp potsherds.

While all this was being carried out at Maximus's command, the holy passion-bearer prayed thus:

"O Lord Jesus Christ! Stand before me, Thy servant; behold, 'the plowmen plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows' (Ps. 128:3)."

Then the eparch said to him:

"At least now be persuaded and confess our gods!"

St. Doulas answered him:

"Your gods, and Aphrodite[16] and Artemis[17] above all, may help you and your malice; but if you wish, I will tell you also about your other goddesses and all their shamelessness."

After that the eparch ordered the attendants:

"Break his jaws, so that he may not revile the gods; and, having broken his shins, leave him so that he cannot say another word."

To this the holy martyr said:

"O most lawless eparch! Why do you beat me, when I tell you the truth, that your Aphrodite and the other goddesses spent their lives in

16. Aphrodite – the Greek name of Venus, the goddess of love. Festivals in her honour, so-called Aphrodisia, were held in many places in Greece and Asia Minor.

filthy lusts and fornications, and even in their dispute over which of them was the more voluptuous, once set over themselves as judge some shepherd Paris[18]? And why are you angry when you are told of the most abominable deeds of your wicked goddesses?

Only my God is true: He willed to become man, was crucified on the cross, then was buried, rose on the third day, and sits at the right hand of God the Father, that afterwards He may come with fire, to consume all your gods!"

Hearing this, the eparch said to the saint:

"Do you see, wretch, that you too have two Gods?" The blessed one answered him:

"Do not err or go astray in speaking of two Gods: the Divinity we worship is Triune."

Then the eparch said:

"So then, you have three Gods?"

The martyr answered:

"I confess and worship the Trinity: I believe in the Father, I confess the Son, and I worship the Holy Spirit."

After this the eparch said:

"Tell me, how do you believe in one God and confess three?"

To this the holy martyr answered thus:

"Although you are a fleshly man and do not understand that which is 'of the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. 2:11), yet, for the sake of the people standing here, I will answer your question. As you, being a man, have speech and breath, so the almighty God the Father has His Word and His all-holy Spirit. This our God at the beginning created man and honored him with His image, breathing into him the spirit of life, and settled him in paradise; but when Satan, who now through you fulfills his will, compelled man to transgress the commandment of God, as he

17. Artemis – in Greek mythology, the daughter of Zeus and Leto – was the goddess of light and of the moon, for which reason, as goddess of light, she was given a bow and arrows as attributes, and as goddess of night, a torch.

18. According to Greek mythology, Paris's parents abandoned him, while still a child, to the mercy of fate. But he was raised among shepherds. Once three goddesses – Aphrodite, Hera and Athena – came to him and asked him to settle their dispute as to which of them was the most beautiful. Paris found Aphrodite the most beautiful of them.

now does through you, and thus cut him off from fulfilling the commandments of God, then God, desiring to restore the perished creature of His hands and to lead him back onto the true path, sent to earth His Son, that is, the Word; and so this Word of God dwelt in the Most Pure Virgin and was born of Her, and through Him God the Father granted salvation to the world."

After this the eparch asked:

"Does any word give birth to a man?"

The saint answered:

"You do not understand the mysteries of God. But if you had known the power of the almighty God, you would understand that He who created man from dust and founded the earth upon the waters, established the heavens and made all nature, is none other than Christ. But since human nature cannot behold the Divinity, the merciful Lord, out of His love for the human race, became man and took upon Himself human nature, so that, as through one first-created man death entered the world, so through the one Man our Lord Jesus Christ there might come the resurrection of the dead (Rom. 5:13)."

Then the eparch said:

"What are you saying? Will there really be a resurrection of the dead?" To this the holy martyr answered:

"Yes, there will be; otherwise how will God judge the world, if the dead do not rise?"

Maximus said:

"I do not want you to speak these false words to me; therefore believe: when we die, so we will lie as dead men."

"You have spoken the truth in this," the martyr answered, "that you are dead, for you believe in dead idols, and therefore you will never come to the resurrection of life, but will enter only the resurrection of judgment and eternal torment; but it befits all men to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give account of all they have done (2 Cor. 5:10)."

Then the tormentor ordered the soldiers to bind the martyr with iron fetters and keep him imprisoned in a dungeon.

On the next day, early in the morning, Maximus again ordered the servant of God Doulas to be brought to judgment, and when the martyr appeared, he said to him:

"O impious one, what profit is there for you in reviling our gods?"

The blessed one answered him:

"I receive a great reward from my God when I reproach your gods; and while you are still alive, the judgment of God will overtake you."

Then Maximus, wishing to defile the saint with a sacrificial offering, said to the attendants standing by:

"Put sacrificial meat and wine into his mouth."

After this the blessed one said:

"Even if you were to wash your whole abominable altar and pour it all into my mouth, you would not in the least defile the servant of God by this."

At this the tormentor cried out:

"Look, wretched man, you have already tasted what is from our altars!"

The holy martyr answered:

"None of this dishonors me in the least, abominable and senseless ruler."

Then the eparch ordered the saint hung upon a tree and his body flayed down to the entrails, and his jaws together with the lower throat to be torn out entirely.

After this the holy martyr said:

"Senseless one, do you not know that your father Satan taught you to do this?"

When the martyr's body had been wounded down to the bones and his jaws torn out, the eparch ordered him again put in prison; then, setting out for Tarsus in Cilicia[19], Maximus commanded that the prisoner be taken along with him. When they had gone about twenty stadia[20], the holy martyr Doulas, signing himself with the sign of the Cross, committed his suffering soul to the Lord, and his body was carried on

19. Tarsus – the principal city of Cilicia, a region of Asia Minor; in the Christian Church it is especially known as the homeland of the holy Apostle Paul (Acts 22:3).
20. By our measures, a *poprishche* is equal to approximately 690 sazhens.

already dead. When they were fourteen stadia from Tarsus, the commentarisius[21] announced to the eparch that Doulas, who had shamefully reviled the gods, was already dead, and that his dead body was now being carried: what should be done with it? The eparch ordered the body cast into a deep ditch, so that it might remain unburied. The soldiers, however, took the body of the saint and threw it into the river that flows into the land of the Zephyrites. And when the body floated to a village not far from the city of Pretornada and lay there on the bank, the dogs of the local shepherds smelled the body of the saint, and one of the dogs, guarding it, did not allow any bird to touch the body of the martyr; another dog, taking in its teeth a shepherd's garment, brought it and covered the relics of the martyr. Seeing this, the shepherds told everything in the village and the city, and at once a multitude of faithful people went to the relics of the holy martyr and received them with piety, giving thanks to God, who had not deprived them of so precious a treasure. Taking up with reverence the body of the holy martyr, they buried it with honor, glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Doulas the Passion-bearer

Память преподобного Дулы Страстотерпца

The blessed servant of God Doulas was a monk of one of the coenobia[22] of the land of Egypt. Humility and meekness always shone in his countenance, and in mind he was great and glorious.

This ascetic of God, persecuted and slandered by all, always rejoiced and was merry in spirit. He counted those who humiliated him as blameless, and prayed to God for them, that the Lord would not impute this sin to them. Laying all the blame on the devil, who was troubling the brethren, and arming himself with courage

21. Commentarisius – the chief over the prisons.

22. Cenobium (from the Greek – common, and – life) – the general name for all communal monasteries, that is, those where the brethren receive from the monastery not only their table but everything necessary for life, by the disposition of the abbot, and on their part present all their labour and its wages for the common use of the monastery.

against him, the blessed Doulas, by patience, prayer, and guilelessness, overcame all his snares. In such patience the ascetic of God remained for twenty years, steadfastly nourishing meekness and humility in his heart.

The devil, not knowing how at last to embitter the blessed one, spread against him such a treacherous lie; and in this case he attacked not only the Venerable Doulas but the whole brotherhood, thus grieving and disturbing all the silent ones; namely, he taught one brother, who had no fear of God, to enter the church secretly and steal all the church vessels there. Having done all this, that monk hid what he had stolen and shut himself up in his cell, as though he had not gone out anywhere before that.

When the time of the morning service came, the parekklesiarch[23], entering the church to light the great lamps, saw that all the church vessels had been stolen; he at once went and told the abbot[24]. Then, according to custom, he struck the signal board[25], and all the brethren gathered in the church for the morning chanting.

At the end of Matins the abbot and the parekklesiarch announced to the brethren that the vessels had been stolen, and all were greatly disturbed by this. It happened that at that time, because of illness, the blessed Doulas had not come to the morning rule; and some of the brethren said:

"No one could have stolen them but Brother Doulas, who for that reason, evidently, did not come to the church; had he not committed this theft, he would have come to the midnight office before everyone, as he always used to do."

And they sent to bring him to the church; the messengers, going, found him, though sick, yet standing in prayer; seizing the blessed one, they dragged him forcibly to the church. Then the holy Doulas asked them:

23. Parekklisiarch – the sexton who lights the lamps in the church.
24. Abba – father; in the East, the superiors of cenobitic monasteries were so called.
25. Semantron (from the word to strike) – a wooden or metal board which is struck or beaten to summon the faithful to the church for worship by sound or noise. Among us, bells have replaced the semantron, but in Greece they exist to this day, especially where there are many Turks, who do not permit the use of bells.

"What does this mean, brethren, and why do you drag me by force, when I could have gone to the holy fathers of my own accord?"

They, reproaching him with abusive and shameful words, said:

"Unworthy of life blasphemer, has it not been enough for you all these years to trouble us, and now you have mocked even our souls."

He answered them:

"Forgive me, brethren, if I have sinned against you."

Then they brought him to the abbot and to the whole assembly of fathers grown old in asceticism, and said:

"Here is a man who from the very beginning has been troubling us and violating the rules of our common life."

And each began to slander him. One said:

"I saw him secretly eating greens."

And another:

"I saw him stealing bread and distributing it outside the monastery."

And yet another slandered him thus:

"I saw him secretly drinking costly wine."

Others likewise falsely slandered him, bringing against him various other accusations of wickedness.

Hearing all this, the abbot and the fathers who were with him believed the calumnies, and they questioned the innocent Dula: was it true, all that was said of him? They questioned him especially about the theft, namely where he had hidden the church vessels he had stolen.

The holy Dula, defending himself, at first maintained that he was in no way guilty of this; but then, seeing that they did not believe him, he fell silent and only said:

"Forgive me, holy fathers; I am a sinner."

Then the abbot ordered that his monastic garments be stripped from him and that he be clothed in secular dress; and he said:

"Such deeds are unworthy of the monastic rank."

When the monastic habit was stripped from the blessed Dula, he wept bitterly, and, looking up to heaven, cried aloud:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of Thy holy name I put on this habit; but now, because of my sins, it has been taken from me."

After this the abbot ordered that the servant of God be put in chains and handed over to the steward; the steward, stripping his body bare, began to beat the saint severely with ox-sinews, asking him whether all that was said of him concerning the theft was true.

Dula, though with tears in his eyes, yet in his innocence still smiling as before, said:

"Forgive me; I have sinned."

Then the steward, seeing him smiling and speaking such words, was still more angered; he put him in prison and fastened his feet in stocks; and he also wrote a letter to the city governor, informing him of the theft and of the brother Dula, and at once dispatched this letter to him.

The city governor, having read the letter, immediately sent his rough servants to bring Dula as a thief. And the soldiers, seizing the servant of God, set him on an unsaddled beast and, placing heavy iron weights upon his neck, led him with disgrace through the midst of the city.

When the blessed Dula was brought to trial, the city governor asked him:

"Where are you from, what is your name, and why did you become a monk? How did you steal the church vessels, and where did you hide them?"

The passion-bearer of Christ, to all these questions of the governor, answered nothing else than:

"I have sinned; forgive me."

Then the governor, angered, ordered the saint to be laid naked on the ground, and commanded four of his servants to beat him without mercy with ox-sinews.

While the blessed Dula was being beaten for a long time without any compassion, he at last, with a smiling face, said to the city magistrate:

"Beat me, beat me; and you will make my stolen silver the purer. To this the governor said: 'Madman, on your body and on your ribs I will make your silver purer than even snow.'"

And he at once ordered glowing coals to be heaped beneath his belly, and vinegar mixed with salt to be poured upon his wounds.

Even those standing by marveled at the blessed man's patience, and said to him:

"Tell us where you have hidden the sacred vessels, and you will be set free."

The martyr of Christ answered them:

"I have neither silver nor the missing vessels." Then the governor, releasing the saint from the tortures, ordered him to be led back to the prison.

On the following morning this elder of the city sent to the lavra[26], ordering that the abbot come to him together with all the monks; and they, gathering together the next day, came to the governor.

And he said to them: "I have subjected your brother, whom you accuse of the theft, to many and various and grievous tortures, and I have found nothing evil in him."

To this the monks said to him: "Lord governor, apart from the theft, this wretch has done many other evils; but until now we have borne with him for God's sake, hoping that he would turn away from his vice; but he has fallen into something worse."

Then the city governor said to them: "What, then, am I to do with him?"

The monks answered: "Do with him what the laws command,"

"Our law," the city authorities replied to them, "commands that a sacrilegious man have his hands cut off."

The monks then said: "Let him suffer according to the law, and receive the punishment due to his deeds."

Then the governor ordered the passion-bearer to be brought, and before everyone questioned him thus:

"Wretched and obstinate man," he began, "tell us the truth concerning the theft of which you are accused, and you will be freed from death."

To this the innocent Dula answered:

26. Lavra – properly, a part of a city enclosed by a wall. But already from the most ancient times this name was applied to populous and important monasteries. Such monasteries were first called lavras in Palestine, where the monks were obliged to gather in as large numbers as possible and to fence their dwellings with walls, out of fear of attacks from various nomads, and especially the Bedouins.

"Do you wish, governor, that I should say against myself what I did not do? I do not want to lie against myself, for every lie is from the devil."

And he went on:

"In that of which you now question me, I consider myself wholly innocent."

Then the governor, seeing that the blessed man did not acknowledge himself guilty, while the monks demanded that he be judged according to the law, ordered that his hands be cut off.

After this the innocent elder Dula was led to the place where those condemned were executed.

At this time the monk who was in truth the author of the theft and the despoiler of the sacred vessels was moved to compunction, and said to himself: "What if now or later all that I have stolen should be discovered? And even if this evil deed of mine should now remain hidden, yet on the day of the righteous Judgment of God it will be revealed; what then shall I, wretch, do? What answer shall I give concerning this double sin: that I both stole the vessels and subjected an innocent brother to torments?"

And he went quickly to the abbot of the lavra and said: "Father abbot, send quickly to the city to the governor, so that they do not cut off our brother's hands and that he not die from his sufferings, for the sacred vessels have been found."

And at once the abbot sent to the governor, and the passion-bearer was released even before the execution was carried out.

When he was brought back to the lavra, his innocence was plainly revealed, and it became clear to all that the theft was the work of another monk; and the brethren began to fall down before the venerable Dula, entreating him: "Forgive us, for we have sinned against you." He, weeping, answered them thus: "Forgive me, fathers and brethren; I give you great thanks that for the brief sufferings you have inflicted upon me I shall be delivered from eternal torments, and that, by the mercy of God, I shall be granted great blessings. And always, hearing your injustices and reproaches against me, I rejoiced in spirit, hoping thereby to be delivered from the great shame for my sins when the Lord comes

in His glory and makes known the counsels of the heart. Yet most of all I rejoice now that I have suffered innocently; for I know what blessings God has prepared for those who endure sufferings for His sake. My only sorrow is for you: may the Lord not reckon it to you as sin that you have so unjustly treated me; and now I pray the merciful God only that He grant you forgiveness."

After this the venerable Dula, having lived three days more, departed to the Lord, but no one knew of his death. The brother who had been appointed to wake the monks for the midnight prayer came one day to the venerable one's cell, but, knocking at it, received no answer. Knocking a second and a third time and again receiving no answer, he went and called another brother; bringing a candle with them, they opened the door, and, entering the cell, found the venerable one standing on his knees: he seemed to be making prostrations, but in soul he had already departed to God, for in prayer and on his knees he had given up his spirit to the Lord.

Not daring to touch him, these two brethren left him standing thus, and going away, reported to the father of the lavra that Brother Dula had reposed. At the conclusion of the morning chanting the abbot himself came, and seeing the blessed one dead, ordered that his body be prepared and brought to the church for burial.

When his honorable body had been made ready for burial and brought to the church, the semantron was struck, so that all the monks might know of the death of their brother; and all gathered and touched the honorable body of the saint as that of a martyr. The abbot at this time sent to the neighboring lavra, asking that the abbot of that monastery come with his brethren, so that all might bury with honor the brother who had suffered innocently.

The monks, crowding about the deceased, hindered and jostled one another; therefore the abbot of the monastery soon ordered the blessed one's body to be carried into the church and its doors shut, awaiting the arrival of the abbot of the other monastery with his monks, that thus the monks of both lavras might be gathered together.

About the ninth hour, when the abbot of the neighboring monastery had already come with his monks and so all had gathered, they ordered

the church to be opened and the body placed in the midst of the cathedral, that all might see it and that the body might be given honorable burial with fitting hymns. But when they approached the body, they did not find it: only the garments and the sandals[27] remained, and all were greatly amazed and filled with awe. Then the abbots of both lavras said to the brethren: "Do you see, brethren, what long-suffering endurance, meekness, guilelessness and humility can accomplish? Behold, our brother has departed from us not only in soul but also in body, having been carried invisibly by angelic hands to another place, for we proved unworthy to touch his holy body; and this honor he has been granted by the Lord for the sake of his long-suffering endurance, which he bore with meekness and guilelessness, in humility of heart. We counted him a sinner and unworthy to live on earth; but he proved to be holy and worthy of heavenly life with the Angels. And now we are put to shame, while he is glorified; we are now humbled, while he is crowned by Christ the Lord. Let us therefore strive to learn patience and humility, meekness and guilelessness, having before us the image of this long-suffering sufferer."

When the abbots of both lavras were saying this, all the monks wept bitterly, and there and then they resolved to celebrate yearly the memory of the holy and Venerable Passion-bearer Dula, for the benefit of their souls, and to the glory of Christ our God, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Vitus, Modestus and Crescentia

Страдание святых мучеников Вита, Модеста и Крискентии

In the reign of the emperor Diocletian[28], under the prefect Valerian, who persecuted the Christians, there lived in Sicily a twelve-year-

27. Sandals – a kind of footwear among the ancient Greeks and Romans. They were made of felt, leather, cork and even wood, and resembled our shoes; but their distinguishing feature was the strap-fastening, which encircled the foot across the toes; to it was attached a thong passing between the big toe and the second toe.

old boy named Vitus, the son of a noble and wealthy citizen, Gilas. This Gilas adhered to pagan impiety; but his son, the blessed Vitus, being enlightened from on high by the wondrous grace of the Holy Spirit, in his youthful years came to know the one true God, Who created heaven and earth; having believed in Him, he prayed to Him constantly, by day and by night, clothed in a hair shirt. The young boy was granted to hear a divine voice pronouncing from on high: "Thy prayer is heard! I will show My mercy upon thee!"

After that miraculous voice, the boy was granted by God the power to work miracles. He healed human infirmities, exhorted the unbelieving to know the true God, and taught all the way of righteousness. For the almighty God willed to win praise for Himself through the lips and deeds of this boy, to put to shame the idolatrous impiety. The Lord gave Vitus an extraordinary understanding and the gift of working wonders, so that, even in his youthful years, the blessed one might be a man mighty in word and deed, and that through this God, wondrous in His saints, might be glorified.

When the prefect Valerian, as a result of the denunciations and slanders of many pagans, learned of this holy boy, he summoned the father of Vitus and said to him: "What is this? I hear that your son worships that very God Whom the Christians revere. But if you desire to see him sound and unharmed, take care to turn him away from this error."

Gilas, returning home, began to exhort his son not to abandon the ancient pagan worship rendered to their gods. But the blessed boy Vitus answered his father: "I know no other God than the One, Who is from eternity, Whose Spirit moved over the waters and divided the light from the darkness (Gen. 1:2–4). I serve the God Who created heaven and earth; He is the holy Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Angels. This God I confess, and I shall confess Him all the days of my life."

28. Emperor Diocletian reigned from 281 to 305.

The father of Vitus was greatly angered by these words of his son and commanded that the boy be beaten with rods, and as he did so he said:

"Who taught you to speak thus? Do you not know that if the prefect learns of this, you will perish?"

The boy, bearing the blows, answered:

"Christ taught me this; I am His servant, and I am in no way afraid of the prefect's wrath."

Then Gilas, summoning the tutor of his son, named Modestus, said to him:

"See to it that the boy never mentions Christ in his speech."

But St. Vitus disregarded his father's command, and constantly bore the name of Christ both in his heart and on his lips, and he was comforted by Christ the Lord through an angelic appearance; for in a vision there appeared to him an Angel of the Lord, who said:

"Fear not, but be bold in the name of Jesus Christ. I am given to you as a guardian; I shall keep you until your death. Know of this mercy of God, that you shall be given by God all that you ask of Him."

The holy boy was comforted and gladdened by this angelic vision, and with still greater zeal began to confess and glorify the name of the Lord.

The father of the saint, however, grieved greatly over the boy, since he was his only son; therefore the father of Vitus strove with flattering words to lead him to the service of demons. But St. Vitus said to his father:

"To what gods do you command me to worship?"

The father answered:

"Do you not know, my son, our gods Zeus[29], Hercules[30], Juno[31], Minerva[32], Vesta[33], Apollo[34] and the rest, whom kings and princes worship?"

The saint answered his father:

"Those of whom you speak are soulless idols, made by human hands; they have mouths but are mute, they have eyes but are blind; they have hands and feet but do not move. But I believe in the one living and almighty God, for "in Him we live and move" (Acts 17:28); I believe in the Creator and Provider of all creation, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; I confess the one Redeemer and Savior of the human race, the Son of God, Who suffered torments for the sake of our sins; by His blood we have received salvation."

The father answered the boy with tears:

"O my dear child! Listen to the useful and sound counsel of your parent, and turn away from that mad faith, according to which you vainly revere a dead, unknown man; turn away, lest the prefect, enraged, destroy you and thereby increase the suffering of my heart."

The blessed Vitus answered:

"O, if only you too, father, would know Who and what He is, Whom you, belittling Him, call a dead man! O, if only you, father, would worship Him together with me! For He is Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world."

Gilas said:

"Concerning that Christ, Whom you call God, I know that, at the command of Pilate, who governed Judea, He was subjected to scourging, condemned to the death of the cross, and crucified by the Jews and the servants of Pilate."

The holy boy answered:

---

29. Zeus or Dios – the supreme god of ancient Greek religion.
30. Hercules or Heracles – the national hero of ancient Greece. Great physical strength was ascribed to Hercules.
31. Juno was regarded by the ancient Greeks and Romans as the goddess-patroness of family life.
32. Minerva or Athena – the goddess of wisdom.
33. Vesta or Hestia – the goddess-patroness of the domestic hearth and of the sacrificial fire.
34. Apollo, from the Greek – destroyer; among the ancient Greeks he was considered the guardian of the bright powers and the vanquisher of the dark ones.

"Yes, it was indeed as you say, father. But there is a great, marvelous and holy mystery in this matter."

Gilas asked:

"If one reasons in truth, this matter would be more justly called not a mystery but an execution."

The blessed one answered:

"Hear me, father, with meekness, and know the truth; the delivering to death and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ is our salvation; and know that no torments will ever separate me from love for Him."

Then Gilas ended the conversation, grieving in his heart over his son.

By the grace of God dwelling in the boy, many miracles were accomplished: the blind received their sight, the sick were healed, and demons, cast out of people, confessed the great holiness of the young boy.

All this could not be hidden from the prefect Valerian. Seating himself on his judgment seat, he said in the presence of all to the father of Vitus:

"Noble man Gilas! It has now become certain to me that your son with all zeal worships the so-called Christ, crucified in Judea; he worships this Christ, while he reviles our ancestral gods; therefore he must come before us for judgment: bring him here."

When the young boy was brought before that impious tribunal, the prefect said to him:

"Why do you not offer sacrifices to our immortal gods? Have you not heard of the royal decrees to put to death, after various tortures, everyone who dared to worship the crucified one?"

The blessed boy, filled with the Holy Spirit, was in no way frightened by the prefect; making the sign of the cross upon himself, he answered:

"I do not wish to worship demons, and I will not revere stone and wooden idols, for I have the living God, Whom my soul serves."

The father of the saint, Gilas, turning to his relatives and acquaintances, cried out with great weeping:

"Weep together with me, my friends, I beg you, for I see that my only son is perishing!"

Then St. Vitus cried out loudly, answering his father:

"I am not perishing, but am made worthy to be numbered among the host of the righteous and the friends of God."

Valerian said to the saint:

"Until now I have restrained myself for the sake of your noble birth and out of my regard for your father; until now I have not applied to you the royal decrees issued against law-breakers; but now, having become convinced that you have arrived at obstinacy in your opposition, I shall begin, on lawful grounds, to torment you, so that, having received punishment, you will abandon your stubbornness."

Having said this, the prefect ordered the blessed boy to be beaten with rods.

The saint was beaten for a long time. Then the tormentor said to the saint:

"Listen to me now and offer sacrifice to the gods."

The martyr answered:

"I have already told you, prefect, that I worship Christ, the Son of God."

Then the prefect, enraged still more, ordered the saint to be beaten with iron rods. But as soon as the prefect's servants wished to do this, their hands dried up; in the same way the prefect's own hand, with which he was pointing out to his servants, suddenly was injured and became withered, so that from the pain he cried out such words: "Woe is me! I have ruined my hand and now I suffer grievously." Then he said to the father of St. Vitus: "You have not a son, but a sorcerer."

But St. Vitus cried out loudly:

"I am not a sorcerer, but a servant of my Lord Jesus Christ, the almighty, Who raised the dead, walked on the waters as on dry land, stilled the raging sea, and healed all the incurable diseases that befell people; now He does the same by His almighty power. I am His servant, and therefore I strive to fulfill His commandments. Tell me, what power do those gods have whom you serve? Let them heal your hand, if they can."

The prefect said:

"And can you heal my hand?"

The saint answered:

"I can, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Then make me well," said the prefect, "so that I may be convinced that you are not a sorcerer, but a servant of the true God, as you say."

Then the holy martyr, lifting his eyes to heaven, said:

"O God, Heavenly Father! Hear me, Thy unworthy servant, for the sake of those who stand here, that they may believe in the Lord our Jesus Christ, Thy Son, the true and almighty God, who reigns together with Thee and with the Holy Spirit. Grant that, for the sake of the name of Thine Only-begotten Son, the hand of the prefect be healed."

No sooner had the saint finished this prayer than the hand of Valerian was healed and became as it had been before. Then the prefect gave the youth back to his father and said: "Take your son to your house and persuade him to offer sacrifice to the gods, that he may not perish."

Having brought his son home, Gilas began with much flattery to persuade him to bow down to his impiety. He arranged feasts and assembled choirs of singers. Before Vitus they played upon graceful musical instruments; cymbals and psalteries resounded; beautiful maidens danced before the eyes of the saint, and young men made merry. Worldly songs of lewdness were sung, and many seductive words were spoken, so that through all this the heart of the young Vitus might be ensnared into vanity. But the soul of the youth, hard as adamant, remained wholly unshaken, for he had in his heart a love of God that overcame every worldly love. He paid no heed to anything that was sung before his eyes, and likewise did not look at what was done before him. Lifting his eyes to heaven, he sighed from the depths of his heart and said: "Do not despise, O Lord, my God, a heart that is broken and humble!"

Then Gilas ordered a chamber to be prepared for his son. He filled it with every kind of riches; he strewed the floor with beautiful carpets; the hangings were adorned with pearls, and the bed and the whole chamber were filled with great splendor. He shut his son up in this chamber and commanded the most beautiful maidens to attend him, to

beguile him. But the chaste and holy youth, kneeling, prayed to the Lord in these words: "O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God and Father of Thy beloved Child, my Lord Jesus Christ! Look upon me and have mercy on me; strengthen me by Thy power, that the malicious and lawless serpent may not be able to accomplish his desire upon me, Thy servant, and that the pagans may not mock Thy faithful servant and say: Where is their God?"

While the saint was praying in these words, suddenly an ineffable light shone in the chamber, and there were seen twelve shining faces, fiery like lamps. An ineffable fragrance also emanated from those faces, and this fragrance spread through the air so that it filled the whole house. Vitus' father, with all his household, was astonished and amazed and cried out: "This is a great miracle. Whence comes such a fragrance, such as we have never smelled in the temples of our gods?" Then he said: "The gods have come into my house to my son." And he began diligently to search out whence that fragrance came. Approaching the door of his son's chamber and entering it, he saw angelic faces that had wings like eagles. These faces were full of ineffable goodness, shone brightly, and sang: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord" (Is. 6:3).

From that strong radiance Gilas was at once struck blind, for he had impure eyes, unworthy to behold the angelic light that is hidden in the heavens, for this light can be beheld only by those who have pure spiritual eyes.

The blessed Vitus, seeing that his father had become blind, was moved by natural affection for him and began to pray to God for him, that he might be shown mercy. Concluding his prayer, he added: "But let it be done, O Master, not my will but Thine; let it be as it pleases Thee."

Gilas, however, because of the severe pain in his eyes, cried out aloud: "Woe is me! I have lost the light of my eyes. I am seized by a grievous sickness!"

All his household, servants and maidservants, seeing their master suffering greatly in his eyes, wept, so that the sound of their lamentation was heard in the neighboring houses; and in this way the whole city soon learned of what had befallen Gilas. After this many citizens

began to gather at his house; the prefect Valerian also came there in haste. Seeing that Gilas had become blind, leaning on his servants and crying out in pain, Valerian asked what had caused his blindness. He answered: "I saw in my son's chamber winged gods; their eyes were like stars and the appearance of their faces like lightning. Unable to endure their radiance, I injured my eyes and lost my sight."

Valerian said: "Undoubtedly those gods whom you saw are very powerful; therefore you must pray to them that they may heal you."

Then, taking the blind Gilas, Valerian led him to the temple of Zeus. Gilas prayed there in these words: "O Zeus, almighty god! If you heal my eyes, I will offer you countless sacrifices; I will sacrifice to you a bull with golden horns. And to you also, O goddess Vesta, I will bring pure virgins, if I receive help from you."

Thus Gilas prayed to his vain gods, but not only did he receive no healing from them, on the contrary he felt still greater pain. The holy Vitus, bending his knees before the Lord, prayed in his chamber for his father, saying: "O Master, who didst enlighten the blind Tobit[35], show mercy to my father, if he will come to know Thee."

At last Gilas, still unhealed, was led by his servants from the idol temple to his house. Entering the chamber in which the holy Vitus was offering to God the sacrifice of praise, he fell at the feet of Vitus and said:

"Beloved son! Heal me!"

The holy Vitus said to him:

"Do you wish, father, to be well?"

Gilas answered:

"Yes, I very much wish it."

The saint said to him:

"If you want to receive healing, then renounce Zeus, Hercules, Juno, Minerva, Vesta, and Apollo."

Gilas answered:

"How can I renounce them?"

35. Tobit – a pious Israelite who, together with his family, was in captivity at Nineveh, under the Assyrian king Sennacherib. The history of his healing from blindness may be read in the biblical book bearing his name.

The holy Vitus said:

"Do not call them gods, but demons; the idols which you have honored until now, do not honor, but count them as nothing, as lifeless and useless things. And if you promise to do so from a true heart, your eyes will at once be healed and enlightened."

Gilas said:

"I renounce the gods, and I promise to do all that you have told me."

The saint said:

"I know that your heart is hardened and your words are not sincere; but I will show upon you the power of my Master, for the sake of those present, that they may believe and glorify the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, although you are unworthy of this."

Having said this, the saint laid his hand upon the diseased eyes of his father and prayed to God in these words: "Lord Jesus Christ, who didst enlighten the eyes of one born blind (Jn. 9:6–7), overcoming nature, enlighten also the eyes of my father, though he is unworthy of this because of his unbelief; but do this for the glory of Thy holy name, that Thine enemies may see and be ashamed, and that all who know and love Thy name may be glorified."

While the saint was praying thus, scabs like scales fell from the eyes of the blind man; he became well and could see clearly with his eyes. But soon, instead of coming to know the true God and giving thanks to Him for the healing received from Him, he began to revile his Benefactor, saying to his son: "It was not your God who healed me, but my gods, whom I serve and to whom I promised to offer sacrifices."

And he glorified his impious gods, saying aloud before everyone: "I thank my gods, who have healed me!" Going to their temples, he began to offer them abominable thank-offerings, as he had vowed. At the same time his heart was so hardened by the devil and blinded by malice that he changed his natural love for his son into hatred, intending to put to death his holy and innocent son. But the Lord, who guards His servants, sent His Angel for their preservation. For the Angel of the Lord, in the form of a beautiful youth shining with light, appeared by night to the aforementioned Modestus, Vitus' tutor, who believed in Christ and was already advanced in years, and said to him:

"Take the youth and set out with him for the sea; on the shore you will find a small boat. Get into it, and you will arrive in a country which I will show you."

Modestus said to the Angel:

"Lord! I do not know the way where I am to go."

The Angel answered: "I will lead you!"

And at once Modestus arose, took his charge Vitus, took also his nurse Crescentia, a faithful servant of Christ, and set out with them for the sea, following the Angel who led them.

When they came to the seashore, they found a boat prepared by the Lord. And the Angel said to the holy Vitus, as if testing him: "To what country will you go?" The holy Vitus answered: "Wherever the Lord leads us, there we will go with great zeal."

The Angel asked: "Do you have payment?" The youth answered: "He whom we serve will reward you." Then, entering the boat, they sailed away from Sicily; after sailing for a short time, they arrived at one of the Italian lands called Lucania, at a place called Allectoria. When, having come to shore, they got out of the boat, at once the Angel of the Lord, who had been with them in the boat in the form of a youth, became invisible.

Setting out on their journey, they came to a river called the Silaris, which flows into the sea from the land of Lucania. Beside this river they stopped to rest under a beautiful spreading tree. The place pleased them greatly, and they settled there to dwell; God sent them their food. Just as of old at God's command a raven fed the holy Elijah in the wilderness (3 Kgdms. 17:4), so an eagle fed these saints, bringing them their food every day. And St. Vitus began to work many wonderful miracles; his name became famous throughout that whole land, for God, by His power, glorifies His servants. The demons cast out of men by Vitus through the power of God cried out: "What have we to do with you, Vitus? Have you come here before the time to destroy us?"

People brought their sick to the saint, and he healed them all by prayer and the sign of the Cross, instructing them in the knowledge of the true God and in keeping His commandments. Many unbelievers turned to Christ and received holy Baptism.

At that time the son of the Emperor Diocletian was possessed by a demon, and the demon cried out through his mouth, saying: "I will not depart from here unless Vitus of Lucania comes here."

And the emperor said:

"Where can we find that man?"

The demon answered: "You will find him by the river Silaris."

At once the emperor sent armed soldiers into Lucania, commanding them to bring Vitus quickly. The soldiers, coming to the place indicated, found the servant of Christ at the river, praying to God, and they asked him:

"Are you Vitus?"

The saint answered:

"Yes, it is I."

The soldiers said:

"The Emperor Diocletian demands you."

St. Vitus answered:

"I am a little-known and humble youth. What use could I be to the emperor?"

The soldiers answered:

"His son suffers torment from a demon, and for this reason he demands you."

St. Vitus said:

"Then let us go in the name of the Lord."

And he set out with the soldiers on the way to Rome; with him went St. Modestus, while the blessed Crescentia followed them at a distance.

On arriving at Rome, the soldiers announced to Diocletian the arrival of Vitus, and Diocletian ordered that he be brought before him.

When the saint stood before the emperor, the emperor marveled at the youth's beauty: St. Vitus was indeed a handsome young man, his face was as it were angelic, and his eyes were like rays of the sun, for he was filled with the grace of Christ. Diocletian said to him: "Are you Vitus?"

But the saint gave him no answer.

Then the emperor began to question Modestus, intending to learn about the saint from him. But Modestus, being advanced in years and,

in his simplicity, unable to give the emperor a proper answer, was rebuked by the emperor with insulting words, and Diocletian intended to drive him away from himself. Then St. Vitus opened his mouth and said to Diocletian:

"Why do you question this old man so insolently, as if he were a youth? You ought to honor him, if only for his gray hairs."

The emperor answered St. Vitus:

"Where does this boldness of yours come from, that you dare to speak to us angrily, belittling our dignity?"

The saint answered:

"We have no anger, for we have received a spirit of meekness from Christ our Lord, and we are imitators of the gentleness of the dove. For our Teacher was good by His nature, great in authority, gentle in disposition, humble and meek; therefore His disciples too must be meek and humble of heart, not fierce and wrathful as you call us."

While the saint was speaking thus, suddenly the demon cried out through the mouth of the emperor's son, saying:

"O Vitus! Why do you torment me so cruelly before the time?"

The saint made no answer to the demon. And Diocletian said to the saint:

"Can you heal my son?"

"Your son," answered the saint, "may be made whole, but I cannot give him health. Christ, the Son of God, whose servant I am, if He wills, can easily deliver him through me, His servant, from the demonic torment, for He is almighty."

Then Diocletian began to entreat the saint to heal his son. Approaching the one who was possessed, the saint laid his hand on his head and said: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, unclean spirit, come out of the creature of God!"

At once the demon left the emperor's son, but not without harm to those present; for by God's permission it suddenly struck dead many unbelievers who had mocked St. Vitus in word or thought, and it carried their loathsome souls down to hell as its prey.

The emperor was greatly astonished to see his son whole and many of those present slain; but instead of coming to know the power of the

name of Jesus Christ and glorifying the one true God, he pondered within himself how to persuade Vitus to his impiety. Diocletian was also captivated by the saint's beauty; he began to speak with him flatteringly, saying: "Dearest Vitus, listen to me and offer sacrifice to the gods together with me; then I will give you half of my kingdom; I will reward you with gold, silver and precious things; I will clothe you in royal raiment, and you will be my sincere, closest friend."

St. Vitus answered:

"I have no need of your kingdom or your riches, for I have my Lord and my God; if I serve Him faithfully, He will clothe me in the incorruptible and most bright garment of immortality in the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Do not speak so, Vitus," said Diocletian, "but spare your life; offer sacrifice to the gods, lest you perish after manifold tortures by a bitter death."

The saint answered:

"I greatly desire to endure the torments with which you threaten me; then I shall more quickly attain the crown which the Lord has promised to His chosen ones."

Then Diocletian commanded that St. Vitus and Modestus be shut up in a dark and foul-smelling dungeon, that heavy fetters of ten poods' weight be placed on each of them, and that the door and window be sealed with his imperial signet ring, so that no one could give them bread or water; the tyrant intended to destroy them by hunger and thirst.

When the saints had been shut in the dungeon, suddenly a light shone there; the jailers, pressed against the crack, saw this light too. St. Vitus cried out to God in a loud voice, saying: "O God, come to our aid and deliver us from these bonds, as You delivered the three youths from the burning furnace (Dan. 3) and as You delivered Susanna from the lawless false witnesses (Dan. 13:1–64)."

While the saint was praying thus, the foundation of the dungeon shook, an even greater light shone, and an indescribable fragrance spread everywhere. Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and said:

"Take courage, Vitus, be strong and steadfast, for I am always with you."

Having said these words, the Lord became invisible. At once the fetters fell from the holy prisoners, Vitus and Modestus, and became as it were dust. The saints stood up and began to sing: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has visited and wrought redemption for His people" (Lk. 1:68).

At the same time angelic voices were heard singing with them; the jailers, seeing the ineffable light and hearing the voices of the angels, were filled with fear and terror and became as dead men. Then, coming to themselves, they hastened to the emperor in fear and reported to him everything they had seen and heard. The emperor, however, considering all this to be the praise of the Christians, summoned the director of public spectacles and ordered him to prepare in the morning a place for a spectacle at which he meant to deliver the prisoners to be devoured by beasts. At the same time he said: "Let us see whether Christ can deliver them from my hands!"

In the morning of the following day the holy servants of Christ were brought out to the place of spectacle. St. Vitus strengthened the blessed Modestus, his tutor: "Do not be afraid, Father, be courageous; do not fear the demonic weapons, for our crown is drawing near."

The crowd prepared to watch that spectacle numbered five thousand people, apart from women and children, who were without number.

And Diocletian said to St. Vitus:

"Vitus! Where are you now?"

The saint, making no answer to the tyrant, lifted his eyes to heaven.

Then the emperor said to him again:

"Where are you now, Vitus?"

The saint answered:

"I see myself at the place of spectacle; but do quickly what you intend to do."

Diocletian said to him:

"Spare your life, Vitus, and offer sacrifice to the great gods."

The saint answered:

"May no good come to you, devil, ravening wolf, seducer of souls! I marvel at your madness, for you, seeing the power of God, have not come to know God, and you are not ashamed to turn me from my God with your words. But I have already told you more than once that I will not offer sacrifice to your gods, or rather to demons; yet you again shamelessly put forward your impious counsels to me. One says to a dog, 'Go away,' and, ashamed, it departs; but you know no shame. I have Christ, my God, whom I have served until now and to whom I offer the sacrifice of praise from my heart; for me there remains only this: that I should be wholly a living sacrifice to Him."

Then the emperor, in great fury, instead of letting loose beasts upon the martyrs, commanded that a burning furnace and a large cauldron be prepared at once, and that tin, sulphur and pitch be melted in it; then he ordered that Vitus alone be cast into that seething and boiling cauldron, saying: "Now let us see whether his God will help him!"

But St. Vitus, signing himself with the sign of the Cross, entered into the very midst of the cauldron, which boiled like the sea. At once an Angel of the Lord, appearing to the saint, took away the power of the fire and cooled the heat and the boiling of the cauldron; and the holy martyr stood as it were in the midst of a bath, singing praises to the Lord and saying: "Thou, O God, who didst deliver the Israelites through Moses and Aaron from the grievous bondage of Egypt, show Thy mercy to us also, for the glory of Thy holy name."

Then, looking at the emperor, he said: "I thank you, Diocletian, and your servants, for having prepared for me a very comfortable bath; there ought to have been soap here too."

All the people, watching everything that was taking place, cried out loudly: "We have never seen such a miracle! Truly great and true is the God of this youth!"

And the saint came out of the cauldron without any injury to his body; on the contrary, his body, pure as snow, became even whiter; and he sang, saying: “Thou hast tried me, O Lord, as gold in the fire, tested me, and found nothing” (Ps. 16:3).

Then he began to rebuke the emperor in these words: "Be ashamed, devil, together with your father Satan, seeing how great a power my Lord shows upon me, His servant!"

The emperor, filled with still greater rage, commanded that a terrible, larger and fierce lion be brought, whose roar alone people could not endure. And the emperor said to the saint:

"Will your sorceries overcome even this one?"

The martyr answered:

"Mad and senseless one! Do you not understand the power of Christ, who dwells with me, whose Angel will soon take me out of your tormentors' hands?"

When the lion approached the saint, Vitus made the sign of the cross over himself, and at once the lion fell at his feet and began to lick his soles. And Saint Vitus said to the emperor:

"Behold, even a beast pays honor to my God, and you do not wish to know your Creator; but if you were even now to believe in Him, you would receive salvation."

The emperor answered:

"Believe in Him you and your house."

The saint, smiling, said:

"You have spoken rightly, for I and my whole house, reborn by the bath of holy baptism, hope to receive the crown of life in the Kingdom of our God."

At this time many people, about a thousand men, believed in Christ. The emperor said to the martyr:

"Why is it, Vitus, that neither fire nor beasts bring you any harm? By what sorcery do you tame them and astonish the people, so that many believe your enchantments?"

The martyr answered:

"I tame neither fire nor beast by any sorcery; but all this is done by the power of Christ, my God. Fire and beast, as creatures of God, obey the will of their Creator and not me, and they honor their Maker, while to you they bring great shame: for fire, being a lifeless creature, and the beast, being a speechless creature, know the God who created them;

but you, who have a rational soul, do not wish to know God, so that you prove worse than the speechless and lifeless creation."

Then the emperor commanded that the holy martyrs Vitus and Modestus be hanged on the torture tree, together with them also Saint Crescentia, the nurse of Vitus, who, coming to that place, confessed herself a Christian and reproved the emperor for his impiety and the torment of the saints. Then the tyrant commanded that the naked bodies of the saints be scraped with iron instruments. At this, Saint Vitus said to the emperor: "You show your power to be weak and worthy of laughter, when you torment a woman."

And the saints were tormented without mercy and with cruelty, so that their flesh was separated by the scraping, their bones were laid bare, and their entrails could be seen. And Saint Vitus cried out to the Lord: "O God, save us, and by Thy power deliver us." And at once the earth quaked, thunder and lightning began; the idol temples fell; and many unbelievers from among the people present there perished: some were crushed by the falling buildings, others were struck by thunder and lightning. The emperor himself, filled with fear, fled from the place of the spectacle, striking himself on the face and crying out: "Woe is me, for I have been overcome by such a young lad!" But the Angel of the Lord, freeing the holy martyrs from the torture tree, carried them into Lucania to a river called Silaris, and set them down there under the tree beneath which they had earlier stopped when they came from Sicily.

While the saints were under that tree, many Christians who lived there gathered around them. Then Saint Vitus prayed to God, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God! Receive our souls to Thyself in peace; and those who desire to honor our suffering in Thy glory, preserve them from all the evils of this world, and lead them without hindrance into Thy Heavenly Kingdom."

As the saint prayed thus, a voice was heard from heaven saying: "Thy prayer is heard!"

Then the saint said, turning to the Christians standing near him: "Brethren, bury our bodies here; and we, after our departure, will pray

for you to the Lord, that you may receive for your salvation all that you ask, and that Christ may deliver you from the enmity of the demons."

After these words the holy martyrs, at the same moment, with joy committed their souls into the hands of God[36]. The faithful took their honorable bodies, wrapped them in shrouds with aromatic spices, and buried them with honor in that same place (the place is called Mariana). Saint Vitus suffered together with Saint Modestus and Crescentia on the fifteenth day of the month of June, in the reign of Diocletian at Rome, and among us Christians in the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom honor and glory are offered forever. Amen.

* * *

Life of Blessed Jerome

Житие блаженного Иеронима

The homeland of Blessed Jerome was the insignificant town of Stridon, which lay on the borders of Dalmatia and Pannonia[37].

The time of birth of this great father of the Western Church is not known exactly[38], just as his secular name is not known exactly: most likely he bore the name Eusebius, after his father. The parents of Blessed Jerome belonged, it may be thought, to the class of wealthy freedmen[39]; they were Christians, and they gave their eldest son a strictly Christian upbringing. "I was nourished," Blessed Jerome said of himself later, "on Catholic milk from my very cradle, and was all the more devoted to the Church in that I was never a heretic." Jerome received his elementary education at home, and his teacher, despite the severity of his character, succeeded in instilling in the gifted pupil a

36. The death of the holy martyrs took place about 303. The relics of the holy martyr Vitus were for a time in Paris (at Saint-Denis), then were transferred to Corvey, in Westphalia; they are now displayed in Prague.

37. The location of the city is difficult to determine more precisely, since it had been destroyed by the Goths already in the days of the blessed Jerome.

38. Investigators who have dealt with this question indicate various chronological dates for the birth of the blessed Jerome: 331, 342 and 346.

39. That is, they had been slaves and then received their freedom. The wealth of the blessed Jerome's parents is indicated by the circumstance that he was able to undertake great journeys through Europe and Syria, having with him a library of selected writers: all this, of course, required considerable sums of money.

love of learning. Afterward, to complete his education, his parents sent Blessed Jerome to Rome. According to the custom of the time, the course of study included logic and, as the chief subjects, grammar and rhetoric; Blessed Jerome, besides this, also became acquainted with the teachings of certain philosophers, but he devoted especially much time to the study of eloquence; he attended the courts to listen to the famous forensic orators. Here too in Rome, in the years of his youth, Jerome laid the foundation of his library, which during all the rest of his life served him as a great consolation.

His stay in the capital of the world, amid temptations and trials, left a sorrowful trace on Jerome's soul: he himself confessed that during "the slippery wandering of his youth" he lived an impure life in Rome, a circumstance that later cost him many tears and bitter regrets. Yet these deviations from the path of piety could not extinguish in him the divine spark implanted in his soul from early childhood. He did not sever his prayerful communion with his brethren in the faith; moreover, on Sundays he, together with Pammachius and other comrades, usually visited the tombs of the martyrs located in the environs of Rome; when on these visits Jerome had to descend into the dark catacombs[40], it seemed to him involuntarily that he was going down alive into the grave.

Here too in Rome, even before the completion of his education, the resolve matured in Jerome to change his life and begin a new one, pure and good. He probably did not delay in confirming his intention by baptism[41]; the exact time of Blessed Jerome's baptism is not known, but with a high degree of approximation to the truth it is permissible to

40. Catacombs (catacumbae) – underground passages and caves arranged in an irregular network: catacombs are known near Rome, at Naples, Syracuse and on the island of Malta. The catacombs in the environs of Rome are especially extensive, so that if it were possible to stretch them out in a single straight line, their length would equal the length of the Italian peninsula. The catacombs served the Christians of the first centuries as a secret place for liturgical assemblies and as a place of burial for the dead: it is supposed that for this purpose the Christians made use of old abandoned underground passages formed while digging potter's clay; the Christians merely continued and enlarged them.

41. At that time there existed the custom of postponing baptism – in most cases from a desire to wipe away by baptism the sins of the previous life, and partly from fear lest one might break the vows of baptism in the early years, when the will was not yet strengthened and the person is susceptible to sinful temptations.

suppose that he was baptized when he was about twenty years old, and that the sacrament was administered to him either by Pope Liberius[42] or by one of the members of his clergy. After leaving Rome, Blessed Jerome undertook a long journey through Gaul, together with Bonosus, his schoolmate and milk-brother. During this journey Jerome, in his own words, "for the first time felt a desire to serve God on the half-barbarian banks of the Rhine," that is, in him there began to awaken the aspiration toward monasticism with its vows of virginity and poverty.

About the year 372 the Blessed Jerome returned to Stridon from his journey through Gaul. His parents had already died, and the care of the family estate, of his sister, and of his younger brother Paulinian, who was twenty years his junior, rested upon him. These cares probably hindered Jerome from fully carrying out his intention to withdraw from the world, and he satisfied his longing for the monastic life only in part, living at times in Aquileia,[43] where a small semi-monastic circle formed of persons close to the Blessed Jerome and to one another. But this circle unexpectedly broke up, for reasons that Jerome mentions only vaguely. Then Jerome set out for the East, to visit above all Jerusalem, and also the hermits of Syria and Egypt. His friends, former members of the Aquileian circle, Innocent, Nicaeas, Heliodorus, Iva and Evagrius, accompanied the Blessed Jerome on this journey. Evagrius, however, went with them only as far as Antioch, his native city. They made their journey through Thrace, Bithynia, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia and Cilicia. The hardships of the long road, joined with ascetic labors, undermined the strength of the devout pilgrims. When they reached Antioch, where they found a hospitable welcome with Evagrius, Jerome fell ill, and Innocent, to the great sorrow of the blessed father, even died; Iva also died. Grief intensified Jerome's illness, which lasted a rather long time, in all likelihood until the spring of 374. When he recovered, Jerome began to study the Holy Scripture, an inclination toward which had awakened in him even earlier;[44] to this end he

42. Liberius occupied the see of the Roman bishop from 352 to 356.
43. Aquileia – at the time described, a large and famous city of Northern Italy, a junction of the roads leading to Pannonia, Noricum, Istria and Dalmatia.
44. Soon after completing his education in Rome, he wrote a commentary on the book of the prophet Obadiah.

listened to lectures on the interpretation of Holy Scripture given by the well-known Apollinaris.[3980] He did not give up his intention to withdraw into the desert, to which he was especially drawn after the death of his close friends, all the more since Heliodorus and Nicaeas no longer wished to continue the journey. In 374 Jerome resolved to settle in the "Syrian Thebaid," the Chalcidian desert (to the east of Syria).

Here he remained almost five years, probably living in some monastery and at times leaving it for solitude in the desert. Approving of common life and advising it to others, the Blessed Jerome, as his *Life of Paul the Hermit* shows, nevertheless cherished a special reverence, bordering on veneration, for those ascetics who, settling singly in remote places of the desert, found refuge in mountain caves; at times they did not see a human face for several years, and only wild beasts and scorpions disturbed their solitude. In the work just mentioned the Blessed Jerome speaks, among other things, of two hermits whom he himself saw in the Chalcidian desert: one of them for thirty years fed only on barley bread and drank foul water; the only food of the other was dates, which were thrown to him daily, five in number, to the bottom of an old cistern where he lived. Mortifying his flesh by prayer, by the harsh labors of fasting, deprivation and physical toil, the Blessed Jerome in the desert solitude devoted himself entirely to the study of Holy Scripture, making use of the books needed for this from his own library and the library of friends living nearby in Antioch, chiefly Evagrius. At this same time, under the guidance of a converted Jew, he began the study of the Hebrew language, in which the books of the Old Testament Scripture are chiefly written. This occupation also served Jerome as a humbling discipline: the humiliation of learning the alphabet and the unmusical sound of Hebrew words, little pleasing to the Blessed Jerome, who had formed his style on the study of the best representatives of classical literature, were fully suited to this purpose. To this period of the Blessed Jerome's life probably belongs the following remarkable dream, which he describes thus:

"Wretched man that I was," he says, "I was fasting just before I intended to read Cicero. After many vigils lasting whole nights, after tears wrung from my very heart by the memory of my former sins, I

would take up Plautus. If, coming to myself, I began to read the prophets, their rough speech offended me, and since I did not see the light with my blinded eyes, I thought the fault lay not with my eyes but with the sun. When the ancient serpent thus tempted me, about the middle of the fast my wasted body was seized by a fever, whose seeds were in me, and so without any relief did it feed upon my wretched limbs that the skin barely held to my bones. Meanwhile preparations were already being made for my burial, and the vital warmth of my soul barely glimmered in the slight warmth of my breast, while my whole body grew cold. And then suddenly I was carried away in spirit before the judgment seat of the Divine Judge, where there was such a flood of light and such a brilliance of glory from the Angelic onlookers that, falling prostrate on the ground, I could not raise my eyes. When asked who I was, I answered that I was a Christian.

"'You lie,' answered He who asked, 'you are a Ciceronian, not a Christian; for where your treasure is, there is your heart also.'"

"Instantly I was struck dumb, and under the blows (for He commanded that I be scourged) I was tormented even more by the fire of conscience, pondering the well-known verse: 'In hell who shall confess Thee?' But I began to cry out, and under the lashes of the whip, loudly lamenting, I said: 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me!'"

"At last those standing near me, falling on their knees at the feet of the Judge, begged Him to pardon my youth and to grant me the opportunity to repent of my error, and afterward to subject me to torment if I should ever again read books of pagan literature. I myself, who in this mortal need was ready to promise even more, began to repent, and calling upon His name, I said: 'O Lord, if ever I read them again, then let me be rejected by Thee!'"

"Released after uttering this oath, I returned to the higher region of the air, and, to the amazement of all, I opened my eyes, so flooded with tears that my fear convinced even unbelievers. And indeed, this was not a dream nor an ordinary sleep, by which we are often deceived. This judgment seat before which I stood, this dread tribunal which I feared, is my witness; may I never again be brought before that tribunal. I confess that my shoulders were black and blue from the blows, that on

waking I felt the very strokes, and that from then on I have read the Divine books with greater zeal than I formerly read human books."

From the Chalcidian desert the Blessed Jerome maintained contact with persons close to him by correspondence, which he used as a means of ardently calling to ascetic labors. In this respect a letter of the Blessed Jerome to the presbyter Heliodorus became especially famous; in the following fiery words he urges his friend to renounce the world: "Away with entreaties, away with caresses! You scorned me when I asked you; perhaps you will listen to me when I reproach you. Effeminate soldier! What are you doing in your treacherous house? Behold, the sound of the trumpet resounds from heaven! Behold, the armed Commander descends from the clouds to conquer the world! Behold, a two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth destroys every obstacle! And do you come out of your chamber into battle, from the shade into the sun? Behold, the adversary in your very breast tries to slay Christ... Even if your little nephew hangs about your neck, even if your mother with loosened hair and torn garments shows you the breasts with which she nursed you, even if your father lies on the threshold, step over his body with dry eyes and run beneath the banner of the cross! In such a matter the only true filial love consists in being cruel."

In Antioch, in the early sixties of the fourth century, two bishops appeared at the same time, Meletius and Paulinus. Elected in 358 with the consent of the Orthodox and the Arians[3981], since both parties regarded him as their own supporter, Meletius in fact justified the hopes of the Orthodox, declaring openly that he held the doctrine concerning the Son of God set forth by the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council[45]. But because Meletius had been elected not without the assistance of the Arians, the Orthodox zealots, who held in loving veneration the memory of the great hierarch of the Antiochene Church, Eustathius, who had been unjustly deposed through the intrigues of the Arians, separated from Meletius under the leadership of the presbyter Paulinus, who in 362 was raised to the episcopal rank. The situation grew more complicated when, in 376, a third bishop, the Apollinarist[46] Vitalius,

45. See the preceding note.
46. That is, one who shared the heretical error of Apollinaris of Laodicea, see above, p. 451.

was installed in the same Antioch. Strife between the parties was further intensified by theological disputes centered on the question of the dignity and equality of the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. While Paulinus, to express the teaching about the Most Holy Trinity, accepted the formula worked out in the West, that in the Most Holy Trinity there is "one hypostasis[47] in three Persons," Meletius, following the usage of the East, acknowledged "one ousia"[48] and "three hypostases"[49]. In essence the adherents of each formula meant the same thing, only expressing an identical thought in different words[50]. These dissensions, caused in Antioch by the Meletian schism and the Arian disturbances, penetrated also into the neighboring Chalcidian desert, where the blessed Jerome labored. In a letter to Pope Damasus[51] he laments in the following words the disturbance of desert solitude caused by these reasons: "The tireless enemy followed me into the desert, so that now in solitary life I endure a struggle even worse than before settling in the desert. On one side the Arian madness rages, supported by the guardians of peace. On the other side the Church in Antioch, divided into three parties[52], seeks to draw me also into itself." As time went on, the dissensions in Antioch grew ever stronger, and together with this increased the disquiet that they caused the blessed Jerome. In a letter to the presbyter Marcus, two years after the letters to Damasus, the blessed father says, among other things: "Why do they call me a heretic, when I agree with the West and with Egypt? Not a single corner of the desert has been yielded to me. Every day I am asked about my faith, as though I had been born again without faith. I confess as they wish, and this does not please them; I sign, and they do not believe me. They have one desire only: to be rid of me. I am ready to

47. Moreover, this word was understood in the sense of essence—"ousia."
48. That is, essence.
49. That is, Person.
50. "Both the Western and we," says St. Gregory the Theologian (see about him below), "piously declare that there is one essence and three hypostases, but since the poverty of their alphabet does not give a separate expression for ousia and hypostasis, they are compelled to introduce the word prosopon (person), lest they seem to acknowledge a three-essence. Can anything be more ridiculous or pitiable than to make this a subject of dispute?"
51. Damasus occupied the see of the Roman bishop 366–384.
52. That is, against the adherents of the bishops Meletius, Paulinus, and Vitalis.

leave." And indeed, soon the blessed Jerome departed from the desert to Antioch, probably to his friend Evagrius. In Antioch the blessed Jerome joined the community of Paulinus, who also ordained him presbyter. In the period described, residence in Antioch could not have been pleasant for the blessed father, who sought peace. Therefore he stayed here not long; drawn by the fame of Gregory of Nazianzus[3990] as a teacher of the Church, the blessed Jerome set out for Constantinople, whose bishop at this time was St. Gregory. Afterwards the blessed Jerome more than once recalled how much he owed to St. Gregory, who guided him in his studies devoted to the study of Scripture. Here in Constantinople the blessed Jerome met the Christian theologian and philosopher Gregory of Nyssa, who read to him his newly written work against the heretic Eunomius, who had erred against the Orthodox teaching on the Holy Trinity.

At the end of 381 the blessed Jerome left hospitable Constantinople and set out for Rome, impelled, in his own words, by "ecclesiastical necessity": it must be thought that Pope Damasus summoned the blessed Jerome to Rome for a council on the affairs of the ill-fated Meletian schism, which had not ended in the Antiochene Church even after Meletius's death. At the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople[53], after Meletius's death, Flavian was elected in his place; the pope, however, together with the Western bishops, supported Paulinus, who had been bishop of Antioch even in the days of Meletius. This disagreement[54] between the Eastern and Western Churches was the cause of the council convened by Damasus. The blessed Jerome arrived in Rome with Paulinus and Epiphanius, whom he had met in Constantinople, where they had stopped on their way to Rome. In Rome the blessed Jerome at once received the post of secretary to the pope and the council. By the fathers of the council the blessed Jerome was entrusted, among other things, with setting forth a confession of faith directed

53. In 381, under the emperor Theodosius the Great.

54. As one ordained by a Western bishop (Lucifer, bishop of the island of Sardinia), Paulinus was always in communion with the West. Therefore, when at the Council, after Meletius's death, the question of his successor arose, the Fathers of the Council elected not Paulinus, who was supported by the West, but the presbyter of the Antiochene Church, Flavian, for, as they justly said: in the affairs of the Eastern Church the East should be master, not the West.

against the heretical error of Apollinaris. In general, the position of the blessed Jerome under Pope Damasus was very influential, especially at first. The pope, who was engaged in studies of Holy Scripture, made use of the guidance of the blessed Jerome, encouraging him at the same time to pursue the same studies.

In the first years of his stay in Rome the blessed Jerome, for his ascetic way of life, for his learning and eloquence, enjoyed general esteem and wide renown: it is enough to say that the blessed father was openly called the successor of Pope Damasus in the see of the Roman Church. But after a short time the blessed Jerome became the object of bitter hatred. His insistent teaching that the attainment of Christian perfection is impossible without complete renunciation of the world and of the flesh repelled from him not only pagans but also many Christians. Taking advantage of this circumstance, some depraved members of the society of that time accused the ascetic of hypocrisy, spreading about him all manner of slanders and accusations. Many were also disturbed by the profound respect with which the blessed Jerome regarded Origen[3993]. Such hostility, which charged the blessed Jerome with fault even for his evident merits[55], intensified especially after his letter to Julia Eustochium on the preservation of virginity. This letter belongs to 383. In it the blessed Jerome exposes and ridicules the moral dissoluteness and religious hypocrisy of the Roman Christian society of his day, and preeminently of the clergy. The letter armed against the blessed Jerome literally all the Roman Christians, the more so because "all the pagans, apostates, and all who regarded the name of Christian with hatred eagerly copied this letter, for it brought dishonor upon all classes of Christians, all ranks, all professions, and the whole Church, subjecting them to the most shameful disgrace"[56].

During this storm of indignation aroused by the said letter, the blessed Jerome found some peace in the company of pious friends who

55. Thus, for example, the necessary and useful revision of the Latin translation of the books of Holy Scripture, made by Blessed Jerome on the commission of Pope Damasus, aroused bitter enmity, because it deprived Christians of many familiar and beloved sayings of Holy Scripture which, although rendered erroneously compared with the original language of the sacred books, had become dear through long usage.

56. So Rufinus, his former friend, later reproached Blessed Jerome for his unfortunate letter.

were well disposed toward him and respected him. This small circle consisted of: Pammachius, patrician[57] and schoolmate of the blessed Jerome, Oceanus, later a friend of the blessed Augustine[58], Marcellinus, notary[59] and a man of very high rank[60], and the presbyter Domnio. The friends just named the blessed Jerome compared to Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael (Dan. 1:1–21). To this society also belonged the following noble, pious and educated women: Melania, Albina and her daughter Marcella, Leah, Asella, and also Paula with her daughters Blesilla, Eustochium, Paulina and Rufina; the blessed Jerome was especially well disposed toward the last family. The beneficial influence of the blessed Jerome upon the noble and distinguished women of Rome, bound to him by affection, was especially important in view of the extreme decline of morals of that time: he gave an example of a better Christian life, which bore witness of itself; the blessed Jerome's guidance of the circle of persons devoted to him consisted in reading and explaining to them Holy Scripture, striving to incline them to resolve to lead an ascetic way of life, preserving virginity or widowhood.

In 384 the blessed Jerome's high protector, Pope Damasus, died; his place was taken by Siricius, a man less enlightened and disapproving of the blessed Jerome's activity. The tongue of the slanderers was no longer restrained by anything, so that the blessed father, some seven months after Damasus's death and after his three-year stay in Rome, was compelled to leave it. He departed together with his young brother Paulinianus and the presbyter Vincentius. Having bidden farewell to the friends who had accompanied him to the landing, the blessed Jerome, with sorrow in his soul, boarded the ship to leave "the eternal city" forever. The only consolation in this sorrowful parting for the blessed Jerome was the thought that "if it was his lot to bear the shame of false accusation, he had come to know that through evil report the Kingdom of Heaven is attained"... "and before the judgment seat of Christ it will be made manifest how each one lived."

57. That is, a man of noble birth.
58. A famous father of the Western Church (d. 430).
59. A secretary at the court of the sovereign.
60. Subsequently, at the wish of the emperor Honorius, Marcellinus presided over the Council of Carthage in 410, convened to reconcile the Donatists with the Orthodox.

Blessed Jerome left Rome with the intention of visiting the Holy Land. On his way thither he stopped, among other places, on the island of Cyprus, where he was the guest of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, and at Antioch, under the hospitable roof of Bishop Paulinus. There at Antioch, Paula and Eustochium joined Blessed Jerome; they had broken all ties with their native Rome for the sake of piety. From Antioch the pilgrims to the Holy Land set out together: Paula and Eustochium in the company of young virgins, and Jerome with Vincentius, Paulinian and a small group of monks. They visited the tower of the holy Prophet Elijah at Sarepta (1 Kgdms. 17:9), and kissed the sand at Tyre where the holy Apostle Paul had knelt (Acts 21:3–5). At Caesarea they inspected the house of the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1–48) and the small chambers in the house of the "evangelist" Philip, where in the days of the holy Apostles his four virgin daughters had once lived (Acts 21:8–9). At Jerusalem the pilgrims reverently kissed the Cross of Christ, His tomb, and the pillar of the scourging; they also visited all the places of Jerusalem hallowed by the memory of the Lord Jesus Christ. From Jerusalem, passing by the tomb of Rachel,[61] the pilgrims arrived at Bethlehem.[4001] There, at the place of the Nativity of Christ the Savior, Paula, in holy rapture, exclaimed: "Am I, a wretched sinner, worthy to kiss the manger in which the Lord wept as a little child, to pray in the cave where the Virgin Mary bore the Infant Christ? This is the homeland of my Lord. Here I shall live, since the Savior has chosen it."

After Bethlehem the pilgrims, having visited the chapel "of the Angel who announced to the shepherds," set out for the Dead Sea[62] by

61. Patriarch Jacob buried his beloved wife Rachel on the road to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem, and set up a monument over her grave (Gen. 35:18–19). The tomb of Rachel was well known even many centuries afterward (1 Kgdms. 10:2). Local Jews and Muslims to this day regard the tomb of Rachel with great reverence. Arabs gather here for solemn prayers during times of drought.

62. The Dead Sea is an inland salt lake in the southeast part of Palestine; by the peninsula of Lisan the Dead Sea is divided into two basins; it lies 394 m below the level of the Mediterranean Sea. The waters of the Dead Sea are so saturated with salts that fish cannot live in them, and the specific gravity of the water is so great that organic bodies that fall into it do not sink. The land around the Dead Sea is covered with salt over a considerable area; according to tradition, on the site of the Dead Sea lay the fertile valley of Siddim, in which the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah stood.

way of Gaza and Hebron; then, having visited the Jordan, by way of Bethel, Shiloh and Nazareth[4003] they reached the Sea of Galilee[63] and Mount Tabor.[64] From Palestine the pilgrims went to Egypt,[65] where they spent a whole month in Alexandria. Here Blessed Jerome heard the blind Didymus, renowned for his knowledge of Holy Scripture, teacher of the Alexandrian catechetical school and successor in that chair to Origen.[66] When the travelers arrived in the Nitrian Desert,[67] they were met by Bishop Isidore with "innumerable multitudes of monks." After converse with the Nitrian hermits, the pilgrims returned to Bethlehem in the autumn of 386.

For the lodging of the pilgrims who had resolved to remain in Bethlehem, Paula undertook the construction of monasteries, one for women and one for men; over the latter Blessed Jerome was superior. Paula afterwards built two more women's monasteries. The building continued for about three years; all this time Paula with the virgins and Blessed Jerome with the monks lived in poorly appointed quarters. Besides the monasteries, Paula built a hospice where pilgrims visiting Bethlehem found free lodging; great numbers flocked to the Holy Land even from such distant parts of the Christian world as Gaul, Britain, Armenia, Pontus, Ethiopia and India. The hospice was open to all pilgrims except heretics: "Joseph and Mary," says Blessed Jerome, "if they were to come again to Bethlehem, would once more find no place." Her broad

63. The Sea of Galilee, or the Lake of Gennesaret, was one of the favorite places of the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ; it is memorable for the Lord's many visits to it (see, for example, Mt. 4:13–17, 23–25, 8:23–24, 9:1–8, 13:1).

64. Mount Tabor lies in Galilee, the northern part of Palestine; the tradition of the Church has long recognized Mount Tabor as the Mount of the Transfiguration.

65. Egypt is one of the first states on the earth in point of time; it occupies a narrow coastal strip of Africa on both sides of the River Nile.

66. The blessed Jerome, relating events that took place in the days of his childhood, reports the following about Didymus: when the famous hermit St. Anthony arrived in Alexandria, summoned there by St. Athanasius to contend with the Arians, Didymus visited the great ascetic. The latter, marveling at Didymus's intelligence and knowledge in the field of Holy Scripture, asked him: "Does he grieve that he is blind?" And when Didymus confessed that blindness was for him a grievous trial, Anthony remarked: "It is strange that you grieve over the loss of a gift which flies and ants possess, and do not rejoice in possessing such knowledge as only saints and apostles have been granted."

67. The Nitrian desert was the favorite dwelling place of monks in Egypt; it lies south of the Desert of Scete.

and generous charity at last exhausted even Paula's considerable personal means, so that Blessed Jerome, in order to support the monastery, was obliged to send his brother Paulinian to Dalmatia with the commission to sell his personal inheritance. Blessed Jerome himself lived in a cave adjoining the cave of the Nativity of Christ. His food was bread with edible herbs, and his drink water; even this meagre food the blessed father partook of, on fast days, only after sunset. He directed the monks of his monastery, while at the same time overseeing the pious exercises and labors of Paula and Eustochium; the persistent questions of the latter about this or that obscure passage of Holy Scripture caused him no small difficulty. Part of the working day Blessed Jerome also devoted to teaching boys. But his chief occupation, as before, was the study of Holy Scripture and copying. Sulpicius Severus,[68] who lived with Blessed Jerome in his cave for six months, bears witness that the blessed father was always occupied with reading or writing, scarcely resting not only by day but also by night. Here in the cave Blessed Jerome gathered, sparing no expense, an extensive library, consisting chiefly of the works of Origen, Didymus, Irenaeus and Eusebius of Caesarea. Connected with Blessed Jerome's chief occupation of studying and interpreting Holy Scripture was his study of the Hebrew language, which he continued at Bethlehem as well: he pursued these studies sometimes with the rabbi Baranina, sometimes with a rabbi from Lydda or Tiberias, the latter taking a high fee for his lessons. In his study of Hebrew Blessed Jerome was inspired, besides the desire to become acquainted with the original language of the Old Testament sacred books, by the wish to refute the mockery of the Jews against the Christians: the Jews pointed out that the passages of Scripture to which the Christians appealed supposedly had a different meaning in the original.

The time of Blessed Jerome's sojourn in Bethlehem was the dawn of his literary activity. This is especially true of the first ten years. Then

attacks of fever, fear of public calamities which seized the whole East, trembling in expectation of the invasion of the Huns,[69] disturbed Blessed Jerome's peaceful life in Bethlehem. But his polemics caused him especially many sorrows; he could not give them up even here, in Bethlehem's remoteness from the world, and he conducted them with great warmth of feeling. Blessed Jerome either denounced persons who expressed views at variance with the teaching of the Church, or defended his own opinions when attacked by persons who differed with the blessed father on a known church question. Thus Blessed Jerome came out with three books of denunciation against a free-thinking monk, Jovinian; he pointed out the following errors in the latter's teaching:

1) that virginity, widowhood and marriage are in themselves equally indifferent and equally pleasing to God;

2) that those truly reborn in the waters of baptism can be sinless;

3) that fasting and the partaking of food with thanksgiving to God have equal moral worth. In 399 Blessed Jerome was drawn into the famous controversy over Origen, which lasted about five years. During this controversy, which caused Blessed Jerome extraordinary vexation, he passed from being a former admirer of the renowned Alexandrian teacher to a vehement denouncer of his errors; this dispute brought about the final rupture between Blessed Jerome and Rufinus, once friends. More successful, though also causing Blessed Jerome no small grief, was his correspondence with Blessed Augustine: Jerome persuaded Augustine to abandon his mistaken opinion, by which he held that a translation of Holy Scripture from the Hebrew was unnecessary in view of the existence of the translation of the Seventy. On the other

68. Sulpicius Severus (d. 410 or 429), a native of Aquitaine, was at first an advocate, and then, after the death of his wife, withdrew in 392 to a monastery near Béziers; from there in 409 he moved to Marseilles. He is known for his closeness to St. Martin of Tours, whose life he described in detail, though not altogether credibly. In addition he wrote a "History" (*Historia*) or "Sacred Chronology" (*Chronica sacra*), in which in two books events are set forth from the creation of the world, ending with the year 409 A.D.; two dialogues also belong to him.

69. A letter of the blessed Jerome from the year 395 to Oceanus survives, in which he reports, among other things, that the whole East trembled in expectation of the invasion of the Huns. The blessed Jerome was compelled to keep ships ready at Joppa for his monks and nuns, to flee in case the Huns should attack the Holy Land. The Huns were already besieging Antioch, and there was a rumor that they intended to take Jerusalem by storm, seeking treasures in it.

hand, Blessed Augustine persuaded Blessed Jerome silently to renounce his interpretation of verses 11–15 of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, where Blessed Jerome represented the conduct of the chief Apostles in the light of insincerity, which debased their high dignity and shook the authority of Holy Scripture.

Blessed Jerome was above all a man of learning, and left after him a rich inheritance in the form of his literary works. By subject and character these writings may be divided into four kinds:

1) dogmatic-polemical;

2) moral-ascetical;

3) works of interpretation of Holy Scripture; and

4) historical works.

To the dogmatic-polemical belong: the "Dialogue against the Pelagians"[70] (written at the end of 415); the "Book against Helvidius on the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary" (at Rome, in 383); "Against Jovinian" (at Bethlehem, in 392); and "Against Vigilantius."[71] Not a few works of this kind were also called forth by the Origenist disputes: the "Epistle to Theophilus of Alexandria," "Against John, Bishop of Jerusalem"[72] (398–399), "Two Books of Apology"[73] against the books of Rufinus (402), and "The Third Book, or Last Reply to Rufinus's Writing" (402). Blessed Jerome's forced participation in the disputes provoked by the schism in the Antiochene Church was the occasion for the appearance of the book "The Dialogue of an Orthodox with a Luciferian" (379, at Antioch). Among his translations of purely dogmatic works, the translations by Blessed Jerome of Origen's "On First Principles" (399) and of Didymus's "On the Holy Spirit" are notable.

70. Pelagius (a heretic of the 5th century) denied the Church's teaching about original sin, understanding it only in the sense of the first bad example given by Adam, and not in the sense of the inclination to sin of human nature after the fall of Adam; at the same time he also denied the teaching about grace as a special power sent down by God to man; he understood grace as God's revelation of all good in nature and in history, beginning with the fact of existence and ending with the revelation of the highest truth through Christ.

71. The latter spoke out against the veneration of saints and martyrs, against the exaltation of the monastic life, against the veneration of relics, against the excessive importance attributed to good works, fasting, and almsgiving. In general he spoke out against all the forms of ecclesiastical-religious life existing in his time, without distinguishing the true from the false.

72. An adherent of Origen.

73. *Apology* – ἀπολογία – defense.

Blessed Jerome's moral-ascetical activity found its expression chiefly in his letters, of which 120 are indisputably genuine. The following letters of the blessed father are especially instructive: the 14th, to Heliodorus, in praise of the hermit life; the 22nd, to Eustochium, on keeping the vow of virginity; the 52nd, to Nepotian, on the virtues of monastics, in connection with a portrayal of the ideal of pastoral service; the 58th, to Paulinus, with instructions for a monk. To these may also be assigned the accounts of the lives of ascetics composed by Blessed Jerome: Paul of Thebes (376), Malchus the Monk and St. Hilarion (both written about 379); the 103rd letter, to Eustochium, contains the biography of Paula, Jerome's companion at Bethlehem.

But it was by his labors in the field of Scripture study, which he especially loved, that Blessed Jerome won for himself an immortal merit before the Christian world. The labors of Blessed Jerome of this kind may be divided into:

1) introductory (isagogical),

2) philological, and

3) exegetical. To the introductory works belong the following writings of Blessed Jerome:

1) *On Hebrew Names*. This work, composed under the influence of Josephus, Philo and Origen, contains an explanation, in a mystical-allegorical spirit, of the various proper names occurring in the books of the Old and New Testaments, arranged in alphabetical order. In 380 Blessed Jerome wrote a work entitled *The Book on the Situation and Names of Hebrew Places*, a work of great importance for the study of the topography and archaeology of Palestine. *Hebrew Questions on the Book of Genesis* is another work of Blessed Jerome of this kind; it presents critical remarks on the most difficult passages of the Book of Genesis, made on the basis of a comparative study of the texts of the "Italic," the Hebrew, and the Greek of the Seventy translators. The following works from the pen of Blessed Jerome are of a philological character: the correction, according to the existing redactions of his time, of the Septuagint, of the so-called "Italic," Latin translation of the Bible, widely current in the Latin Church but containing a mass of errors. Blessed Jerome undertook this work in 383 at the commission of Pope

Damasus; first of all he occupied himself with correcting the four Gospels and the remaining books of the New Testament; of the Old Testament books he corrected the Psalter. By the order of Pope Damasus the Psalter was at once introduced into liturgical use and came to be called the "Roman Psalter."[74] The New Testament books corrected by Blessed Jerome are still included in the Bible used throughout the whole Western Catholic Church. Already during his life at Bethlehem Blessed Jerome completed the correction of the "Italic text," and for the books of the Old Testament as well, beginning this work again with the Psalter, which he corrected according to the Hexapla of Origen. Blessed Jerome found the manuscript of the latter at Caesarea, where Origen had been in the third century.[75] This Psalter is known under the name of the "Gallican Psalter," because it came into use first of all in the Gallican Church and was afterwards accepted throughout the whole Western Church. In the same manner Blessed Jerome corrected all the remaining books of the Old Testament, but this labor, "by the malice of one man," as the blessed father himself says, was lost without a trace, with the exception of the Book of Job.

Being a master of Hebrew, "Chaldean," Latin and Greek, and having at hand so important an aid as the Hexapla of Origen, Blessed Jerome undertook an independent Latin translation of all the sacred books of the Old Testament from their original language; he desired to remove the defects of the Italic text. Blessed Jerome set to this work about the year 390 and finished it in 405, when the whole Old Testament was translated, with the exception of the non-canonical books: Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach. Nearly all the books were translated from the Hebrew original; only Tobit and Judith were translated from the "Chaldean language," and some parts of Esther and Daniel from the Greek. Blessed Jerome's

74. However, it was used only until the 16th century,

75. The Hexapla of Origen represent a list of the books of the Holy Scripture of the Old Testament, divided into six columns (whence the name): in the first column was placed the Hebrew text in Hebrew letters; in the second – the same text in Greek transcription; in the third – the translation of Aquila; in the fourth – that of Symmachus; in the fifth the Septuagint translators; and in the sixth that of Theodotion. The translation of the LXX was furnished with notes indicating its divergences from the Hebrew text.

translation is not free from defects, because it was carried out with extreme haste: for example, the Book of Tobit was translated in one day, the Books of Solomon in three days. Yet even with its defects, Blessed Jerome's translation has hitherto had no equal for beauty, expressiveness and accuracy of rendering. It is therefore not surprising that under Gregory the Great[76] the translation came into general use in the Latin Church, and from the thirteenth century became known under the name of the Vulgate, that is, the translation spread among all the people.

Blessed Jerome's exegetical labors fall into translated works (translations of the homilies of Origen: 14 on the Prophet Jeremiah, 14 on Ezekiel, 2 on the Song of Songs, 39 on the Evangelist Luke) and his own; to the latter belong his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew (398), on the Epistles of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, Ephesians, Titus and Philemon, and also a commentary on the Apocalypse. Many separate interpretations are scattered through his letters. Blessed Jerome's interpretations are for the most part philological explanations, which often pass into discourses of a mystical-allegorical character; they are valuable also in that among the explanations there have been preserved fragments from the works of Origen, Apollinaris and Didymus, now lost.

Blessed Jerome's historical works are limited to the following: the translation of the *Chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea* into Latin, with its slight revision and continuation down to 378, and the *Catalogue of Illustrious Men*. Given the limited historical material preserved from antiquity, the first work has considerable significance. The last work, composed chiefly on the basis of the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea, gives a consecutive historical survey of the whole Christian literature, ending with the fourteenth year of the reign of Theodosius the Younger. Alongside information about the writings, biographies of the writers themselves are given; in this survey Blessed Jerome devotes the main attention to the exegetical works, among which he also placed his own.

Blessed Jerome was destined to be a contemporary of the fall of Rome under the blows of the Gothic hordes of Alaric (in 410). The

"Eternal City," which for many centuries had been the living embodiment of state power, became a place of "terror, confusion, famine and misery, fire and bloodshed." Its "splendid churches were turned to ash and rubble." In those terrible days persons close to Blessed Jerome perished in Rome: Marcellina and Pammachius. When the news of the fall of Rome reached Blessed Jerome, it made on him the impression of thunder unexpectedly bursting forth, and filled him with great grief; this grief found its echo in his letters. "Who would believe," he asked, "that Rome, founded on triumphs over the whole world, could be subjected to destruction? That she, the mother of nations, could also become their grave? That all the lands of the East, Egypt, and Africa would be filled with crowds of young men and maidens of the former master of the world? That the holy city of Bethlehem would have to see day after day brilliant persons of both sexes, who once lived in abundance and luxury, streaming to its walls as beggars?" Blessed Jerome, being unable to help them, shared their misfortune, shedding tears together with them. But these tears were a relief compared with those that were wrung from his eyes when he first received news of the capture of Rome and of the horrors that accompanied this world event: "My voice," he says in a letter to Principia on the death of her mother Marcella, "is choked, and sobs hinder me from dictating the words. The city that once took the whole world has been taken; more than that, it perished of hunger before it fell by the sword, and scarcely a few persons were found to be taken captive. The fury of the hungry turned into loathsome cannibalism: people tore off each other's limbs, a mother did not spare her nursing infant." In 411 the aged ascetic was visited by a new trial: Bethlehem itself trembled with terror caused by a savage raid of Arab Bedouins, and only the mercy of God saved the community of Blessed Jerome from ruin. Thus, amid calamities, having outlived all his friends, Blessed Jerome ended his days in sorrowful solitude. His very outward appearance bore witness to the labors, privations and losses he had endured: his hair, long since gray, framed a brow furrowed with deep wrinkles; weak, sunken eyes and a pale, emaciated

76. From 590, Bishop of Rome.

face bore the traces of many tears. The one bright ray that brightened the gloomy old age of Blessed Jerome was the settling at Bethlehem of the younger Paula, granddaughter of Paula and Albina, the Christian wife of a pagan priest, with her daughter Melania. They probably also closed the eyes of the dying old man. The year of Blessed Jerome's death is not known exactly. There is, however, the testimony of Prosper of Aquitaine, which says that Blessed Jerome died on 30 September 420. Probably he passed into eternity after a fairly long and grievous illness;[77] he was buried near Paula and Eustochium in a cave adjoining the place of the Nativity of Christ. In 642 the relics of Blessed Jerome were transferred from Bethlehem to Rome and laid in the church of the Mother of God at Maggiore; where they now are is unknown. Only a venerable hand has been preserved, which is in Rome, in the church bearing his name near the Piazza Farnese.

On the same day, the translation of the relics of the Venerable Theodore of Sykeon, Bishop of Anastasiopolis (for his Life see April 22).

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of our holy father Jonah, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia, Wonderworker.

NOTES

3980. Apollinaris, bishop of Laodicea, not limiting himself to the rejection of the Arian positions in the teaching on the Son of God (on Arianism see below), strove to establish positions opposite to them; this striving led him into heresy. Thus, in contrast to the particular emphasis which the Arians, in dependence on their teaching of the Son of God as a created being, placed on the acknowledgment in Christ of a wholly human nature, Apollinaris abolished the human personality in the Lord Jesus. From the psychological point of view, the teaching of the Nicene Creed that in Christ there were united perfect divinity and perfect humanity seemed to him incredible: he reasoned that two sub-

77. One may conjecture this on the basis of the circumstance that for the last nine months of 420 there exists no letter of the blessed Jerome: evidently the illness took from him the ability to write.

stances, while preserving all their properties, could never unite into one. The idea of the God-man seemed to him unthinkable also from the dogmatic side: sin is associated with complete humanity, and if one were to think of sin in Christ, even as a possibility, then the work of redemption would for him become impracticable. Therefore Apollinaris, following the Greek philosopher Plato in dividing the nature of man into body, animal or vital soul (*psyche*) and spiritual soul, spirit (*nous*), held that Christ, having assumed at the Incarnation a body and a human soul, did not assume the distinctive part of the human being – the human spirit, since the latter necessarily presupposes freedom, and with it an inclination to sin; and the human spirit, in Apollinaris's view, was replaced in Christ by the divine Logos, who ruled over all the evil impulses of the animal soul. Apollinaris died in 390. The heresy of Apollinaris was condemned by the Council of Alexandria in 362. In 375, when Apollinaris, having separated from the Church, began to form his own sect, he was condemned by a council at Rome; this last condemnation was confirmed by the Second Ecumenical Council.

3981. Arius, a heretic (d. 386), who blasphemously asserted that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not God, consubstantial with the Father, but a created being, and therefore not eternal, though the most perfect of all created beings. This heresy, known in the history of the Christian Church under the name of Arianism, was condemned at the First Ecumenical Council (325) at Nicaea, whose Fathers set forth the Orthodox teaching on the consubstantiality of the Son of God with God the Father thus: "We believe... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father, that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom (the Son) all things came into being, both in heaven and on earth"; and the heresy itself was anathematized by the Fathers of the Council. But the Nicene Creed did not put an end to the ecclesiastical turmoil caused by Arianism: the Arianizing bishops, who were present at the Council in considerable numbers, affixed their signatures to the conciliar definition of faith solely out of fear of the civil authority, which shared the convictions of the Orthodox members of the Council; and having succeeded, soon after the end of the Council, in winning the civil authority to their side, the leaders of the Arians, with its support, entered into a bitter struggle with the defenders of the right faith, and in the middle of the fourth century they achieved an almost complete outward victory over their opponents, who had united under the sacred banner of the Nicene Creed.

3990. St. Gregory the Theologian—the great father of the Church and ecumenical teacher—was born about 329 in Arianzus (a locality south of Nazianzus, an insignificant town of Cappadocia). In early childhood St. Gregory saw a dream which struck him and foreshadowed the path of his later life: chastity and purity in the form of beautiful maidens appeared to him, inviting him to follow them. St. Gregory received his secondary education in Caesarea in Cappadocia, where he first met Basil the Great. After this, to complete his education, he undertook a journey to Caesarea in Palestine, Alexandria, and Athens. His rather lengthy stay in Athens left the best memories in St. Gregory's soul forever; here he became friends with Basil the Great, the two friends "knowing only two paths—to the school and to the Christian church"; here he also made the acquaintance of the future emperor Julian, who later acquired sad notoriety for his apostasy

from Christianity. Julian made a repellent impression on St. Gregory. Around 357 St. Gregory sadly left "golden Athens," and by way of Constantinople came to his homeland, where he received baptism. In 359, on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, Gregory was unexpectedly ordained presbyter by his father, Gregory the Elder, bishop of Nazianzus. When the father of Gregory the Theologian, out of simplicity, signed a semi-Arian creed and thereby aroused the Orthodox flock against himself, St. Gregory reconciled the flock with the bishop. Meanwhile Basil the Great, already bishop of Caesarea, almost forcibly ordained his friend Gregory as bishop of the small place Sasima. But St. Gregory, in the rank of bishop, remained with his aged father as the latter's vicar and helper until the latter's death, which followed in 373 or early 374. Soon his mother Nonna also died; his brother and sister had died earlier. Then St. Gregory withdrew to Seleucia, to the monastery of St. Thecla, striving for the ascetic life from which the duties toward his relatives had previously kept him. From Seleucia St. Gregory was summoned to Constantinople by the Orthodox to defend Orthodoxy, which was persecuted by the Arians. In May 381, when by the will of the emperor Theodosius the Second Ecumenical Council was convened, St. Gregory, in accordance with the desire of the emperor and the people, was elected to the vacant see of the Bishop of Constantinople; the Fathers of the Council confirmed this election. Soon the president of the Council, Meletius of Antioch, died, and his place was naturally taken by the newly elected bishop of the capital, that is, St. Gregory. Disagreements between him and the Fathers of the Council—chiefly over the measures by which the Meletian schism in Antioch should be brought to an end—caused St. Gregory to withdraw to his homeland, where he spent his time in seclusion, occupied with literary labors; here he died in 389. He left behind him a considerable number of works: 45 orations, 243 letters, and a collection of poems. The orations and some letters of St. Gregory had great influence in clarifying the Orthodox teaching on the Holy Trinity and on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3993. Origen—the famous teacher of the Alexandrian Church, a marvel of his age in intellect and depth of learning. Many of the most eminent Fathers of the Church treated the theological works and merits of Origen with profound respect; but later he was condemned as a heretic, even during his lifetime, at two local Alexandrian councils, and after his death at the Constantinopolitan Council of 543. Without presenting his non-Orthodox opinions as unalterable truths, Origen nevertheless thought erroneously about many truths of the Christian Church's teaching, for which reason some considered his firmness in the principal Christian dogmas doubtful. Developing the non-Orthodox 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 Godhead and of becoming like Him; one of these created spirits so ardently yearned toward the Godhead that it became inseparably united with the Divine Word, or became His created bearer; this, in Origen's opinion, is that human soul through which God the Word could become incarnate on earth, since the direct incarnation of the Godhead, in his erroneous view, is unthinkable. Holding the heretical view on the incarnation of God the Word and the creation of the world and of man, Origen also understood the death of Christ in a non-Orthodox sense, representing it as something spiritually repeated in the spiritual world and having there an effect in liberating the Angels, and

ascribing to ordinary powers with which our nature is endowed too much in the work of salvation. Origen also thought wrongly on several points of his teaching about the resurrection and the future life—for example, that the devil can be saved—and in interpreting Holy Scripture he understood far too much in a mystical sense, to the detriment of the historical meaning of Scripture. But in any case, Origen's merits before the Church are more significant and cover his errors. In his schools he educated many remarkable Fathers and teachers of the Church, some of whom owed to him their conversion from paganism to the Christian faith, with which he wished to harmonize knowledge and philosophy. Especially remarkable are his labors in the study of Holy Scripture—its interpretation and, above all, the restoration and purification of the authentic text; remarkable too are Origen's writings directed toward the defense of Christianity against its enemies and heretics. In the persecution of Decius, Origen was granted the glory of a valiant confessor of Christ; he died a seventy-year-old elder in Tyre in 254.

4001. In the Old Testament Bethlehem is known as the homeland of the greatest Jewish king, David, and in the New Testament as the birthplace of Jesus Christ. It lay two hours' journey south of Jerusalem and stands on two hills whose slopes abound in vineyards, while at their foot stretch well-cultivated fields of grain. From this fertility the very name "Bethlehem" probably derives, from the Hebrew meaning "house of bread." In antiquity it was called Ephrama (Mic. 5:2), from the Hebrew meaning "to bear fruit." From the time of the birth of Christ the Savior, Bethlehem became a holy place for all Christians. Before the Ottoman occupation of Palestine (15th century) Bethlehem was more than once utterly destroyed, and by that time it had fallen into complete decline, from which it recovered only at the beginning of the 19th century. Now it is a small town with a population of Arabs, half Orthodox and half Catholic. On the site of the cave or grotto where the Lord Jesus Christ was born stands a church; the cave lies beneath its sanctuary, and its walls and floor are faced with marble. The place of the Savior's birth is venerated as a recess in the cave, lit by five silver lamps. Set into the floor is a silver star with the Latin inscription: Hic de Virginie Maria Jesus Christus natus est – "Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born." About three paces from this spot is a hollow regarded as the place of the manger in which Christ was laid. To the northwest of the cave runs a narrow underground passage with Holy Tables and chapels, and also a cave where the blessed Jerome was buried.

4003. Nazareth – from the Hebrew meaning "branch" or "enclosed place" – a small town in southern Galilee, so little known before the coming of the Savior that it is never once mentioned in the Holy Scripture of the Old Testament. But with the coming of the New Testament times Nazareth became the most famous place in Galilee, because many events from the life of the Savior are connected with it: Nazareth was the homeland of the Betrothed of the Mother of God, the righteous Joseph; here the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos took place; here, after the return of the Holy Family from Egypt, the childhood and youth of the Savior passed; and here too the Lord dwelt when He had entered upon His open ministry to the human race, until, because of the unbelief of its

inhabitants, He exchanged Nazareth for Capernaum. Because He spent the greater part of His life in Nazareth, Jesus Christ bore the name of Nazarene (Mt. 2:33).



THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 16

16 июня

New Calendar June 16 · Old Calendar June 29 (civil dates)

Life of Our Holy Father Tikhon, Wonderworker, Bishop of Amathus

Житие святого отца нашего Тихона чудотворца, епископа Амафунтского

Saint Tikhon was born on the island of Cyprus, in the city of Amathus,[1] to pious parents who were Christians. Raised from his earliest years by his parents in Christian piety, he was taught by them to read the Holy Scriptures, and for this he was received into the clergy of the Church and granted the office of church reader. On account of the purity of his life he was then ordained deacon by Saint Mnemon, Bishop of Amathus. When Bishop Mnemon died, Saint Tikhon was chosen by the common desire of the Christians of Amathus to succeed him, and he was ordained by Saint Epiphanius, Archbishop of Cyprus.[2]

At that time there still remained on the island of Cyprus many pagans who held to the ancient idolatry.

The Hierarch of Christ, Tikhon, took upon himself a great labor, turning the inhabitants of Amathus away from pagan errors and leading them to the knowledge of Christ our God. In this great labor the Lord aided him, for, having delivered from the power of the devil the great rational flock, the hierarch brought it into the fold of the Orthodox Catholic Church, turning goats into sheep of Christ. Saint Tikhon

1. Amathus – now the city of Limassol on the island of Cyprus.
2. Saint Epiphanius, Archbishop of the island of Cyprus, reposed in 403 A.D.; this hierarch shone forth with the power of God-wise teaching and with the gift of miracles and prophecy. – His commemoration is May 12.

also destroyed the idols around Amathus, and the temples of these idols, as dwellings of demons, he uprooted and laid waste.

Having governed in piety the flock entrusted to him by the Lord, Saint Tikhon died in deep old age. For his many miracles, wrought both during his life and after his death, Saint Tikhon is called "Wonder-worker."

Of the many miracles of Saint Tikhon, there has survived to our time an account of only two instances of his miraculous power.[3] The first miracle, wrought by Saint Tikhon while still a youth, was as follows. The father of Saint Tikhon, who supported his family by baking and selling bread, sent his son to sell the bread. But Saint Tikhon distributed the bread to the poor for nothing. His father, learning of this, was grieved, and in anger at his son began to reproach him for it. The pious youth then said to his father:

"Why are you grieved, father, as though you had lost something? I have lent the bread to God, and the Holy Books say: 'He who gives to God shall receive a hundredfold.'"

"If you do not believe what is said there, let us go to the granary, and there you yourself shall see how God repays His creditors."

Saying this, he went with his father to the granary, and when they wished to open the door, they saw that the storeroom, which had been empty, was entirely filled with clean wheat. Seeing such a miracle, the father of Saint Tikhon was greatly amazed, and, falling on his knees, he bowed to God, giving Him thanks. From that time he ceased to be angry with his son and no longer hindered him from distributing bread to the beggars as much as he wished.

The other miracle wrought by Saint Tikhon was as follows:

In a certain vineyard the gardeners, pruning the dry branches of the vine, threw them out as worthless. Saint Tikhon, gathering these branches, planted them in his own garden. In planting them he prayed to the Lord that He would grant the vine branches four properties: first, that the dry shoots would take root in the earth, send out roots,

3. Detailed information (as Saint Demetrius of Rostov writes) about the life and miracles of Saint Tikhon has not come down to us, for owing to the many Muslim invasions and the lapse of time, as many churches became deserted, the church records in them also perished.

and grow; second, that the vine branches would abound with berries; third, that the berries would be sweet and beneficial to health; fourth, that his grapes would ripen and mature sooner than all others. When Saint Tikhon went out into the garden the next morning, he saw that his prayer had been heard: the dry branches had taken root in the earth and put forth buds; and when, that same summer, they began to grow, they proved, quite unusually and beyond nature, to be very fruitful. And while in other vineyards the fruit was still ripening, the berries in the vineyard of Saint Tikhon were fully ripe, pleasant to the taste, and very beneficial to health.

This vine possessed such miraculous power not only during the lifetime of Saint Tikhon but also after his repose, and every year its fruit ripened earlier than in other vineyards; so that on June 16, the day of the commemoration of Saint Tikhon, the mystery of the Eucharist was celebrated at the Divine Liturgy with wine pressed from this grape. From these two miracles alone one can see that Saint Tikhon was a Wonderworker and a great servant of God.

The service to Saint Tikhon further relates that he prophetically foreknew and foretold to others the time of his death.[4]

For the sanctity of this wonderworker Tikhon, let there be glory to our God, now and always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.[5]

Troparion, Tone 1:

Dweller in the desert, and in the flesh an Angel, thou hast shown thyself a wonderworker, God-bearing Father Tikhon. By fasting, vigil, and prayer thou didst receive heavenly gifts, and thou healest the sick and the souls of those who run to thee in faith. Glory to Him who gave thee strength; glory to Him who crowned thee; glory to Him who works through thee healing for all.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Having remained in holy and God-beloved asceticism, thou didst receive from on high the power of the Comforter to overthrow the

4. Canticle 7, stanza 2, and canticle 8, stanza 1.
5. Saint Tikhon lived in the reign of the Greek emperor Arcadius (395–408) and of his son Theodosius.

idol of deception, to save men, to drive away demons, and to heal diseases. Therefore we honor thee as a friend of God, Blessed Tikhon.

* * *

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Tikhon, Wonderworker of Lukh

Память преподобного отца нашего Тихона, Луховского чудотворца

Our Venerable Father Tikhon was a native of Little Russia, from the Lithuanian borderlands, and served there in military service. Unable to endure the violence of the Latins, he moved to the royal city of Moscow and began to lead a pious life there. Afterwards, out of extreme humility, he distributed his property to the poor, accepted the monastic life, and settled on the river Lukh.[6] Here he founded a skete, gathered many disciples, and began to labor in fasting and abstinence in a God-pleasing manner. Out of great humility he did not accept the priestly rank until the end of his life. Having learned beforehand of his departure to God, and having instructed his disciples in everything that might serve for their soul's benefit, the Venerable Father reposed unto the eternal dwellings.[7]

Many years after the repose of the Venerable Father, his relics were uncovered,[8] and many healings began to take place from them. Later, through the zeal of the faithful, on the site of the Venerable Father's labors there was established an honorable monastery, which by God's blessing exists to this day.

* * *

6. The river Lukh, a left tributary of the river Klyazma, flows through the present-day provinces of Kostroma and Vladimir and rises in the Yuryev district.
7. The repose of the Venerable Tikhon took place on June 16, 1503.
8. The relics of the Venerable One were uncovered incorrupt in the time of Hegumen Constantine, about 1566, and from that time his commemoration began to be celebrated.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the commemoration of the Hieromartyr Tigrius, presbyter, and of the Martyr Eutropius, reader, who suffered at the beginning of the 5th century in Constantinople.

On the same day, the commemoration of the Venerable Tikhon of Medyn (Kaluga).



THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 17

17 июня

New Calendar June 17 · Old Calendar June 30 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Manuel, Savel and Ismail

Страдание святых мучеников Мануила, Савела и Исмаила

The holy martyrs Manuel, Savel and Ismail were full brothers and came from the land of Persia[1]. Their parents were men of distinction, but they were not of one faith: the father held to the Persian unbelief, while the mother was a pious Christian. From the earliest age she brought up her children in Christian piety, even as in their infancy she had nourished them with her own milk and reared them in the fear of God; and the blessed presbyter Eunoicus begot these holy brothers through the bath of holy baptism and taught them the Word of God. When they reached mature age, they were enrolled in military service. But although they devoted their bodily strength to the Persian king Alamundarus[2], in spirit they served without ceasing the King of heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ, striving to please Him in all things by their good deeds.

Once they were sent by their king to the Greco-Roman emperor Julian the Apostate[3] to conclude a peace with him. Julian at first received them with honor, showed them every kindness, and treated them in a friendly manner throughout; but afterward, learning that they were

1. The Persian state at that time occupied a vast territory between the Tigris, the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea.
2. Alamundar, as king of Persia, is entirely unknown in history; some think he was one of the Persian commanders.
3. Julian, son of Constantius, brother of Constantine the Great, was born in A.D. 331. He was at first instructed in the Christian religion, but when he became Caesar in 355 he openly renounced Christianity, for which he received the name "the Apostate."

Christians, he was filled with wrath against them, and, contrary to the customs and laws common to all peoples, he delivered these brothers to torments for their faith in Christ and put them to death after the most grievous tortures.

Their martyrdom took the following course.

Once the lawless emperor resolved to go to Bithynia, to the place called Orgia Trigon[4], for there one of the abominable pagan festivals was soon to take place. When he had crossed by ship from Constantinople to Chalcedon[5] and arrived at the place we have named, he at once began, with the whole multitude of people gathered there, to celebrate his impious festival, worshipping idols and offering countless sacrifices to demons: and so continuous feasting began here, with singing, music and the play of drums, and during this time many abominable iniquities were committed in honor of the baleful pagan gods.

The servants of Christ Manuel, Savel and Ismail, who were present there together with the emperor, did not wish even to look upon this ungodly festivity; having once withdrawn to one side from the revelers and standing at a distance, they wept and lamented over the delusion and error of these people, and prayed to the Lord God both for themselves, that they might not be defiled by fellowship with idolatrous sacrifices, and for all who were in error, that the Lord might lead them to knowledge of the truth.

"Do not leave these people, O Lord," they prayed, "to remain in such great destruction of evils, and do not suffer Thy rational creature to be in such madness; for here they are more senseless even than the stones and trees they revere: at least their wooden idols, as insensate and lifeless creatures, do not know what is being done before them; but these people, honored by Thee with a rational soul and being Thy image and likeness, do not see or understand what they are doing or to whom they are paying divine honor: they walk in darkness, go astray, and go to eternal perdition."

While the saints, standing at a distance, were thus weeping and praying, the emperor, seeing those who offered sacrifices and feasted

4. It is thought that the Trigon was a temple dedicated to idols, near Chalcedon.
5. Chalcedon was a city of Bithynia, at the southern end of the Bosphorus, opposite Byzantium.

with them, and not seeing the Persian envoys beside him, ordered them to be found and summoned to him, that they might make merry with him. Then one of the imperial chamberlains, finding them standing apart, began to call them to the imperial festivity: he thought they too belonged to the idolatrous impiety. But the servants of Christ answered the chamberlain who summoned them with one accord:

"Go away from us: we shall not renounce the faith in which we have been brought up from our youth, and therefore we shall not forsake our Lord nor bow down to the demons that dwell in you; and let it not be with us to become partakers in this manifest error: we are not so mad and senseless as, spurning the living God, our Creator, to worship a lifeless creature. Nor did we undertake so long a journey and come here for the purpose of renouncing our faith, but to conclude a peace between the Persian and Greco-Roman states. Your emperor, and those of one mind with him, know well that they will not turn us aside or persuade us to pass over to their impiety, even if they deliver us to fire and torments and deprive us of life itself."

After this the chamberlain, leaving the saints, reported these words to Julian, and he at once flared up against them in wrath and fury; however, he decided not to hand them over to torments immediately, so as not to hinder his impious festivity, but postponed it until morning, commanding only that the servants of God be cast into prison.

And as they went to the prison, they sang thus to the Lord:

"Come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us shout unto God, the rock of our salvation; let us come before His face with thanksgiving, let us shout unto Him with psalms" (Ps. 94:1–2).

And again:

"Who is so great a God as our God!" (Ps. 76:14). We are His people and the work of His hands, and we shall always call upon Him.

On the next day Julian, ascending the judgment seat, ordered the Persian envoys to be summoned before him and began to speak to them thus:

"Good men, your king has sent you here as men faithful to him and well disposed toward us, that between the two kingdoms the peace long awaited by all might be restored. But this peace can be restored

between us only with the help of loving concord and mutual goodwill. Yet what concord can you have with us, and where is your love for us, if yesterday you would not join us in celebrating the festival and taking delight in the rejoicing in honor of the same gods whom you Persians also worship[6]? For the Persians too, like us, revere the sun, the moon and the stars, the most radiant fiery power, and our other gods; why, then, did you refuse to honor them with us and not wish to take part in our service to them, if only so that the terms of our peace might be firmer and more secure? But if you despise and disparage our gods, and if you are not of one mind with us, then you have come to us not to establish peace but to break it, and to renew enmity and war."

To this the holy men answered:

"We have come to you from our king to conclude terms of peace, so that your soldiers may not cross our borders nor ours yours, that we may not lay waste each other's land, and that our merchants may always have free access to your state and yours to our land, and that both may return home without any offense; it is for terms about this that we have been sent to you, and not at all to discuss the gods. Let each worship the god he wishes, and in the manner that pleases him. Indeed, wars between kingdoms never arise on account of faith; but disputes, quarrels and battles always arise over cities and regions and their borders and frontiers. But you, abandoning all negotiations for peace, for which we have been sent to you, begin to speak of other matters, of which we ought not to speak with you. For you are speaking with us not about the welfare of your empire, not about a peaceful relation with our state, which borders on yours, but keep questioning us about the gods and expounding the faith. Since it is so pleasing to you, know that we, though Persians by birth, are Christians in faith, brought up in piety by our mother and instructed in the true faith by our spiritual father, the presbyter Eunoicus. And in our own country there have been many who wished to turn us away from our Lord Jesus Christ to

6. In his philosophical and religious convictions Julian was an eclectic, that is, he chose for himself from all religious teachings whatever pleased him and was generally in agreement with his worldview. He believed in one supreme God, but identified Him with Mithras, or the sun-god of the Eastern cult; and the Persians, as is known, also venerated the sun as their chief deity.

idolatry, but they did not succeed: by the grace of our Lord we have remained unshaken and firm in the confession of our faith; we hope now too in the help of the Lord that here also no one will turn us from our holy faith nor persuade us to pass over to the service of demons, which is truly vain and full of all deception, error and lies."

Then the tormentor, filled with anger, said to them:

"How do you, being simple and ignorant men, who do not even know our language, dare so brazenly, with such senseless words, to revile our faith, which we, educated men who have perfectly mastered all book learning, profess? We are acquainted with your teaching too. You know that I studied your Christian books also, but seeing that in them there is nothing but falsehood and nothing true, I at once rejected them, lest through the obscurity of what is written in them I should fall into some error. And of those people who believe your books and act by them, which one has ever shown himself glorious and perfect, or what valiant deed has he done in his life? Therefore I advise you: abandon this childish and false reasoning and rather believe what the best philosophers have taught from of old. But if you will not accept my good advice, you will, even against your will, submit to the torments to which I shall at once deliver you."

To this the saints answered:

We have learned from our Lord not to fear those who kill the body, nor to think that we must answer those who wish to torment us, for the Holy Spirit Himself will strengthen us in suffering and will give us words and boldness for an answer. But we ask you: what do you see in us that is foolish, you who consider yourself the wisest of all men? And who is truly the more senseless: he who has known the true God, the Creator of all things, and piously honors Him, or he who, turning away from the living God, worships a lifeless creature, stones, wood, or something similar to them? Truly he is mad who honors a dead thing instead of God; he is wise who serves the living God. For this above all is the work of the human mind: to know its Creator and Giver of all gifts, to believe in Him, and to serve Him diligently; but not to know Him, the Creator and Benefactor, and to labor for one's enemy, the soul-destroying demon, this is extreme folly. And your ancient philo-

sophers, who were in such a pernicious error, only seemed wise, but in truth were the most foolish of men, according to the word of the holy Apostle: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22), and their foolish heart was darkened. To them you have become like, if not worse: for they remained in their madness, not knowing and never before professing the true faith, but you, enlightened by holy Baptism and brought up in Christianity, have renounced Christ our God, and now by all who truly believe in the Lord you are called a Hellene instead of a Christian, and an impious and godless man instead of a pious one.

Greatly provoked by such words of the martyrs, Julian, filled with immeasurable fury, commanded that they be tormented cruelly at once. First they were stripped and laid on the ground, and were beaten without mercy with harsh thongs on the back and belly; then they were hanged at the place of torment, their hands and feet nailed high to the tree, and with iron combs they scraped their whole bodies. The martyrs of Christ, bearing these grievous torments with courage, raising their eyes to heaven and praying to the Lord, cried out to Him thus:

"O Master! Thou, who once wast Thyself nailed to the tree by the unbelieving Jews, and by Thy passion and death on the cross didst blot out the sins of the world, look upon us now hanging wounded on the tree; and since our nature is weak, send us Thy help from on high and grant us relief in our sufferings, for only in hope in Thee have we dared to undertake this martyr's contest. How cruel and dreadful these torments are, Thou Thyself, O Lord, knowest and seest, but for love of Thee, O sweetest Jesus, they are pleasant to us!"

While the saints were praying thus, suddenly an Angel of the Lord appeared before them; but only the holy martyrs saw him, for the darkened eyes of the impious were not worthy of it. This Angel, comforting the sufferers, gave them such consolation in their sufferings that they seemed no longer to feel the pain of their wounds, and it seemed as if they had never endured any of these torments. Then Julian commanded that the holy martyrs be taken down from the tree, and when they were taken down, he said to them, as though mocking them:

"You see how I spare you, not yet subjecting you to greater torments. I hope that after this comparatively small punishment you will now become of one mind with us."

The holy martyrs, clearly perceiving all the flattery of his words, answered him with still greater boldness:

"Do not think or hope, enemy of Christ, that we will change our faith in the Lord. Go on, then, tormenting our bodies, if you wish to torment us still more: we are ready to endure everything. Whether you subject us to wounds, fire, sword, or anything yet more terrible, we will consider all this a joy for us rather than a torment: all this we will endure with gladness for Jesus, who loved us!"

Then the lawless Julian, seeing that Manuel, as the eldest of the brothers, spoke at greater length and more boldly than the other brothers, commanded that he be led aside, while he himself, beginning a conversation with the two remaining, Savel and Ismail, spoke to them with guile:

"You are children of the same parents, yet men of quite different dispositions: your eldest brother is not worthy even to be called your brother, for he is stubborn, wicked, shameless, talks and disputes much, and remaining unbending in his madness, he draws you along with him and does not let you choose what is better for yourselves; but you, as I see, are men of good, gentle nature, not quarrelsome, and in general prudent. Now, then, obey my good counsel: leave your brother to perish in his vain error and mad resistance, offer sacrifice to our gods, and then you will receive from them great mercy, and from us rich gifts and honor."

The saints, however, not wishing even to listen to these flattering words, loudly began to expose the treachery of Julian and to condemn his madness.

Then Julian, again inflamed with anger, commanded that they be led to the place of torment and that their ribs be scorched with burning candles. The martyrs, bearing these torments with courage, all the while glorified the Lord and reproached the tormentor. Then Julian a second time commanded that Manuel be brought and, now with caresses, now with threats, again began to compel him to worship the

idols. At last, seeing that he stood unshaken like a rock in confessing Christ, he began to torment him as he had his brothers: he commanded that an iron nail be driven into the head of each martyr, and sharp stakes under the nails of their hands and feet, and then, when they were so wounded, he ordered that their heads be cut off with the sword and their bodies burned.

And so the holy martyrs were led to the place of execution, the place called Constantinovo, where, before the shedding of their blood, they offered one last prayer to the Lord:

"O just God, without beginning, who didst bring all things from non-being into being, who in these last times for our salvation didst humble Thyself, dwelt with men in the form of a servant, and endured the cross to free us from the bonds of sin and make us heirs of Thy Kingdom: receive in peace Thy servants and number us with those who from of old have pleased Thee, for for the sake of Thy holy name we willingly accept this death by the sword and departure from this present life. And turn to Thee, all-merciful Master, this people enslaved to the devil, who surround us in such multitude, and send them enlightenment of mind and understanding for the knowledge of the truth, so that, knowing Thee as the only true God, they may serve Thee alone and receive from Thee eternal salvation."

While the holy martyrs were praying thus, a voice was heard from on high:

"Come, to receive the crown of glory, for you have bravely accomplished your contest."

The holy martyrs were beheaded on the 17th day of the month of June.

But when the impious servants wished to carry out another command of their lawless king, to burn the bodies of the passion-bearers of Christ, suddenly, by God's command, the earth quaked, and the place on which the saints lay sank deeply, and the abyss thus formed received the bodies of the martyrs and hid them, so that the defiled hands of the tormentors might touch them no more and the power of fire might not reduce them to ash; and all the servants fled in fear.

Then many of the people standing there, seeing such a miracle, believed in Christ and, rejecting the Hellenic error, joined the community of Christians.

After two days, during which the Christians ceaselessly offered prayers to the Lord at that place, day and night, the earth again opened and brought the bodies of the saints up to the surface, and behold, an indescribable fragrance poured forth everywhere.

Then the faithful, filled with great joy, took the bodies of the saints with love and honorably buried them in that wondrous place; after that, healings in abundance began to flow from the tomb of the holy martyrs for all the sick.

And the impious apostate Julian, shortly after this, perished by a remarkable and terrible death.

After the murder of the Persian envoys, the holy martyrs Manuel, Savel and Ismail, he set out with his whole army into Persia.[7] The demons seduced him into this through their sorcerers, false prophets, who foretold him victory and the subjugation of the Persians. The Persian king, however, hearing of the slaughter of his envoys, was filled with deep sorrow and great wrath; learning that the lawless Julian was marching against him, he likewise gathered all his army, and standing on the border of his state, he took up arms against his proud enemy. And when the two armies met, a great battle began. But the Persians soon prevailed and defeated the Roman army, thus crushing the whole strength of Julian.

In this very battle the wrath of God struck the apostate Julian: the impious emperor was smitten by an invisible hand and perished in great torments, becoming at the end a laughingstock for all the Persians against whom he had so proudly advanced, with his vain hope, to the joy of the demons in whom he had believed and on whom he had so relied.

The Christians, thus freed from cruel persecution and torments, glorified their Deliverer, Christ God, to Whom from us also be honor

7. As is known, Julian set out on his campaign against the Persians on March 5, 363.

and glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.[8]

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Wounded by faith in Christ, the all-blessed ones, having faithfully drunk this cup, cast down to the earth the service and audacity of the Persians, ye who are equal in number to the Trinity, making intercession for us all.

* * *



8. The solemn celebration of the memory of these saints is very ancient. Thirty years after their repose, Theodosius the Great, in 395, built a church in their honor at Constantinople, and the monk Germanus, afterwards Patriarch (d. 740), wrote a canon in their memory.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 18

18 июня

New Calendar June 18 · Old Calendar July 1 (civil dates)

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Leontius, Hypatius and Theodulus

Страдание святых мучеников Леонтия, Ипатия и Феодула

In the reign of Vespasian[1] there lived in Rome a senator named Adrian, a man cruel, unmerciful and inventive in every kind of evil. He heard that the Christians, disdaining idolatrous sacrifices, reviled the gods honored by the Romans and the Greeks, since they acknowledged only the one true God, Christ, to faith in Whom they also turned many. Kindled with zeal for his vain gods, Adrian went to the emperor and asked him to give him authority to compel the Christians to idolatry, with the right to torture and kill those unwilling to worship the gods. The emperor appointed Adrian *hegemon*[2] of the land of Phoenicia, with authority to persecute all believers in Christ. When Adrian, having departed from Rome, was already drawing near to Phoenicia, he learned that in the city of Tripoli[3] there was a military commander, Leontius, who was undermining the laws of the fathers: reproaching the ancient gods, he taught men not to worship them or offer them sacrifices, and by this turned many who heard him away from the veneration of idols. Adrian at once sent to Tripoli the tribune[4] Hypatius with a *speira*[5] of soldiers, charging him to seize Leontius and keep him under guard until his own arrival.

1. He reigned from 70 A.D. to 79 A.D.
2. Hegemon – a provincial governor.
3. Tripoli – a maritime Phoenician city with a harbor; it was situated at the foot of the highest point of Lebanon.
4. Tribune – a commander of a detachment of 1000 soldiers.
5. Speira – a cohort (Acts 10:1) or a regiment (Acts 21:31).

Leontius, servant of Christ, was by birth from Greece; tall, strong and courageous, he distinguished himself for bravery in battles, in which he gained many victories; therefore Leontius was known and respected among the soldiers. Moreover, endowed by nature with understanding, possessing wide experience of life and book learning, Leontius was a man of counsel and of government. Knowing that there exists only one true God, the Lord Jesus Christ, Leontius devoted his whole life to serving Him, believing not in word only but also in deed. Merciful to the poor, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, gave shelter to strangers; in a word, he adorned himself with every good work, for which the Lord deemed him worthy of the crown of victory.

When the *speira* of soldiers drew near to Tripoli, the tribune Hypatius suddenly and unexpectedly fell ill with a fever, the cause of which he explained to his soldiers as follows:

"I know the reason for this present affliction: the gods are angry with me, because, setting out on this journey, I did not offer them a sacrifice worthy of them; behold, they are punishing me with sickness."

Seeing that the tribune was indeed stricken with a grave illness, the soldiers grieved for him, sorrowing in his sorrow; three days passed, and the sick man ate nothing, for the illness grew worse hour by hour, threatening a fatal end. On the night between the third day and the fourth, an Angel of the Lord appeared to the tribune in a vision and said:

"If you wish to be well, then together with your soldiers call out three times to heaven: 'O God of Leontius, help me!' If you do this, you will be healed at once."

Rising quickly and opening his eyes, the tribune, burning with inner fever, saw the holy Angel, who stood before him in the form of a beautiful youth clothed in snow-white raiment.

"I," he said to the Angel, "have been sent with the soldiers to take Leontius and keep him under guard until the coming of the hegemon Adrian, and you command me to summon to help the God of Leontius."

While the sick tribune was speaking these words, the Angel vanished from his sight; in terror the tribune woke the friends sleeping near him and said to them:

"Listen to what I saw: no sooner had I fallen into first sleep than a certain bright youth stood before me and advised me, together with all of you, to call upon the God of Leontius, promising recovery in return. The youth I saw with my own eyes, awake, and soon afterwards he disappeared."

"This is not a difficult matter," said the friends; "we shall all do it, if only you are well."

One of the tribune's friends, named Theodulus, was especially astonished by the vision and questioned the sick man in detail as to what form the youth who appeared had; the tribune gladly satisfied his curiosity. And the heart of Theodulus was kindled with love for the God of Leontius, unknown to him. When the soldiers, awakened from sleep, gathered about the suffering tribune and learned from him of the vision that had come to him, then all of them without exception rose and, looking up to heaven together with the sufferer, cried out:

"O God of Leontius, help!"

At once the tribune arose in health, as though he had not been ill at all; the hour of dinner came, and the tribune with his friends began to eat, drink and make merry. But the miracle shown upon the tribune filled Theodulus with still greater wonder; he sat apart, reflecting in silence:

"Who is Leontius, and who is the God of Leontius?"

Meanwhile his friends invited Theodulus to take part in the feast, but he, preferring hunger to it, would taste nothing. Seeing that the soldiers, under the influence of wine, had forgotten the hegemon's command, Theodulus said to them:

"Behold, Adrian will overtake us tomorrow or the day after, and we do not even think of searching for the man whom we are commanded to seize. If you wish, I and the tribune will go on ahead of you to the city and look for the one for whom we were sent."

Then, having persuaded the tribune to go with him, Theodulus and Hypatius both set out toward the city.

No sooner had they climbed to the top of the mountain on which Tripoli stood than Leontius came out to meet them and greeted them with these words:

"Rejoice in the Lord, brethren!"

"Rejoice you also, brother!" answered the tribune and Theodulus.

"Whom have you come here to seek?" asked Leontius.

"The emperor Vespasian," they said, "has learned that in this city there lives a certain man named Leontius, a noble, wise, virtuous man and a brave soldier; it is his dwelling place that we have been sent to discover. Behind us comes the hegemon Adrian, to whose government the emperor has entrusted this whole land of Phoenicia; the hegemon himself wishes to see Leontius, as a man pleasing to the gods, in order afterwards to send him with great honor to the emperor, and the whole Roman senate wishes to see Leontius, since his manly bravery in battles, his skill in governing, his piety and many other glorious deeds are known to all."

Hearing this, the blessed Leontius said:

"I see that you are strangers and do not know what is happening in this city. Come to my house; rest from the road, and I will show you Leontius, whom you call a friend of your gods; in truth he is not at all a friend of the gods you revere, but know him to be a Christian, believing in the Lord Jesus!" Hypatius and Theodulus said to one another:

"Who is this man, who calls Leontius a Christian? Is he not a relation of his?"

Then they asked the unknown man:

"What is your name?"

"As to my name," he answered, "it is written in the books: 'You shall tread upon the asp and the basilisk; you shall trample the lion and the dragon' (Ps. 90:13), for I must trample the lion, the devil, the invisible enemy, and the serpent, the *hegemon*, the visible enemy. I must conquer, like the asps and basilisks, both him and his counselors, the zealous servants of demons. And when I have triumphed over the whole host of the lion, then the deed itself will reveal my name."

These words seemed enigmatic to the tribune and to Theodulus; trying to make them out for themselves, they followed the wondrous man in perplexity to his house. The holy Leontius entertained them, preparing a meal for them. When they had partaken of it, they said to their host:

"We are very well pleased with your hospitality, good man! Complete your kindness to us: show us the Leontius whom we seek. When Adrian arrives, we will tell him how much you have done for us, and for this he will honor you greatly, so that you will be in fellowship with the friends of the emperor."

"I am Leontius, whom you are seeking," the saint answered, "I am that soldier of Jesus Christ whom Adrian sent you to seize."

Then the tribune and Theodulus fell at the feet of Leontius, saying:

"Servant of the Most High God! Forgive us our sin, and hasten to entreat your God on our behalf, that He may deliver us also from idolatrous impiety and from the savage beast Adrian, for we wish to be Christians."

Then they told him how the Angel had appeared to the sick man, and how the illness had left the tribune at once upon the calling on the God of Leontius.

Seeing the manifestation of Christ's power, the holy Leontius was filled with joy; prostrating himself on the ground in the form of a cross, he began with tears to pray to God thus:

"Lord God, 'Who wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4), look upon us at this hour: You have caused those to follow me whom I was bound to follow; keep me also, Your sheep, and enlighten them together with me by the light of Your mercy. Pour out upon them the grace of Your Holy Spirit, create in them a pure heart, and, overshadowing them with Your holy sign, make them Your invincible soldiers; arm and strengthen them against the enemy, the devil, and his servants. May these Your servants crush the head of the invisible serpent and of the wicked beast Adrian."

After the fervent prayer of the holy Leontius, a bright cloud overshadowed the tribune Hypatius and his friend Theodulus, and it baptized them, pouring rain upon them; the holy Leontius, meanwhile, invoked over those being baptized the name of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

After the miraculous baptism he glorified God, saying:

"Glory to You, O my God! You Who regard the prayer of those who love You and fulfill the desire of those who fear You!"

Having clothed the newly baptized in white garments, St. Leontius commanded that lighted candles be carried before them. At this time the remaining soldiers, who had fallen behind on the road, also came into the city; they inquired about Leontius, and likewise about their tribune and Theodulus. When the soldiers found them, they were exceedingly astonished and perplexed at seeing the burning candles and the white garments on Hypatius and Theodulus. Learning, however, that these two had turned to Christianity and been baptized, the soldiers were at first confused and then began to be indignant; and at that very time the news of the baptism of Hypatius and Theodulus reached some of the citizens of the city, who raised a riot, crying out:

"Let those who dishonor our gods be given over to the fire!"

Discord and tumult arose in the city: some defended Leontius with the rest of the Christians, while others wished to put them to death, but nevertheless they waited for the arrival of the governor, not daring of their own accord to inflict any harm upon the Christians.

After two days had passed, the governor Adrian drew near the city; the citizens who went out to meet him reported to him everything about Leontius and the other Christians who were led by him.

"A certain man," they related, "Leontius by name and a Christian in faith, turns everyone away from our gods by his magical tricks known to him alone. At the same time he glorifies a certain man whom the Jews, after buffeting him, put to death, and whom Pilate, after scourging, crucified. Finally, this same Leontius by sorcery has deceived even the imperial soldiers, persuading them to accept the Galilean faith; and now for the third day he has held them, having first clothed them in white garments, shut up in his house without going out, and together with them he glorifies his Christ, who was once crucified, while heaping countless reproaches upon our gods."

Adrian at once sent soldiers to seize Leontius, the tribune Hypatius and Theodulus, commanding that they be cast into prison and kept under guard until trial. Then, having entered the city, the governor devoted the day to rest. While in prison, St. Leontius unceasingly instructed his companions in the Christian faith and strengthened them for the martyr's struggle that lay before them, pointing to the reward to come;

and all that night they spent in prayer and in psalmody, glorifying God. In the morning of the following day the governor took his seat on the tribunal, when the holy prisoners were brought to him from the prison for interrogation.

"Are you Leontius?" the governor addressed St. Leontius.

"I am," answered the latter.

"What is your rank," the governor continued the interrogation, "and how by your magical sorcery did you beguile these soldiers, once faithful servants of our emperor, so that you have now made them serve your God?"

"I am," St. Leontius explained, "a soldier of my Christ, I am a son of that true Light 'which enlightens every man who comes into the world' (Jn. 1:9), and everyone who comes to this Light will not stumble (Jn. 11:9–10). Hypatius and Theodulus now know that the beginning, the action and the fulfillment of the Light I speak of is Christ Himself, the Son of God and God without beginning, co-eternal with the Father, Light of Light, God of God; having come to know Him, they have forsaken your gods, made of wood, stone or the bones of senseless animals; these inactive and powerless gods are easily destroyed."

The governor, vexed by the fearless speech of St. Leontius, commanded his servants to beat him. He, enduring the blows, raised his eyes to heaven, whence he awaited help for himself, and said to the governor:

"Mad tormentor! You, intending to inflict suffering upon me, torment yourself even more, gnawing at your own heart."

After a long beating the governor commanded that St. Leontius be led back to prison again; then he turned to Hypatius and Theodulus:

"For what reason have you rejected the paternal customs instilled in you from childhood, and forsaken the military reward, grieving the emperor?"

"We have received," the saints answered, "a better reward from the King of Heaven: the 'bread of God which comes down from heaven' (Jn. 6:33) has been given to us, and the cup of wine that flowed from the side of Christ."

"By such unseemly and senseless speeches," said Adrian, "the impious Leontius has taught you; and I tell you: fulfill the emperor's will. Do you not know his command to bestow great honor and rewards upon soldiers who honor the gods, and to put to death those who turn away from them, delivering them to cruel torments?"

"Our military dignity is in heaven," the holy Hypatius and Theodulus replied, "and so do with us what you will; as a zealot of impure gods, you arm yourself against us who are innocent; but soon your own life will also perish, the days of your life are shortened."

In fury Adrian commanded that the tribune be stripped, hung upon the torture tree, and his body scraped with iron claws. Theodulus he commanded to be stretched upon the ground and beaten without mercy. The saints bore all these torments with courage; remembering the instruction of St. Leontius, they uttered nothing but the following prayer: "Save [me], O Lord, for there is no longer any righteous man" (Ps. 11:1).

Seeing that the saints remained firm and unshaken in the Christian faith, the tormentor condemned them to death by beheading with the sword. Being led to death, the holy Hypatius and Theodulus sang:

"Thou art our refuge, O Lord! Into Thy hands we commit our souls."

Gladly they stretched out their necks under the sword for Christ, and after the beheading they departed to the Lord, to receive from His right hand the crown prepared for them.

After this, St. Leontius was again led before the governor's tribunal.

"Spare your life, Leontius," the governor said to him, "so that you may not endure those grievous tortures which the tribune and Theodulus, whom you beguiled, have suffered. Obey me, offer sacrifice to the gods, and then you will be granted great honor not only by me but by the emperor himself and the Roman senate, for the emperor and the nobles greatly desire to see you."

"I do not wish," St. Leontius answered, "to see the face of your emperor, who is hostile and abominable to my God. Rather, Adrian, if you desire it, be a friend to my Christ; and if you become one, I will show you what honor, wealth and salvation you shall receive in eternal life."

With a malicious laugh Adrian asked:

"You wish, evidently, that I should receive the same salvation that fell to the lot of the tribune and Theodulus? Senseless head! Or do you not know by what execution they perished?"

"That execution," the saint replied, "is not an execution but a better life, peace and joy: now they rejoice, having been established among the ranks of the Angels."

"Listen attentively to what I say," the governor proposed to St. Leontius: "Which of men not deprived of reason has despised this sunlight and the great gods Zeus, Apollo, Neptune, Venus and the rest, merely in order to end his days by a shameful and tormenting death? Truly, no one except those bewitched by you!"

"Have you not heard," St. Leontius asked the governor, "the words of Scripture: 'For all the gods of the nations are idols' (Ps. 95:5), 'Those who make them will become like them, and so will everyone who trusts in them' (Ps. 134:18)? Which of sensible men would wish to make himself like a mute stone or a lifeless substance, as in truth your gods are, so that by offering sacrifice to them he would perish with an endless death?"

In strong anger the tormentor commanded four strong servants to beat the martyr, who lay upon the ground, without mercy, while a special herald cried out:

"Those who disparage our gods and do not obey the commands of the emperors shall perish by a death like this."

They beat the holy martyr until those who beat him were exhausted. And St. Leontius said to the tormentor:

"Even if you turn my whole body into one wound, you still will not conquer my mind, you will not be master of my soul."

Then the governor commanded that the saint be hung upon the torture tree and his whole body, ribs and shins, be scraped with sharp iron instruments. For a long time they scraped the holy martyr; in grievous suffering he raised his eyes to heaven and addressed God with this prayer:

"My God, Thou art my hope, save me!"

Then the tormentor said to the executioners:

"Take him down from the tree; I know that he raises his eyes to heaven in order to beg our gods to give him relief."

Hearing this, St. Leontius cried out loudly and angrily to the governor:

"Perish with your gods, dangerous and vile tormentor! I pray to my God that He may grant me courage and strength to endure the grievous torments you impose."

The tormentor commanded that he be hung again, but now head downward, with a heavy stone tied to his neck. For a long time St. Leontius remained in this position, praying aloud thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who strengthened Thy servants Hypatius and Theodulus in confessing Thy most holy name, establish me too, Thy humble and sinful servant, that I may be able to bear the present torments. Do not forsake me, my Hope!"

"I know, Leontius," said the governor, "that you will become a friend of our gods."

"I am a servant of the Most High God," the martyr replied, "but you are a servant of your gods, with whom you and your soldiers will perish."

All day St. Leontius endured such torments; when evening approached and the sun had already begun to decline toward the west, the governor commanded that St. Leontius be taken down from the torture tree and cast into prison until morning. All night in confinement St. Leontius sang: "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 26:1).

An Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said:

"Take courage, Leontius! The Lord God, whom you faithfully serve, has sent me to you, that I may remain with you without ceasing."

And the saint rejoiced and was glad in the Lord his God. The sun rose, and once again Adrian, seating himself on the tribunal, summoned St. Leontius before him.

"What has Leontius decided?" he asked.

"I have come," the saint answered, "to one settled conclusion: not to pay heed to your empty words. Many times before I have said, and now I say again, that I will never forsake my God, the Creator of heaven,

earth and sea and all that is in them, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who endured the agony of the Cross for our salvation. In Him alone I place my hope."

"Listen to me, Leontius!" the hegemon urged. "Offer sacrifice to the gods. I swear to you by my gods that in that case you shall receive great honor and many riches from the emperor."

"What honor and what riches of the world," asked St. Leontius, "could compel me to listen to you and renounce my God? The whole world is unworthy of Christ my Lord, whom I love with all my heart, for love of whom I suffer and am ready to endure everything. To your gods I will not offer sacrifice."

Having finally become convinced that it was impossible to overcome the invincible warrior of Christ, that is, to win him over to pagan impiety, the hegemon issued the following sentence of death against St. Leontius:

"Leontius, who not only refused to submit to the command of the emperor and offer sacrifice to the gods, but also reviled the gods of our fathers, we command that he be stretched upon the torture-tree, his limbs pulled out to the four sides, and beaten until he yields up his soul from his sufferings."

St. Leontius was stretched out and bound to four stakes driven into the ground. Then four strong soldiers beat him long and cruelly, until in his torments he committed his holy soul into the hands of God. His body, cast outside the city, was taken by the faithful and laid in honorable burial near the harbor of Tripoli.

The suffering of the holy martyr Leontius was described by the servant of Christ "Cyrus the notary," who witnessed the torment with his own eyes. He wrote down everything on tin tablets, which he placed with the relics of the martyr in his tomb for the generations of Christians to come, so that everyone who reads or hears them might lift up his hands to heaven and give glory to God, who strengthened His servant for such a feat. St. Leontius completed his suffering on 18 June, in the reign at Rome of Vespasian, and in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom glory is offered with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.[6]

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Thou didst put to shame the cunning deceits of the tormentors, and didst expose the godless service of the Hellenes; thou didst shine forth in the knowledge of God to all men through the teachings of piety, O God-wise Martyr. Wherefore we honor thy memory with love, O wise Leontius.

* * *

✠

6. The Council of Constantinople held under Patriarch Menas (536–552) mentions St. Leontius the Martyr; a church was dedicated to him in Phoenician Tripoli. In Constantinople the memory of St. Leontius was solemnly celebrated in two places: in the church bearing his name and near the Kamaridion.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 19

19 июня

New Calendar June 19 · Old Calendar July 2 (civil dates)

Memory of the Holy Apostle Jude, Brother of the Lord According to the Flesh

Память святого Апостола Иуды, брата Господня по плоти

The Holy Apostle Jude belongs to the number of the twelve disciples of the Lord. He was of the tribe of David and Solomon. The Holy Jude was born in the Galilean city of Nazareth to the righteous Joseph, to whom the Most Pure Virgin Mary was afterwards betrothed. It is not known with certainty who was the mother of Jude. According to some, she was Salome[1], daughter of Aggeus, son of Barachias, brother of St. Zachariah, father of the holy Prophet and Forerunner of the Lord, John. This Jude was the brother of the Holy Apostle James the Righteous, head of the Church of Jerusalem[2]. The Holy Apostle Jude is usually called Jude of James, that is, the brother of the Apostle James[4043]. He took this designation out of humility, for he considered himself unworthy to be called the brother of the Lord according to the flesh, all the more so because he had sinned before the Lord, first by his little faith and second by his lack of brotherly love.

1. From this Salome one should distinguish also the elder Salome, a dweller of Bethlehem (the reputed grandmother of the Lord); this Salome was a relative of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and of the Righteous Joseph; see concerning her in the narrative of the Nativity of Christ, in December, on the 25th.

2. The holy Apostle James, the Lord's brother according to the flesh, according to tradition accompanied his father Joseph, the Ever-Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus during their flight into Egypt. After the Ascension of the Savior, he was appointed bishop of the Church of Jerusalem; he first composed the Divine Liturgy. He died, having been thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple by the Jews, in the year 61 or 62 A.D.; to him belongs the catholic epistle that bears his name. The memory of this holy Apostle is October 23.

That Jude sinned by little faith is attested by St. John the Theologian, who says: "For neither did his brethren believe in him" (Jn. 7:5).

In explaining this passage of the Gospel, St. Theophylact[3] understands by the brethren of Christ the children of Joseph. Namely, he says:

"The brethren, the children of Joseph (among whom was also this Jude), heaped reproach upon Him, that is, upon Christ. Whence came such unbelief in them toward Him? From their own evil will and from envy, for kinsfolk are wont to envy their own more than strangers."

Thus it is clear from this that Jude sinned before the Lord by his little faith.

But Jude, besides this, also showed Christ a lack of brotherly love, as is written in the Life of James, brother of God. When Joseph, upon returning from Egypt, began to divide his land among his children born of his first wife, he wished to assign a portion also to the Lord Jesus, who had been born supernaturally and incorruptibly of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, and who was at that time still a small child. But three of Joseph's sons did not wish to receive Christ into their share, since He was born of another mother; only the fourth son, the Holy James, received Him into shared possession of his portion, and for this he was afterwards called the brother of God. Recognizing these former sins of his, little faith and lack of brotherly love, Jude did not dare to call himself the brother of God, but called himself only the brother of James, as he also writes in his epistle: "Jude, servant of Jesus Christ, brother of James" (Jude 1:1–25).

Besides the name Jude of James, the Apostle Jude has other names as well. The Evangelist Matthew calls him Lebbaeus and Thaddeus. These names were given to the Apostle Jude not without reason: the word "Lebbaeus" means "heartfelt." As applied to the Apostle Jude, this name signifies that he, Jude, after the transgressions he had committed against Christ God in ignorance, when he became convinced that Jesus is the true Messiah, Christ God, united himself to Him with all his heart.

3. The Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ohrid in Bulgaria, is known for his commentary on the four Gospels, in which he follows St. John Chrysostom in much. He died around 1085.

The Apostle Jude is also called Thaddeus, which means "praising," for he glorified and confessed Christ God and proclaimed the Gospel to many nations.

Very little is known to us about the life and activity of the Holy Apostle Jude. It is known only that at the end of the reign of Domitian[4], two grandsons of Jude, who worked the land with their own hands, were brought before this emperor on the denunciation of heretics, as descendants of David and kinsmen of the Lord; but when the emperor became convinced that they presented no political danger to him, they were released.

The Apostle Jude, like the other "brethren of the Lord" according to the flesh, undertook many labors of preaching, spreading the Gospel of Christ. Soon after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, the Apostle Jude, like all the Apostles of Christ in general, set out to preach the Gospel. According to the testimony of the church historian Nicephorus[5], "the Divine Jude, not Iscariot, but another, who had the twofold name Thaddeus and Lebbaeus, son of Joseph, brother of James, who was thrown down from the roof of the Temple at Jerusalem, preached the Gospel and spread Christianity first in Judea, Galilee, Samaria, and Idumea, then in Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and finally came to the city of Edessa, which belonged to King Abgar[6], where another Thaddeus, one of the seventy Apostles, had earlier preached the Gospel. Here the Apostle Jude completed and corrected what had not been finished by that Thaddeus"[7].

There is a report that the Holy Apostle Jude also preached Christianity in Persia, whence he wrote his catholic epistle in the Greek language. The impetus or occasion for writing this epistle was the circumstance that ungodly men had crept into the community of believers, who turned the grace of God into an occasion for lawlessness and, under the guise of Christian freedom, permitted themselves all manner of abominable deeds. This short epistle contains many profound thoughts

4. The Roman emperor Domitian reigned from 81 to 96 A.D.
5. Nicephorus Callistus, a Greek historian of the 14th century, who left us a "Church History."
6. To this Abgar, according to tradition, Jesus Christ sent His image not made by hands. Edessa is a city in Mesopotamia.
7. The memory of this holy Apostle Thaddeus is August 21, and also January 4.

and edifying teaching. It contains partly doctrinal teaching: on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, on the incarnation of Jesus Christ, on the difference between good and evil Angels, and on the future Last Judgment; and partly moral teaching: an exhortation to avoid sinful impurity of the flesh, blasphemy, pride, disobedience, envy, hatred, deceit, and guile. The Apostle advises everyone to be steadfast in his duty, in faith, in prayer, and in love, and to take care for the conversion of those who have gone astray, and to keep himself from heretics, whose soul-destroying ways he has portrayed clearly, declaring that those heretics will perish, like the inhabitants of Sodom (Jude 1:7).

Besides this, in his epistle the Holy Apostle Jude says that it is not enough for salvation merely to be converted from paganism to Christianity, but that one must, along with faith, do good works befitting Christianity and worthy of salvation, and he cites as examples the Angels and men punished by God. God bound the Angels with everlasting chains in darkness and keeps them for His Last Judgment because they did not keep their dignity (Jude 1:6). The people brought out of Egypt, God destroyed in the wilderness because they fell into debauchery, living not according to the law of God (Jude 1:5). Thus the Apostle Jude, in brief words, reveals to us in his epistle great truths.

The Holy Apostle Jude visited many different lands, preaching the Gospel, converting peoples to the Christian faith, and instructing them on the path of salvation. In such labors he reached the lands of Ararat, and here, turning a multitude of people away from idolatry, he made them Christians. By this the Apostle greatly provoked against himself the priests of the idols: they seized him and, after various tortures, hanged him on a cross and pierced him with arrows. Thus the Holy Apostle Jude completed his struggle and his life, and departed to Christ God, that he might receive from Him the crown of eternal recompense in heaven[8].

Troparion, Tone 1:

Having known thee as the kinsman of Christ, O Jude, and as a steadfast martyr, we piously praise thee, for thou didst trample

down deceit and didst keep the faith. Wherefore, celebrating today thy most holy memory, we receive through thy prayers the forgiveness of sins.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thou didst appear to Paul as his companion, O Apostle, and thus didst proclaim to us the preaching of the divine grace, O blessed Jude, mystery-speaking. Wherefore we cry out to thee: cease not to pray for us all.

Another Kontakion, Tone 2:

With a steadfast mind thou didst appear as a chosen disciple and a pillar invincible of the Church of Christ. With thy tongue thou didst preach the word of Christ, teaching belief in the one Godhead; wherefore thou wast glorified and didst receive the gift of healing, to cure the infirmities of those who come to thee, O Apostle Jude, all-praised.

* * *

Life of Our Venerable Father Paisius the Great

Житие преподобного отца нашего Паисия Великого

The vain delusion of this world, which is corruptible and passing, attracts to itself people who thirst for it, and causes them, for the sake of insignificant earthly joy, to err in their intentions and feelings and to cleave with their minds to lowly passions, and to such a degree that these lovers of the world sometimes begin not only to despise the heavenly life promised to them, but also—alas!—turn away from the very Creator of true life and strive more after temporal and earthly

8. St. Apostle Jude died around 80 A.D. According to the Menologion of Emperor Basil, the Apostle Jude was in Mesopotamia, in Edessa, where he healed Abgar, and afterwards in the city of Arat was pierced with an arrow on the cross; according to the Slavonic Prologue, the Apostle Jude suffered on the island of Arad. There is a city and island of Arad, but in Phoenicia, not in Mesopotamia. According to Armenian tradition, the Apostle Jude arrived in Armenia around the year 60 and met here the Apostle Bartholomew in the city of Artashat on the Araxes; he enlightened many, and was nailed to the cross in 72 A.D. in Ormia in Greater Armenia, now Urmia. In that case Arat should be sought near the Ararat mountains. (Menologion of Archimandrite Sergius, vol. 2, note under June 19.)

goods than after the future ones, voluntarily preparing for themselves a cruel and endless death. Likewise, the eternal treasure in heaven arouses an immeasurable longing for itself in people who hope to attain it, and fills their hearts with a certain divine and ineffable sweetness. The heavenly Kingdom promised to us causes such people to recall the eternal blessedness, the recompense for labors, and the bright triumph of the ascetics; the thought of this so moves them to strive for the attainment of this Kingdom that they not only begin to despise everything temporal and vain, but even spare not their lives, desiring, for Christ's sake, according to the Gospel word (Mt. 10:39), to lay down their souls for Him, and they prefer death for Him to all earthly joys and pleasures. In those cases when, owing to the cessation of persecutions, the champions of piety did not obtain a martyr's death, they desired to endure it in another way: they undertook a long, but for them necessary, ascetic labor of mortifying their flesh, and in this, of course, they bore constant ailments; by fasting daily and mortifying themselves with manifold labors, they contended with invisible demons, and while still in the flesh they unceasingly compelled themselves to resist these incorporeal enemies.

Among such glorious and God-pleasing men there was a certain man, of whom I [9] now wish to tell, having recounted his birth, his youth, and his wondrous life: the name of that man was Paisius. Let everyone believe me as he hears of him things most glorious and above nature, and let no one think that I, for the sake of honor, add anything to the narrative about this holy father: he is far above all human glory, and, being praised in the heavenly dwellings by the holy Angels, he does not require praise from us, who are earthly and sinful. But I shall speak of him for the benefit of those who listen and who desire to emulate his virtues. And I shall relate what I have seen and heard with my own eyes and ears.

Thus I shall begin the account of the most praiseworthy and instructive life of the Venerable one from his very infancy.

9. That is, the writer of this Life, John Kolobos, called Kolobos, that is, of small stature, labored in Egypt. He died around 430 in a desert cell near the city of Kolzum (now Suez). His memory is November 9.

This glorious and blessed man was born and lived in Egypt, where once was also born the great prophet and God-seer Moses, who, as Holy Scripture relates to us, was greatly exalted by his nearness to God and by his great wonders. But Egypt was no less glorified a second time through the life of the Venerable Paisius, who was born in it and enriched it with his honorable name and with many virtues.

The parents of the blessed Paisius were truly believing people who feared the Lord. They spent their lives blamelessly in the fulfillment of the commandments of God, and they strove by every kind of good deed to please the Lord alone.

They had seven children, and they raised them all in good obedience, taking care that they should in everything imitate them, their parents.

The parents of the Venerable Father had abundance in everything and distributed alms to all who were in need. Their hands were always stretched out in giving, and what they gave to the poor was returned to them abundantly from the Divine gifts.

But since no man can be exempt from death, the father of the Venerable Father also reposed from this life, leaving to his honorable wife the care of the children; of these the youngest in years was the lad Paisius, and because of him the mother had to bear especially much sorrow.

One night, when the mother of the lad was already asleep, she had such a vision: an Angel of the Lord appeared and said:

"God, the Father of orphans, has sent me to you to ask why you grieve so much over your children and are constantly in such great care for them? Are you alone concerned for them, and God does not even think of them? Therefore, from now on, set aside your sorrow and dedicate to the Most High God one of your sons; through him the most holy and most praised name of the Lord shall be glorified."

The mother of the Venerable Father answered the Angel:

"All my sons belong to the Lord, and if any one of them is pleasing to Him, let Him take him to Himself."

Then the Angel, taking Paisius by the hand, said:

"This one is pleasing to God."

"Take rather one of the elder ones," said the old woman then.

But the Angel answered her:

"O good woman! Do you not know that the power of God is usually made manifest in the weak? Therefore this youngest one has been chosen by God, and he will be well-pleasing to Him."

Having said this, the Angel vanished.

The mother of the Venerable Father, awaking from sleep, marveled at such a Divine vision and gave thanks to the Lord thus:

"Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, and upon Thy servant Paisius!"

Then, after a fairly lengthy prayer, she led her son to the church to have him admitted to the clergy. The blessed lad Paisius, being counted worthy to enter the clergy, began to become like virtuous men, and, growing in years and understanding, he grew at the same time in the grace of God: day by day his heart was kindled with ever greater love for God, and he himself burned with impatience to attain as soon as possible the tonsure of the monastic state; and when this time came, and he could be worthy of ordination and begin in the monastic rank a more perfect life, he, like a blameless lamb, instructed by the grace of God, went to the skete desert, and there, for spiritual guidance, he desired to settle under the shepherd of the rational sheep, the blessed Pambo [10]; this father received him with love and joy and clothed him in the holy monastic habit. The blessed Pambo was endowed with the gift of foresight: by revelation from above he knew all that was to happen to Paisius, and therefore he regarded him as a chosen vessel of the grace of God, which would guide him to every good work.

First of all, the blessed Paisius zealously fulfilled obedience, submitting without contradiction to his father and fulfilling his will in everything, and at the same time he always led the most austere way of life, and as by steps he ascended in his heart ever more to perfection in the virtues. Our Venerable Father Pambo, seeing that he had given himself wholly to fasting, and wishing to encourage him to still greater ascetic labor, once said to him:

"Child Paisius, a novice monk must carefully guard all his senses from stumbling and temptations, and especially must he keep his eyes

from every curious glance; he must not look anyone in the face, but constantly turn his eyes downward, while with his mind he looks upward and with the inner eyes contemplates the ineffable goodness of God, glorifying and singing praises to the almighty Lord."

And so the blessed Paisius, instructed by such edifying conversations, kindled with still greater love for God, resolved to carry out all that had been said to him exactly; and indeed, for three whole years he diligently kept the commandment not to look at other people's faces, and with diligence devoted himself to reading the Divine books, constantly attending to the word of God and its instructions, always watering his soul as with waters; and he was, according to the word of David, like a garden planted beside a spring of waters, growing, flourishing, and bearing sweet fruit in its season, for the psalmist's words to God were dear to him: "How sweet are Thy words to my throat! sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Ps. 118:103); following the apostolic exhortation, praying without ceasing, and by fasting and vigil afflicting his body, he enslaved it to the spirit, and in the depths of his heart, as a treasure, he kept all his virtues.

The Venerable Elder Pambo, seeing him prospering, rejoiced at such a virtuous life in God: watching over him as a father, he guided him to further labors; and piously instructing him in every pleasing work and knowledge, he soon made him the most skillful of monks.

When the time came for the departure of Saint Pambo to the heavenly inheritance, to which he so longed to go, this venerable father, having blessed the blessed Paisius and uttered much prophetic speech about him, passed over to eternal blessed life, that he might receive there the ineffable good things he had long awaited.

"I, the humble John" (says the writer of this life), "remained with the Holy Paisius: alike in everything, we spent our life together; living apart from all and fulfilling one and the same rule both in prayers and in life, as we had received it from our father, we supported one another, caring only for the salvation of our souls. But after a little time, the

10. His memory is January 16.

blessed Paisius desired a higher labor and life, and therefore we had to part."

Kindling in spirit ever more toward a severer asceticism, he did not touch food for a whole week, and on Saturday and on the Lord's day he ate only bread with salt and water; on the other days, instead of bodily bread, he fed on spiritual bread. He often read the prophetic book of the God-speaking Jeremiah, and many times this holy prophet, appearing to him, explained the mysteries in the prophecy that were incomprehensible to him, and by hidden thoughts stirred his mind toward attaining the promised good things. But pressing ever forward toward a still severer way of life, Paisius abandoned the initial labor of his fasting and chose a new one: now he began to fast for two whole weeks, and only after they had passed did he eat, as has been said, a little bread with salt and water, as much as was needed. And of this his fasting and angel-like life no one knew, but God alone, who knows all human secrets, for Whom even what is not yet revealed is open; moreover, he desired to take upon himself also the labor of silence, that in solitude he might offer prayer to Christ, the one Lord, draw nearer to Him still more, and be enlightened by His light.

"Having learned of this desire of his," continues John Kolov, "I understood with heavy grief that we must part from one another. But I, wishing to know whether his intention was from God or from ordinary human self-will, said to him:

'Brother Paisius, I see that you wish to take upon yourself the labor of a silent life; believe me sincerely that I have the same thought, but I doubt, not being certain whether this thought is from God or not; therefore let us pray to the bountiful God, that our Lord Himself may by His will arrange our life, and that He may reveal to us whether we are to remain together or to be parted from one another.'

Paisius answered me:

'You speak well, beloved; let us do what you have said.'

So, rising to prayer, we prayed diligently to the Lord all night. And the merciful Lord, not wishing to despise our prayer, sent to us with tidings His holy Angel, who, appearing to us in the morning, said:

The Lord divides you in your lives. Therefore you, John, remain here and be a guide to salvation for other people; and you, Paisius, servant of Christ, go from here to the western side of the desert, for the Lord has said that a great assembly of monastics will gather to you, and by His command a monastery will be founded there, and through you His name will be glorified.

Having said this, the Angel departed. We (says John) bowed in thanksgiving to the Lord and, by His command, went our separate ways: I remained in my former place, while the blessed Paisius went on to the western part of the desert. There he hewed out a cave in the mountain and settled in it, and here, by perfect purity and manifold ascetic labors, he drew so near to God that Christ Himself appeared to him, instructed him and guided him toward virtue, as will be told in its place concerning all of this.

Once, when Paisius was sitting in his cave and chanting divine songs, the Savior appeared to him and said:

"Peace be to thee, My beloved servant!"

Overcome with fear and trembling, he rose and said:

"O Christ, Lover of mankind, Savior, I am Thy servant. Why, O Lord, dost Thou show me so great a mercy that Thou hast now deigned to descend to my unworthiness?"

To this the Lord answered him:

"Dost thou see this desert, how great and broad it is? For thy sake I will fill it with ascetics who will glorify My name."

Then the chosen servant of God, Paisius, fell to the ground and said:

"O Lord, Master! All things obey Thy mighty hand, and what Thou willest, that is accomplished. I beseech Thy goodness: grant me to understand whence all that is needful and necessary will come for those who will labor in this desert?"

The Lord answered:

"Believe Me, who tell thee the truth: if I see in them love, the mother of all virtues, and if they keep all My commandments, let them be concerned about nothing; I Myself will care for them."

Then Paisius asked the Lord again:

"Once more I ask Thy goodness: how will they pass unhindered through the nets of the enemy, and escape the fierce temptations of the demons?"

The Lord answered:

"If they keep My commandments, as I have told thee, with meekness, righteousness and a humble heart, I will not only make them superior to all the battles of the enemy and his crafty snares, but will also give them the Kingdom of Heaven as an inheritance."

Having said this, the Savior ascended into heaven in glory.

The holy Paisius, however, being still more filled in his heart with the fear of God, unceasingly pondered the descent of the Savior from heaven to him.

But the father of envy and hater of mankind, the devil, seeing that Paisius, skillfully avoiding all his deceitful nets, was invulnerable to his schemes and remained above all his slanders, flared up against him with still greater malice; but being unable to approach him in view of the divine power given to him by God, he began to devise other stratagems, so as to finally ensnare the servant of Christ in his nets. Thinking to capture him with the golden hook of covetousness, the devil undertook, by means of almsgiving, to entrap the servant of God in the net of avarice, so that, once he had fallen away from non-possession, it would be easier for the fierce spirits of malice to attack him.

And so the deceitful enemy of the human race went to a certain Egyptian prince, a God-fearing man possessed of great wealth; he appeared to him in the form of an Angel and said:

"Beloved, arise and go into the desert; there thou wilt find a man named Paisius, a man utterly poor, but greatly adorned with virtues, a vessel chosen by the grace of God. Meeting him, give this elder gold without stint, so that he may have the means to supply the lack of the other desert-dwellers as well."

The prince, not discerning the demonic deception but thinking that this was truly an Angel, took part of his gold and silver and much else that was necessary for the monks, and set out for the saint. But the divine power dwelling in Paisius revealed to him these snares of the devil, who wished, under the guise of princely alms, to ensnare the saint with

covetousness. The divine man Paisius at once rose and went out to meet the prince.

When the saint met him, the prince asked him about the desert-dweller Paisius: who he was and where he lived. Paisius, in his turn, asked the prince:

"Why dost thou seek Paisius? What need hast thou of him?"

The prince answered:

"I have come to share with him gold, silver and everything necessary for life, so that he may distribute all this to the monks."

Then the saint, answering the prince, said:

"O lover of Christ! Know that gold and silver are not needed by those who desire to live in this desert, and none of those who have settled here will wish to take anything from thy estate. Therefore return home without grief, and God will accept thy good intention. But if thou wishest to distribute what thou hast brought to the needy, then in the cities of Egypt there are many people in want: the poor, the destitute, the orphaned and the widowed. Care for them, and thou shalt receive a great reward from God!"

The prince, believing the saint's words, returned and did as he had taught him: he gave his estate to the beggars, the poor and the needy.

When the venerable Paisius was entering his cave, the devil appeared to him and said:

"O Paisius! What am I now to do with thee? For thou art thwarting all my crafty designs. I will now go wage battle against others instead, and I will never return to thee, for I have been defeated by thee."

After this the blessed man adjured the unclean spirit by the power of Christ and drove him away from himself, and the devil withdrew in shame, no longer daring to approach the saint so boldly.

Soon the venerable one went into the inner part of the desert, but while remaining there in body, in spirit he stood before the Lord of all together with the heavenly powers. Here, becoming like the bodiless ones, he gave himself to a still stricter life, and for this he was granted, while still on earth, to become a beholder of heavenly mysteries, for the Holy Spirit dwelling in him was pleased to reveal to him the everlasting triumph of the righteous in heaven.

Once, standing in prayer, Paisius felt that, as if borne aloft on wings, he was already in heaven. First of all he saw the beautiful dwellings of paradise, filled with ineffable light and joy; he also saw the Church of the firstborn who triumph forever, and having been granted here to partake of the non-material food of the Divine Mysteries, he received the gift of extreme abstinence and fasting. Partaking of the Mysteries once in a week, namely on the Sunday of the Lord's Resurrection, he remained completely without food until the next Sunday: thus by the power of God's grace his nature was enriched by the Creator.

"Let everyone among the faithful believe me" (says the writer of his life), "for I have the word of God as a faithful witness. Does it not also say that all things obey God's command? And since it is true, let everyone regard as true what I relate. After partaking of the divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, the venerable Paisius at times remained without bodily food for seventy days; and there is nothing surprising in this, for divine grace has an ineffable power, and so it could sustain his life in him better than sustenance by perishable food. For according to the fleshly nature of those who live, the body, in order not to grow weak, requires food to strengthen it; but those who, like the bodiless, have advanced in a life above nature, to them the creative power abundantly grants this grace, to which human nature submits, and they live no longer so much by bodily food as by spiritual. The almighty Creator, our God, knows how to preserve life on earth for the seven sleeping youths for more than three hundred years, and indeed He preserves in the heavenly dwellings the life of Elijah until the last day. But of this enough: let us speak of the blessed Paisius."

To this venerable father there flocked not only monks but also laymen who desired to live near him; settling around him like a swarm of bees, all of them ardently longed to be satisfied with the sweetness of his spiritual honey. He, drawing grace from the ever-flowing divine source, sweeter than any sensible honey or honeycomb, poured out this spiritual drink, full of ineffable sweetness; so that daily the number of brethren gathering and multiplying around him greatly increased. All of them, having rejected the worldly allurements of this age, took upon their shoulders the yoke of Christ, as the Gospel commands. Among

these brethren, the venerable father set some apart for the labor of silence, that they might converse alone with God in warm prayer; others he bade serve the Lord together with the rest and abide in harmony with the brethren in obediences, bearing the common labor; and a third group he left to learn handicrafts, so that they might not only feed themselves by the work of their hands but also feed the hungry and the poor, and with love give rest to the other needy brethren and strangers. The chief precept he gave was this: let no one do anything of his own will, but everything by the command and judgment of experienced elders. Such was the rule the venerable father gave to the brethren gathering to him, and such was his teaching. As for the silent life of the venerable father himself, it is impossible to describe it in detail; but of much let there be said at least a little.

After some time, the Venerable Father, seeing that his silent life was constantly disturbed by brethren who came to him, grew weary of this, for he himself desired to observe strictly the ascetic labor of silence. He therefore resolved to leave the cave where he had formerly lived, and with it the care of his brethren. And so, secretly from everyone, he departed from there and went into the more remote parts of the desert; there in one place he found a cave, settled in it, and remained there three years. During this time the hair of his head grew greatly and was so long that, binding it with some skill to a stake that had been fixed at the top of the cave, he was able, without falling asleep for a single moment, to perform all his all-night prayers. Thus both by night and by day he gave himself no rest, wholly given over to labor, and only in it did he find rest, for the sake of the love of God with which he was always embraced. Therefore the Lord also loved him, and the Venerable Father more than once was granted a divine appearance and the sight of Christ, as our Savior Himself said in the Holy Gospel: "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (Jn. 14:21).

Once, when the Venerable Paisius was kindled with a particularly ardent love for God, and his whole mind was absorbed in the Lord through God-pondering prayer, the Savior Christ appeared to him as before. Paisius, being unable to gaze upon the most bright glory of the

most holy face of the Savior, fell to the ground seized with fear and trembling. But the Lover of Mankind, the Lord, stretched out His hand to him and (O, ineffable love of Thine, Christ the King, for Thy saints!), raising Paisius from the ground, said to him:

"Peace be unto thee, My servant; fear not, and let not thy heart tremble; for My goodness is greatly delighted in thy deeds, and thy labor is very well pleasing to Me. Rejoice, then, and receive a worthy reward for this: behold, I give thee such a gift: whatever thou shalt ask of My Father in My name, it shall be given thee."

The holy Paisius, seeing such great goodness of the Lord, taking up a certain boldness, said:

"O Christ God, Lover of Mankind! If by Thine unsearchable goodness Thou dost vouchsafe such grace to me, unworthy and wretched, I humbly beseech Thee, Thyself instruct and teach me for whom and for what needs I ought to pray, for I see all my sins before Thee, and for my shortcomings I always beseech Thy mercy: forgive and cover with Thy compassion the multitude of my sins, and grant me to spend the remaining time of my life without sin, that, fearlessly entering upon the path of salvation, with Thy help and guidance I may unstumblingly attain a blessed life; for who can do anything good without Thy help and instruction, and obtain mercy from Thee? And what good deeds of ours, what labor and ascetic struggle, are worthy of such great mercy of Thine, even if we were to accept death for Thee, as we ought to lay down our souls for Thee, our Creator and Redeemer, who in great mercy hast loved us sinners? For if Thou, the immortal God, for us mortal men, shedding Thy most holy blood, didst endure the cross, death and the tomb, in order that by Thy resurrection Thou mightest grant us resurrection as well, what death ought we to endure for Thee, our Savior?"

While the holy Paisius, with great heartfelt tenderness, was speaking thus to the Savior, the Lord blessed him and, withdrawing from him, ascended into heaven in glory. Paisius bowed down to his Lord, praising and thanking Him for His gracious condescension toward him.

Our following account (continues the writer of this life) has as its aim to show the great zeal of this Venerable Father for the holy faith; this zeal once manifested itself in the following way.

In one of the Egyptian villages there lived a certain elder; by his life he was a very virtuous man, but he was wholly ignorant of the Holy Scripture, and so, through ignorance, he fell into such a heresy: concerning the Holy Trinity he spoke not as of a Trinity but as of a duality; that is, he confessed the Father and the Son, but about the Holy Spirit he kept silent, saying that He is not God. And believing thus falsely himself, he also taught others this his perverse belief; many of the common people followed his blasphemous reasoning and teaching, seeing his virtuous life in God. But Christ God, who prepares salvation for all, not wishing that the labors of the elder and his ascetic exploits should be in vain, revealed to the blessed Paisius the village and the place where this holy elder lived. Paisius at once set about preparing for the journey with haste: he made with his own hands a great number of baskets, and at the same time fixed to each of them three little handles, and went with them to that elder, presenting himself as a wanderer and a seller of his handiwork. And many of the monks who were with the elder, holding to his false teaching and wrong faith, seeing the wanderer and his baskets, and not knowing that this was Paisius, began to ask who he was and whence he came. He answered that he had come from the desert to sell his handiwork. They also asked him about the baskets, why they were made with three handles? And the holy Paisius always answered them thus:

"Since I am a servant of the Most Holy Trinity and am fervently inflamed with love for Her, therefore I have made my baskets in the image of the Holy Trinity with three handles, so that I may not only believe in my heart and confess with my lips, but also through my handiwork, which prefigures the threefold nature of the Divine Persons, glorify the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For one handle is made in the image of God the Father, another in the image of God the Son, the third in the image of God the Holy Spirit; and just as each basket has three handles yet is itself one, so in the Holy Trinity there are three Persons, but one God."

While the holy Paisius was setting forth in brief words this mystery of the Holy Trinity, those men, together with their ascetic teacher, were ashamed, and, prepared to listen to him, said:

"O wondrous man, tell us still more clearly about the true faith, and instruct us further with your discourses; you have already astonished us greatly by what you have said."

And the divine Paisius, filled with the Holy Spirit, as an experienced teacher began prudently and God-wisely to expose the heretical error and its soul-destroying harm, and zealously to teach them the holy, orthodox and soul-saving faith and to lead them onto the true path. For a long time the Venerable Paisius conversed with them from the Divine Scripture and the God-inspired books, taught them to believe in the Holy Trinity and to confess this truth piously, and turned that elder and all who were with him to repentance for their former error; and having thus enlightened them, he went back to his desert, singing prayers of thanksgiving to the Lord. As he drew near the desert, suddenly a great light shone before his eyes, and looking around he saw the whole desert filled with hosts of Angels; amazed, he wondered what this might be, and asked the Lord to reveal to him what all that he saw meant. And at once the holy Angel who accompanied him said:

"God has shown you all this, so that you may know that both with you and without you, the Angels, by His command, guard the monks who dwell in this desert, as the Lord Himself promised you."

And Paisius, giving thanks for this to God, the Provider of all, went on to his cell.

The following account will set forth the prophetic gift of the holy Paisius, namely, with what foresight this servant of God was endowed.

The fame of the divine and holy Paisius spread everywhere, and many virtuous people invited him to make his acquaintance and converse with him; so too the blessed Pimen, though still very young at that time, was kindled with a desire to see the holy Paisius. He went to the Venerable Paul and began to beg him to go with him to the great Paisius, for Paul used often to visit the holy Paisius. But to this request he said to Pimen:

"You are still very young, and I am ashamed to take you to this holy man; for he is a great servant of God and loves silence, and we do not come to him casually, but with discretion, and even then not always, but only at a fitting time, for the sake of the soul's benefit."

Pimen answered him:

"But I, Father, when I come with you, will stand outside the cell, and you alone will go in to the saint; it will be a great consolation for me even if I only hear his voice conversing with you; but if I am not even granted to hear his voice, still I will at least touch his cell, and when you come out from him I will touch also your venerable feet which entered within the cell, and I will take up the dust of the earth on which the holy feet of the servant of God trod, and this will be a great joy for me."

The blessed Paul, seeing that Pimen spoke all this with great humility and good faith, took him with him and went to the great Paisius; coming to the saint's cell, Paul alone went in, and Pimen remained outside it.

Receiving Paul with love, as a father, the holy Paisius asked him also about the young Pimen, whom he had not yet seen with bodily eyes, but whom he had already, with spiritual sight, beheld from afar; and he said to Paul:

"Where is your companion, the young man?"

Paul answered:

"He, Father, remained outside the cell, for he fears and is ashamed to come in to you!"

Then the saint, bidding Pimen come in, said:

It is not good to forbid visits to us from those for whom the Savior made the ascent even to heaven easy; and to men too He said in the holy Gospel: "Unless you turn and become as children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:3).

Having said this, St. Paisius took the youth, turned him to face himself, and blessed him; and to Paul he said:

"Believe me, beloved Paul, that this lad will save the souls of many people, and through him many will be granted to dwell in the paradise

of God, for the hand of the Lord is with him, guarding him and guiding him in the divine way."

Having said this, St. Paisius laid his hands on the head of Pimen and blessed him again; and after a fairly lengthy conversation about the salvation of the soul, he dismissed them in peace. He himself, keeping silence, continued to labor in his customary ascetic exploits of fasting.

It is, however, now time to relate also the glorious miracles of the Venerable Paisius.

In the lands of Syria there lived a certain great ascetic, a man adorned with very many virtues. Once, when this monk was standing in prayer, he asked himself involuntarily: to which of those who pleased God was he like? No sooner had he thought this than a heavenly voice was heard from on high:

"Go into the land of Egypt, and there you will find a man named Paisius, who has the same humility of wisdom and the same love for God as you have."

Hearing this, the honorable elder at once set about making ready for the journey with haste, and, paying no heed either to the long road or to the heavy labor, he went straight from Syria into Egypt. Arriving at the Mountain of Nitria[11], he asked where Paisius was. Since the name of Paisius was already known everywhere, he was at once shown the place of his dwelling. Paisius, too, was not unaware of the elder's coming, but it had been revealed to him by the grace of God; so he rose and went out to meet the elder. They met in the desert, embraced each other lovingly, and kissed with the holy kiss in the Lord. Then, coming into the cell of Paisius and offering a prayer, they sat down and began to converse.

The elder was the first to speak to St. Paisius; he spoke through an interpreter in the Syriac tongue, for he did not know how to speak Egyptian. Paisius, being an Egyptian, grieved greatly that he did not know the Syriac language, since he did not wish to let pass a single useful word of the elder. And so, raising his eyes to heaven and directing his mind to God, he sighed from the depths of his heart and said:

11. In the northern part of Egypt, in the Nile delta.

"Son, Word of God, grant me, Thy servant, to understand the power of the words of this holy elder!"

And no sooner had he said this than—O how always near to us is the help of God!—he at once began to understand the Syriac discourse of the elder, and, enlightened by the Divine Spirit, he began to speak with him in Syriac too. And the two of them delighted in God-inspired conversation without an interpreter, telling one another of their ascetic labors, which God had enjoined upon them, and of what gifts of God each of them had been granted.

Thus they remained together for six days, feasting on spiritual sweetness and rejoicing in God, their Savior. When their soul-profiting conversations were ended, and the elder was about to go home, St. Paisius called all his disciples who were then with him and said to them:

"O beloved children, this venerable man, being perfect in the virtues, is filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Come, therefore, all of you, that you may be granted his blessing, and receive his prayers as a protection for you against all the assaults of the enemy."

After Paisius had said this, all his disciples offered the Syrian elder the reverence due to him and received his blessing. Then, having prayed to the Lord for the disciples of Paisius and exchanged with him a loving kiss in Christ, and having taken leave of all the brethren, this elder, accompanied by Paisius and his disciples, set off for his own country.

Some time after the elder's departure, a certain brother, who lived apart from the others, came to St. Paisius. The saint's disciples said to him:

"Beloved, there was here with us, from the land of Syria, a man of God, a great elder among the fathers; he is enlightened both in mind and in heart, and he greatly strengthened us by his soul-profiting conversations. He has only just gone home, and if you wish to see him, you can, for he has not yet gone far and is now somewhere near us. So do try to overtake him, that you may be granted his blessing."

That brother resolved at once to follow the elder. But St. Paisius said to him:

"Do not go, for the venerable elder has already traveled more than eighty stages of the road, for the clouds are carrying him."

After the saint said this, all were amazed and glorified the Lord, who is wondrous in His saints.

Once a brother came to the Venerable Paisius, wishing to see him, and found him asleep; and at his head he saw standing a Guardian Angel, very beautiful in appearance. Marveling, he said: "Truly God keeps those who love Him!" The brother did not dare to approach the sleeping father, since he feared the presence of the Angel; and, giving thanks to God, he went away, having received great benefit from being granted to see God's Angel in the presence of the venerable one.

One of the disciples of St. Paisius, obeying his command, set out for Egypt to sell his handiwork. On the way he chanced to meet a certain Jew who was also going to Egypt, and he went along with him. On the road the Jew, seeing his simplicity, began to pour out from his wicked tongue the poison that he had in his heart from the soul-destroying serpent, and among other things said to the monk:

"Beloved, why do you believe so in a simple Man who was crucified, when He was not at all the expected Messiah? Another must come, but not He."

After the Jew had spoken to him many other crafty and soul-harming words, the monk, through his weakness of mind and simplicity of heart, was seduced by the Jew: he listened to his words as though they were truth, and even once said:

"Perhaps what you say is true."

O seduction and unexpected calamity! For this monk (woe is me) at once lost the grace of baptism, as will be told below.

When he returned to the desert and came to the Venerable Paisius, the elder became as it were unapproachable to him: he not only did not wish to look at his disciple, but turned away from him everywhere and did not answer him a single word. For a long time the father thus avoided his disciple, and the latter grieved greatly over this and was sick at heart, not knowing of any fault or transgression on his part before St. Paisius. At last, finding a suitable time, the monk came to the venerable one and, falling at his feet, said:

"Why, Father, do you turn your honorable face away from me and despise me, your wretched disciple? And what you never before had the habit of doing, that you now show toward me, turning away from me as though from some abominable man."

The elder answered him:

"Who are you, man? I do not know you."

The monk replied:

"Father, what have you seen in me that is strange, that you do not recognize me? Am I not your disciple?" And at this he gave his name.

But the elder said to him:

"That disciple of mine was a Christian and had upon him the grace of baptism, but you are not such; yet if you are indeed that disciple of mine, then truly the grace of baptism has departed from you, and the image of a Christian has been taken away. So tell me, what has happened to you? Relate the temptation that befell you, and what soul-destroying poison you took in on your way."

"Forgive me, Father," the monk said in reply, "I did nothing."

But the saint said:

“Go farther away from me, together with all who have renounced the Lord; I do not wish to converse with you. For if you were my disciple as you were before, I would see you as you were before.”

Then the monk, sighing, began to shed tender tears, saying:

"I am that disciple of yours, and no one else, and I do not know what evil I have done."

The great Paisius then asked him:

"With whom did you converse on the way?"

"With a Jew," the monk answered, "and with no one else."

Then the saint said to him:

"What did the Jew say to you, and what did you answer him?"

The saint's disciple said in reply:

"The Jew said nothing else to me except that Christ, whom you worship, is not the true Christ, and that the Savior has yet to come into the world. And I said to him: perhaps what you say is true."

Then the elder cried out:

"O wretched man! What could be worse and more foul than this word, by which you have renounced Christ and His divine baptism? Now go and lament yourself as you wish, for there is no place for you with me; your name is written among those who have renounced Christ, and with them you will receive judgment and torments."

After these words of the elder, his disciple, sighing and weeping, raised his eyes to heaven and, with supplication, cried out to the venerable one:

"Father, have mercy on me, wretched as I am, and give peace to my soul! Having through carelessness lost the divine enlightenment and become a source of joy and delight to the wicked demons, I do not know what to do now. But I take refuge in God and in your holy prayers. Do not despise me, wretched as I am, and entreat the Lord Christ on my behalf, that He may restore to me His mercy once more!"

As he prayed thus, seeking to move the elder more by tears than by words, the saint was softened as he looked upon him, and said to him:

"Be patient, child; we must now beseech the mercies of the loving-kindness of God on your behalf."

Having said this, the Venerable one shut himself in for prayer and began to beseech the Lord to forgive his disciple the sin he had committed against Him through carelessness and guileless inattention. And the Lord, who never despises but always fulfils the prayers of His servant, inclined Himself to mercy and forgave the transgressor; and the sign of this forgiveness was the following vision: the Venerable one beheld the grace of the Holy Spirit returning in the form of a dove to that disciple and entering into his mouth; and at the same time he saw the evil spirit departing from the sinning monk in the form of dark smoke, which spread out into the air.

Seeing this, the Venerable one believed that the Lord had granted forgiveness to that brother, and turning to him, he said:

"O child, render together with me glory and thanksgiving to Christ God, for the unclean, blasphemous spirit has gone out of you, and in its place the Holy Spirit has entered you, restoring to you the grace of baptism. Therefore keep yourself now, lest through sloth and careless-

ness you fall again into the snares of the enemy and, sinning, inherit the fire of Gehenna."

Such was one of the wonders of St. Paisius; but let us continue the narrative with his other glorious deeds.

Once there came to St. Paisius an elder named John; he had spent many years in the desert, training himself in the ascetic labor of fasting. This brother was very hungry and in need of food. The Venerable one, perceiving in spirit that John was greatly famished, said to his disciple:

"Quickly prepare a meal and bring food, that we may be refreshed together with Father John."

When the meal had been prepared, the Venerable Paisius offered John to partake of it, saying:

"Because of your long abstinence, you now need food; therefore eat and be strengthened."

John said to him in reply:

"Forgive me, father; it is now a fast, and because of my many sins it is fitting for me to fast."

Then the elder, marveling at John's abstinence, immediately rose, and looking up to heaven, said from the depths of his heart:

"Lord, visit Thy servant John, who labors beyond his strength for Thy name!"

While Paisius prayed thus, by his merits a great and most glorious illumination was sent down from God upon the one for whom he offered this prayer; and behold, John, as though he were in ecstasy, saw a certain beautiful youth holding food and drink in his hands and offering them to him, that he might be strengthened after his hunger. And coming to himself, he was filled with great sweetness, as if he had been completely satisfied by a most rich feast, and no longer needed the food offered by the elder, being already sated with heavenly nourishment; but, giving thanks to God and to His servant St. Paisius, he departed to his desert, and even more intensified his ascetic labor of fasting, constantly saying to himself:

"I have eaten very sweetly; therefore I will fast with zeal."

Thus this blessed John, strengthened by the prayers of St. Paisius, made progress in the ascetic life.

"When at times I sat with the Venerable Paisius," writes the blessed John Kolov, "some monks used to come to him, desiring to hear from him a word profitable for their souls, and they often asked him:

"Tell us, father, about our salvation: how must we live for the Lord?"

The elder answered them:

"Keep the commandments of God and preserve the traditions of the fathers."

And another time the monks asked him:

"Tell us, father, something more for the benefit of our souls."

The divine man, seeing with his discerning eyes their thoughts, told each one what he was thinking, and at the same time related to them which of their thoughts were good and which were wicked, and from what these thoughts had come into their hearts.

These monks, greatly marveling at the elder's discernment, said to me (John Kolov relates) privately:

"Truly, Father John, Abba Paisius has disclosed to us all the secrets of our hearts, and what was known to God alone, he has clearly seen within us."

I answered them:

"Many times we too have come to know by experience this his discernment. If you believe me, I will tell you the truth, for I intend to say nothing of him but what is true; for we fear the true Judge, who says in the Holy Gospel: 'By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned' (Mt. 12:37). 'I tell you, that for every careless word that men speak, they will render an account on the day of judgment' (Mt. 12:36). Therefore I speak to you a word that is not false and not idle: all that I often thought within myself, and what I secretly did apart from others, Father Paisius, meeting me when I came to him, told me all of it, as if he had been in the cell with me and had seen everything I was doing."

When the monks heard this from me, they marveled and said:

"He gives strength and power to His people" (Ps. 67:36).

And after this they departed, glorifying the Lord for that great grace which had been given to His servant, St. Paisius.

Let us also tell how mighty the prayers of the Venerable one were, and how they could bring back to God a great sinner who had fallen away from Him and turn him onto the path of salvation.

A certain brother, named Isaac, following the inclination of his heart, resolved to abandon his hermit's ascetic labor of solitude and settled near a city; and since he often entered that city to sell his handiwork, he very soon fell into a destructive snare: a Jewish woman came up to him to buy something from what he sold; he, looking at her face, noticed her beauty and was at once seized by an impure thought toward her; and that woman too, seeing that he was still a youth, fixed her gaze upon him, and after the conversation that took place between them, they were inflamed toward each other with satanic love. Thus soon, with the cooperation of demons, the monk became entangled in the net of that wicked woman, and having conceived the sickness, he gave birth to lawlessness: abandoning the monastic life, he married her, and, Woe! What is even worse, he, the wretched one, forsook not only the monastic life but also his faith for love of this woman; he passed over to the Jewish faith, and serving their Old Testament law, lived together with the Jews, was their constant companion, and reviled Christ, our Savior, as the Jews revile Him. Isaac in everything followed the will of his vile and unclean wife, who was possessed by such malice toward Christ and such hatred for His most holy name that often, laying the head of her wretched husband upon her breast and opening his mouth, she would pull out his teeth with a small stick, saying: "Let no part of the Christian Communion remain between his teeth" — for that impious woman thought that among Christians the Divine Communion remains long between the teeth; and the husband yielded to her malice and truly became an enemy of Christ our Lord. O impiety! I know, says the writer, that all who hear of this will grieve in their hearts, but I marvel at God's long-suffering, His great love for mankind, and His countless divine grace, which not only loves the righteous but also shows mercy to sinners, and by secret visitation touches their hearts, just as a ray of the sun, passing through a small crevice into a chamber shut up on

every side, lights up the whole of it. Yet let me return again to the interrupted narrative.

That wretched monk, having departed from monasticism and Christianity and falling through his destructive unbelief into the depths of hell, after a considerable length of time since he had fallen into this lawlessness, nevertheless began little by little as it were to come to himself, and, under the stings of conscience, began to recognize all his perdition. At this time some brethren of that desert, where formerly this apostate monk Isaac had performed his ascetic labor, had occasion to go to the city on their business. By God's providence it fell to those monks to pass by the house where he, seduced, lived together with his Jewish wife; seeing them passing by, he at once felt contrition of heart, remembering his former life and the honorable company of holy brethren; going out to them from the house, he began to ask them who they were, whence they came, and why they had come there. They answered him:

"We are from the Nitrian desert[12], disciples of the great Paisius, and we have come here on our own business."

Then he, heaving a deep sigh, told them everything about himself, and earnestly began to beseech them to convey his request to the great elder, that he would pray to the Lord for him, so that through his prayers he might be delivered from the enemy's snare. The monks, grieving for him in their hearts, promised to convey his request to the holy elder, which indeed they did: returning home, they told all this to the blessed father. The elder, hearing them, sighed from the depths of his heart and said:

"Alas for me, beloved children, how often men through women lose divine grace! We have examples of such men in the holy books written by the ancient fathers; for the enemy who wages war against men has no firmer weapon than women; using this instrument, the adversary easily overcame even great men: remember the great David and his

12. The beginning of monasticism in the Nitrian desert was laid by St. Ammon, a contemporary of St. Anthony. In Nitria itself St. Ammon founded a monastery, and Anthony laid the beginning of the arrangement of skete settlements. At the end of the 4th century there were up to 50 monasteries there, arranged according to the rule of St. Pachomius. South of Nitria was the Desert of the Scetes, where many monks dwelt.

grandsons and great-grandsons. This is why we too must always be cautious and always pray to the Lord to be delivered from such treachery."

Having said this, the elder shut himself in his prayer cell, and standing in prayer, cried out to the Lord thus:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Word! Do not despise the work of Thy hands, and do not permit that monk to be cast down to the very depths of perdition, but graciously look down from Thy heavenly dwelling and do not despise the prayers I offer to Thee: receive the supplication for him who has fallen away from Thee and now has returned in repentance; I pray to Thy goodness — call him to repentance."

After the saint had prayed for a fairly long time in this way, and had ceaselessly entreated the mercies of God, the mercy of God was inclined by his supplications, for the Saviour does not despise the prayers of those who love Him. The Lord Himself appeared to the holy elder, and He who knows all asked him:

"For whom do you cry to Me day and night? Is it not for that man who fell away from Me and has now gone over to My enemies, the wretched man who was once a monk and has now become a Jew? Is it not for this man that you pray, My servant Paisius?"

The elder answered the Lord:

"It is for him that I pray to Thy goodness, O Lord who lovest mankind. Looking upon Thy mercies, which call all men to salvation and do not desire the death of the sinner but wait for his conversion, I have, for the sake of these Thy mercies, dared to beseech Thy compassionate heart: call back, O good Shepherd, the straying sheep; call him again into Thy fold, and be merciful to him."

To this prayer the Lord said to him:

"O My servant! Great is your piety, for in imitation of My love you take thought for the salvation of sinners. Therefore do not grieve: what you ask shall be given to you."

Having said this, the Lord ascended into heaven. After a little time that evil Jewish woman, struck by the wrath of God, died. Isaac, however, returned again to the desert and, presenting himself to the Venerable Father, fell at his honourable feet, weeping and confessing his sins;

by his return and repentance he brought great joy to the Venerable Father and to all the fathers of that desert. After the teaching of the great father, this monk again received his former faith and again put on the angelic habit; and he laboured in great struggles, weeping and grieving over his sins; and thus, having lived all his days in repentance, virtuously and pleasingly to God, he departed to the Lord. All this the sinner received through the prayers of the Venerable Paisius: he repented and was saved. As for us, who hear these most glorious deeds, it befits us to glorify and sing of Christ God, who has so exalted His servant.

Among the disciples of the Venerable Paisius there was a certain elder who had altogether worldly habits and manners. When the monks came to the Venerable Father for instruction and heard his God-inspired words, this elder listened with them, but he gained no benefit from it, for he did not have within him a well-tilled and moist soil; his heart was hardened like a stone, and so the good seed of the divine discourses could not take root in him and sprout. At times he even reviled the holy one's words; for, going away from the presence of the Venerable Father, that elder would sometimes allow himself, in the presence of other brethren, to mock the discourses of St. Paisius, speaking only corrupting and blasphemous falsehoods, as worldly and impious people do; and some of the monks were scandalized by the slanders they heard from him. After a rather long time had passed, the brethren, not wishing any longer to hear his corrupting words, yet not daring to tell the holy father of it, went to a certain God-loving and virtuous ascetic, complaining of that ill-natured elder; then this ascetic went with them to the great Paisius.

At the time when the saint was engaged in contemplation alone, an angelic voice was heard:

"Let it be known to you, father, that the elder who dwells with your disciples produces scandals and leads other brethren astray; therefore his unseemly custom must be stopped and he must be corrected by means of the commandments."

To this voice the holy Paisius replied:

"I would have done this long ago, if I had known that I could correct him. But since the devil is ready to destroy him and, appearing, lures him by his cunning into his net, therefore I cannot say anything harsh to him, lest he receive my word with bitterness and count it an insult to himself. For in that case he may leave the company of the brethren and the desert and go back into the world; then I should become the cause of his perdition and be guilty before God, since I could not bear with a brother who is assailed by the enemy. Rather we must pray for him, that the Lord may heal him of such an infirmity."

Having said this, he began to pray for that elder, and at once he saw a blasphemous and shameless spirit coming out of the elder. Afterwards the brethren came to the Father together with that God-loving ascetic; but before they began to tell of the unseemly elder, he too came behind them and, falling at the feet of the holy father, began to wash them with his tears, repenting and asking forgiveness, and promising to amend his life. After this he became meek and obedient: he listened with joy to the God-inspired discourses that came from the lips of the Venerable Father, and strove in every way to put into practice what he received from his teaching. Soon he surpassed many in virtue and became an experienced hermit, and all this by the help and prayers of St. Paisius, who obtained for him from God a great mercy.

But enough of this. We cannot pass over in silence the other most glorious deeds of St. Paisius; therefore let us leave off speaking of these his numerous miracles, for it is impossible to describe in detail all these wondrous deeds. Having already said not a little about them, we shall pass over all the rest in silence.

Once two young brethren came to St. Paisius in the desert, and by the Venerable Father's command they began to live together with those brethren who were already in his monastery; Paisius himself, together with his disciple, lived apart in the desert, far from his monastery.

For a long time those two brethren bore the labour of obedience; at last they came to the elder and began to beg him to allow them to live in the desert alone, as hermits. The Venerable Father, seeing their burning desire for the ascetic struggle of fasting, and perceiving that they were capable of a special desert silence, granted their wish and

blessed them to move from the monastery to a solitary hermit's life. And these two brethren, having found in the desert a place suitable for the silent struggle, settled there and spent their lives pleasingly to God, skilfully overcoming all the temptations of the evil spirits. But the unseen enemy, who always envies all good people and knows how to devise various and manifold stratagems against the servants of Christ, extended his guile also to these two monks, and he planned to beguile them in this way: from one of the desert hermits, who was not yet perfected in monastic non-possession, there was stolen his poor cell-property. This hermit, being still faint-hearted, and therefore grieving over the stolen things, began to seek the thief, but did not find him. Hearing, however, of a certain far-seeing elder, and hoping that he would help him to discover both the stolen goods and the thief, he went to him; he did not dare to go to the Venerable Paisius, fearing that he would reproach him for covetousness.

Coming to that seer, the monk begged him to tell him where the stolen goods were and who had stolen them. But the elder, not being truly enlightened by the grace of God in clairvoyance, but seeing all things by demonic power, at the instigation of the evil demon, slandered those two monks who had recently settled in the desert:

"These monks," said the seer, "have committed the theft. Take those hermits and do not let them go until they give you back everything."

Hearing this, the hermit at once hurried to the lavra of that desert. Coming to the abbot and obtaining a strong guard from him, he went on, and as if by chance fell upon those two silent monks; he seized them as malefactors and, dragging them with blows, brought them to the lavra; there they were shamefully thrown into a dungeon. The abbot, together with the elders, believing that seer, condemned those monks as thieves to deprivation of the monastic rank, and began to torture them with blows about the stolen goods. But the Venerable Paisius, having learned prophetically, by the grace of God, of all that had happened, and pitying those two brethren who at that time were suffering so innocently, rose and set out from his cell to that lavra. His coming was at once known everywhere, for among the desert-dwellers there was no name more glorious than the name of Paisius, who was

everywhere glorified for his God-pleasing life. To greet him there gathered the brethren from the neighbouring monasteries and hermit cells, and even the elders came together to him. Among the rest came also that elder who, by the devil's deception, had passed himself off as a seer. And when all the fathers and brethren were giving the holy one the kiss of love in Christ, our great father Paisius asked them:

"Where have you put the two young monks, the desert-dwellers?"

The brethren were silent. Then some of them answered and said:

"Father, they are thieves, and for their wicked deeds they are now shut up in a dungeon."

The saint said to them in reply:

"Who said of them that they are thieves?"

Then the brethren, pointing to the seer elder, answered:

"This seer father pointed them out as thieves."

Then the great Paisius questioned that elder:

"Is it true what you said about them?"

He answered:

"What I said is the truth: this was revealed to me by God."

After this St. Paisius said:

"If this clairvoyance of yours were from God, and not from demonic delusion, the devil would not be seen on your lips."

Hearing this, all were seized with fear, for it was clear to everyone that the words coming from the mouth of Paisius were true; and they all began to reproach the deceived seer and urged him to ask the Venerable Father's forgiveness; and he, overcome with shame, fell at the honourable feet of the saint, saying:

"Father, forgive me, and pray for me, who have been deceived."

No sooner had the saint prayed for him than, before the eyes of all, a vainglorious and lying demon came out of the mouth of the deluded man. Transforming itself into a huge wild boar, it rushed upon the Venerable Father with great fury, as though intending to tear him apart with its teeth. But the blessed father, adjuring the unclean spirit, sent it into the abyss. The elder who had previously been deceived by the devil felt, and even saw with his own eyes, the demonic power of delusion issuing from him. Filled with great terror and trembling, he fell to

the ground, rolling at Paisius' feet, and with tears begged to receive complete forgiveness from him. The other brethren as well, who had given way to delusion and wronged the innocent, all fell before the saint and asked his forgiveness. Then they brought the two young monks out of seclusion, and all who beheld them wept with tenderness, while those who had wronged them asked for their prayers. The Venerable Paisius taught everyone to guard carefully against such enemy delusions and not to believe the false prophecy of those who strive to appear holy and clairvoyant. To the abbot of the Lavra, in private, he pointed out where the stolen things had been put, but said nothing about those who had stolen them. Then, granting forgiveness to all and praying for all, he returned to his cell.

In those same times, and in the same Egyptian deserts, another servant of God shone forth in the ascetic labors of abstinence: the Venerable Paul, through whose prayers the Lord also showed great mercy to men.

The Venerable Paisius, desiring once to visit him, went to him, and they met as two Angels of God and as two warriors of Christ, mightily contending with invisible foes and helping one another in this. Both were like a fortress impregnable to every adversarial cunning, and they conversed with one another in words filled with the Holy Spirit, rejoicing together also in the sweet fruit of silence. In their old age they devised daily the purely youthful exploits, each time beginning anew to labor as though they had resolved to lead an even more perfect life.

The great Paisius was older in years than Paul; the blessed Paul in appearance was dignified, but good of soul. And the Venerable Paisius said:

"While we are in this life, the Lord does not wish our body to grow weak and slothful, and it will be shame and disgrace for us if at the time of our death we are found in idleness."

When the Venerable Paisius had said this, the blessed Paul, having listened, answered:

"O chief of shepherds, behold, I am already following your praiseworthy and good counsel not to give myself over to idleness, and I trust

in God that, through your holy prayers, He will help me to live according to your will."

Having lived together for a fairly long time and instructed one another, the Venerable Paisius and the blessed Paul, after a kiss of love in the Lord, parted in body but not in spirit. The Venerable Paul remained in his former place, and St. Paisius returned to his cell.

Both these holy fathers were wonderworkers, healers of passions, experienced guides in the work of saving souls, intercessors and those who prayed for the salvation of all, and teachers—men mighty in deed and word, serving also as a good example for everyone. For the monastic labors of the holy Paul were greatly praised, while the numerous and supernatural ascetic exploits of the blessed Paisius, which he performed in secret, were known to nearly everyone, though not all of them, but only some. They were known so that those who heard of these exploits might be moved to give thanks to almighty God, and those who were striving might be kindled to still greater zeal. For no human words can adequately convey the full height of his spiritual life; he served the Lord much in secret and did not wish his good deeds to be known to others—and this was surely because of his great humility. When any of the brethren asked him which virtue was the highest, he answered: "That which is accomplished in secret, and of which no one knows." He also highly esteemed this virtue: to do everything according to the will of others, and not one's own. Throughout his virtuous life, the Venerable Father assigned to each activity its proper time, and faithfully observed this. He had a time to keep silence, a time to speak, a time to withdraw and shut himself in his cell, and a time to go out to the brethren and converse with them about what is profitable to the soul. Thus, in silence, the Venerable Father drew near to God by the path of contemplation of God, while in fellowship with the brethren he sought the salvation of his neighbor. And most wondrous of all was that he wisely knew how to conceal his virtues, so that his life was not known to all who were in fellowship with him. When the brethren began to praise him for some deed, he would leave off that deed and begin another ascetic labor, so that all might quickly forget his former deed. "When I," says the writer of the Life of the Venerable Paisius,

“asked him, ‘Why do you act thus?’ he answered me gladly: ‘So that my former ascetic labor might remain undamaged; for human praise is a great harm,’ he added, ‘and whoever labors for its sake gains little benefit for himself, and few of such people are saved, since vain human glory does them much harm. Truly it was said by our Lord:”

"Let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (Mt. 6:3).

Recalling these words and the instruction of the Venerable Father, I, John, come to the end of my account.

Having attained deep old age, great in his life and enlightened by virtues, our Venerable Father Paisius received the end of his earthly labors, and the Lord called him to eternal rest and heavenly blessedness. His body was honorably buried by a multitude of monastics, and his soul soared up to the heavenly and immortal life.

Not long after, the blessed Paul also departed from this life in his most remote desert; passing over to the unageing life, he, together with St. Paisius, took up his abode in the light of the saints, so that as they had labored together in monastic exploits, so their blessed souls might together enjoy also the unending repose. Their honorable bodies did not rest long apart from one another: by God's providence they were soon laid together as well, and this is how it came about.

Our Venerable Father Isidore, who was fasting in his monastery on Mount Pelusium, having heard of the repose of the great Paisius, boarded a ship and sailed to the place where the holy body of the Venerable Father had been buried. Taking it reverently and with honor from the earth and wrapping it in burial shrouds, he placed it in a coffin, desiring to enrich his monastery with it as with a great treasure, more precious than all riches. Having carried this coffin onto his ship, he set out with great joy, singing and praising the Lord. When he was sailing not far from that desert where the honorable body of the Venerable Paul rested, suddenly the ship, as though held back by some wondrous power, stopped and turned toward the land where the desert of St. Paul was situated. The sailors labored long, trying to sail away from that place, but could do nothing; they spent two days in such labor and, not knowing how to set off, were in great perplexity. But the Ven-

erable Isidore, understanding that this stopping of the ship was an act of God's providence, ordered the sailors to let the ship sail wherever it wished; and the ship, guided by an invisible hand, sailed to that desert shore where the body of St. Paul lay, and came to rest on a shoal.

While all who were on the ship grieved over this and were perplexed, there came to that shore from the desert a certain elder named Jeremiah. Addressing those on the ship, he said:

"Beloved! Why do you labor beyond your strength? Do you not see that the Venerable Paisius is calling his beloved Paul? He wishes to be carried together with him into your country and laid in one place. Therefore, hasten to go and take his body."

Hearing this, the Venerable Isidore and all who were with him were filled with great joy, and, disembarking onto the shore, they asked that honorable elder Jeremiah:

"Where has the body of St. Paul been laid?"

Then he led them into the distant desert and showed them the tomb of the Venerable Paul. Taking from there his honorable relics, more precious than gold and all precious stones, they carried them to the relics of St. Paisius. As soon as they boarded the ship, it immediately moved of its own accord from its place and, O wonder, sailed with great speed along its proper course, at once reaching the harbor at Pelusium. Then the Venerable Isidore brought ashore the honorable relics of both holy fathers, Paisius and Paul, and, singing psalms and spiritual songs, carried them into his monastery and placed them in the church he had built. And glorious wonders were performed there: those tormented by unclean spirits or afflicted with other illnesses, as soon as they touched the honorable coffins containing the relics, at once received healing; the unclean spirits were driven out, and every sickness was immediately healed through the prayers of these great servants of God.

This I, John, called Kolov, have written for the benefit of those who read and hear, to the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one God in Trinity, to whom belong all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

* * *

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Zosimas the Soldier

Страдание святого мученика Зосимы воина

While the Roman state was governed by the Emperor Trajan[13], the pagans, as is well known, were still held in idol-worship and in great spiritual blindness; and therefore, in his reign, a fierce persecution was soon raised against the Church of God.

At that time there lived among the pagans a certain illustrious man named Domitian, governor (hegemon) of Antioch in Pisidia[14].

Coming once to Emperor Trajan, he asked to be given authority over the Christians, so that he might compel by grievous torments all who would not offer sacrifice to the gods. Having received such authority from the emperor, and clothed in the armor of the devil, he flared up with wrath, like a lion, against those who resolved to keep their faith in Christ firm to the end. Passing once through the land of Sozopolis, he approached a city called Apollonia[15]. In this city there lived a certain pagan, a soldier named Zosimas, who had all along been striving to become a follower of the Christian faith. Hearing of the governor's approach and of the impending persecution, he laid aside his military weapons and resolved to join the holy Church; having been taught faith in Christ and received holy baptism, he began to strive after Christian virtues and to exercise himself in purity and chastity, in fasting and prayer.

Some days after the governor Domitian came to that city, one of the idol-worshippers approached him and said:

"In this city there dwells a certain soldier named Zosimas, who despises the emperor and your authority. He has renounced the military rank with which the Emperor Trajan had invested him, and has cast off his weapons. He calls himself a Christian, counts our gods as nothing, and scorns the imperial laws and disdains imperial power."

Hearing this, the governor said:

13. Reigned from 89 to 117.

14. Pisidia: a region in the south of Asia Minor, next to Cilicia.

15. In Thrace, by the Pontus; in this city, among other things, there was a temple in honor of Apollo, with his colossal statue. In the Byzantine era it was known under the name Sozopolis. Today it is the insignificant town of Sidzeboli.

"Bring this Zosimas here, to the tribunal."

Then the imperial guards, by the governor's command, went to Zosimas, seized him and brought him to judgment. The governor, seeing him, asked:

"Are you Zosimas?"

The soldier of Christ answered:

"I am Zosimas, servant of my Lord Jesus Christ."

After this the governor said:

"First tell us what rank you hold, and then say whose servant you are."

The saint answered:

"By rank I was a soldier of your earthly emperor, but I renounced your most destructive gods and became a soldier of the heavenly King, Christ, the true God."

"O lawless man," said Domitian then, "the name of Christ will not help you. Rather, offer sacrifice to the gods, and your sin against our emperor Trajan, by whom you were honored with military rank, shall be forgiven you."

Then the saint said:

"I will by no means offer sacrifice to your gods."

After this Domitian ordered the soldier of Christ to be led away to prison.

On the morrow the saint, bound with his hands behind him, was again brought to the tribunal, and the governor commanded that he be hanged on the instrument of torture. When the martyr had been hanged, Domitian said to him:

"Impious Zosimas, offer sacrifice to the gods, or else all your limbs will at once be subjected to cruel torments."

The saint answered:

"Not with words, nor even with wounds, will you persuade me to offer sacrifice to your gods."

Then the governor ordered his cruel soldiers to beat the holy martyr without mercy. When they began to torment St. Zosimas, he said to the governor:

"Your servants labor in vain, for the Lord strengthens me, and I do not feel the wounds inflicted upon me."

And they tormented the saint for a long time, so that the ground was already stained with his blood. At last the martyr cried out with a loud voice to the Lord:

"Lord God Almighty, who sittest upon the throne of Thy glory, who createdst the heaven, who foundedst the earth and gatheredst the waters into one place, the hope and expectation of Thy servants: hear me, who pray to Thee, and suffer me not to be overcome by threats of torment or by the torments themselves, that all who do not believe in Thy name may through me come to know Thee, the one true God!"

While the saint was praying, suddenly a voice was heard from heaven:

"Take courage, Zosimas, for I am with thee, and nothing shall overcome thee."

This voice Domitian and all who were with him heard,

and some even cried out:

"Great is this sorcerer!"

And others said:

"This is no sorcerer, but a servant of Christ, his God, and truly great is the Christian God, from whom this voice has just been sent!"

Then the governor ordered four soldiers to forcibly stretch the saint out on the ground in the form of a cross; and the sufferer of Christ, already exhausted, raised his eyes to heaven and said:

"O Lord my God, who knowest the thoughts of men, the hope of Christians, the refuge and rest of those who are in affliction! Deliver me from the destructive treachery of the servant of demons, Domitian, that all who stand here may know Thee, that Thou art the living God, existing before all ages, and that Thou art from everlasting."

And at that time many of the people standing there, marveling at the great endurance of the martyr, believed in Christ. The governor, seeing all this and fearing that all would turn to the Christian faith, was put to shame; raging and even gnashing his teeth, he began to devise by what cruel death he might destroy the servant of Christ. At last he commanded that a bronze bed be brought and a strong fire be

kindled beneath it, so as to burn the martyr upon it. When the bed had been heated intensely, he ordered the holy sufferer, naked, to be laid upon it. And as soon as Zosimas, making the sign of the cross upon himself, mounted the bed, the Lord at once turned the fire into dew; for through His Angels He came to the help of the martyr. And while all who stood there thought the martyr had perished in the fierce fire, the Angels of the Lord, lifting the saint from the bed in the sight of all, set him beside the bed alive and not in the least harmed by the flame. The people, seeing such a miracle, glorified the true God, who, sending His holy Angels, had delivered His servant from such fire; and many then turned to the Christian faith. The governor, rising from his judgment seat, went home in shame, while the martyr he commanded to be taken and kept under guard.

Soon after this the governor Domitian, setting out for the city of Kononeia[16], ordered the martyr Zosimas to be led bound behind him, that he might there put him to death in torments. Coming to that city and seating himself on the judgment seat, he commanded the martyr to be shod in iron sandals in which sharp nails had been set, and to be tied with an iron chain to young unbroken horses, so that he would be made to run behind them. The saint, bound to those horses, in his iron sandals with the nails, ran so swiftly that he seemed even to outrun the horses, for the Lord was with him and helped him. And the saint said:

"O Lord God, who givest my feet the swiftness of a deer, grant me endurance to the end!"

The governor, seeing such endurance in the martyr, commanded that he be shut up in prison and given neither food nor drink, so that he might perish of hunger and thirst. After three days, during which the saint remained without food or drink, two beautiful youths entered the prison; one carried pure bread, the other water in a vessel, and they said to the saint:

"Receive this precious gift, sent to thee by the Lord thy God."

The martyr of Christ, taking it, ate and drank, and strengthened in body, cried out to the Lord:

16. In Pisidia, on the way to Persia.

"I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast had mercy upon me and hast not despised me, but hast fed me with Thy heavenly bread and drink; I praise and glorify Thy majesty forever. Amen."

On the following day the governor, again seated on the judgment seat, commanded the martyr of Christ to be brought before him. The saint appeared with a bright countenance, his mind wholly turned toward the Lord. The governor marveled to see the martyr's face unchanged after such torments, and said to him:

"O Zosimas, since you now, it seems, have come to your senses, offer sacrifice to the gods, so that you may no longer be subjected to wounds and may not die a cruel death."

The saint answered:

"If you wish, offer sacrifice to demons like yourself; but I, as I have said before, serve only my one God."

After this the enraged governor commanded that the martyr be hanged again on the tree, and said to him:

"Do you see, wretch, how many torments you are undergoing? Will you still not obey me and offer sacrifice to the gods?"

The saint answered:

"One who loves the living God counts these torments as nothing."

And the governor ordered the martyr's body to be scraped with iron combs. The holy martyr, enduring all these sufferings, cried out with a loud voice to God:

"Now especially do I come to know the mercy of Thy tender compassion, O Christ, Creator of light, for Thou hast strengthened me to endure everything manfully and not to betray my sufferings even by a word, so that through my torments they may understand still more the power of Thy Divinity."

When the saint had said this, the ruler commanded that he be taken down from the instrument of torture and set again before him; when this was done, he said to him:

"You have endured many torments for the sake of your Christ, and yet have received no relief; come now, and at least now offer sacrifice to the gods."

The saint answered:

"O Domitian, most savage, inhuman and full of all impiety, tormentor! Fear the heavenly God, abandon your error, and do not call idols gods; for they are demons, not gods."

Then the governor said:

"Do you, most lawless man, dare to call our gods demons, gods on whose festal days the whole world celebrates?"

To this the martyr said:

"Let those festal rejoicings that are now offered to your gods be rendered afterward in Hades to you, and to your emperor, and to all who believe in them."

After this the ruler again commanded that St. Zosimas be hanged on the instrument of torture and that his belly be scorched with lighted candles.

Then the martyr said to the ruler:

"Burn my belly, and my whole body as well, and yet you will never overcome me, for Christ, who strengthens me, is with me. I even desire to be put to death by you, since this is my glory before Christ, if I die for Him."

Not knowing what else to do with the martyr, the governor at last condemned him to death, namely to beheading with an axe. As St. Zosimas was being led to the place of execution, he prayed to the Lord in this way:

"O Lord my God! Look upon me, a sinner, and receive my soul with those who have pleased Thee from of old, for Thou art my glory and my praise from now and unto ages of ages."

When the martyr came to the place where executions were usually carried out, he was struck down by the sword, laying down his honorable head for his Christ. This took place on June 19, in the city of Kononeia, at the time when Trajan reigned in Rome, and over us Christians reigned our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory and dominion unto ages of ages, Amen.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father John the Hermit

Память преподобного отца нашего Иоанна Отшельника

Our Venerable Father John, having left the world, dedicated himself to the monastic life and, desiring to dwell in the solitude of a hermit, settled in Palestine, not far from Jerusalem; here he spent all the days of his life in a God-pleasing manner, in fasting and prayer.

Concerning his holy life, the following is related in the book called the Leimonarion[17], which, as is known, was compiled by our Venerable Fathers John and Sophronius (afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem):

"To us, John and Sophronius, Abba Dionysius, presbyter and keeper of the vessels of the holy church that stood in Ascalon[18], related concerning Abba John the Hermit that this man was great in his life and very God-pleasing. He lived in the vicinity of the village of Sechous, distant from Jerusalem by twenty stadia; in his cave this elder had an image of our Most Pure Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary; She was depicted holding in Her arms the pre-eternal Infant Christ our God. And it must be said that whenever this elder was about to go somewhere, whether into the distance of his desert, or to Jerusalem, to venerate the honorable Cross and the Tomb of Christ, and in general whenever he wished to visit this or that of the holy places of Jerusalem; or when he wished to pray on Mount Sinai or to those holy martyrs whose relics lay far from Jerusalem, for this elder loved to honor the saints, so that at times he even went to Ephesus, to the tomb of St. John the Theologian, and at other times to Venerable Theodore at Euchaita, and even to St. Thekla at Seleucia in Isauria[19]; in a word, wherever he set out on pilgrimage, he always placed in his cell, before this image of the Most Pure Mother of God, a lamp[20], and, having lit it according to custom and standing in prayer, he besought

17. The *Limonar* (*Leimonarion*, "Meadow" or "Pasture") is a very widespread hagiographic work by the Greek monk John Moschus (d. 622). Before his death, John handed this work over to his friend Sophronius, the future patriarch, who had already circulated it among the people. In essence it was a collection of various narratives concerning the lives of Christian ascetics.

18. Ascalon: one of the most ancient cities of Palestine, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

19. Seleucia in Isauria, in Cilicia; it was built by Seleucus I Nicator, the founder of the Seleucid monarchy.

20. *Kandilo*: a glass bowl in which oil was burned and which was set before the icons.

God to bless his way. And while gazing upon the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, he always entreated Her thus:

'Most Pure Lady Theotokos, since I am setting out on a distant and long journey, do Thou Thyself watch over Thy lamp, and, according to my prayer to Thee, keep it unquenched until I return; and I, having Thy help accompanying me, set out on the path I have chosen.'

And only after this did he set out on his way, remaining on the road sometimes a month, sometimes two or three, and at times even five or six; and on returning he always found the lamp full and burning, just as he had left it when he set out, and he never found it extinguished."

Concerning this Venerable Father John, the same book, the Leimonarion, further relates that once, walking through the environs of that village where his cave was, he met a large lion. At this spot the road was very narrow: it lay between two thorn hedges, with which the farmers were accustomed to enclose their fields. And the path was so narrow that, because of this thorn hedge, only one man on foot could barely pass, and that without any burden. And when John and the lion began to approach each other, the elder resolved not to yield the way to the lion, and the lion, because of the narrowness of the place, could not step aside from the path, so that they could not pass each other. Then the lion, seeing that the servant of God did not wish to turn back and intended to go along the path that was proper to him, stood on his hind legs on the left side of the elder, and by the weight of his body widening the hedge in this way, made the way free for the righteous man; and thus the elder passed by the lion, his back touching the lion's spine; after this the elder and the lion went each on their own way.

To this Abba John, once a certain brother came; not seeing anything in his cave, he said to him:

"How do you live here, Father, having nothing needful for your necessities?"

The elder answered him:

"Child, this cave is a spiritual trade: it both gives and takes; it gives handiwork, and takes all that is needful."

This God-pleasing father, having lived for a fairly long time in his ascetic labors and struggles, departed to the Lord and was numbered

among the saints who stand before the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God in Trinity, to Whom be glory forever, Amen.

On the same day, the repose of Venerable Barlaam of Shenkursk, in 1462.

* * *

NOTES

4043. Some, however, distinguish from Judas, the brother of the Lord, Judas of James (mentioned in Lk. 6:16 and in Acts 1:13), and to this Apostle they refer the following circumstance reported in the Gospel. During the Lord's last farewell discourse with the disciples, the Lord, having announced to them His departure to God the Father, said to comfort them: "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. A little while, and the world will see Me no more; but you will see Me, for I live, and you will live. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" (Jn. 14:18–21); then Judas said to the Lord: "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us and not to the world?" (Jn. 14:22). From this question it is evident that the Apostle Judas had not yet parted from the favorite thought of the Jews about the Messiah as an earthly king, and understood the promised manifestation of the Lord in the sense of a visible, sensible appearance, in the glory of an earthly king and conqueror. The Lord, by His answer, gave him to understand that He is not an earthly king, and that His manifestation in His Kingdom is not a visible, external, bodily manifestation, but an inward, spiritual one, His mysterious communion with believers (Jn. 14:23).

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF JUNE

June 20

20 июня

New Calendar June 20 · Old Calendar July 3 (civil dates)

Life of Our Father among the Saints, Leucius the Confessor

Житие во святых отца нашего Левкия Исповедника

In the times of paganism, when the Roman idolater emperors held sway over East and West[1], there lived in Alexandria a noble man named Eudicius. Untaught in book learning, he was wise in spiritual instruction and adorned with good works. Eudicius passed his life in the fear of God and in love; he joined abundant almsgiving to the ascetic labor of fasting and prayer. He had a single son, of whom our account now speaks, named Eutropius by his parents, and afterwards renamed by God Leucius.

When the lad was in his tenth year, his mother, Euphrosyne, died. Then Eudicius, taking his son, went with him to the monastery of the Blessed Hermias, situated within the bounds of Alexandria and governed by the blessed abbot Nicetas; here Eudicius himself took monastic tonsure, and he gave his son to be educated in letters. Being a clever boy, who grasped everything quickly and without particular effort, Eutropius, with God's help, advanced so far in book learning that he surpassed many in this respect. Moreover, he was meek, full of humility and obedience; he served all who lived in the monastery with zeal, and all loved Eutropius, some for his good conduct and obedience, others for his erudition in books and the knowledge given him by the Holy Spirit.

The blessed abbot Nicetas departed to the Lord when Eutropius was still only seventeen years old; nevertheless, the brethren, after tak-

1. Other accounts place the birth of St. Leucius in the times of the Christian Greco-Roman sovereigns, namely in the time of Theodosius the Great (379–395).

ing counsel among themselves, asked the youth, who was not yet tonsured to the monastic life, to be their abbot. But he stubbornly refused, and his father Eudicius, admonishing him, also forbade him at so young an age to take upon himself a burden he had not yet grown accustomed to bearing; he advised Eutropius to show himself unworthy of authority, as a youth in need of guidance himself. Thus the monastery of Hermias remained without an abbot for seven years, because the brethren did not wish to entrust the rule over themselves to anyone else: therefore, despite the unwillingness of the blessed Eutropius, and although he had not been tonsured, the brethren, guided by the example of his virtuous life, nonetheless regarded him among themselves as their abbot. When Eutropius reached the age of twenty-five, the brethren gathered and said to him:

"Why do you disregard both our need and our entreaties, and why are you unwilling to be our superior? Already seven years have passed since the death of our blessed father Nicetas, and we have had no abbot, and each one lives according to his own will. Take care lest you answer for our ruin, if some wolf should enter the monastery and carry off the flock of God; for we desire to have no other as our father but you alone: we all see your holy life, we know of your good conduct and of the wisdom given you by God."

To this the blessed Eutropius answered the brethren thus:

"Why, honored fathers and brethren, do you unceasingly beseech me for that which I am wholly unable to accomplish? I am not tonsured to the monastic life and hold no ecclesiastical rank; how then shall I be your father, having at the same time no authority to teach you in the house of God? How can I admonish the elder among you, when I myself am young?"

Then they began to press him to accept tonsure and the priesthood, but he by no means wished to fulfil their desire. Indeed, in his heart Eutropius strove toward the monastic order, but he feared to accept it, lest the brethren then compel him by force to be abbot; thus, remaining untonsured, he showed himself an example of a true monk.

At this time the pagan Commodus reigned in Rome. He sent to Alexandria as eparch[2] one Philip, whose daughter Eugenia, after her conversion to Christianity, lived an ascetic life in male garb, and ended it by a martyr's death. Philip, although generally merciful to Christians, nevertheless, in obedience to the emperor's command, expelled from the city the Christians, hierarchs, priests and monks, permitting them, however, to settle freely in the suburbs, and to build monasteries and churches there. In those days the Christian bishop of this district was Saint Ellius, who resided in the city of Eliopolis, which lies at no great distance from Alexandria. In the Alexandrian suburb the aforementioned bishop had founded a monastery, entrusted to the direction of Saint Theodore. Besides the monastery, in the same locality there stood a church celebrated throughout the district, dedicated to the Most Pure Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary; on her feast-days Christians flocked here not only from Alexandria but also from the surrounding cities and lands. Therefore, when the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary drew near, many set out for her church; and the blessed Eudicius, leaving the monastery of Hermias, likewise went to the feast together with his son Eutropius. It so happened that on that same day and for that same festival, there came out, together with the clergy and a multitude of people from Eliopolis, the holy bishop Ellius; Eudicius and Eutropius joined the crowd following the bishop. The bishop intended first to call in at the monastery he had founded, governed by the abbot Theodore, in order to rest there until the feast arrived. As he drew near the monastery, on the way there met him the eparch's daughter, the blessed Eugenia, walking in male attire accompanied by two eunuchs; seeing the bishop surrounded by the people, she pressed into the crowd with the purpose of questioning someone about the bishop, and began a conversation about him with the blessed Eutropius. He told her in detail everything about the archpastor of God, as is seen from the life of the blessed Eugenia, and then led her to the bishop, to whom Eutropius was known for the purity of his life and his book learning.

2. Of the commander.

While the blessed Eudicius was resting in the monastery established by the bishop, he received in a dream at night a divine revelation that he would soon die, and that his son would be a bishop who would destroy the idols in Bruntisiopolis of Italy[3], enlightening that land with holy baptism. At the same time he heard a voice addressed to him:

"Eudicius, Eudicius, faithful servant of the Lord! Henceforth let your name be not Eudicius but Eudiclius, that is, the meek consoler; and let your son's name be not Eutropius but Leucius, that is, 'the Spirit of the Lord has come upon him.'"

Awakening, Eudiclius at once called his son and told him of the vision revealing the will of God:

"Behold, my son, the time of my departure is drawing near; do not be beguiled by the vain world. The Lord has revealed to me concerning you that you will be granted the episcopal service, for the Lord wishes through you to cleanse Bruntisiopolis from the idol shrines; and let your name be no longer Eutropius but Leucius; thus the Lord has renamed you, as He renamed me from Eudicius to Eudiclius."

Hearing this, Saint Leucius, who was also Eutropius, prostrating himself cruciform upon the earth, bowed before God, offering up to Him such a prayer of thanksgiving:

"Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for Thou dost not leave unregarded those who hope in Thee, and Thou dost not withdraw Thy mercy from Thy poor servants, showing mercy to me, unworthy as I am: therefore I glorify and magnify Thee, the Lord of heaven and earth, for Thou art the Lord who loveth mankind; to Thee be glory unto ages of ages."

During this prayer of the saint, a voice was heard from heaven above the church:

"Leucius, Leucius! Bright in soul and pure in heart, behold, thy name is written in heaven, and thy memory shall not be blotted out of the book of life."

3. Now Brindisi.

This voice was heard by the holy bishop Ellius and some of the brethren, who had spent the night without sleep in prayer. But no one could understand to whom it was addressed.

With the coming of morning, the brethren of the monastery of Hermias came to the bishop and said:

"Know, vladyka, that for more than seven years we have remained without an abbot, and each of us lives as he wishes. More than once we have asked the honorable Eutropius to accept the rule over us; he grew up in our monastery, and his life surpasses each of ours in holiness; no one can equal him in the labors of obedience; he always abides in fasting and prayer, reading and writing books; in a word, we see him engaged in every good work. Therefore we wished to have him as our father, that we might follow in his footsteps; but he does not consent to this, disregarding our request. We beseech you, vladyka, appoint him abbot for us, even against his will."

"I too," the bishop answered, "have been thinking of what you now speak of; however, wait a little, and I will try to persuade him to submit to our will."

After this the bishop went to the church, since the time for the holy Liturgy had come. He commanded the archdeacon, standing upon the ambo, to call out to the people:

"Who among those present here bears the name Leucius?"

No one among the people answered this call, because there was no man bearing such a name. When the archdeacon had called to the people twice and thrice, Saint Leucius, seeing that among the people there was no other Leucius but himself, answered, saying:

"I am the sinful Leucius!"

All were amazed, looking at him, and said in perplexity:

"Are you Eutropius, the son of Eudicius?"

Saint Leucius answered this:

"Ask my father; he will tell you better than I can about my name."

Then the blessed Eudiclius, an honorable elder of ninety-seven years, was brought forward into the midst, and they asked him:

"What in truth is the name of your son?"

He, seeing God's will that the mystery concerning him and his son should be revealed, related in detail the whole of his vision, including also how the voice of God twice, in sleep and in waking, had named his son Leucius. All who heard this, rejoicing, gave thanks to God and, approaching St. Leucius, greeted him with great reverence. Following this, the bishop began to exhort St. Leucius to accept the rank of abbot together with the priesthood. He refused, but the people cried out:

– Leucius is worthy to be not only a priest and abbot, but even a bishop!

And despite St. Leucius's unwillingness, he was ordained and appointed abbot. After this, all joyfully celebrated the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos in her church.

Having entered upon the governance of the monastery, St. Leucius increased his ascetic labors and worked wonders by the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Once there was brought to him an Ethiopian who was possessed by a demon and who had already been catechized for holy baptism. Seeing his sufferings, St. Leucius said to the demon:

– Cease, diabolical spirit, from tormenting this man!

The demon, trembling, began to cry out with sobbing:

– If I come out of him, where shall I go? I have no other home; this one is better.

– Unclean spirit, – St. Leucius repeated his command, – leave the creature of God and do not dare to enter into him again; go out, shamed and disgraced, from him whom you have hitherto cruelly tormented, bound with the fetters of your dark power. Enter rather into those people who do not believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and do not worship His life-giving Cross.

With a terrible cry the demon came out of the man's mouth in the form of a black bird; and in departing he cried out:

– What have I to do with you, servant of God Leucius, that you cast me out of the dwelling which I had chosen for myself? I did not wish to enter a man with a white face, of ordinary appearance, but I entered an Ethiopian with black skin, unpleasant to the eyes, hoping that from such a dwelling no one would drive me out.

Having driven out the devil by the sign of the Cross, St. Leucius raised the man from the ground healthy and afterwards granted him holy baptism. The devil, however, departed into Egypt, where he took the form of a serpent of enormous size; he crawled through the streets of one city, killing with extraordinary fury the pagans and Jews he met – men, women and children; he spared not even the animals. St. Leucius, foreseeing in spirit such murderous malice of the devil, hastened to Egypt; sensing the approach of the saint to the city, the devil threw himself into the sea, leaving behind a multitude of corpses lying in the streets. Entering the city and seeing the multitude weeping with sobs over their dead, St. Leucius asked:

– What has caused such weeping?

Then they told him how a serpent had suddenly appeared in the city, slaying many, and how it had just now, before his arrival, thrown itself into the sea, where it disappeared. St. Leucius ordered water to be brought, blessed it, and began to sprinkle the dead with it, saying to them:

– Arise in the name of the Lord of Hosts! You are held not by the bonds of death, but are only injured by the devil's poison; yet you are unable by yourselves to be freed from the power of the serpent, which is mightier than you because of your impiety and blindness of heart. Arise, then, by the power of my God, and give glory to Him who created you.

During this address St. Leucius touched the corpses with his staff. And at once all, as if awakening, rose up and, clasping the saint's feet, said:

– The God who is worthy of worship is none other than that Father, Son and Holy Spirit whom you, servant of God and our father, preach.

All who had risen believed in Christ, and with them some three thousand men were converted to Christianity; they were all baptized with their wives and children, glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ, who wrought such wonderful miracles through His holy Leucius.

After some years, the eparch of Alexandria, Philip, believed in Christ together with his whole household, moved to this by the example of his holy daughter Eugenia; after some time he laid down his office

and became a Christian bishop. After the martyric death of Bishop Philip, St. Leucius was unanimously chosen as his successor. Meanwhile in Alexandria, after Philip, the eparch was first Terentius, and then Saturninus. Being an enemy of Christianity, the latter, together with his idolatrous counselors, planned how to raise a persecution of the Christians in Alexandria, first by killing their bishop, St. Leucius, for Saturninus saw that he was converting many from paganism to Christianity. And the eparch began to seek a convenient time for carrying out his evil design. The faithful among the inhabitants of Alexandria, learning of this, consulted among themselves how to kill the eparch. Then St. Leucius, calling all the Christians to him, urged them to abandon their rebellious plan and related to them the manifestation of God that had come to him:

– Know, beloved, that my Lord was pleased to appear to me in a vision and commanded that you should be given another bishop, so that I might go to the West, to Bruntisiopolis, for that city has need of Christian enlightenment.

Hearing this, the Christians began to fall at the saint's feet with weeping, saying:

– Holy father! Do not leave us orphans; do not part from those whom you have won for God; do not forsake us until your death.

– You all know, – replied St. Leucius, – that in the days of my youth the Lord was pleased to reveal to my father Eudiclius that I, unworthy, would receive this episcopal dignity and would go into an idolatrous city, into the midst of a people who do not know God. So it is pleasing to our Master that through me, His unworthy servant, those people should be joined to the holy Church. Therefore the Lord has commanded me to give you another father, and I go to the task appointed for me. As for the eparch Saturninus, know that his impious design against the Christians will not be fulfilled, for the days of his life are shortened and his destruction is near: after my departure from here his house will collapse, burying him together with all his household beneath its ruins.

Having said this and comforted the weeping Christians, he chose a man worthy of the episcopal throne; thus another bishop was set in

place of St. Leucius. Taking with him two of his deacons, Eusebius and Dionysius, and five disciples, St. Leucius set out from the city to the harbor. All the Christians, numbering five thousand, not counting wives and children, accompanied their bishop with lamentation and weeping.

– Why, – they cried out, – do you leave us, father, not sparing your children?

Turning back and seeing the weeping people, St. Leucius himself was stirred in spirit, shed tears, and, raising his hands to heaven, said:

– Lord, my God Jesus Christ, if it is Thy will, do not separate me from these Thy people, to whose service Thou hast appointed me!

No sooner had he finished this prayer than a voice from heaven was heard by all the Christians:

– Leucius! Do not disregard the command of the Lord, but embark upon the ship and go in peace, whither you are bidden.

– You hear, – St. Leucius addressed those who accompanied him, – the will of the Lord, brethren? Know, then, that I part from you not by my own desire.

Having taken leave of all, he boarded the ship and set out on his way. In Alexandria, however, in accordance with the saint's prophecy, the eparch's house suddenly collapsed, killing the eparch together with all who were inside.

After fifteen days the ship arrived at Adrianople, not the Thracian one, but the one situated in ancient Egypt; here St. Leucius stayed a short time, taking with him two priests, Leo and Savinus. Finding another ship, he boarded it, paying the agreed fare, and sailed to Hydruntum, where he transferred to a Dalmatian ship, on which he reached the region of Bruntisiopolis. Disembarking, St. Leucius set out toward the city with his clergy. On the way they met the tribune[4] Armaleon with his soldiers; St. Leucius asked one of the soldiers:

– Who is the ruler of this city?

– Have you not heard, – the soldier answered, – of the great Antiochus, lord of this land?

4. Tribune – commander of a detachment of soldiers.

– What faith does your lord Antiochus profess? – St. Leucius asked again.

Hearing such a question, the tribune and the soldiers said with laughter:

– Is there any other faith and any other god than the sun and the moon, which give light to the universe? Do not the ears of all hear their voices, thundering in the clouds? What is swifter than the lightning issuing from the sun? What is brighter than the moon, which by its changes foretells the coming changes of weather?

– Poor ignorant people! – said St. Leucius with a sigh. – The divine enlightenment has not yet reached you, and therefore you do not know that the sun and the moon are creatures of God and obey the command of the Lord, accomplishing their unceasing course. And they should not be called gods: there is nothing divine in them; they cannot even stand in one place, but constantly move, rise and set, are covered now by a cloud, now by the darkness of night, and are at times visible, at times hidden from our eyes. And their light differs from the everlasting Light, that is, God, whom we worship, as much as the creature differs from the Creator. Our God, who created the sun, the moon, the heavens and the earth with all that fills them, is the true Light, which enlightens all who believe in Him. He made the radiance of the sun and the moon, commanding them to serve the people who inhabit the earth – let the sun shine by day, and the moon by night. And if you knew the invisible Light – our God – you would never bow down before the visible luminaries.

– What light is this, – asked the tribune Armaleon, – of which you say that it is invisible to our eyes?

"Christ, the Son of God," explained St. Leucius, "was born of the Virgin Mary of the Holy Spirit."

And he told them everything concerning Christ: how He was born, how He lived among men, how He suffered of His own will, died, rose on the third day, ascended into heaven, sat at the right hand of God the Father, and how He would come to judge the whole world, to render unto each according to his deeds. The soldiers listened with compunc-

tion to the instruction of St. Leucius; believing his words as the truth, they fell down before him on the ground, saying:

"We beseech you, father, make us partakers of eternal life!"

After instructing them in the faith, he baptized them; the number of the newly converted was sixty-seven men. Accompanied by them and by the clergy, St. Leucius entered the city. Thus was laid the beginning of the enlightenment of Bruntisiopolis with the light of Christ's teaching.

Prince Antiochus, learning that Tribune Armaleon had believed in Christ together with his soldiers, summoned him and asked:

"Is it true what I hear about you, Armaleon? Is it true that you have become a Christian, together with the soldiers under your command?"

Armaleon was silent. Then Antiochus said angrily:

"Why do you not answer me?"

"Is it really necessary for you," asked the tribune, "to be angry with me because I am now a Christian?"

"I ask you," Antiochus replied, "without any anger: tell us, who taught you the Christian faith? We all knew you as a man wise in our teachings, who until now rejected Christianity, and we are astonished how you have become a Christian."

"Until now," Armaleon answered, "I was blind and wandered in the shadow of death, but now, enlightened by the grace of God, I have received my sight and abide in the hope of eternal life."

"What is this eternal life of which you speak?" asked Antiochus.

"If you wish, you can know it," the tribune offered. "If you truly show it to us," Antiochus said, "then, of course, I wish to see and understand it; yet I do not think there is any life other than the present one, nor do I believe that there is any other light or God besides the sun and moon."

"The sun and moon," said Armaleon, "are not gods, but God's creation, established by the Lord in heaven not to draw anyone into serving them, but to serve by illuminating the earth for His rational creation—that is, for man, who dwells upon the earth."

Antiochus listened to these words of the tribune with astonishment and asked him:

"Who taught you such wisdom?"

"I was enlightened," he said, "by an Alexandrian, named Leucius, who came here recently."

At that time St. Leucius was outside the city, at the place of spectacles opposite the western gates of Bruntisiopolis; there he taught the people the faith of Christ, baptizing those who came to the Lord Jesus. Antiochus sent for him, courteously asking him to come. When he saw the bishop of God, he said to him:

"If you wish us to believe in the God whom you preach, then beseech Him to send rain upon our land, for we have seen none for two years now. Because of the drought our land has dried up and lost its former fertility, and therefore the people live in want and distress."

St. Leucius summoned his clergy and all the newly baptized Christians and offered fervent prayer together to the Lord God; immediately the sky was covered with clouds, from which abundant rain poured down, watering all the land of that country. Then the whole city, with Antiochus at its head, believed in Christ, so that twenty-seven thousand people were baptized, and all glorified Christ, our God. In the midst of the city they built a church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary; another church, in the name of John the Baptist, they erected at the place where the people had been baptized. Thus all Bruntisiopolis was enlightened with the light of the holy faith.

As St. Leucius taught and strengthened the newly enlightened in the faith, he fell gravely ill and by divine revelation learned that his illness was mortal. Calling Antiochus to him, he charged him to bury his body at the place where their ship had touched land. Then, raising his hands, he prayed for his flock, gave all his final blessing and farewell, wishing them peace; after which he reposed in the Lord, mourned by the whole city.[5] Antiochus took the saint's precious body and carried it with due honor to the place where the saint, having arrived from Alexandria, had disembarked from the ship. Building a church there in the name of St. Leucius, Antiochus placed within it the precious relics of

5. Some accounts place the death of St. Leucius in the fifth century.

the servant of God. And many miracles were wrought at his tomb, to the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the God glorified in the Trinity, to whom from all creation are due praise, thanksgiving, and worship unto the ages. Amen.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Methodius, Bishop of Patara

Память святого священномученика Мефодия, епископа Патарского

From his youth the servant of God, Methodius, gave himself over to the service of the Lord and became an honorable vessel, receiving the Holy Spirit; for this, by divine election, he was deemed worthy of the episcopal dignity, becoming the chief shepherd of the rational sheep of the city of Patara, in the region of Lycia.[6] St. Methodius guided his rational flock with God-pleasing care, leading it toward perfection through gentle instruction. In the days of St. Methodius's episcopacy, the heresy of Origen arose,[4068] deceiving many; seeing its growth, St. Methodius, as an eminent shepherd, burned the heresy as with fire through his rebukes; by teaching filled with wisdom and divine grace, he dispelled the heretical darkness that hung over the faithful. His God-inspired teachings shone throughout the world like lightning, and the voice of his instruction resounded throughout the earth like the sound of a rational trumpet. Therefore the invisible enemy could not endure the zeal with which St. Methodius was inspired in his great labors, undertaken for piety and for the Church of Christ; he armed against the holy bishop his visible servants, the pagans who worshipped idols. At his instigation, the pagans resolved to put the servant of God to a death of torment, though even before his sufferings he had been clothed in "life-giving mortification." Seizing Christ's hierarch, the pagans struck off his precious head with a sword. And St. Methodius passed into the better life; as a living sacrifice was he offered to God, he who at first served the Lamb of God and afterward was himself slain like a lamb. Thus was the good champion of piety crowned with a

6. In Asia Minor.

double crown: he had contended against heresies and fearlessly confessed Christ before the pagans, even unto the shedding of his blood and a martyr's death, which took place in the reign of Aurelian.[7] Amen.[8]

Troparion, Tone 1:

Thy blood, O wise one, crieth secretly from the earth unto God, as did Abel's, O God-wise Hierarch Methodius, who clearly didst preach the incarnation of God; therefore hast thou put Origen's deceit to shame, and hast departed to the heavenly palace. Pray to Christ God that He save our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Thou wast a sacred minister of the Holy Trinity, a preacher of the divine commandments that surpass understanding, and a confirmation of the Orthodox, O Methodius; thou didst expose the thoughts of those of evil belief, and for the sake of true faith wast revealed as a Hieromartyr through thy blood. Standing with the Angels before Christ, pray that we may be saved.

* * *

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Aristocles, Demetrian, and Athanasius

Память святых мучеников Аристоклия, Димитриана и Афанасия

The holy Martyr Aristocles, a native of Cyprus from the city of Tamassus, was a presbyter of the cathedral. In the days of Emperor Maximian,[9] when a great persecution broke out against the Christians, St. Aristocles withdrew into the wilderness, where he hid in a mountain cave. There, while he was praying one day, a light brighter than the sun shone upon him, and a voice from heaven was

7. 270–275. But the supposition is more probable that the death of St. Methodius followed later, 310–312.

8. Written works of St. Methodius have been preserved, relating: 1) to the defense of the holy faith against paganism, 2) to the exposition of the dogmas of the faith, especially against the errors of Origen, 3) to moral teaching, and 4) to the explanation of Holy Scripture.

9. Maximian Galerius reigned from 305 to 311.

heard commanding him to go to the metropolitan see of Salamis on the island of Cyprus and there undertake the martyr's struggle for confessing the name of Christ. Strengthened by the vision of light and the divine voice, he immediately laid aside his fear of torments and went where he had been commanded. On the way, which led through a forest, he entered the church of the holy Apostle Barnabas, where he found the deacon Demetrian and the reader Athanasius, who received him with love. During their conversation, St. Aristocles disclosed to them the reason for his journey to the city of Salamis, recounting the vision that had appeared to him. After hearing this account, Demetrian and Athanasius felt an irresistible desire to go with Aristocles, so that they might die for Christ. When they reached the city of Salamis, they stood in a high place, in full view of all, and began to preach aloud about Jesus Christ, glorifying Him and reviling the pagan gods, insensible idols. The pagans immediately seized the preachers and brought them before the ruler for questioning. When he learned that they were Christians and saw their unwavering devotion to the holy faith, he ordered that the presbyter Aristocles be beheaded with a sword; but Demetrian and Athanasius, after much torment, he condemned to be burned. Yet after the holy men had remained alive and unharmed in the fire, the ruler condemned them also to be beheaded with a sword. Thus the Passion-bearers of Christ brought their lives to an end,[10] adorned with the martyr's crown.

* * *

Translation of the Relics of the Holy Martyrs Inna, Pinna, and Rimma

Перенесение мощей святых мучеников Инны, Пинны и Риммы

These holy martyrs came from the northern lands, from a barbarian country.[11] They were disciples of the Apostle Andrew, and

10. About 306.

11. In the Menologion of the Emperor Basil it is said that these holy martyrs were natives of Scythia, from its northern borders; but according to Prof. E. Golubinsky (History of the Russian Church, vol. I, first half, ed. 2, p. 31 and note 2) they came from Doric Gothia, which occupied a narrow strip of coastal land in the present-day Crimea between Balaklava and Sudak.

they turned many of the barbarians from the veneration of idols to faith in Christ. For this they were seized and brought before the ruler of the barbarians, who sought to beguile them with various enticements and flattering promises; but they did not yield to the honors offered them, and for their steadfastness in the faith of Christ they were beaten without mercy. At that time it was a harsh winter, and the rivers were frozen so solidly that they could be crossed on the ice. So, in the middle of the river, they set up straight trees, fixed them in the ice, and bound the holy martyrs to them. When the ice began to bend beneath the weight of the trees, the water rose up to their necks, and in that condition they gave up their holy souls to the Lord. Some Christians buried their bodies at that time; but afterwards the bishop[12] took them out of the grave, carried them upon his shoulders, and laid them in his church. Seven years after their death, the holy martyrs appeared to the same bishop and commanded him to transfer their relics to a place called Alix, a dry haven.[13]

* * *

NOTES

4068. Origen – the celebrated teacher of the Alexandrian Church, a marvel of his age for the power of his mind and the depth of his learning. Many of the most eminent Fathers of the Church treated the theological works and merits of Origen with profound respect; but afterwards, while he was still alive, he was condemned as a heretic at two local Alexandrian councils, and after his death at the Council of Constantinople of 543. Without presenting his non-Orthodox opinions as unalterable truths, Origen nevertheless thought wrongly about many truths of the Christian Church's teaching of faith, for which reason some considered the firmness of his adherence to the chief Christian dogmas doubtful. Developing the non-Orthodox teaching of 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 likening themselves to Him; one of these created spirits was drawn toward the Divinity with so ardent a love that it became inseparably united with the Divine Word, or became His created bearer; according to Origen this is the human soul through which God the Word could become incarnate on earth, since, in his mistaken opinion, the direct incarnation of

12. In the Slavonic redaction of the Menologion of the Emperor Basil this bishop is called Godla, and the name Godla is Gothic.

13. Alix is the present-day Alushta, situated on the shore of the Black Sea 42 versts north-east of Yalta. "Dry haven" means a sea harbor.

the Divinity was 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 a non-Orthodox sense, representing it as something spiritually repeated in the spiritual world, with an effect there in the liberation of the Angels, and attributing too much in the work of salvation to the action of the ordinary powers with which our nature is endowed. Origen also thought wrongly on some points of his teaching about the resurrection and the future life, for example that the devil could be saved, and in interpreting Holy Scripture he understood far too much in a mystical sense, to the detriment of the historical sense of Scripture. But in any case Origen's services to the Church are greater and outweigh his errors. In his schools he educated many remarkable Fathers and teachers of the Church, some of whom owed to him their conversion from paganism to the Christian faith, with which he wished to reconcile knowledge and philosophy. Especially notable are his labors in the study of Holy Scripture – its interpretation and, above all, the restoration and purification of the authentic text; notable too are Origen's writings directed toward the defense of Christianity against its enemies and heretics. During the persecution of Decius, Origen was granted the glory of a courageous confessor of Christ; he died at Tyre in the year 254, a seventy-year-old man.



THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF JUNE

June 21

21 июня

New Calendar June 21 · Old Calendar July 4 (civil dates)

Memory of the Holy Martyr Julian of Tarsus

Память святого мученика Иулиана Тарсянина

Saint Julian, son of a pagan senator and a Christian mother, was born in the Cilician[1] city of Anazarbus. After the death of her husband, the mother of Saint Julian moved from Anazarbus to the Cilician city of Tarsus[2]. Here she baptized the youth Julian into the Christian faith and reared him, teaching him, together with book learning, the truths of the faith and the rules of Christian piety.

When Julian had reached eighteen years of age, a severe persecution of Christians was raised by the emperor Diocletian[3]. Among the other Christians Saint Julian was seized and brought to trial before the governor Marcian[4]. But neither cruel tortures, nor threats, nor promises of gifts and honors could induce the pious youth to offer pagan sacrifices or to renounce Christ. For a whole year Julian was led about from city to city throughout Cilicia and everywhere subjected to torture, but he remained, like adamant[5], unyielding in confessing his faith in Jesus Christ. When Saint Julian was brought to the city of Egaea[6], the impious pagans forcibly opened the mouth of the holy martyr and

1. Cilicia – a southeastern Roman province in Asia Minor.
2. Tarsus – a large and populous city in the southern part of Cilicia, on the river Cydnus, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea not far from it. Even at the present time Tarsus is still a fairly considerable city.
3. Diocletian reigned from A.D. 284 to A.D. 305.
4. Hegemon – governor of a province.
5. Adamant (diamond) – a stone of such hardness that it scratches other stones without itself receiving any harm from them. In ecclesiastical literature this name is applied to many saints who became renowned for the steadfastness of their faith.
6. Aegeae – one of the seaside cities in Cilicia.

thrust into it meat sacrificed to idols and blood, desiring by these impious offerings to defile the pure and holy servant of Christ. After this Saint Julian was cast into prison. His pious mother came to him there; she had accompanied Julian everywhere, beseeching the Lord to strengthen her son in his martyric struggle. When the tormentors seized the mother of Saint Julian and brought her to trial, she asked the governor to permit her for three days to visit her son in prison, in order to persuade him to bow down to the idols. The governor allowed her to come to her son in prison without hindrance. She, spending days and nights with him in the prison and speaking with him in maternal love, with tears urged him to endure temporal sufferings to the end, that he might be granted from the Lord eternal blessings in the kingdom of the martyrs.

After three days had passed, Saint Julian together with his mother was brought to trial before the governor. Thinking that the mother had already persuaded her son to offer sacrifices to the idols, the governor began to praise her for this exhortation; but she loudly and fearlessly began to confess the name of Jesus Christ and to denounce pagan godlessness. Saint Julian also fearlessly confessed and glorified Jesus Christ, the one true God, and denounced pagan polytheism. Then the enraged governor commanded that both of them, mother and son, be tortured. After many torments the mother of the saint had her feet cut off, the feet with which she had followed her son from Tarsus; the holy martyr Julian was placed in a sack filled with sand and various poisonous reptiles and cast into the sea. Thus Saint Julian ended his sufferings. After some time his pious mother also died in her sufferings, and both received the crown of victory from Christ God.

The body of Saint Julian was carried by the waves to the shore, where it was found by a pious widow of Alexandria and buried with honor. Afterwards the holy relics of Julian were transferred to Anti-

och[7]. Saint John Chrysostom[8], when he was a presbyter in Antioch, honored the memory of the holy martyr Julian with a eulogy.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Let us all worthily praise today Julian, the invincible warrior of piety, the ally and weapon-bearer of the truth, and let us cry to him: Pray to Christ God for us all.

* * *

Life of the Venerable Julius the Presbyter and Julian the Deacon

Житие преподобных Иулия пресвитера и Иулиана диакона

The homeland of Saints Julius and Julian was the land of Myrmidonia[9]. They were full brothers and from childhood were reared in Christian piety and received good instruction in book learning. Having attained maturity, they began to live in virginal purity, serving God with fasting and prayer, meditating day and night on the law of the Lord. For such a God-pleasing life they were deemed worthy of ecclesiastical ranks: Julius was ordained a presbyter and Julian a deacon; and they were in the Church of Christ like two lamps, shining with good works and by them glorifying the Heavenly Father. At that time, among the wheat of the holy faith, there was still much of the tares of idolatrous error. Although East and West were then already under the rule of Christian emperors, and piety flourished everywhere, nevertheless pagan impiety had not yet been wholly destroyed, especially in the villages, where people in unreasoning blindness still held to the ancient idol-worship. And so these two servants of Christ, filled with zeal for God, came to Constantinople to the pious emperor Theodosius the Younger[10] and asked him to give them his imperial letter, so that they

7. Antioch – the oldest city of Syria, lies on the river Orontes, some 10 versts from where it flows into the Mediterranean Sea.
8. St. John Chrysostom – the renowned Father of the Church of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century; his memory is celebrated on November 13.
9. That is, the island of Eshna.
10. Emperor Theodosius the Younger reigned from A.D. 408 to A.D. 450.

might without hindrance destroy idols in the Greco-Roman domain, overthrow and burn the idol temples, and visit the groves and gardens planted in honor of the idols, and instead build temples of God and spread the glory of the name of Jesus Christ. The emperor granted them this permission, confirmed by a letter in which was added a command that throughout the surrounding districts and cities all the rulers of the province (governors, princes, various dignitaries and city prefects) should obey Julius and Julian in all matters and supply them with everything necessary for building the temples of God. They also received from the most holy patriarch a blessing to preach, to build and to consecrate churches. And so these two holy warriors of Christ, like two apostles, set out for the lands of the Greco-Roman kingdom, preaching the name of Jesus Christ to the pagans, and converting many to Christ God, confirming their faith not only by word but also by miracles; for from God they had been given grace and power to heal the sick and to cast out demons; and everywhere they overthrew the idol temples and destroyed the idols. In those places where the pagans in their obstinacy offered them resistance, there too, showing the imperial command to the rulers and city prefects and receiving help from them, the saints carried out their work. They built a multitude of churches, not only with aid from the imperial treasury but also from the generous alms of truly believing Christians: for everyone, everywhere, who saw such teachers, enlighteners and wonderworkers, did not spare their possessions but gave them for the holy work. Thus they traversed East and West and built up to one hundred churches. The miracles wrought by them are countless, so that it is impossible to relate them in detail, and only some can be mentioned.

Once, during the construction of a church in Vivlae, which was being built through the zeal of the holy brothers, one of the workmen, through carelessness, cut off his left thumb with an iron tool, so that a great deal of blood flowed out, and the man fell as if dead from exhaustion and pain. The saints, seeing this, took the severed thumb, applied it to the joint, signing the injured place with the sign of the Cross, and the thumb immediately grew back into its place, and the wound closed.

The saints, raising the man from the ground healthy, placed his iron tool back in his hands, saying:

"Be strong and work in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

At another time the saints were in the diocese of Milan[11], near a city called Gavdian. Here, having cleansed of idol shrines a certain village, they themselves labored at building a church (the ninety-ninth of the churches they had built). Together with them a multitude of believers labored on this construction, helping them. It happened that some people were driving past that place. Seeing those who were laboring at the building of the temple, they decided among themselves that the builders would detain them and, even if they did not wish it, would persuade them to take part in the work[12]. And since it was not possible for them to pass by that place, they acted thus: they laid one of their company in the cart as if dead, pretending they were carrying a dead man for burial. As soon as they drew near to the very place where the church was being built, the holy brothers addressed them with the words:

"Children! Help us in our work."

They answered:

"We cannot delay, for we are carrying a dead man for burial."

"Are you not lying, children?" asked Saint Julius.

"No, Father," they answered.

"Then let it be to you according to your word," said Saint Julian in reply.

And those people went on their way. Having gone a little further, they told the one who had feigned death to rise up. But he did not rise; then they began to shake him more vigorously, thinking he was asleep. Soon, however, they were convinced that he had indeed died. This miracle became known everywhere, and all were in fear and terror, so that from that time no one dared to tell the saints a lie.

11. Mediolanum – now Milan – in Italy.

12. According to the custom of that time, all who happened to be near the place of construction were to take part in building a church. Travelers, by virtue of this custom, could not have refused to help the builders if they had been invited.

Some time after this, Saint Julius the presbyter said once to his brother, Saint Julian:

"Stay here, brother, and build this ninety-ninth church, while I go and seek another place where the hundredth might be built, so that, once a hundred churches have been built on earth, by the grace of God we may be transferred to the Church not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Having said this, Julius set out on his way. Having gone about two miles, he came to a lake called Mukoros. The lake is very large; on it he saw a large island, very beautiful, on which no one dwelt. Looking at that island from afar, the saint began to consider how he might cross over to it. And since there was no boat nearby, he stood in prayer, and kneeling, prayed, saying:

"O Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ! By Thy almighty power grant that this my mantle[13], which is upon me, may serve me in place of a boat, so that, standing upon it, I too, guided by Thy right hand, may cross over to that island without sinking into the water."

Having prayed thus, he spread his mantle upon the water, and, making the sign of the Cross, stepped onto it; and the mantle, like a boat, did not sink into the water. The Saint, holding his staff and rowing the water with it as with an oar, steered the wondrous vessel made of the mantle and reached that island. Having landed upon the island, he went all around it and rejoiced greatly, seeing its beauty. In the middle of the island St. Julius saw an enormous rock occupying a large space. Upon it he resolved to build the hundredth church in honor of the holy Twelve Apostles. But on that island there were great numbers of serpents and all kinds of venomous reptiles, so that no man dared even to approach that island. The Saint, climbing onto that rock, made a cross out of a small tree and set it in a small cleft in the rock. Then, having prayed to God, he summoned in the name of Jesus Christ all the serpents and reptiles, and a great multitude of them gathered to him. The Saint said to them:

"You have already lived long enough in this place; now, in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

I command you to depart from this island and to leave this place for the house of God and for the servants of Christ who intend to dwell here."

No sooner had the Saint spoken these words than all the serpents and reptiles, as if understanding his words, at once obeyed his command, and, gathering together, withdrew to the western side of the island; then, plunging into the lake, they swam across to the other side, to the mountain called Kamunkin, and there they settled, making their nests; and the island was cleared of reptiles. The Saint, crossing back again as he had done the first time, went to the Christian villages in the vicinity, and, receiving from them help and all that was necessary, returned to the island in boats with workmen; then, laying the foundation of a church upon the rock in honor of the holy Twelve Apostles, he occupied himself with its construction.

At that time his brother, St. Julian, having finished the building of the church near the city of Gavdian, resolved to prepare a tomb in it for his brother Julius, and began to build it. St. Julius, learning of the completion of that church, went to see it and at the same time to visit his brother. When he came there, the other met him with these words:

"Behold, brother, by God's help and by your prayers the building of the church is finished; only a tomb is still being built for you, so that your body may rest in it after your repose."

But St. Julius, filled with the gift of prophecy, said in reply to St. Julian:

"Hasten to finish the building of this tomb, for it is you yourself who will have to rest in it."

And this came to pass. When the tomb was prepared, St. Julian the deacon reposed in the Lord. St. Julius, having honorably committed his brother's body to burial, returned again to the island, where he continued the construction of the church dedicated to the Apostles. Having finished building the church, he prepared a tomb in it for himself, for he foresaw his approaching end, being already of advanced years. At that time in Mediolanum a senator named Avdentius, a man of noble birth, virtuous and pious, had been appointed by the Emperor as eparch to

13. Mantle (*milot'*) – an outer garment, a cloak.

govern all that land. Learning of St. Julius, he wished, together with his household, to visit the island of Mukoros, to see the man of God, the presbyter Julius, and to view the church he had built; they embarked on a ship and set out. Having arrived on the island, Avdentius was granted the blessing of the Saint and conversed with him about spiritual matters, and also inspected the church building; after this he addressed the Saint with these words:

"Father! If you intend to build anything else, tell me, and I will help you from my estate, for I am gladly ready to serve you in everything that is needed."

The Saint replied:

"My child! For us nothing more needs to be built; it remains only to build beside my tomb a tomb for you, for after your death your body will rest in this church."

Avdentius replied:

"Let your tomb be here, Father, and I have already prepared a tomb for myself in Mediolanum."

"Believe me, my child," said St. Julius to him in reply, "that your body will be buried beside my body, and not in any other place."

Having conversed sufficiently with the Saint and received his blessing, Avdentius returned to Mediolanum. In a short time St. Julius reposed in the Lord and was buried in his tomb, from which, through his prayers, many healings were granted to the sick. After the repose of St. Julius, his successor was the pious presbyter Elias. After some years Avdentius, the eparch of Mediolanum, also died and was laid in his tomb in Mediolanum; but early the next morning he was found lying outside his tomb, not thrown out of it by anyone, but as if carried out of it and carefully laid down. His body was placed back into the same tomb, but a second time he was found lying outside the tomb; the same happened a third time. They wished to lay him in another place, but nowhere could a place be found for his burial. Then his household remembered the words St. Julius had spoken to Avdentius, that he would not be buried in any other place than beside his body; and they carried the body of Avdentius to the island of Mukoros. The blessed Elias met the body of the eparch with crosses, censers and candles, and with fit-

ting honors committed it to burial beside the tomb of the Venerable Julius.

Thus was the prophecy of the Saint fulfilled, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

* * *



THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF JUNE

June 22

22 июня

New Calendar June 22 · Old Calendar July 5 (civil dates)

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Hieromartyr Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata

Житие и страдания святого священномученика Евсевия, епископа Самосатского

Saint Eusebius was bishop of the city of Samosata[1], which was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch. He was a man orthodox and pious, filled with zeal for God, steadfast and unshaken in the Orthodox confession at the very time when the growing heresy of Arius[2] was doing great harm, and the Church of God, sorely troubled, was tossed like a ship in the midst of the sea during a storm.

After the death of the holy Great Emperor Constantine (who reigned from 306 to 337), his son Constantius[3] ascended the throne in the eastern half of the realm. Being an Arian, he gave every assistance to the Arians and furthered their interests. Therefore, in his reign the Orthodox had to endure great persecution and oppression at the hands of the Arians, and from them Saint Eusebius also suffered no small afflictions for his zeal for the Orthodox faith.

The zeal of Saint Eusebius for the Church of Christ became known to all after the following event.

When Eudoxius, the Arian Patriarch of Antioch, departed for the throne of Constantinople[4] out of love of riches, a council of all the Syri-

1. Samosata was the chief city of the Syrian province of Commagene; it was situated on the western bank of the river Euphrates, now Samsat.
2. Arius denied the consubstantiality of the Son of God with God the Father, regarded Jesus Christ as a creature, and did not acknowledge in Him divine perfection. The heresy of Arius was decisively condemned at the First (325) and Second (381) Ecumenical Councils.
3. Constantius (II) reigned from 337 to 361.
4. Eudoxius was Patriarch of Antioch from 357 to 358, and of Constantinople from 360 to 370.

an bishops was convened at Antioch on this occasion to elect a patriarch in place of Eudoxius. Since among the Christian people, and even among the bishops, there were few Orthodox, and many had turned Arian following the impious emperor, the doctrinal position of the newly elected patriarch was of great significance for the Orthodox Church. Saint Eusebius, who at the council occupied no small place among the presiding bishops, took care of this matter. Knowing well Meletius, bishop of Sebastia in Armenia, as a true believer firmly holding to the symbol of the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, Eusebius advised everyone that this bishop should be chosen for the patriarchate. The Arianizing party, not knowing the Orthodoxy of Meletius and thinking he would be one of their own, gladly followed Eusebius' counsel. They drew up a common decision concerning Meletius, confirmed it with their signatures, and entrusted it for safekeeping to Saint Eusebius. Then, when they had received the imperial consent to this election, notice of the election was sent from the bishops to Saint Meletius, and he was brought to Antioch, where he was received with great joy. Saint Meletius, in the rank of patriarch, began by teaching his flock first of all a good and virtuous life; by this he sought to smooth the way to orthodoxy for stubborn hearts. The saint hoped that, by correcting evil morals and rooting out thorns and thistles, he could more successfully sow the seeds of orthodoxy among his flock. After a short time the people wished to ascertain what confession their new patriarch held, and they asked the patriarch about it. On this occasion Saint Meletius preached a sermon to the people in the church, in which he praised the Orthodox faith established at the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, and confessed the Son as consubstantial and co-natural with the Father, uncreated, and the Creator of all creatures. After such a public sermon the Arians were thrown into confusion and greatly enraged, while the Orthodox rejoiced, seeing on the apostolic throne such an Orthodox archpastor. The Arians drove the patriarch out of the church with fury on the thirtieth day after his enthronement, and they began to revile him everywhere, calling him a follower of the heretic Sabellius[5]. Then, at their request, Meletius was condemned by the emperor to exile, and

by night he was sent away from Antioch into banishment. In his place the Arians elected Euzoius, an Arian, to Antioch.

Saint Eusebius of Samosata, seeing what disturbance the heretics had caused in the Antiochian church, and seeing also the undeserved reproach the Arians had heaped upon the new archbishop Meletius, left Antioch without telling anyone and went to his own city. After Meletius' departure, the Arians recalled that the decision on the election of Meletius, signed by the hands of the bishops, was in Eusebius' keeping. Recalling this, they fell into no small confusion, fearing that they might be seen to have elected an archbishop of their own will and then immediately expelled him. Therefore the Arians asked the emperor, who was then in Antioch, to send to Eusebius with a request to return the decision entrusted to him. The emperor immediately sent a messenger for the decision to Eusebius. The messenger, arriving at the bishop, delivered the imperial command to him, to which Saint Eusebius replied thus:

"I will not give up the common decision entrusted to me until all who entrusted it to me are gathered together (in council)."

The messenger returned empty-handed, for which the emperor was greatly angered and sent him again, writing a stern order that, if the bishop should refuse to give up the decision, his right hand should be cut off. The emperor wrote this to frighten the saint, but he did not dare to order the messenger to carry it out. When the imperial messenger caught up with the bishop and showed him the threatening letter, Saint Eusebius, having read it, at once held out both hands for amputation, saying:

"Cut off not only my right hand but my left as well; I will still not give up the decision that exposes the malice and lawlessness of the Arians."

The messenger again returned without the decision and told everything to the emperor. The emperor, hearing the holy bishop's an-

5. Sabellius, a heretic of the third century, distorting the Orthodox teaching on the Holy Trinity, maintained that God has one Person: as Father He is present in heaven, as Son on earth, and as Holy Spirit in creatures.

swer, was greatly astonished at his fearless courage and steadfastness, and afterwards he praised Eusebius before many people.

After some years the impious emperor Constantius died, and after him Julian the Apostate[6] began to reign. This emperor at first restored Saint Meletius from exile to the Antiochian throne, but later he banished him again.

In the reign of Julian the Church of Christ suffered an even greater evil than under Constantius. To the Arian heresy, which troubled all the Orthodox throughout the world, there was added persecution from the idolaters. The emperor himself openly renounced Christ and began publicly to offer sacrifices to idols. A persecution was raised against the Church of Christ and against the Christians, directed chiefly against the clergy. These persecutions led to many Orthodox churches (at that time) being left without their ministers, and episcopal thrones without bishops; some were put to death, and others were driven out either by the Arians, in the reign of Constantius, or by the idol-worshippers, in the reign of Julian. It became so grievous that, had the Lord not brought the life and reign of Julian to an end, hardly any church would have remained intact with its ministers.

In such a fierce time Saint Eusebius, concealing his episcopal rank, put on military garments and in this guise went about Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, confirming the Christians in the Orthodox faith. Wherever he found a church without ministers, he ordained priests, deacons and other clergy, and everywhere he appointed as bishops only those who rejected the heresy of Arius and held Orthodox views. Such was the zeal for Christ, such the labor, the diligence and the care that the great hierarch of God Eusebius had for the Church of Christ at this time!

After the shameful death of Julian, the pious and Christ-loving Emperor Jovian[7] began to reign, under whom Saint Meletius was restored to his throne. At this time Saint Eusebius and the other Orthodox bishops began, with boldness and without fear of the pagans, to govern their flocks. On the advice of Saint Eusebius, Meletius convened a local

6. Julian the Apostate reigned from 361 to 363.
7. Jovian governed the Roman Empire from 363 to 364.

council at Antioch, at which there were 27 bishops; among them, after Meletius, first was Eusebius. At this council was Pelagius, bishop of Laodicea, concerning whose blameless and holy life the following is told.

In his youth Pelagius was persuaded by his parents to enter into marriage, but when he was brought into the bridal chamber, he persuaded his bride to keep virginity in purity. Thus, under the appearance of marriage, he dwelt with his wife in incorrupt virginity, as brother and sister. Besides this he was distinguished by many other virtues, for which he was honored by God and men with the episcopal rank. Pelagius showed great love for Saint Meletius and Saint Eusebius, was their like-minded friend, and together with them a champion of piety. At the above-mentioned local council of Antioch the holy fathers commanded everyone to confess and to hold fast in Orthodoxy the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, as well as the doctrine that had been established at the first Ecumenical Council. The Arians joined in this decision and affixed their signatures, though they did so hypocritically, for a time, out of deference to the Orthodox emperor, and chiefly out of fear of the Orthodox bishops, Saints Meletius, Eusebius and Pelagius, who enjoyed great respect from the emperor. The pious emperor greatly loved these pillars of the Church for their orthodoxy and holy life and listened to them in all things, which is why they were terrible to the heretics, who from fear of them joined the Church.

After the death of the pious Emperor Jovian, who reigned briefly, Valens[8] ascended the throne, and the heretics returned again to their error like dogs to their vomit[9], first of all perverting the emperor to Arianism through his Arian wife Domnica. The Orthodox Church again began to suffer oppression, and its bishops were subjected to exile. Saint Meletius was banished to Armenia, Saint Pelagius to Arabia, and Saint Eusebius was condemned to imprisonment in Thrace.

The unjust order of the unrighteous emperor concerning the expulsion of Eusebius was delivered at Samosata toward evening. St. Euse-

8. The Emperor Valens reigned from 364 to 378.
9. The comparison is taken from 2 Pet. 2:22.

bius, learning of this, summoned the imperial messenger and said to him:

"Keep silent today and tell no one the reason for your coming, lest the people learn of it and, being zealous, rise up and kill you; then I shall be the cause of your death."

Having said this, St. Eusebius performed the evening prayer, and in the night he disclosed the secret to one of his faithful servants. As soon as all had fallen asleep, the hierarch together with his servant went out of the episcopal house; the servant carried the bishop's pillow and a book behind him. When the travelers came to the river Euphrates, which flows near the city walls, they sat in a boat to sail in it to the city of Zeugma. The hierarch at once ordered the oarsmen to row, and they, laboring all night, brought the travelers to the city of Zeugma the next day. The Samosatans, learning that the holy hierarch had left them, gave themselves over to great weeping and lamentation, and at the same time began to inquire whether anyone knew where the hierarch had gone. One of the inhabitants had seen the hierarch sit in the boat and had heard that the saint had ordered himself to be taken to the city of Zeugma, and he told this to the people. At once many of the inhabitants got into boats, hastily sailed after the hierarch, and overtook him at Zeugma. Standing before the hierarch, they wept with great lamentation, trying to persuade him to return to their city. The hierarch refused. After this, what prayers they did not offer before him, what words they did not speak! They fell at his feet and watered them with their tears, that he might only return to his see. St. Eusebius reminded them of the following apostolic word: "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Rom. 13:1–2).

Quoting this apostolic word, the saint said:

"It is impossible for me to be an opponent of the imperial command, and it is not safe for you either to oppose the will of the Emperor."

After this, those who had come understood that they were not able to persuade the saint to return, and then they began to give him things

for the journey: one gold, another silver, garments, and others slaves, as to one departing to a distant land. Of what was offered, St. Eusebius took very little. At parting the saint instructed them to hold fast to the Orthodox faith and the apostolic dogmas, prayed to God for all of them, and, having blessed them all, set out on his way to Thrace, where he had been condemned to exile.

When St. Eusebius was at Histria, a report came that the Goths had invaded Thrace and were laying it waste severely. Therefore the saint did not go further, but remained at Histria, and there he stayed until the death of the impious emperor Valens. In Eusebius's place at Samosata the Arians appointed the Arian bishop Eunomius.

When Eunomius entered the city of Samosata to govern the flock, not one of the city's inhabitants—neither rich nor poor, neither artisan nor farmer, neither man nor woman, neither old nor young—went out to meet him: the whole city, being Orthodox, did not wish to honor the heretical bishop, nor to receive a blessing from him, nor even to see him. Eunomius, by imperial authority, took over the administration of the episcopal see and began to conduct services in the cathedral church. The people did not go to that church, nor to the episcopal house, because they did not love the heretical bishop. In view of this, Eunomius was constantly alone, except for those who had come with him. Of him it is told that, although he was a heretic in faith, yet in his disposition he was kind, gentle, quiet, humble, and agreeable to all. Concerning his good disposition the following is related.

Once he went in to bathe in the public bath, and the servants, according to the custom of that land, closed the doors behind him so that others might not enter where the bishop was bathing. Eunomius, learning that many were standing at the doors wishing to bathe, ordered the servants to open the doors and admit all who wished to bathe with him together. Those who entered the bath, seeing the bishop seated in the warm pool, did not wish to sit down and stood before him, showing him this honor. The bishop invited them to enter the same pool where he was, but those who had come refused. Then the bishop understood that those who had come because of him were standing and did not wish to bathe. This greatly grieved him; he came out of the pool and withdrew

from the bath, not wishing to be honored. Those remaining in the bath immediately poured out the water from the pool, as defiled by the washing of a heretic, and thoroughly cleansed the pool itself, abhorring the heretic's presence in it; and only then, heating new water, did they prepare a pool for themselves. Learning of this, Eunomius was fully convinced that he could not win over the people of Samosata; he left the episcopal see and withdrew from the city.

After Eunomius's departure, the Arians, in accordance with their heresy, appointed Lucius as bishop of Samosata, an open wolf and enemy of Christ's sheep. The citizens of the city likewise did not show honor to this bishop, as they had not to the first (Eunomius), and he lived in communion only with those who had come with him, for none of the Orthodox went to the bishop. The sheep of Christ, though without their shepherd (Eusebius), nevertheless remembered well his teaching and kept the holy faith without blemish. How much the Orthodox abhorred the heretical bishop may be seen from the following case:

Once many boys in the street, playing as children do, were tossing a ball from one to another. At this time it happened that the bishop was passing by. By chance the ball fell under the horses and chariot of the bishop. The children, seeing this, cried out loudly: "The ball has been defiled by heresy, the ball has been defiled by heresy..." Hearing the cries, the bishop left one of his servants to learn what the children were doing and why they were shouting so loudly. The children kindled a fire and began to toss the ball through the flame, thinking by this fire to cleanse the ball of heresy. Thus not only grown men but even small children abhorred the heresy of the bishop, who was like an abomination of desolation in a holy place (cf. Dan. 9:27). Learning of this, Lucius did not follow the meekness of Eunomius, but was angered and banished many sacred persons to remote places. He sent the nephew of Eusebius, the blessed Antiochus, a most worthy priest, pleasing to God and inspired by God, skilled in the wisdom of books, into exile in Armenia; and the most renowned among the servants of the Lord, the deacon Evolcius, he drove into the desert of Oasis. In view of this, no little sorrow and grief befell the city of Samosata.

After the dreadful death of the wicked emperor Valens, the right-believing emperor Gratian[10] began to reign. He immediately freed all the hierarchs and other sacred persons who had been exiled for the Orthodox faith, and commanded that their former sees be returned to them. Then there returned: St. Meletius to Antioch, St. Pelagius to Laodicea, St. Eusebius to Samosata. Together with Eusebius there returned to Samosata also all who had been exiled by the Arian Lucius, and among them the priest Antiochus from Armenia and the deacon Evolcius from Oasis. For the Orthodox this was a great joy, for the impious a great shame. Upon returning to his former place, Eusebius, together with the other bishops and especially in concert with St. Meletius, began to care for the good order of the Church. First of all he took pains to choose for the episcopal sees, which had been vacant after the deposition of the Arian bishops, men worthy and steadfast in Orthodoxy. Ordaining them to the episcopal rank, the saint appointed the following bishops: the honorable Acacius to Beroea, the virtuous Theodotus to Hierapolis, Eusebius, bearing his own name, to Chalcis, Isidore to Cyrrhus; and at Edessa, after the repose of the holy hierarch Barsas, he raised the confessor Eulogius to the see. With the God-pleasing bishop Marinus, who had been chosen for the Arian city of Dolichina, St. Eusebius himself went to that city, where he wished to cleanse the church of heresy and seat the newly chosen Orthodox hierarch on the see. When Eusebius entered this city, an Arian woman threw a pot at him from the roof and split the saint's head. From this wound St. Eusebius fell ill and reposed in the Lord. Dying, he adjured all who were with him not to do any harm to that woman who had caused his illness out of vengeance. In this the saint imitated his Lord, Who prayed for those who crucified Him, saying: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34); and also St. Stephen, who prayed for those who stoned him[11].

Thus the great servant of God Eusebius died a martyr's death[12] at the hand of an Arian, having suffered for the Son of God, co-eternal

10. Gratian governed the western half of the Roman Empire from 375 to 383.
11. The memory of the holy Archdeacon Stephen is celebrated on 27 December.
12. The repose of the holy Hieromartyr Eusebius took place about 380.

and of one essence with the Father. His holy body was returned to the city of Samosata, where it was honorably buried, with tears and lamentation of the whole Christian people. In Eusebius's place was raised the aforementioned blessed Antiochus, son of the sister of St. Eusebius. The Church of Samosata flourished in Orthodoxy, piously glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God in the Trinity, to Whom be honor, glory, thanksgiving and worship from us also, now and unto endless ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

Having lived piously in hierarchy and traversed the path of sufferings, thou didst extinguish the idolatrous sacrifices, O hierarch Eusebius; but as one having boldness toward Christ God, pray that our souls be saved.

* * *

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Zenon and Zena

Память святых мучеников Зинона и Зины

Saint Zenon the Martyr was from Philadelphia of Arabia[13], which in antiquity bore the name Eman. Zina was his servant, and he burned with desire to undergo sufferings for the faith in Christ. Under the governor Maximian, who administered the region in the reign of the Emperor Maximian, Saint Zenon[14] distributed all his possessions to the poor and set his slaves free. Hearing of the great honor the governor was paying to the idols, he came to him together with his servant, for Zina himself had wished it so: he would not leave his master and went with him of his own accord. Saint Zenon presented himself to the governor, and when he saw that the governor was indeed greatly concerned with honoring false gods and himself zealously devoted to the service of idols, he rebuked him. The governor at once

13. According to the explanation of the Most Reverend Philaret (*Lives of the Saints*, June, p. 165), Philadelphia of Arabia was the name of the northern part of Peraea, or the Transjordanian country in Palestine, which bore the name of the Decapolis.

14. According to the Menologion of Emperor Basil and the Greek Synaxarion, Zenon was a soldier.

commanded that the saint be beaten with straps of ox-hide. During this torment Zenon, stretching out his arm, struck the wall of the idol-temple with his elbow and thereby broke it and destroyed it. For this he was first hanged, and they mercilessly began to scrape his body, rubbing the wounds with vinegar and salt, and afterwards they fixed his feet in the stocks with four wedges. Zina, his servant, came to the place of the saint's torment and begged his master not to reject him or abandon him. Learning of this, the governor commanded that Zina also have his feet fixed in the stocks. When both holy martyrs were brought before the governor for interrogation and refused to renounce Christ, they were subjected to cruel beating, and Saint Zenon in addition had his breast and the part of it where the heart lies burned with red-hot iron rods. After this the saints were hanged on a tree, heavy stones were tied to their feet, and their muscles were burned with fire; then they were thrown into a pit of fire and oil was poured on the fire, but since the holy martyrs remained miraculously unharmed and were not even singed by the fire, their heads were at last cut off with the sword[15]. Their memory is celebrated in the church of Saint George in Kiparissia[16].

On this day is commemorated the holy martyr Galaction, drowned in the sea, and Juliana, who was burned together with her son Saturninus.

* * *

15. The holy martyrs died in 304, in the reign of Maximian Herculius, co-ruler with Diocletian from 286 to 305.

16. Kiparissios or Kiparissos is a locality in Constantinople.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF JUNE

June 23

23 июня

New Calendar June 23 · Old Calendar July 6 (civil dates)

Memory of the Holy Martyr Agrippina

Память святой мученицы Агрипины

The holy virgin Agrippina was born and brought up in ancient Rome. From her early years she dedicated herself to God, and was, in the words of the Apostle, "the sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved" (2 Cor. 2:15). Like a fragrant apple or a sweet-smelling flower, by her chaste and virtuous life she brought sweetness and fragrance to faithful hearts, and thereby drove away the stench of the passions. She adorned her soul with virginal purity and betrothed herself to Christ. For Him, in the reign of Valerian[1], she boldly and courageously, not fearing torments, gave herself up to many wounds out of love for her Bridegroom Christ. Her body was beaten with rods so severely that her bones were broken; after this she was stripped and bound in chains. But the Angel of the Lord, with an invisible hand, released her from her bonds and strengthened her, and she, trampling underfoot all impiety, in torments yielded up her spirit to God[2]. The handmaidens of Christ, Vassa, Paula and Agathonika, secretly took the body of the holy martyr and departed with it from Rome. Passing from place to place, after a long voyage, they came to the region of Sicily, where they secretly buried the holy body. As soon as Sicily was granted the honour of receiving the venerable relics of the holy martyr, at that same time it was delivered from dark demonic malice, and it began to have protection against the Agarenes through the prayers of St. Agrippina. Thus, when the Agarenes advanced upon the city where the

1. The Emperor Valerian ruled the Roman Empire from 253 to 259.
2. The death of the holy martyr Agrippina took place in the middle of the third century.

church of the holy martyr stood, and dared to take it, they were at that very time delivered to utter destruction.

From the venerable tomb of the martyr, all the sick and lepers who came with faith received healing from every infirmity, through the prayers of the holy martyr, by the grace of Christ our God. Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 4:

The radiant day of thy bright exploits has dawned, on which the Divine Church, honouring them, gathers all together to cry joyfully to thee: Rejoice, virgin and martyr, Agrippina, most honourable.

* * *

Tale of the Repentance of Theophilus

Повесть о покаянии Феофила

Shortly before the invasion of the Persians[3] upon the Greek domains, in the second Cilician eparchy, in the city of Adana[4], there lived the steward of the holy cathedral church of that city, by name Theophilus. He lived virtuously and holily, disposing of the church property justly and wisely, and managing affairs righteously and in accordance with the will of God. For the hierarch he was the eye that watched over everything and the right hand that carried out all the affairs and commands. He was greatly loved by his bishop, and not only by the bishop but also by the whole church clergy and all the inhabitants of the city, for his virtues: for he was a father to orphans, a provider for widows, a generous refuge for the poor, a defender of the wronged, a helper of the helpless; in a word, there was no one whom he did not comfort in sorrow by word and deed. For this all revered Theophilus as a father, loved him as a benefactor, and extolled him with praises.

When, by the providence of God, the bishop of Adana departed from temporal life, all the pious inhabitants of that city, of every rank, from the greatest to the least, moved by true Christian love for Theophilus

3. At the beginning of the seventh century, under King Chosroes.
4. Adana is an insignificant town in Cilicia, a Greek region in Asia Minor.

for his many benefactions, and knowing also his pure and blameless life, unanimously chose him as their bishop. Then they sent several especially esteemed citizens to the Cilician metropolitan with a written notice of this. Having read the letter, the metropolitan agreed to confirm their election: Theophilus was also known to him as a virtuous and God-pleasing man, capable of governing the eparchy, skilled and experienced in all things. He at once gave orders to summon him for ordination as bishop of the church of Adana.

But Theophilus, learning of the metropolitan's decision, did not wish to go to him, stubbornly refusing to accept the episcopal rank. The citizens and the whole clergy long asked and entreated him with tears to become their bishop, but in vain. Then they again sent a petition to the metropolitan that he should ordain Theophilus as their bishop, even against the latter's will.

Having at last summoned him by force, by his authoritative command, the metropolitan received him with joy and love and wished at once to ordain him bishop. But Theophilus fell prostrate at his feet and with tears began to beg him not to lay such a burden upon him.

"I know my sins!" he cried out. "I am unworthy of the episcopal rank."

After he had lain for a long time thus at the metropolitan's feet, weeping and begging to be spared, the hierarch gave him three days' time for reflection, so that, considering the circumstances, he might agree to accept the episcopal rank, and not disregard the entreaties of so many people who earnestly desired to have him as their shepherd.

After three days had passed, the metropolitan again summoned Theophilus and began to exhort and beseech him not to refuse the hierarchal rank; at the same time he praised the purity of his life and his skill in administration, and called him worthy of this rank. But Theophilus again fell at his feet and, shedding abundant tears, continued to cry out:

"I am unworthy of the hierarchy!"

Seeing that he remained unyielding, stubbornly refused, and yielded neither to commands nor to entreaties, the metropolitan at last left him to his own will. Having ordained another as bishop, whom he also con-

sidered worthy, he sent him to Adana, entrusting Theophilus to him, so that he might continue to perform his stewardship service as before.

After the new bishop had been for some time on his throne, while Theophilus continued his usual service, certain enemies, moved by satanic envy, began to slander the steward to the bishop, secretly defaming him and accusing him of many unseemly deeds.

At first the bishop did not heed their calumnies and did not give them credence, knowing his steward to be a man virtuous and blameless in every respect. But since they did not cease to slander out of envy, almost daily bringing various humiliating accusations against Theophilus, little by little the bishop began to incline to their words, to listen to their slanders and to trust them.

After some time he removed Theophilus from the stewardship, so that he should no longer manage anything either in the episcopal house or in the church property, but should live at home quietly and in stillness, resting from his labours; and the stewardship was entrusted to another.

Freed from cares and worldly bustle, Theophilus began to devote himself to the service of the one God. But the enemy of the human race, the devil, unable to endure the sight of Theophilus's God-pleasing and carefree life, armed himself against him with all his wiles and began to trouble him, now through his own thoughts, now through other people, quietly whispering to him: "The bishop has dishonoured you, forgetting your great labours; he has humbled you, preferring to you one worse, unskilled and unworthy; he has given you over to the mockery and insult of men."

And Theophilus began, at first little by little, to heed these diabolical suggestions and thoughts, and then he more and more reasoned about this with himself or with friends and bitterly lamented. At last the enemy's cunning brought him to the point where, forgetting his habitual hope in God, he began to languish in faintheartedness and sorrow and fell into despair. It seemed to him that everyone was laughing at him and mocking him, that no one any longer respected him; he became ashamed to go out of his house among people. In his heart there blazed an irresistible desire for his former authority and the manage-

ment of the church property; day and night he thought of this, troubled himself with thoughts, and pondered by what means he might recover his former position, so that his enemies would no longer rejoice in his humiliation.

Because of this desire and other thoughts displeasing to God, the grace of God withdrew from his heart; without it he came at last to extreme despair and began to seek help in sorcery and among demons. He who at first had not wished to accept the episcopal rank now sought a much lesser authority. Thus God permitted this to him, because he had taken into his heart evil thoughts and the counsel of Satan.

In that city there lived a certain Jew, a son of perdition, a famous magician, sorcerer and deceiver. He was a true servant of the devil and led many into perdition. Theophilus went by night to this magician and, coming to his house, began to knock at the gate. The magician came out to see who was knocking and, seeing Theophilus, was struck with terror. Astonished (for he knew him), he asked him to enter the house, and when Theophilus had entered, he asked him:

"For what reason, my lord, have you taken the trouble to come to me by night, a poor and unworthy man?"

But Theophilus in reply threw himself at his feet and, entreating him, said:

"If you can help, then help me, and do not reject me in my great sorrow."

Then he told the magician everything in detail: how the bishop had grieved him by taking away his administration, how he had given him over to the mockery of men, preferring to him one worse, and dismissing him from service; he promised the magician a rich reward if he would help him and restore his former honour. Then the God-hating Jewish magician answered him:

"Do not grieve over this, my lord, but return home joyfully and with good hope; on the following night come to me at this same hour, and I will take you to my master, and he will help you in everything."

Hearing this answer from the magician, the wretched Theophilus (at that time) rejoiced greatly and returned home full of pernicious hope.

The day passed and night came again. At midnight, at the magician's command, Theophilus appeared before him. The magician led him to the hippodrome, the place where horse races were held, and said to him:

"If you see some vision, or hear some voice, do not be afraid, and do not cross yourself; the cross helps people in nothing: it is a Christian deception worthy of laughter."

Theophilus agreed with him in everything and promised not to shield himself with the cross. Then the magician at once showed him in a vision a multitude of various wondrous figures, adorned with different bright garments and holding lighted candles in their hands. These were demons; they shouted out praises to their prince, Satan; and the prince of darkness sat in their midst in pride and phantom glory. Then the wretched Jewish magician took Theophilus by the hand, led him into this ruinous assembly, and drew near with him to the prince.

"Why have you brought this man here to us?" asked the prince of darkness of the magician.

"My lord," answered the God-hating Jew, "I have brought him to you because, deeply offended by his bishop, he asks you for help."

"How can I help one who is a slave of his God? If he truly wishes to become my slave and to enter the number of my servants, then I will help him in such a way that he will obtain greater power and honor than he had before, and will be more mighty even than the bishop himself."

"Do you hear what the prince says?" the magician then asked Theophilus.

"I hear," he answered, "and I will carry out everything he commands me."

Having said these words, he at once fell down, bowed to Satan, and began to kiss his feet.

"Let this man renounce the so-called Son of Mary," said the devil to the magician, "let him renounce also Her Herself, since I hate them both intensely. Let him write out the renunciation with his own hand and hand it to me. After this let him ask of me whatever he wants, and he will receive what he asks."

Having heard this, Theophilus answered him:

"I will carry out everything you command, my lord, only let me receive what I desire."

At these words the crafty enemy of the human race, the devil, stretched out his demonic hands to him, and embracing Theophilus, began to stroke his beard and kiss him, pressing his unclean lips to his mouth.

"Rejoice, my sincere and faithful friend," he said to him.

And the wretched Theophilus, confirming his friendship with the devil, renounced Christ our Savior and the Most Pure Mother of God; having written his renunciation on a sheet of paper[5] prepared beforehand by the magician, and having sealed it, he handed it to the prince of darkness. After this they embraced each other in friendship, kissed, and parted: the prince of darkness with his servants became invisible and withdrew to his place, to hell; and Theophilus with the Jew returned from the hippodrome, both rejoicing in their ruin.

The next morning, by God's providence, as it seems, and not by the devil's effort, the bishop, waking, repented that he had dismissed Theophilus from the office of steward. Sending men to summon him again to the episcopal house, he restored him with great honor to his former post, gave him double honor, and entrusted him with still greater authority over the church property and over all affairs. Moreover, the bishop, in the presence of the clergy and the citizens, asked Theophilus for forgiveness.

"Forgive me, brother," he said, "forgive me; I have sinned against you by dishonoring your sanctity when I put in your place a man unworthy of it. Now I dismiss him, and I beg you to take up the stewardship again."

From that hour Theophilus began to live in his former honor and authority, esteemed above all and managing all the affairs of the stewardship. Not only did the clergy and the citizens render him great honors and obey him with fear, but the bishop himself conceived respect for

5. *Paper* (*khartiya*): When the making of paper was not yet known, people wrote on specially prepared skin or on sheets of Egyptian reed called papyrus. Manuscripts on such sheets of skin or reed were called *khartiya*.

him, and his former enemies, in shame, fell silent and began humbly to seek his favor.

At this time the impious and cunning magician often visited Theophilus.

"Do you see, my lord," he would say, "how my prince and I have helped you according to your desire, and how quickly you have received help from us."

"Truly I have received it," Theophilus would answer, "and I thank you very much."

Having lived a short time in such apostasy, Theophilus began as if to awaken from sleep and come to himself, recognizing his ruin. Our Creator and Redeemer, Christ God, who does not desire the death of sinners but mercifully awaits their repentance[6], called to mind Theophilus's former virtuous life and labors, his many works of mercy, his care for the poor and the widows, the upbringing of orphans, the defense of the wronged, the help to all who required help, and the whole multitude of his benefactions. Not despising His creation in His ineffable goodness, the Lord showed in him His mercy, for there is no sin that overcomes His love for mankind: by His secret and divine inspiration He placed in Theophilus's heart the thought of repentance and conversion.

Coming to his senses, Theophilus began to reflect what a great and terrible crime he had committed in renouncing Christ God and the Most Pure Mother of God for the sake of temporary and insignificant human honor. He began to suffer in his soul, to grieve and repent inwardly, sighing deeply from the depths of his heart, striking his breast, weeping bitterly and sobbing.

Meanwhile the Jewish magician was seized by the ruler of that land, condemned by lawful judgment to death for his many sorceries and crimes, and received a punishment worthy of his deeds: he was burned alive.

6. Cf. Ezek. 18:21–23.

Theophilus, however, day and night wept and sobbed, grieving in his heart, taking neither food nor drink, and wishing to speak with no one. Shut away alone, he lamented and sorrowed.

"Woe is me, the wretch! Woe is me, the lost one!" he cried out. "What have I done? Into what destruction have I plunged? Where shall I now go to obtain salvation? To whom shall I flee to obtain mercy? To Christ God? But I have renounced Him. To the Theotokos? But I have rejected Her. I have become a slave of the devil, and with my signature I have sealed my slavery. Who can tear my written bond from his hands? Who will help me and deliver me from his power? What need had I to go to this vile and abominable magician, to entrust myself to him and together with him to give myself over to eternal fire? What profit have I gained from this temporary honor? What is the pride and prosperity of this vain world? Woe is me! I, the wretch, am lost! Woe is me! I have strayed and fallen into a net from which I do not know how I can free myself! Woe is me! I have deprived myself of eternal light and dwell in darkness! Would it not have been better for me when I was dismissed from the stewardship? Would it not have been better for me when I lived carefree and quiet? Why did I desire to plunge my poor soul into Gehenna for the sake of temporary and vain human esteem and empty glory? I am myself the author of my ruin! I myself have killed myself, I myself am the betrayer of my wretched soul! Woe is me! What have I lost! Woe is me! How I have been deceived! Woe is me! What shall I do now? Woe is me! What will I answer God on the day of judgment, when everything shall become manifest and plain, when the righteous are crowned, and I, the wretch, am condemned together with Satan, to whom I sold myself! Whom shall I then beseech to help me? Who will then have mercy on me? Truly no one! Woe to my wretched and unhappy soul! How did you give yourself over to the captivity of hell? How did you destroy yourself? With what a dreadful fall did you fall! Into what waves have you plunged yourself! To what refuge will you now turn? Or to what haven will you hasten? Woe is me, O soul! Woe is me! What calamity has befallen you!"

Weeping long and tormenting his soul in despair with grief and sorrow, Theophilus gradually began to surrender himself to hope in God's mercy.

"I have renounced my Lord Jesus Christ, born of the Most Pure Virgin Mary," he said to himself, "and I do not dare to turn to Him. But although I have also renounced the Mother of God who bore Him, nevertheless I will turn to Her, and with all my soul and with all my heart I will fall down before Her mercy. I will go to the holy church of the Most Pure Mother of God, fall down before Her icon, and remain there in prayer to Her until I appease Her and am granted her intercession for God's mercy."

"But with what lips shall I begin to pray to Her," he continued, "having renounced Her with my defiled lips? How shall I begin my confession? With what heart, what conscience, and what hope shall I move my impious tongue to prayer? I do not know. How shall I ask forgiveness for my immeasurable sins? I fear lest fire fallen from heaven burn me, the wretch, or the earth, opening, swallow me alive and cast me down into the abyss of hell. But do not despair utterly, O my soul; rise up, and strive to be delivered from the evil that holds you; flee to the Mother of Christ, and you shall not be put to shame."

In a secluded place of the city there stood a small church in the name of the Most Pure Theotokos, in which services were held only on feast days. It was in this church that Theophilus desired to shut himself up for prayer, having first freed himself from all his duties as steward and set aside all obstacles and worldly cares. Shutting himself up in this church, and falling down before the honorable icon of the Most Pure Mother of God, he began to pray to Her, weeping and sobbing bitterly. No one knew of all this except his faithful servant Eutychianus, who also wrote down the life of Theophilus.

For forty days and forty nights Theophilus remained in the church, fasting, confessing, repenting, praying day and night without ceasing, and falling down before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. When the forty days were ended, as he was praying at midnight, there appeared the most blessed Mother of our Lord, the true salvation of the

whole world, the refuge of the human race, and our only hope after God.

"O man!" she said to him. "Why do you so shamelessly trouble Me, crying out and beseeching Me to help you, when it was you yourself who renounced My Son and Me? How shall I pray for you to My Son and God, that He may forgive you, the slave of the devil who gave yourself over to him by your written bond? With what eyes shall I look upon the most bright countenance of the Lord when I desire to pray for you? Even I cannot endure the dishonor inflicted upon My Son and God. I can forgive you, O man, the sins you have committed against Me, for I greatly love the Christian race, and especially those who come to Me with the right faith and warm love and pray in My church: such people I help in every way, I take them into My embrace, and I hear their prayers. But the insults and vexations that you cause My Son, whom you crucify a second time by your sins, these I can neither see nor hear. Much labor, many ascetic struggles, and heartfelt contrition will be needed of you to implore His mercy. Although He is most merciful, He is at the same time a righteous Judge and a stern avenger, who renders to each according to his deeds."

Gladdened by the vision of the Mother of God, Theophilus took some heart.

"O my most blessed Lady!" he cried out, "Defender of the human race, refuge and salvation of those who flee to Thee! I know, truly I know, how cruelly I have sinned and angered Thee and the God born of Thee. But I see many examples of people who angered before me Thy Son and our God, to whom forgiveness of sins was granted for the sake of their repentance and confession. If there had been no repentance, how would Thy Son have spared the Ninevites? (Jon. 2:1–11, 3:1–10) If there had been no repentance, how would He have preserved the harlot Rahab? (Josh. 6:24) If there had been no repentance, how would David, who fell into adultery and murder (2 Kgdms. ch. 11), not only have received forgiveness, but also have regained the gift of prophecy after having received it? If there had been no repentance, how would the holy supreme apostle Peter, the pillar of the Church who received from God the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 16:19), not only

have received forgiveness after his great fall, but also have been granted the highest honor of being appointed shepherd of Christ's rational sheep (Jn. 21:15–17), when he denied the Lord not once, not twice, but three times, and then began to weep bitterly (Lk. 22:56–62)? If there had been no repentance, how would the Lord have made a robber-tax-collector an evangelist? (Mt. 9:9) If there had been no repentance, how would St. Paul have become from a persecutor the chosen vessel of Christ? (Acts 9:1–20) If there had been no repentance, how would the Lord have received Zacchaeus, the chief of the tax collectors? (Lk. 19:1–10) If there had been no repentance, how would the returning prodigal son have become dear again to his father? (Lk. 15:11–32) If there had been no repentance, how would the harlot who wept at the feet of Christ have received forgiveness of her many sins? (Lk. 7:36–50) If there had been no repentance, how would Paradise have been opened to the thief? (Lk. 23:39–43) If there had been no repentance, how would the apostle have commanded that the Corinthian sinner be received? (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:1–8) If there had been no repentance, how could Cyprian the magician, who had become altogether like the devil, cutting open the wombs of pregnant women for the sake of his sorcery, and afterward converted to Christ by the righteous Justina, have received not only forgiveness of his great crimes but also been granted the crown of martyrdom? Having so many great examples of repentance, and beholding the boundless mercy of God that covered them, I, a sinner, have dared also to flee with repentance to Thy mercy, all-merciful Lady: extend to me a hand of help, and entreat from Thy Son and our God forgiveness for my grievous sins."

When Theophilus had spoken these words, the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, the true refuge of sinners, the hope of those in despair, and the swift helper of those who pray to her, said to him:

"Confess, O man, that My Son, whom you renounced, born of Me, is truly Christ the Son of the living God, who is to come to judge the living and the dead; and then I will entreat Him for you, and He will accept your repentance."

"O most blessed Lady," answered Theophilus, "how shall I, unworthy and accursed, dare to open my foul and unclean lips, with which

I, for the sake of a small and vain honor, renounced Thy Son and my God, and His holy Cross, the protector of my soul, and holy baptism, and confirmed the renunciation with the written bond I gave to the devil?"

"Only confess," said the Most Pure Theotokos to him, "and do not doubt His mercy; He is loving to man and merciful, and He accepts the tears of those who truly repent: for the salvation of the human race He was pleased to be incarnate of Me, and, being God, became man."

Then Theophilus, with fear and shame, with humility and heartfelt contrition, opened his lips and cried aloud:

"I believe, I confess, and I glorify the one of the Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, ineffably begotten of the Father before the ages, who in the last times came down from heaven and was incarnate for our salvation of the Holy Spirit and of Thee, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the true Theotokos. Perfect God and perfect man, He of His own will was pleased to suffer for our sins, and stretched forth His most pure hands on the life-giving tree of the Cross; the Good Shepherd, He laid down His soul for His sheep, was buried and rose again, and, having taken up the flesh received from Thee, O Most Holy Virgin, ascended into heaven, and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. I confess all this with my heart and my lips, and I worship Him, my God. And Thee I beseech, O Lady! Do not disdain me, foul as I am; do not despise my sinful prayer; do not abandon me, wretched one, beguiled by the malicious enemy and cast into perdition! But intercede for me with Him who was born of Thee, that He may forgive me my great sins and deliver me from perdition, so that I too, with all who have received forgiveness, may sing and glorify the boundless mercy of our God, born of Thee, and Thine, most blessed Virgin!"

Receiving these words from him as a kind of satisfaction for his sin, the Most Pure Theotokos, the fountain of mercy, the seeker of the lost, the true and unceasing intercessor for us before God, and the pledge of our salvation, answered him thus:

"Trusting in your repentance for the sake of the baptism by which you were baptized into Christ, and having compassion on you (for I

deeply sympathize with all who suffer), I will go to My Son and my God and pray to Him that He accept your repentance."

Having said this, the Most Pure Virgin became invisible, and the day was already beginning to dawn.

O how fortunate for the sinner was that night, during which he was granted such a vision of the Most Pure Theotokos and a lengthy conversation with her!

Having received after this vision some relief from his sorrow and an increase of hope, Theophilus spent three more days in weeping and prayer before the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, gazing at it, falling down before it, striking his head upon the ground, and hoping to be saved by God through the prayers of the Theotokos. At the end of the three days, our hope and refuge, the most pure Mother of the Lord, appeared to him again. This time, looking upon Theophilus with a joyful face and with her bright eyes, she said:

"Man of God! Your repentance is pleasing to the merciful Lord God; He has accepted your tears for My sake and has heard your prayers. See now for yourself that from now on you keep the right faith in Him until the day of your death."

"Truly I will keep it, my most blessed Lady," answered Theophilus, "and I will not transgress Thy command. After God, Thou art my protection and intercession, and on Thee I place all my hope and trust. I know, I know well, most merciful Lady, that people have no other help and no other protection but Thee; none who have hoped in Thee have been put to shame, and none who have prayed to God through Thy intercession have been forsaken. Therefore I too, a sinner, beseech Thy inexhaustible goodness, which heals our infirmity: open to me, who have strayed and fallen into the depths of evil, the doors of Thy mercy, and command that the wretched written bond, which I in my deception gave to Satan, be placed back into my hands; he greatly disturbs my soul, and I cannot be comforted from my great sorrow while this bond remains in the devil's possession."

No sooner had he spoken these words than the Most Pure Virgin became invisible; and Theophilus spent three more days in diligent prayer, as before. Then he fell asleep, weary from the labors he had en-

dured, and in a dream-vision he saw the Most Pure Mother of God bringing him the sheet of paper bearing his written bond. Waking up in joy, he did not see the Most Pure Virgin, but he found his bond, sealed and whole, lying on his breast. From joy and from terror he grew still weaker in body and became as one half dead. When he afterward came to himself, how great a thanksgiving did he offer to the merciful Lord Christ and to the compassionate Mother of God, his helper and intercessor!

The next morning (it was a Sunday) he went to the cathedral where the bishop was serving the Liturgy. After the reading of the Holy Gospel he drew near to the bishop, who was blessing the people, and with tears threw himself at his feet, begging that he be heard, for he wished to make his repentance known aloud before all. Then he related in detail everything that had befallen him: how the loss of his post as steward had grieved him; how, out of sorrow, he had renounced Christ God and the Most Pure Mother of God and given himself over to Satan by a written bond; how afterward, by fasting, prayer and weeping, he had seen the Most Holy Theotokos, had conversed with her, had received forgiveness of his sins, and how at last his written bond had been returned to him. Having recounted all this loudly and in detail in the presence of the people and the bishop, Theophilus handed the latter the sealed paper he had given to Satan, and begged him to have it read aloud, so that all might learn of his sin and glorify the mercy of God obtained through the Theotokos. Unsealing the paper, the bishop gave it to a deacon, who took his stand on the ambo and began to read it. And all marveled at so terrible a deed.

Thus the whole clergy and people, men and women and little children, all learned what had befallen Theophilus, how he had fallen and risen again and received back his written bond. The bishop, turning to the people, said in a loud voice:

"Come, all you faithful, let us glorify the most merciful true God, the Lord Jesus Christ! Come, you pious ones who love God, and behold wondrous miracles! Come, you lovers of Christ, and understand that our most merciful Lord does not desire the death of sinners, but awaits their repentance! Come and see, you orthodox, how much contrition of

heart, sighs and tears can accomplish! Who would not marvel, fathers and brethren, at the great and ineffable patience of merciful God! Who would not be amazed at His boundless mercy and love for mankind, shown toward us sinners! Truly this is a miracle! The prophet Moses after forty days of fasting received from God the tablets of the law (Ex. 24:18, 31:18), and our brother Theophilus after forty days of fasting received back his written bond, taken from Satan by the power of God and the intercession of the Mother of God! Let us then, children, together with him sing a song of thanksgiving to the Lord, who has mercifully accepted his repentance through the intercession of the most pure Theotokos, who for people is a bridge to God, the hope of the despairing, the refuge of the afflicted, the true door which opens her mercy to sinners who knock upon it, and who bears our prayers to her Son, our God born of her. What more can I say, for what song shall we sing to glorify her and her Son? Truly, Thy works are wonderful, O Lord, and no word is sufficient to praise Thy wonders! Truly, 'O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all' (Ps. 103:24). Truly, it is now fitting to repeat the word of the Gospel: 'Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this' our brother Theophilus 'was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found' (Lk. 15:22–24)." While the bishop spoke, Theophilus lay at his feet and wept; the bishop, stretching out his hand, raised him from the ground. Theophilus, standing, asked him to burn the written bond, but the bishop told him to do it himself, which Theophilus did before everyone. Watching the burning of the impious paper, the people for a long time cried out with tears:

"Lord, have mercy."

Having at last bidden the people be silent, the bishop continued the Divine Service and, when it was completed, gave Theophilus Communion of the most pure and life-giving Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. And at once the face of Theophilus shone like the sun. All who saw the change in his face glorified the most merciful God, who justifies and sanctifies repentant sinners.

After all this Theophilus went to that church of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos where he had fasted with tears of repentance, had been granted her holy vision, and had received forgiveness of his sins; there he rested a little after his labors. Learning, after three days had passed, of the approach of his death, he made a will concerning his property, and ordered that all of it be distributed to the poor. Then, taking leave of the brethren who were present, he committed his righteous soul into the hands of God and the Mother of God. He was buried beneath the holy icon of the Most Pure Virgin, in the place where he had made his repentance.

And in him was glorified the mercy of Christ God and of the Most Pure Theotokos, to whom together with her Son be honor, glory, worship and thanksgiving from us sinners, who always need her help, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

"I, the humble and sinful Eutychianus (says the writer of this tale), raised in the house of the blessed Theophilus and by his intercession made worthy to become a minister of the holy catholic Church, serving my master in his sorrow and grief, and following him everywhere, having seen with my own eyes his repentance and heard with my own ears his account of it, have truly and accurately described all this for the benefit of the pious, and to the glory of Christ our God, who is glorified forever." Amen.

* * *

Celebration of the Wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God of Vladimir[4111]

Празднование Владимирской чудотворной иконе Божией Матери

In 1480 the impious Akhmat, khan of the Great Horde, came with a great army to the river Ugra to begin war against the Grand Prince John Vasilyevich.[7] Moscow was threatened with siege. Then the Grand Prince, armed with the prayer and blessing of Gerontius,[8] Metropolitan of All Rus', and of his confessor, Vassian, Archbishop of

7. Grand Prince from 1462 to 1505.
8. Occupied the see of the Moscow Metropolis from 1473 to 1489.

Rostov,[9] set out against the Tatars on the river Ugra; both hierarchs earnestly entreated the Grand Prince to fight bravely against the pagans in defense of the Orthodox faith.[10] For a long time the armies stood facing each other, without engaging in decisive action. At last, through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos, a wondrous miracle took place: fear fell upon the Tatars, and they, fearing one another, fled, pursued by no one. Thus the most merciful God, through the prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos, granted to the joy of Christians an unusual victory over their enemies without the shedding of blood, sparing His possession, the city of Moscow and all Russia. When the Grand Prince John Vasilyevich returned to Moscow together with his son, the Grand Prince John,[11] and with the whole army, all the people were filled with exceeding joy, glorifying God and the Most Holy Theotokos for the glorious deliverance.[12] From that time a new feast in honor of the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos called "of Vladimir" was established in the God-protected city of Moscow; therefore on this day, June 23, the cross procession is held in glory and thanksgiving to the Savior of the world, Christ our God, and to His Most Pure Mother.

Troparion, Tone 4:

"Today the most glorious city of Moscow shines brightly, having received thy wonderworking icon, O Sovereign Lady, as a sunrise; and we, running to it, and praying to thee, cry out thus: O most wondrous Sovereign Lady Theotokos, pray to Christ our God, incarnate of thee, that He deliver this city, and all Christian cities

9. Archbishop of Rostov from January 1506, died 1515.

10. The Metropolitan wrote a conciliar epistle to the Grand Prince in the camp on the Ugra, exhorting him to stand firmly against the Christ-hating enemy. But with especial boldness and directness St. Vassian of Rostov admonished the Grand Prince not to conclude peace with Akhmat, as "some seducers" advised him, but to go forth bravely to meet "the godless Agarene people," emulating the forefather Demetrius, "who in person stood against the rational wolf Mamai."

11. Grand Prince from 1498; died in 1509 in confinement.

12. "Let not the frivolous boast in the fear of their weapons," the Russian chroniclers said of this miracle, "no, it was not weapons, nor human wisdom, but the Lord Himself who has now saved Russia." **On this day the repose of the Righteous Artemius of Verkola (for his life see under October 20).** On this day also the memory of the Holy Martyrs Eustochius, Gaius, Urbanus and others, who suffered under Maximian at Ancyra, in the beginning of the fourth century.

and lands, unharmed from all the assaults of the enemies, and save our souls, for He is merciful."

Kontakion, Tone 8:

"To thee, the victorious Voivode, O Sovereign Lady Theotokos, we, who have been delivered from evils by the coming of thy honorable image, make bright the feast of thy meeting, and as is customary we cry to thee: Rejoice, Bride unwedded."

* * *

NOTES

4111. On this day (June 23) a solemn cross procession takes place in Moscow from the Dormition Cathedral to the Sretensky Monastery with the wonderworking Vladimir Icon. A similar cross procession, the first in order of establishment, is held on August 26 in memory of Russia's deliverance from the invasion of Tamerlane in 1395; struck with dread by the awesome appearance of the Mother of God, Tamerlane left the borders of Russia on the very day and hour when the Muscovites, kneeling, met on the Kuchkovo Field the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, brought from Vladimir to Moscow by order of the Grand Prince Basil Dmitrievich, who in the struggle with the enemy trusted more in the power of God than in his own weapons. On the site of the meeting of the icon, in memory of the miraculous intercession of the Mother of God, the so-called Sretensky Monastery was founded, to which the aforementioned cross processions are made.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF JUNE

June 24

24 июня

New Calendar June 24 · Old Calendar July 7 (civil dates)

Synaxarion for the Nativity of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord

Синаксарь на Рождество святого Иоанна Предтечи и Крестителя Господня

When the Unsetting Sun of Righteousness, our Savior, willed to shine upon the world, and had already bowed the heavens and dwelt in the most pure womb of a Virgin, at that very time there had to come to pass, from a barren woman, the birth of His dawn-star, St. John the Forerunner; for he, as the herald, was to precede the manifestation of the Lord, preaching and saying: "There cometh One mightier than I after me" (Mk. 1:7).

And so, when the time came for St. Elizabeth to give birth, she bore a son in her old age, from a womb grown past bearing, as in ancient times Sarah bore Isaac. Thus one miracle goes before another: before the Virgin bears Christ, one who had grown old in her days bears the Forerunner of Christ, so that those who witnessed the supernatural birth from one advanced in years might believe also in the supra-natural birth from an unwedded maiden, and say to themselves: "The almighty Right Hand of God, which loosed the barrenness of the aged woman, is able also to make the incorrupt Virgin a pure Mother." Therefore the miraculous birth of the Savior of the world is preceded by the miraculous birth of the Forerunner. This had to be so, in order that by one miracle the world might be prepared to receive another: seeing a mother grown old in her days, people became more capable of beholding the Ever-Virgin who bore the Son; having become witnesses of a wondrous birth from the aged Elizabeth, they were being prepared for the tidings of the "strange" birth of Christ from a Virgin. For in

both events, by the will of Almighty God, to Whom every nature is subject, "the order of birth overcame the laws of nature."[1]

When Elizabeth bore the Forerunner of Christ, all her kinsfolk, neighbors and acquaintances, hearing of this birth, rejoiced together with her, because the Lord had shown her great mercy by taking away from her "the reproach of barrenness." Thus were fulfilled the words of the herald of God, the Archangel Gabriel, who said to Zacharias: "Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and many shall rejoice at his birth" (Lk. 1:13–14). Then rejoiced both the kinsfolk of Zacharias and those who were filled with fervent expectation of the Messiah, the Deliverer. For although they did not yet know of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, which had already been accomplished, nevertheless their spirit, borne aloft under the influence of the Holy Spirit, was mysteriously moved to joy by the very event of the Forerunner's birth, and they saw in this event, as it were, an assurance that they would await the desired Messiah.

On the eighth day after the birth of the Forerunner, the priests and relatives of Zacharias came to his house to take part in the rite of the child's circumcision; at this they wished to name him after his father, Zacharias. But the mother of the child would not agree to this; having a husband who was a prophet and having borne a son who was a prophet, St. Elizabeth was herself filled with the gift of prophecy, and by prophetic foreknowledge insisted that her son be named by the name which the Angel had commanded. She could not have heard of this from her husband, for Zacharias had returned from the temple to his house with his tongue, as it were, bound, and could not tell his wife that he had seen an Angel who announced to him the conception of a son and at the same time commanded him to name him John. Thus, guided by the Holy Spirit, the holy mother named the child John, prophetically, just as she had earlier prophetically recognized the coming to her of the Mother of God, when she said: "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk. 1:43).

Then the priests and relatives began to question Zacharias by signs, as to what he wished to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet

and wrote on it: "His name is John" (Lk. 1:63). And at once the mouth of Zacharias was opened and his tongue was loosed from the bonds of muteness, and he began to speak, glorifying God. All marveled at so many miracles of which they were witnesses: they were astonished both that one grown old had borne a child, and that the father, who had been mute, thought of the child's name in agreement with the mother, and that the dumb man, after writing the name, began to speak and pronounced with his tongue what he had written with his hand, as though the name of John were a key to the father's lips, which, after Zacharias wrote this name, were opened for the glorifying of God. Hearing the words of Zacharias, all were amazed and filled with awe yet more, and they spread word of all they had seen and heard throughout the whole mountainous country of Judea, that is, within the bounds of the holy city of Hebron,[4119] in which was the house of Zacharias.

This city with its environs, already in the days of Joshua the son of Nun, was allotted to the priestly tribe of Aaron. It was 8 hours' distance from Jerusalem and was situated a little farther than Bethlehem, on an elevated place. It was called a "mountain city" because of the high mountains on which it stood; and its environs bore the name of the "mountain country," as is written in the Gospel narrative of the journey of the Most Holy Theotokos to her kinswoman Elizabeth: "And Mary arose in those days (from Nazareth of Galilee) and went with haste into the hill country, into a city of Judah, that is, Hebron, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth" (Lk. 1:39–40).

Thus it was here, in Hebron, the mountain city of the tribe of Judah, in the midst of the hill country, that all those wondrous and marvelous events of which we have spoken above took place. And all who heard of these events greatly marveled and wondered in perplexity: "What then shall this child be?" (Lk. 1:66).

And the hand of the Lord was with the newborn child, increasing in him the working of the grace of God and preserving him from the sword of Herod. For the report of John's miraculous birth reached Herod also, and he greatly wondered at it, saying within himself:

1. The expression is taken from the Theotokion (dogmatikon).

"What then shall this child be!" When our Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and wise men came from the East[2] and inquired about the newborn King of the Jews, then Herod, sending soldiers to Bethlehem with orders to slay all the male children there, also remembered John, the son of Zacharias, of whom he had heard much that was wondrous, and began to reflect: "Is not he the future King of the Jews?" Therefore, tormented with malice, he planned to kill him too, and to this end he deliberately sent murderers to Hebron, to the house of Zacharias. However, those sent did not find St. John.

When the godless slaughter of the children began in Bethlehem, the cry and lamentation that arose in Bethlehem reached also to Hebron, which was not far distant from the city of David; and here too they learned the cause of the weeping in Bethlehem. St. Elizabeth, taking the youth John, at once hastened away into the highest mountains of the wilderness (at this time St. Zacharias was in Jerusalem, fulfilling the turn of service that had fallen to him). Hidden in the mountains, St. Elizabeth prayed to God with tears, asking Him to protect her and the youth. And when, from the height of the mountains, she saw the soldiers approaching, she cried out, turning to a rocky cliff:

"O mountain of God, receive a mother with her child!"

And at once the mountain parted, received Elizabeth with the youth John inside, and thus hid them from the pursuing murderers. So the soldiers, not finding what they sought, returned empty-handed to him who had sent them. Then Herod sent his armor-bearer to the temple to Zacharias, to say to him: "Give me your son."

St. Zacharias answered:

"I now serve the Lord God of Israel, and where my son is at present, that I do not know."

Herod was greatly enraged and again sent an armor-bearer to Zacharias to tell him that if he did not surrender his son, he himself would die. And there came to him soldiers, fierce as beasts, ready to

2. In antiquity the name "magi" denoted wise men who possessed knowledge of the hidden forces of nature, of the heavenly luminaries, and the like. The magi who came to worship Christ were apparently from Persia. They were astrologers, that is, they served the stars and occupied themselves with observing the heavenly luminaries. Evidently they were at the same time virtuous people, which is why they were vouchsafed special revelations from God.

carry out the command of the lawless king, and with fury they said to the priest of God:

"Where have you hidden your son? Give him to us, for the king has ordered us to kill you at once if you do not give us your son."

Zacharias answered them courageously:

"You may kill my body, but the Lord will receive my soul."

And at once the murderers, carrying out the lawless command, rushed in fury upon the saint and slew him between the temple and the altar (Mt. 23:35). His shed blood, having soaked in, remained on the marble and became like stone, as a witness to Herod's crime and his eternal condemnation.

Meanwhile Elizabeth, hidden by God together with John, remained in the mountain which had parted. In it, by God's command, a cave was formed for them; near it a spring appeared, and a date palm grew up, full of fruit. Whenever the time for taking food came, the tree bowed down; and when they had been satisfied with its fruits, it straightened up again.

After 40 days from the slaying of Zacharias, St. Elizabeth reposed in the aforementioned cave. From that time St. John was nourished by an Angel until his maturity, being kept until the day of his manifestation to the people of Israel. So the hand of God preserved and covered St. John, that he might go before the Face of the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, and prepare the way before Him who was to come to save the human race. For all this let Christ, our God and Savior, be glorified, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

O prophet and forerunner of the coming of Christ, we know not how worthily to praise thee, though we honor thee in love: for the barrenness of her who bore thee and the muteness of thy father were loosed by thy glorious and honorable Nativity, and the Incarnation of the Son of God is proclaimed to the world.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

She who was barren before today bears Christ's Forerunner, and he is the fulfillment of all prophecy; for laying his hand upon Him whom the prophets proclaimed, in the Jordan, he appeared as the prophet, herald, and forerunner of the Word of God.

* * *

Homily of St. John Chrysostom on the Nativity of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord John

Слово св. Иоанна Златоуста на Рождество святого пророка, предтечи и крестителя Господня Иоанна

It is a fitting day of festival and universal joy, on which there come to my mind the ministry of Gabriel and the priesthood of Zacharias, and I think of him who was condemned to dumbness for unbelief. You have heard the Evangelist Luke relate how the righteous Zacharias, when "according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense, went into the temple of God, while the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. And there appeared unto him an Angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the Angel said unto him: Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John" (Lk. 1:9–13).

O strange and mysterious miracle! Justly did Zachary reply to the Angel. He asked for one consolation and received another; he prayed for the people and was named the father of a son; he sought forgiveness of sins and received the promise of the opening of a barren womb. Zachary desired the healing of sinful souls more than the conception of Elisabeth. Justly was Zachary troubled and terrified, and as soon as he saw the Angel he said in his soul: strange is the coming of this man, strange his promise! Who is this that boldly enters the holy temple? Who is this that stands at the right of the altar of incense? Who is this that shines with the form of a strange appearance? Who is he? I have

not seen a man with wings, nor a bird in the form of a man; who then is this that fills my soul with fear? Who is he, this bearer of light upon his lips, speaking great things while his lips are closed? Who is this watcher over my ministry? Who is he that hinders my intercession? The people, praying outside, await my answer from the King of heaven, and this one detains me within; through me they offered their supplications to the King, asking forgiveness of their sins; for this I pray, to fulfil the desire of the people, to show the effect of my ministry; therefore cease, whoever you are, that terrify me! If you are an Angel sent by God, then assist me in my task, have compassion on those weeping without, grieve with those who grieve. What profit is it to the people if I have a son? What benefit is it if Elisabeth nurses a child? What advantage is it if I leave an heir? Depart, my terrifier, whoever you are, depart from me! We are old; the time of conception has passed; the passion of marriage has died out; time has cooled the heat; we are both dead to union; youth did not bloom, so how shall old age bring forth?

So thought Zacharias. But the Angel says to him, as you have just heard: "Fear not, Zacharias"; do not be troubled by your thoughts. I am an Angel of light, not of darkness; I am Gabriel, one of the chief ministers before the King of heaven; I carry out a command, I do not command by my own authority; I am sent to announce to you, not to do violence to you; I am clothed in a form, I do not appear before you in a bare essence; he who sent me spares your life; fear not, I am sent to bring you good tidings, not to astonish you; you shall overcome old age, and grey childlessness, and a barren womb; and who bears children by desire? It is the gift of God, not a human invention. Have you not heard the words of the Lord: I am the Creator of man, "who formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1)? Do you not believe, Zacharias? But how was Adam created, how was Eve made, how was Isaac born? Abraham did not err in obedience; and you, a priest, do not believe! Is every word of God powerless, Zacharias? Because of your old age you object, old man; you consider bodily deadness stronger than God. If you had not seen the example of Abraham, you might well doubt; you appeal to the help of nature, and do not believe the present divine promise, but you doubt and dispute? You ask for a small thing and receive

much. You pray only for the Jewish people, but I bring you good tidings of him who will prepare all tribes for salvation.

Zacharias, hearing this, and turning his gaze a little aside, answered the Angel: What are you saying, Angel? Shall my wife bear a child? Did I pray for this, or do I offer incense in my turn in order to display before the people my fruitfulness? I ask for the forgiveness of sins, and shall I desire beyond this the removal of barrenness? I desire relief for the people, shall I desire burden for Elisabeth? I call wounded souls to healing, and shall I call for dried-up breasts to become milk-giving? What are you saying, Angel? My wife shall bear? And what profit is there in this for those who pray without? Will they not, upon hearing it, stone me, saying that I become chief priest not for them nor for their common salvation, but only for myself, that I have received not a blessing but a son? I no longer think of child-bearing now; depart! I no longer desire this; what I prayed for I did not receive; and now you explain to me one thing in place of another; has not old age ceased with time? We cannot walk without a staff, and how are we now commanded to begin our child-bearing? Old age rejects nature; this matter is beyond faith; we look toward the grave, and shall we hire a nurse? No, I now think nothing at all of child-bearing; I seek the salvation of the people and the happiness of the tribe, the captivity of enemies and the prosperity of the city, not the crying of infants, swaddling clothes and nursing; I do not think of this at all. How shall I become the father of a natural son? Old age repels faith from itself; this matter is outside nature; I go with a staff as with a horse, and you urge me to the matter of marriage when my whole body has become a grave? By what shall I be convinced of this, tell me, great Gabriel? Tell me, by what shall I be convinced of this? Behold, my limbs tremble; behold, through age we both look toward the earth. If one were young and the other old, there would be some hope in what is said; now the body of us both is decrepit; we expect nothing else but the sickle of death, like ripe ears at harvest time. If you are true in all that you say, lord Gabriel, then give first some sign whatever it may be, deliver to me a pledge of the promised miracle. By what shall I be convinced of this? Aaron would not have believed had not the rod blossomed; Moses would not have been assured

had his hand not turned white; Gideon would not have understood had there not been dew on the fleece; Hezekiah would not have acknowledged had the sun not gone back; by what shall I be convinced of this? Give a sign, and I shall rejoice like a youth; give a sign, that Elisabeth may not laugh lightly, as Sarah did; by what am I to be convinced of this, Archangel messenger? How can your words to me be made evident? If I am a second Abraham, and if there is for me also what belongs to Abraham, then enter my house, and I will wash your feet after your complete journey, and offer you a meal full of mystery; Elisabeth shall knead three measures of flour, prefiguring the Church; ask for a calf, that you may bestow a son upon me. By what shall I be convinced of this, O you who bring to us on earth the fair good tidings from above? Why, Angel, do you foretell to me the name of the son and enumerate the virtues of one not yet existing? Show me that which is above nature, that I may believe that which is against nature. If heaven becomes a tent, and I am renewed; if the sea is changed, and my wife Elisabeth becomes a mother; if the sun is held back, and dried-up breasts pour forth milk; if the moon falls down, and the dried womb is moistened. By what shall I be convinced of this, "whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years" (Lk. 1:18).

Then the Angel said to Zacharias: "You ask of God a guarantee. Do you count weakness stronger than the Lord's promise? Do you not fear to question beforehand the one who brings you the good tidings? 'How shall I be assured of this?' you say. Are you sent to Egypt to terrify Pharaoh? 'How shall I be assured of this?' you say, Zacharias. Does God not do anything supernatural? You ask for the sequence of nature, and see not the wondrous work of the Godhead. Tell me, Zacharias: on what are the pillars of the earth established? What upholds the vault of heaven? Where are the receptacles of the clouds devised? Where are the drops of rain formed? Where are the flakes of snow created? Who directs the course of the sun? Who sets the limit to the waning of the moon? Who shall count the multitude of the stars? How does the sea, in the storm, keep its bounds with sand? How do the warm currents mingle? How is the darkness of the mist produced? How is man formed

in the womb? And how does the female sex prove weaker than the male? 'How shall I be assured of this?' you say, Zacharias. Do you seek the sequence of nature, where the work of God is? Do you not believe that the barren can bear? What then, if you hear that a Virgin, beyond expectation, bears? Can former unbelief become faith? Therefore unbelief is now punished in the matter of barrenness, that you may not doubt the miracle in the matter of the Virgin: 'thou shalt be silent and shalt not have power to speak' (Lk. 1:20). O merciful chastisement, producing correction rather! The Angel rebukes the faltering voice, restrains the bold tongue: 'he made signs to them and remained dumb.' It is well written by the Evangelist also, 'remained'; silence awaits the voice about to be born: Zacharias awaits John, the old man awaits the son, the priest awaits the prophet. By this the Angel says: since you, as an unbeliever, seek a sign from God, receive a scourging sign in your own body: 'thou shalt be silent and shalt not have power to speak until the day when this shall come to pass.' Where there is an instrument of contradiction, there is also vengeance; where there is rash boldness, there is also the rein of correction; where there was insolence, there is also the punishment. God wished, Zacharias, that you should become a herald of such a miracle: the commander of the host of the heavenly King is born, and the forerunner of the world's deliverance from sins. Since you have made the weakness of the body stronger than the Lord's promise, therefore 'thou shalt be silent and shalt not have power to speak until the day when this shall come to pass, because thou didst not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time.' Do you see that without faith nothing due is accomplished?

No sooner had Zacharias heard these words than he went out of the temple at once, with silence, the reward of his unbelief. O wonder! He entered to bring deliverance to others, and himself came out condemned; offering the liturgical incense, he bore away the sign of his exile. The people awaited to hear something good from him, and he expressed by signs: 'let no one question me; I fear the wrath of the Lord.' O wondrous works! Zacharias is restrained, and Elizabeth prospers; the tongue is mute, and the womb conceives; the ailment of the womb

passes over to the tongue; speech is restrained, and that which is to be born is set free; Zacharias is silent, and John leaps.

No sooner had the barren woman beheld the Virgin than the morning star perceived the sun, and John leapt strongly in his mother's womb, rebuking the slowness of nature: "I am," he says, "the herald of the Lord; why am I bound by chains like my fellow-servants? I will anticipate the time of birth; I will not wait for the labour, lest I lose my course, lest the Lord outrun the imprisoned servant, lest the sequence of nature become a disorder of order. I have recognized the One who is present, and I cannot endure silence; I have recognized Him who sent me before His face on the way, to prepare His way before Him; I will shake the bonds of nature, for I hasten to preach." O wondrous works and marvels! What the Angels in heaven did not know, John, carried in the womb, learned, and spoke to his mother. For the Thrones He was unperceived, and the Lord who came did not outrun the one borne in the womb; from the Dominions He concealed the mystery of the economy, but He revealed it to the one carried in the womb; and with what tidings the Archangel came to the Theotokos, this the leaping infant suggested within. The Deliverer of our race, having come, while in the womb, arrived at His friend, John; and it was plain that the Creator greets the creature, that the King dwells in the tent of the warrior, that the Lord enters the house of the servant. John, seeing from the womb Him who was in the womb, strove to surpass the bounds of nature, saying: "I do not know a Lord limited by nature, and I will not wait for the time of birth; I have no need of nine months in the womb for my birth; I do not need this present confinement; and why should I not come out of the bonds that restrain me? I will go forth, and briefly announce the meaning of the wondrous deed; I am the seal of the divine coming; I am the womb of God the Word made flesh; I will sound forth, and make my father's tongue eloquent; I will sound forth, and make my mother's dead womb live. I will go forth, go before with the preaching, and cry out to all who are present: 'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes [upon Himself] the sin of the world' (Jn. 1:29)." Such was the leaping of John, or rather, his words.

"And the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and cousins heard... and they rejoiced with her" (Lk. 1:57–58). For it was a miracle that Elizabeth in old age and with a womb grown barren bore a child; this depended not only on the fleshly father but on God the Word. Of this the Archangel Gabriel himself bears witness, who said to Zacharias: "Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb; and many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Lk. 1:13, 15–17).

O birth of a son of another, wondrous nature! It was wondrous and unnatural, since ordinarily he who begets begets with the aid of passion, and she who bears bears in pains. What then is the grief of Elizabeth, when the Holy Spirit is present, and not an inexperienced midwife, when this is a work of grace and not a burden of nature? Listen! This labour was insignificant in comparison with the joy. Not after his birth did John receive grace; but from his mother's womb, clothed in sanctification, he became a wondrous forerunner, as the Angel said: "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb... and he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Lk. 1:15, 17). Who shall precede whom? John goes before the Lord Christ; therefore he is called the Forerunner, as may be heard from John's own words about the Saviour: "After me cometh a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me" (Jn. 1:30). **After me** refers to time; **before me** refers to dignity.

Why did Gabriel say that John goes before Christ the King in the spirit and power of Elijah the Tishbite? Listen attentively! Elijah means “God.” Since John had God within himself,—he was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and God is Spirit,—of him the Lord spoke through the prophet long before: “Behold, I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before me” (Mal. 3:1; cf. Mk. 1:2), and he shall turn many from error to the truth; for this reason John goes before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, since John had much resemblance to Elijah.

Surely the son is born, and speech returns to the father. Zacharias, when they asked how he wished the child to be named, "asked for a writing tablet and wrote: 'His name is John.'" He who had not believed the Angel's words is now compelled to write of the event, to preach by writing; he who by hearing had not accepted what was said now legislates by hand, and writes of what has happened. And having given him the name, he received speech: hence "they all marvelled. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spake, blessing God" (Lk. 1:63–64).

O wondrous and strange miracle! The name of the son is written, and the dumb mouth of the father is opened; he is called John, and the tongue of him who names him is set in order. Do you see how he did not err, and we did not err, in offering the fitting explanation? Behold, the name of the most righteous opens the dumb mouth and stirs the motionless tongue. Thus John the crier is made manifest, for even his very name calls forth the voice: I am "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" (Mt. 3:3). O miracle! The Word abides, and the voice goes before; the Lord comes, and the servant is sent before. Let us therefore rejoice and be glad, that Elizabeth has borne and Zacharias has spoken; that the barren has brought forth, and the old man has cried out; that the wax tablet was requested, and the priestly tongue was loosed and the voice restored; that the Forerunner has appeared, and the whole world has rejoiced.

It would be fitting to end the discourse here, but Zacharias does not allow it with exclamations: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited His people and wrought redemption for them" (Lk. 1:68). Wondrous deeds! What does Zacharias say? After his healing from dumbness, Zacharias for the first time exclaimed: "Blessed be the Lord." What does this mean? Zacharias had been dead, and he rose again. He was not dead by nature, but endured a likeness of death. He was held in silence as in a tomb, and as in swaddling bands he was bound by the fetters of the tongue; he returned to life without breathing the priesthood, and brought mourning and the grief of the people. When the priest is removed, all those for whom he interceded grieve.

After this figurative resurrection, Zacharias for the first time exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." O Zacharias! Had you not seen the spiritual ear of grain, had you not recognized the spiritual husbandman, had you not received the gift, you would not have blessed the Giver. But Zacharias glorified God with a prophetic song worthy of the gift. Let us too exclaim: "Blessed be the Lord God of the Christians, for He hath visited His people and wrought redemption for them." To Him be glory and dominion, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this same day is the commemoration of the holy martyrs, the seven brothers according to the flesh, Orentius, Pharnacius, Eros, Firmus, Firminus, Cyriacus and Longinus, soldiers who suffered under Diocletian and Maximian on the shores of the Black Sea.

NOTES

4119. Hebron (now called by the Arabs El-Khalil) is a city situated in the south of Palestine, one of the most ancient cities of Asia. It was known as an ancient city already in the time of Abraham, and according to Flavius (the Jewish historian who lived at the beginning of the Christian era), at his time it was already considered to be 2300 years old. The city has long been regarded by the Jews as holy, since in it are the tombs of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. In the days of Constantine the Great a church was erected over the burial cave of Abraham, which the Muslims converted into a mosque. The city itself lies on a height a thousand feet above Jerusalem, in a deep and narrow valley surrounded on both sides by mountains. The entire valley and the slopes of the mountains are occupied by gardens: olive, fig, apricot, pomegranate and grape. At present the city has up to 10,000 inhabitants, who are engaged here in glassmaking, agriculture, the cultivation of fruit orchards and winemaking.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF JUNE

June 25

25 июня

New Calendar June 25 · Old Calendar July 8 (civil dates)

Life and Passion of the Holy Venerable Martyr Febronia

Житие и страдание святой преподобномученицы Февронии

During the reign of the impious emperor Diocletian, there lived in Rome an eparch[1] named Anthimus, who had a son, Lysimachus, whom he betrothed to a beautiful maiden, the daughter of the senator[2] Prosporus. When he fell mortally ill, Anthimus summoned his brother Selinus and said to him:

"My brother! Behold, I am departing this life and entrusting my son to you: be a father to him in my place, and let him be to you as a son. When I die, hasten to unite him in marriage with his betrothed, the daughter of Prosporus."

Having heard his brother, Selinus promised to do everything as he had asked. Anthimus, after three days, reposed. After Anthimus's death, Diocletian summoned Lysimachus and his uncle Selinus, and, taking them aside, said to Lysimachus:

"Remembering your father's love for me, I would wish to appoint you eparch in his place; but I have heard a report that you are inclined toward the Christian faith. Therefore I have deferred my intention until it becomes clear whether what is said of you is true. For the present, as a test, I have decided to send you to the East, that you may root out the Christian faith there; and when you return to us, having fulfilled your commission, then you shall be rewarded by us with the rank of eparch."

1. *Eparch* – city governor, regional administrator.
2. *Senator* – a member of the senate, that is, the council of elders; later the name senator became an honorary title.

At these words of the emperor, Lysimachus dared make no reply, for he was very young, being about 20 years of age. But Selinus, his uncle, fell at Diocletian's feet and said:

"I beseech you, great and immortal emperor, permit Lysimachus to remain here for several days, so that he may marry the daughter of Prosporus; and when he has married, I too shall go with him, and together we shall do everything as your Divine authority commands us."

The emperor said to them both:

"First go where I am sending you and destroy the Christians; and when you have carried out the task entrusted to you, return here—then I too shall celebrate Lysimachus's marriage with you."

Hearing this, they dared not utter another word, but obediently submitted to the emperor; taking the decree and the troops, they set out for the East.

Lysimachus took with him his kinsman, the comes[3] Primus, who was the son of his mother's sister, and entrusted him with command of the army.

Having arrived in the East, they halted in the region of Palmyra,[4] and began to subject all the Christians there to various cruel tortures: some they burned with fire, others they gave to the beasts to devour, and still others they cut down with the sword and cast their bodies to the dogs. Selinus, Lysimachus's uncle, was exceedingly harsh and inhuman. Many were seized with fear at the sight of Selinus's cruelties. Lysimachus, however, was very compassionate toward the Christians, for his mother had been a Christian, and from her he had learned the knowledge of Christ. One night he summoned his kinsman, the comes Primus, and said to him:

3. *Comes* – a companion of the emperor, or of a high official; this name designated persons who were in their retinue.

4. *Palmyra* – once a city of Syria, lying in one of the oases between Damascus and the river Euphrates. The city was founded as early as by Solomon. Under Nebuchadnezzar it was laid waste, but soon, thanks to its advantageous position between the Mediterranean Sea and the valley of the Euphrates, it was rebuilt and became an important trading center. Under the Romans Palmyra with its territory for a time formed an independent state, but afterward it was conquered by the Romans, who destroyed the city upon their victory; but under the emperor Diocletian it was restored. In the time of the Arabs the city was again destroyed and became a wretched village.

"Honored Primus, you know that my father was a Hellene[5] in faith and died in paganism, but my mother died a Christian and during her life strove to make me a Christian. Yet, fearing my father and the emperor, I could not do so openly, and I promised my mother that I would destroy no Christian and would strive to become a friend of Christ. Now I see that my uncle Selinus cruelly tortures and kills the Christians, and my soul suffers greatly because of it; for secretly I wish to spare the Christians, and to release those of them who are held in bonds, so that they may flee and hide wherever they can."

The comes agreed to help him, and they made a pact with one another, pledging mutually to spare the Christians. Whenever they discovered churches or monasteries of Christians anywhere, they at once sent word there in secret, warning of the persecutors' approach and advising them to hide. Moreover, the comes instructed the soldiers who shared their views not to seize Christians for torture, and ordered that those who had been seized be released.

After remaining in Palmyra for a considerable time, Selinus, having tortured many Christians, wished to go to Sivapol, a city lying within the Assyrian borders,[6] which formed part of the territory subject to Rome. In this city there was a women's monastery consisting of 50 nuns. Its abbess, Vrienna, had been a disciple of the blessed abbess, the deaconess[7] Platonida, and strictly observed the rules of her instructress. Platonida's rule was as follows: on Friday none of the sisters was to work, but all were to gather in the church and pray or read the Divine books from morning until evening. First, the deaconess Platonida herself read to the sisters until the third hour of the morning;

5. That is, he professed the Greco-Roman pagan religion.

6. Assyria was situated east of Syria, in the upper, northern part of the Mesopotamian plain.

7. *Deaconess* – a church servant. The ministry of the deaconesses consisted of the following: they prepared women for baptism, teaching them how and what to answer the questions of the one baptizing and how to conduct themselves after baptism; they assisted the bishop at the baptism of women and in his place anointed the parts of the body, with the exception of the forehead; they watched at the church door through which women entered the church, arranged women in their places and observed that they conducted themselves decorously, were present at the conversations of bishops and presbyters with women, and attended to charitable works toward women. In the first centuries deaconesses were counted among the clergy, and afterward they were installed in their office by a special ordination; later the ordination was forbidden, and then the very ministry of deaconesses ceased.

then she handed the book to Vrienna, instructing her to read until evening. Vrienna likewise did so later, and after the death of her instructress, when she assumed the governance of the monastery, she imitated her in all things.

Two maidens, Procla and Febronia, were being raised and prepared for the monastic life by the abbess Vrienna. Procla was 25 years old, and Febronia 20. Febronia was Vrienna's niece, that is, the daughter of her brother, and shone with such wondrous beauty that no artist could perfectly depict the blooming grace of her countenance. This beauty greatly troubled Vrienna, and she pondered much how to preserve Febronia in chastity, far from the temptations of the world. All the sisters of the monastery took food only once each day, toward evening, and then in very small quantities; but Vrienna commanded Febronia to fast until the following day, so that she would remain without food all day and partake only toward evening on the next day. She hoped that by such abstinence Febronia's beauty would fade. Febronia, wishing to mortify her flesh, for her part exerted every effort toward so great an abstinence, and never ate or drank to satiety; but with thirst and hunger, with many labors and struggles, she unceasingly afflicted her flesh, abstaining, moreover, from sleep. Her bed consisted of a single bare plank, without any covering; it was 3 cubits long and 1.5 spans wide. Worn out by excessive fasting, Febronia would fall asleep upon this plank, or upon the bare earth, and then only for the shortest time. And when the devil sought to tempt her with visions in sleep, she would immediately rise, fall to the ground, stretch herself out in the form of a cross, and pray to God with bitter tears to deliver her from the devil; then, taking the books of Divine Scripture, she would read them diligently and receive spiritual delight from them. Febronia was by nature so inquisitive and keen of mind that Vrienna herself greatly marveled at her understanding.

On Fridays, when all the nuns gathered in the church to read the Word of God, the abbess Vrienna entrusted Febronia with reading Holy Scripture. Since laywomen often came to the church with the nuns to hear spiritual instruction, Vrienna instructed Febronia to read behind a curtain, so that she would not see the appearance and adornments of

these women, whom she had never seen before. And the good repute of the blessed Febronia spread throughout the whole city; everywhere her learning and intelligence, her beauty and good nature were praised, for she was gentle, humble, chaste, and adorned with every virtue.

A woman of senatorial rank named Hieria heard of all these qualities of the holy maiden and was seized with a great desire to see Febronia and converse with her. This woman belonged to the Hellenic faith, was young in years, and had already been widowed, having lived with her husband for only 7 months. After her husband's death, she lived in her parents' house; they too belonged to Hellenic impiety. Coming to the monastery, she informed the abbess Vrienna through the gatekeeper of her desire to see Febronia. When Vrienna came out to her, Hieria fell at her feet and, embracing them, entreated the abbess:

"I adjure you by God, who created heaven and earth, do not despise me, an impious woman, who until now has been the plaything of idols and demons. Do not deprive me of the instructive conversations of our sister Febronia, that she may guide me on the path of salvation. Then I hope to find in Christ, the True God, what is prepared for Christians. Therefore deliver me from the vanity of this age and from the impiety of idols, for my parents are forcing me into a second marriage, while I wish to begin a new life, spending my time in instructive and soul-profiting conversations with Febronia. The years I have already spent in impiety through ignorance are enough for me."

As she spoke, Hieria bathed the abbess's feet with her tears, moving her to compassion.

Vrienna, having listened to her, said:

"The Lord is witness, Lady Hieria, that I took the maiden Febronia into my care when she was only two years old, and now she has lived in the monastery without ever leaving it for 18 years, seeing neither men nor laywomen, nor their clothing and adornments, nor anything of the world. Even her nurse has not been able to see her until this day; though she has many times implored me to see her and speak with her, I have not allowed it. But now, seeing your earnestness, understanding your love for God, and hoping for your salvation, I shall bring you to her; only you must exchange your worldly garments for monastic ones."

Hieria at once gladly fulfilled this condition, and Vrienna led her to Febronia. Seeing Hieria in monastic garb, Febronia thought that some wandering nun had come to them; therefore she bowed down to the ground before her, and embracing her kissed her as a sister in Christ. Vrienna, however, bade them both sit down and occupy themselves with the edifying reading of the Divine books. Then Febronia, taking the books, began to read to Hieria, and the latter was so moved by all she heard that she spent the whole night without sleep. So the two of them, remaining sleepless, occupied themselves with reading the Divine books: Febronia did not tire of reading, nor did Hieria tire of listening. In the course of this she shed so many tears that the ground was wet with them; for, being a Hellene by faith, she had never heard such soul-profiting instruction.

When morning came, Hieria could scarcely obey the abbess and go to her house. Having taken leave of Febronia with tears, she went to her parents. Febronia, however, asked Thomais, the abbess's assistant:

"I beg you, my lady, my mother, tell me who that wandering nun was, who wept so, as though she had never heard the Divine words."

"Do you not know with whom you were conversing?" Phomaida replied.

Febronia answered:

"How could I know a wandering nun whom I have never seen?"

Then Thomais said to her:

"This sister is none other than Hieria, a noblewoman of our city."

"Why did you not tell me this earlier?" Febronia remarked. "I conversed with her as with a sister."

Thomais said:

"So our Mother Abbess commanded."

After such words Febronia fell silent and prayed to God in the depth of her soul for Hieria, that God would turn her to the right path and receive her into His chosen flock.

Hieria, returning home, related everything she had heard from Febronia, and began to persuade her parents to abandon the Hellenic error and to know the one true God, Jesus Christ. They heeded their daughter's prudent counsel, believed in Christ, and received holy Baptism to-

gether with all their household. Thus did the prayers and instruction of St. Febronia work upon them.

Not long after this Febronia fell gravely ill. Hieria came to her and cared for her during her sickness. Suddenly the news spread that Selinus and Lysimachus were approaching the city to torment the Christians. Then all the Christians, not excepting the clergy and the clerics, and even the bishop himself, abandoned everything and fled from the city, driven by fear, and hid themselves wherever they could.

Hearing this, the nuns of Vrienna's monastery came to her and said:

"My lady, our mother, what are we to do? Behold, savage beasts, impious tormentors, are approaching the city, and all the faithful Christians have fled, fearing the torments."

Vrienna on her part asked them:

"What do you think, and what do you wish to do?"

They answered:

"Command us, O our Mother, to hide ourselves as well, that we may save our souls."

To this Vrienna remarked:

"You have not yet seen the struggle, and already you think of flight; the hour of ascetic labor has not yet come, and already you wish to be defeated. No, children, I beg you, do not do this; rather let us remain here, endure the torments, and die for Christ, who died for us, that we may live with Him forever." Hearing these words, the sisters fell silent. But on the following day one sister, named Eferia, said to the others:

"I know that it is on account of Febronia that our Mother Abbess does not permit us to escape; she wishes, I think, to destroy us all for her sake alone. But let us go to her again, and I will say for all of us what is fitting."

Hearing this, some of the nuns agreed with Eferia, while others began to object to her; but at last they all came to an agreement and went to the abbess. Vrienna, understanding why they had come, asked Eferia:

"What do you want, sister?"

She answered:

"We beg you, our Mother, allow us to flee from the threatening calamities, for both the bishop and the whole clergy have withdrawn. Remember, O our Mother, that among us there are young maidens for whom we must fear, lest, seized by impious soldiers, they lose their virginity and forfeit their reward from God. We must also fear that we shall not endure the torments and, denying Christ, destroy our souls. Command us also to take with us our sister, the sick Febronia, that we may hide her from here as well."

Hearing this, Febronia said:

"As my Christ lives, whose bride I count myself and to whom I give my soul, I will not depart from this place, but here I will die and be buried."

Then Vrienna, turning to Eferia, said:

"See what you are doing, troubling the sisters. You see that I am not to blame for what you think of me."

Then, turning to the others, she said:

"Let each of you decide as seems more profitable to her."

Then all the sisters, fearing the torments that lay ahead, took leave of the abbess and Febronia and, weeping and sobbing, beating their breasts, departed from the monastery. Procla, however, a contemporary and fellow pupil of Febronia, embraced and kissed her, weeping, and said:

"Pray for me, my lady and sister."

Febronia, holding her by the hand and not letting her go, urged her:

"Fear God, my sister Procla, do not forsake us. You see that I am ill and shall soon die. Our Mother Vrienna cannot bury me alone; remain, then, and help her to bury me."

Then Procla answered:

"Good, my sister, I will remain here for as long as you bid me."

When evening came, however, Procla did not keep her word, and secretly fled from the monastery. Only Vrienna and Thomais remained with Febronia.

The abbess Vrienna, seeing the deserted monastery, went sorrowfully into the church, fell to the ground, and wept bitterly.

Thomais, comforting her, said:

"Cease, my lady and mother. For God is mighty to work in sorrow and affliction also 'relief' (1 Cor. 10:13). He will help us to endure the calamities that come upon us (Sir. 2:10). Remember, has anyone who believed in God ever been put to shame, or anyone who abides in the fear of God been left without His help?"

Vrienna answered:

"Yes, my lady Thomais, all this is so; but what am I to do about Febronia? Where shall I hide her and keep her safe? With what eyes shall I look when the barbarians lead her away as a captive?"

Then Thomais said:

"The Lord who raises the dead can strengthen Febronia and keep her unharmed from the barbarians. I beg you, my lady and mother, cease to grieve and weep; rather let us go to the sick Febronia, and comfort and strengthen her."

When they came to Febronia, Vrienna again wept bitterly. Febronia, looking at Thomais, asked:

"What do the tears of our Mother Vrienna mean?"

Thomais, turning to her, answered:

"These maternal tears are on your account, since you are young and beautiful. The cruel tormentors will come to us to inflict great sorrows: us old women they will kill at once, but you, a young maiden fair of face, they will keep, to entice you with the allurements of the world. We fear that with flattering words and force they will destroy your virginity and deprive you of the bridal chamber prepared for you by your Heavenly Bridegroom."

Then Febronia said:

"I beg you, pray to the Lord for me, that He may look upon my humility, strengthen my weakness, and grant me patience, as He grants it to all His servants who have loved Him with their whole heart."

To this Thomais answered:

"My child Febronia! The time of ascetic struggle is coming. If the impious tormentors tempt you with flattering words, with gold, silver, and costly garments, or with any vain allurements of this world, be wary and attentive to yourself; do not listen to their exhortations, lest you lose the reward from the Lord for your former labors. See that you

do not become a laughingstock to the devil and a plaything of idols. Remember that there is nothing more glorious than virginity, and great is the reward awaiting virgins. For the Bridegroom of virgins is immortal and grants immortality to all who love Him. Therefore, my lady, strive to attain that to which you have devoted your whole life. Guard yourself, my daughter, lest you lose the pledges of your blessedness, that is, the grace of Baptism and the monastic tonsure. For terrible will the Lord be when He sits on the throne of His glory to judge all and to render to each according to his deeds."

Heeding these words, Febronia grew strong in spirit and bravely prepared to enter the valiant battle with the devil. Then she said to Thomais:

"You have done well, my lady, in confirming your servant in the faith and making my soul ready for the valiant ascetic struggle. Let it be known to you that if I did not have the desire to die for my Bridegroom, I would have fled with the other sisters to hide from the terrible ordeal of martyrdom. But since I love my heavenly Bridegroom with my whole heart, to whom I have betrothed my soul and to whom I have consecrated my body, I dare to go to Him by the path of martyrdom, if He deems me worthy to suffer and die for His name."

Vrienna, having heard such words from Febronia, said to her:

"Daughter mine, Febronia! Remember my labors and cares for you; remember that from your second year I took you into my keeping from the hands of your nurse, and that to this very day no layman has even seen your face. Until now I have guarded you as the apple of my eye. But what I am to do with you now, and how I am to keep you, I no longer know. Guard yourself, that you may not grieve my old age nor destroy the labors which I, your spiritual mother, have expended upon your upbringing. Remember the passion-bearers who before you bravely and valiantly suffered for Christ, and have now received the crown from Him, among whom were not only men but also women and children. Remember Livia and Leonida, those glorious sisters who manfully laid down their souls for Christ. For Livia and Leonida, the one beheaded by the sword and the other cast into the fire, both together went to the bridechamber of their Heavenly Bridegroom. Remember

the twelve-year-old maiden Eutropia, who was tortured together with her mother. Have you not always marveled at her obedience and patience? You know how the judge, having released her from her bonds, wished to terrify her with arrows, thinking that she would flee from them. But she heard the voice of her mother saying to her, 'My child Eutropia, stand still,' and the maiden stood firm like an immovable pillar until she was wholly wounded by the arrows; then she fell to the ground, commending her spirit to the Lord. This maiden was simple and unlearned; but you yourself have well studied the Divine books and have been a good teacher to many. Consider, therefore, how bravely it befits you to stand up for your Lord."

These and many other things they spoke to one another, until the night passed and day came.

When the sun rose, a great tumult arose in the city. Selinus and Lysimachus had entered the city, and their soldiers had already begun to seize many Christians and cast them into prison. Some pagans told Selinus about the women's monastery in the city. Selinus at once sent soldiers to take all the nuns. The soldiers, coming to the monastery, surrounded it on all sides, and, hewing the doors with axes, entered within it like wild beasts. Seizing Vrienna, they wished to kill the elder with the sword. But Febronia, seeing the danger, fell at the feet of the soldiers and began to cry aloud:

"I adjure you by God: kill me first, that I may not see the death of my mistress."

While Febronia was thus crying out, the comes Primus came there; he angrily drove the soldiers away and asked Vrienna:

"Where are the other nuns who dwelt in this monastery?"

Vrienna said:

"They all fled in fear."

Then the comes said:

"Oh, if only you had fled with them! But even now you may freely do so and flee wherever you wish; I grant you this mercy."

Saying this, he left the monastery and led the soldiers away with him. When he came to the praetorium of Lysimachus, the latter asked him:

"Is it true what they told us, that there is a Christian monastery nearby?"

"It is true," said the comes.

Then, drawing Lysimachus aside, he said to him privately:

"Almost all the nuns have run away from that monastery, and I found there no one except two elderly women and one young nun. And I have something wondrous to tell you which I saw in that monastery: I saw a young nun of such great beauty that I had never seen such a beautiful woman before. God is my witness that I speak the truth to you. When I saw her, I marveled at the comeliness of her face, and had she not been clad in poor garments, I would have deemed her worthy to become a wife to you, my lord."

To this Lysimachus replied:

"If I do not wish to transgress the commandment of my mother and to shed Christian blood, but desire by all means to spare the Christians, how then can I be a seducer of the brides of Christ? I will never do that; but I turn to you, my lord, with an earnest request: bring those elders and the young nun out of the monastery and keep them somewhere, so that they may not fall into the hands of Selinus, my uncle, for torment."

While they were speaking thus to one another, one of the most malicious soldiers who had been in the monastery, overhearing their conversation, went at once to Selinus and told him that they had found in the women's monastery a very beautiful maiden, and that the comes advised Lysimachus to take her as a wife.

Selinus, filled with rage, at once sent soldiers to guard the nuns found there, so that they could not escape. Then he sent some of his nearest and most trusted servants to look at that maiden and learn her name. They went, and returning, told Selinus that surely there would not be found beneath the heavens a woman who could equal in beauty the maiden they had seen. After such words Selinus at once sent a herald to cry through the city that on the following morning all the inhabitants, men and women of every age, should gather to watch the ordeal of the young maiden Febronia.

Hearing this, all the people who lived in the city and the surrounding villages gathered in great numbers for the spectacle, to see the ordeal of St. Febronia. At the coming of morning the tormentor sent into the monastery the most savage soldiers, and commanded them to bring the holy maiden from there to the tribunal. The soldiers, coming into the monastery, pitilessly seized Febronia, and, binding her neck with chains, dragged her out of the monastery.

Then Vrienna and Thomais, embracing their disciple with tears, began to weep bitterly and to beseech the soldiers that they might allow them to talk a little with Febronia; the soldiers consented. And again Vrienna and Thomais began to implore the soldiers to take them also with her to the same ordeal that awaited Febronia; for the elderly women feared lest she alone, without support from them, should be frightened by the torments.

But the soldiers said:

"We have not been commanded to bring you to the tribunal, but only Febronia."

And so Vrienna and Thomais began to confirm Febronia in the faith.

Vrienna spoke to her thus:

"Behold, you, my daughter Febronia, go now to the ordeal of suffering. Know that the heavenly Bridegroom will look upon your sufferings, and the Angelic powers have already prepared for you the crown of victory, if you bravely endure to the end. Take heed that you fear not the torments and become a mockery to the demons. Spare not your body when they begin to mangle it with wounds, for it, even if we did not wish it, would after some time in any case enter the grave and turn to dust. Behold, I with bitter weeping will await good or sad tidings of you. Strive then, my daughter; I earnestly beseech you in this, that I may hear good news of you. Oh, who would bring me that blessed news, that Febronia suffered martyrdom for Christ and entered into the company of the martyrs!"

To this the blessed Febronia answered Vrienna:

"I hope, my mother, that as hitherto I have not transgressed your commandments, so now too I will unchangingly keep your instruction

and command. And people will see and marvel and praise the labor of Vrienna, saying: Behold, truly the planting and the shoot of Vrienna, that great elder! For in a woman's body I shall show a manly strength of spirit; but you pray for me and do not hinder me from going to the ordeal that lies before me."

Then Thomais said to her:

"As the Lord lives, my sister Febronia, I too will follow after you. I will clothe myself in worldly garments, and standing among the people, will watch your ordeal."

When the soldiers began to hurry Febronia and were already about to drag her away with them, she said to those holy elders:

"I beg you, my mothers, bless me on my way and pray for me."

And Vrienna, raising her hands to heaven, began to pray thus in a loud voice:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who once appeared in the form of Paul to Thy servant Thecla in her sufferings, appear now also to Thy humble servant Febronia in the hour of her ordeal, and from on high invisibly strengthen her, that through her also Thy holy name may be glorified."

Having thus prayed, Vrienna with tears embraced Febronia and, kissing her, let her go from herself. The soldiers, taking the holy maiden, led her to the tormentor Selinus.

Having accompanied for a little while her beloved spiritual daughter, Vriena returned weeping and wailing to the monastery and, prostrating herself on the ground in the church, cried out, praying to God for Febronia. Thomais, leaving Vriena weeping in the church, put on the garments of worldly women and went after Febronia to the place of spectacle. There also went those women who every Friday came to the monastery to hear the book instructions from the lips of Febronia; beating their breasts, they hastened with tears to the place of spectacle, and were in great grief because they were losing their teacher. The news that Febronia had been led to the place of spectacle reached also Hieria, and she wept so loudly that her parents and all who were in the house were terrified and began to ask:

"What is the matter with you, Hieria?"

"They have led my sister Febronia to the place of spectacle; they have sent my teacher to torments for Christ," Hieria answered amid her sobs.

Hieria's parents tried to calm her, but she wept still more and said to them:

"Leave me; I will not cease weeping for my sister and teacher Febronia."

As she spoke thus, her parents also burst into tears, and the whole house resounded with weeping for St. Febronia. Hieria, however, began to beg her parents to let her go to the place of public spectacle, and they did not hinder her. Taking many male and female slaves, she went with tears to the place of public spectacle and overtook a multitude of women hastening there with tears as well; among them was Thomais, who was walking in worldly garments. Recognizing her, Hieria went with her, and both of them, shedding many tears, came to the appointed place. An innumerable crowd of people had gathered there, and the judges were already seated in their places. When everything was prepared, Selinus and Lysimachus commanded that St. Febronia be brought before them. The saint stood before them with her hands bound behind her and her neck fettered with chains; seeing this, almost all who were present there were bathed in tears and gave themselves over to bitter weeping and sobbing. The tormentor Selinus, giving a sign for silence, said to Lysimachus:

"Subject this woman to examination and hear her answers."

And Lysimachus began to question Febronia. First he asked her:

"Tell us, what is your condition: are you a slave, or are you free?"

"Yes, I am a slave," answered Febronia.

"Whose?"

"Christ's," the holy maiden boldly confessed.

Lysimachus asked her again:

"What name do you bear?"

And Febronia answered:

"I am called a humble Christian."

Lysimachus asked again:

"We wish to know your name."

"I have already told you that I am a Christian," answered Febronia, "but if you wish to know the name that was given me at birth, I will answer you: my mother named me Febronia."

Then the tormentor Selinus commanded Lysimachus to stop the questioning, and himself addressed the holy maiden.

"I call the gods to witness, Febronia, that I did not wish to condescend to converse with you; but since your meekness and the beauty of your face have overcome my anger against you, I will ask you no longer as one condemned, but as my daughter. Listen then, my daughter; let the gods be witnesses that I speak the truth to you. You see my nephew Lysimachus sitting with me; he and his father Anthimus, now already dead, had chosen for him as a wife a noble maiden possessing great wealth, the daughter of the senator Prosphorus, and had already betrothed him to her. Now, if you confess your guilt before the gods, we will annul the marriage agreement with the daughter of Prosphorus and make a new one, with you. And you will become the wife of Lysimachus and, as his wife, will sit at his right hand, as I now sit. You see that he is handsome, as you are. Listen then to my counsel, as to your father's; as a reward for this I will make you noble and rich, and you will never know poverty. I have neither wife nor children, and all that I have I give to you: I make you mistress of all my estates. All this I will give as dowry with you to my lord Lysimachus, and I will be a father to you both. Then, seeing how great an honor you have been granted, all the women will glorify and call you blessed; our valiant emperor too will rejoice over you and on his side will also reward you with much, for he has promised to appoint Lysimachus eparch of Rome. Now you have heard all that I have said to you. Tell me, then, that you will not turn away from our gods; by this you will bring great joy to my soul. But if you do not heed my admonition, then, I swear by the gods, you will not live even three hours. So choose for yourself what you want, and tell us."

To this, the holy Febronia answered Selinus thus:

"Judge! I have in heaven a chamber not made with hands, in which a marriage is celebrated that is indissoluble forever, and my dowry is the whole heavenly kingdom. Having the Immortal Bridegroom, I do not

wish to be joined to a mortal and corruptible man. As for what you promise me, I do not wish even to hear it. No, do not trouble yourself, judge! Neither by flatteries nor by seductions will you achieve anything, nor will you frighten me with threats."

Hearing such an answer, Selinus flew into a great rage and commanded the soldiers to tear her garments off her, then to gird her with a poor and short sackcloth, and to set her almost naked on display before everyone; he hoped that the holy maiden, seeing herself in such dishonor, would be ashamed of her disgrace and repent of her obstinacy. The soldiers at once carried out Selinus's order and set the martyr almost completely naked before everyone.

Then Selinus said to her:

"What do you say now to me, Febronia? You see what dishonor has become your portion, when you might enjoy great blessings."

To this Febronia said to the tyrant:

"Know, judge, that even if you strip from me not only those garments but even this sackcloth, and leave me completely naked, I count this shame as nothing. For there is one Creator of man and woman; for Him I am ready not only to bear the shame of nakedness, but I desire even to be cut down by the sword and burned by fire. O, if only He would deign to make me suffer for Him who of His own will endured for me countless sufferings!"

"O shameless one, worthy of every dishonor!" cried Selinus. "I see that you take pride in your beauty, and therefore you do not count the dishonor of nakedness as shame to yourself, for you hope to be glorified by your beauty, standing naked before the people."

The saint answered him:

"Christ is my witness that until this day I have not even seen the face of a man, and likewise no worldly person has seen my face. Shall I now, being in your power, be shameless? No, you yourself are shameless, exposing a maiden's body before everyone. But tell me, mad judge: if a wrestler enters the Olympic contests[8], does he not wrestle naked until he defeats his opponent? In the same way I, coming here to

8. The contests in wrestling and running are meant, which took place every four years at Olympia, a city in southern Greece. These contests had the character of Greek national festivals.

wrestle with the adversary and expecting wounds and fire for my body, how can I endure them while remaining clothed? Does not a naked body receive the wounds? And so I come out naked, that, despising torments, I may conquer Satan, your father."

Then Selinus said to the servants:

"Since this woman herself seeks torments and says she does not fear fire and wounds, lay her out on the ground, kindle a fire under her, and let four soldiers beat her on the back with staves."

Immediately the soldiers began to torment the saint as they had been ordered. They beat the saint for a long time, so that blood flowed from her body in streams. And so that the fire kindled beneath her would not go out, the torturers poured oil on it, so that the flame would grow larger and stronger and scorch the martyr more severely. While the saint was being tormented in this way, many in the crowd began to cry out to Selinus:

"Spare, spare the young maiden, merciful judge!"

But he, not heeding their entreaties, commanded that the holy maiden be tormented more severely; then, somewhat calmed in his anger, he ordered the torments to cease. The soldiers left Febronia and, considering her already dead, threw her outside the fire.

Phomaida, seeing the grievous torments of Febronia, grew faint in spirit and body and fell to the ground at the feet of Ieria. Seeing this, Ieria cried out loudly:

"Woe, woe is me, my sister Febronia! Woe is me, my teacher! I shall no longer hear your teaching. And I shall lose not only you but also Phomais; for she, in grief for you, is dying."

Febronia, lying on the ground, heard these words of Ierea and began to beseech those standing near to pour water on the face of the fainting Phomais. They did as she asked, and Phomais came to herself and stood up on her feet.

Seeing that Febronia was still alive, Selinus addressed her with these mocking words:

"What do you say, Febronia? How sweet your first ascetic exploit of suffering seemed to you?"

"You see," answered Febronia, "that, despite your efforts, I have remained invincible, because I despise all torments."

Then Selinus commanded the servants:

"Hang her on a tree and scrape her sides with iron combs, and sear the wounds with fire so that even her bones are burned."

The torturers at once began to carry out this command. Amid such sufferings Febronia raised her eyes to heaven and began to pray thus to the Lord:

"Come to my help, and do not despise Thy handmaid in this hour."

And after these words she fell silent.

When her body was mercilessly scraped and burned with fire, many of those gathered at the spectacle could not look upon such terrible torments and withdrew from there; others began to cry out to the judge that he should spare the young maiden, who was blameless in everything. Then Selinus commanded the attendants to stop the torments. Afterward he began to put certain questions to Febronia, who hung on the tree, but she remained silent. Again inflamed with fury, the tyrant ordered her taken down from the tree and tied to a stake set up on the ground; then he said:

"Since this vile woman will not answer me, cut out her tongue and throw it into the fire."

Hearing this, the holy martyr at once thrust her tongue out of her mouth and gave a sign to the soldier that he should carry out the order. But as soon as the soldier touched the tongue to cut it off, the people standing there cried out loudly, adjuring the judge by the name of his gods and beseeching him to revoke his order. Yielding to the people's entreaties, Selinus gave the command not to cut out the tongue, but instead to pull out the teeth. At once one of the torturers took an iron instrument and began to pull out the martyr's teeth one after another. When he had pulled out 17 teeth, Selinus ordered this torment to stop. Meanwhile, streams of blood flowed from the saint's mouth, and from the cruel sufferings she was completely exhausted in body. A physician was summoned, who stopped the flow of blood.

Then Selinus again began to question the saint, addressing her with these words:

"Even now, Febronia, at least submit to the demand of the court and confess faith in the gods."

The saint answered:

– Anathema[9] to thee, accursed servant of the devil, grown old in iniquities! How long wilt thou hinder me on my way, barring my entrance to my Bridegroom Christ? Hasten and set me free from this mortal body of mine, for my Bridegroom is already waiting for me.

To this Selinus said to Febronia:

– Behold, I shall command that thy body be utterly torn asunder, given over to the sword and to fire. For I see that thou shamelessly takest pride in thy youth. But this will profit thee nothing; thy pride will bring thee still greater evil and the most grievous torments.

The holy martyr, worn down by excessive torments, could say nothing more, but her silence only inflamed the fury of the tormentor the more: the cruel Selinus commanded that her virginal breasts be cut off. The people cried out, entreating the judge to spare the maiden and revoke his order. But Selinus, angered at the tormenting attendant, said to him:

– Why dost thou delay, most foul opponent of our gods? Why dost thou not carry out what is commanded thee?

Then the attendant, taking a razor, began to cut the holy martyr's right breast. She, lifting her eyes to heaven, prayed to God with a loud voice, saying:

– O Lord my God, look upon the torments I endure, and receive my soul into Thy hands.

Having said this, she fell silent and said nothing more. When both breasts had been cut off and cast upon the ground, Selinus commanded that fire be brought and that the wounds formed in place of the cut-off breasts be seared with it. In the same way he commanded that the martyr's womb be burned, so that all her inner parts were consumed. At this, many of the people, unable to look upon such torture, turned away from the spectacle and loudly cursed Diocletian and his gods.

At this time Phomaida and Ieria sent a maidservant to the monastery, to tell Vrienna all that had happened. Hearing the report of the

messenger, Vrienna was filled with spiritual joy and gladness, and with tears began to cry out to God in this way:

– Lord Jesus Christ, our God, come to the help of Thy servant Febronia!

Then, falling to the ground, she spoke with weeping and sobbing:

– Where art thou now, Febronia? Where art thou, my gentle daughter? Where art thou, servant of Christ? Where art thou, adornment of the monastic order?

At last, rising from the ground and raising her hands to heaven, she cried out:

– O Lord! Look upon Thy humble servant and help her in her struggle! Grant that I may see her die as a martyr and enrolled in the choir of the holy martyrs.

Meanwhile at the place of the spectacle the following took place: the tormentor Selinus commanded that Febronia be untied from the stake to which she was bound; the saint was untied, and being unable to stand on her feet, she immediately fell to the ground. Seeing this, the comes Primus quietly said to Lysimachus:

– Why does this young maiden endure such cruel torments? Is it not time to end the torture?

To this Lysimachus replied:

– Wait, brother, for her sufferings will profit many who look upon her. And I think these sufferings will also be for my salvation. I have heard much from my mother, who used to say how the martyrs by their courage turned many to the path of salvation. Let this maiden, then, endure her martyr's struggle to the end, that she may save me and many others.

At this time Ieria, seeing Febronia fallen to the ground, cried out loudly, addressing Selinus:

– O inhuman tormentor! Was it not enough for thy cruelty that thou didst subject this innocent maiden to the first torments? Dost thou not remember thy mother, who also had a woman's flesh? Didst thou not thyself feed at breasts like those which thou hast commanded to be cut

9. *Anathema* means excommunication. It is the handing over of the excommunicated to the judgment of God.

off? Was it for this that thou wert nursed at women's breasts, that thou shouldst display such savage cruelty toward women? I marvel that nothing can tame thy cruel and inhuman disposition. But know this: as thou hast not spared this maiden, so the King of heaven will not spare thee.

So cried out Ieria. Selinus, hearing her words, was again filled with fury and commanded the soldiers to seize Ieria from the crowd, intending to subject her to torments at once. Hearing the command, Ieria gladly went herself to meet the soldiers, making her way through the crowd of people, and as she went she repeated:

– Lord God of Thy servant Febronia! Receive me also with her, Thy humble servant.

But before she reached the judgment seat, the friends of Selinus began to advise him not to subject Ieria to torment before the whole people, in view of her noble birth.

– We fear, – they said, – lest the whole multitude of the gathered people, seeing her sufferings, should desire to suffer together with her, and then we should have to deal with the whole city.

Selinus heeded their counsel and did not command that Ieria be subjected to torments, but only angrily cried out, addressing her:

– Listen, Ieria! I swear by the gods that by thy bold and shameless words thou art bringing still greater torments upon Febronia.

Having said this, he immediately gave the order that both hands of the holy Febronia be cut off. The armour-bearer, placing a block of wood under the martyr's right hand, struck it with an axe and cut it off; in the same way he also cut off Febronia's left hand. Not yet satisfied, the cruel tormentor commanded that the martyr's right leg be cut off. Placing a block under the saint's legs and taking the axe in his hands, the armour-bearer struck with great force with the axe above the knee, but could not cut through the martyr's leg; then he struck a second time, likewise without success. Among the people, seeing this, there arose weeping and confusion, and all were indignant at the cruelty of the tormentor. The armour-bearer struck the leg a third time, and only then with difficulty cut off the leg. Febronia, from such cruel torments, trembled all over her body, and although she was already on the

threshold of death, nevertheless, as far as she was able, she stretched out her other leg, laying it on the block, that it too might be cut off. Seeing this, Selinus said:

– Behold what great strength this shameless woman has.

Then, turning to the armour-bearer, he said in great anger:

– Cut off her other leg as well.

He at once carried out this command.

Then Lysimachus, rising from his seat, said to Selinus:

– Dost thou still wish to torment this poor maiden? Let us go from here, for the hour of dinner has come.

But the impious Selinus answered:

– I swear by the gods that I will not leave her alive, but will stay here until she dies.

But the martyr's soul did not depart from her body for many hours; then Selinus asked the armour-bearers:

– Is this shameless woman still alive?

– Yes, she is still alive, – they answered him, – the soul still remains in her.

Then Selinus commanded that the martyr's holy head be cut off.

The soldier, taking a sword in one hand, seized with the other the hair on the martyr's head and slew her at the neck, as sheep are slain, and then cut off the head. Immediately after this Selinus rose and went to dine; Lysimachus went with him, shedding tears.

After the martyr's death of holy Febronia, the faithful who were among the people wished to carry away her honourable relics. But Lysimachus set soldiers over them with orders to guard them, so that no member of the martyr's body should be stolen. And he himself, not wishing to take food out of great grief and sorrow, shut himself in a bedchamber together with Selinus, and there wept bitterly over the slaying of Febronia.

Selinus, seeing Lysimachus' lamentation, was also grieved and likewise did not wish to take food; but rising he began to walk about the chambers of the palace, in great confusion. When he happened to raise his eyes upward, to the height of heaven, a great fear and terror suddenly fell upon him and he became mute. Then, crying out with a loud

voice and roaring like an ox, he struck his head against a marble column that stood in that chamber, and, breaking his head, fell dead to the floor. Among the servants and soldiers of Selinus there arose a wail, and confusion ensued. At their cries Lysimachus came from his bedchamber, and seeing his uncle lying on the ground and dead, he was amazed and filled with horror. Recovering himself, he commanded that the wailing cease and began to ask:

– How did this happen?

Those present told him what they had seen.

Shaking his head in wonder, Lysimachus said:

– Great is the Christian God! He is truly worthy of honour, for He has avenged innocent blood!

Having said this, he commanded that Selinus' corpse be carried out of the city and buried in the Hellenic manner. Then Lysimachus summoned the comes Primus and said to him:

– I adjure thee by the Christian God, – do not transgress the command that I give thee. Endeavour quickly to prepare for Febronia's body a coffin of wood that does not decay, and send messengers summoning the Christians to the burial of the holy martyr: let them gather fearlessly, for Selinus is already dead. Thou knowest, beloved Primus, my desire. Take then a detachment of soldiers and, gathering all the severed members of Febronia's body, carry them to the monastery; and take care that no part of the saint's body be lost or go missing. And so that the dogs may not lick the ground upon which the martyr's blood was spilled, command that it be scraped clean, then gathered and carried, together with the relics, to the monastery.

The comes at once summoned the soldiers and, in accordance with Lysimachus' desire, ordered them to carry the martyr's body to the monastery; and he himself, gathering the severed parts of her body: the head, the hands, the feet, the breasts and the teeth – and wrapping them in his cloak, went after them, accompanied by a multitude of people. On reaching the monastery, the comes allowed no one to enter it except Phomaida and Ieria.

The abbess of the monastery, the venerable elder Vrienna, seeing the lifeless and mutilated body of Febronia and her severed members,

was overcome in body by great grief and pity and fell to the ground as one dead. The comes, however, set a military guard at the monastery and returned to Lysimachus.

Only after several hours did Vrienna come to herself. Rising from the ground, she fell upon the body of the martyr and, embracing it, cried out:

"Woe is me, my daughter Febronia! Now thou hast been taken from thy mother's eyes. Who will now read the Divine Scriptures to the sisters? Whose hands will unfold the books which thou didst hold?"

At this time all the nuns who had gone out with Eferia returned to the monastery and, with tears, bowed down to the ground before the body of the holy martyr Febronia.

Before the relics of the holy martyr, the blessed Ieria also wept bitterly, crying out:

"I bow down before the holy feet that trampled upon the head of the serpent; I kiss the holy wounds, which pour into my soul the grace-filled streams of healing. I crown with the praiseworthy crown her head, who by the greatness of her ascetic struggle has crowned the whole female race."

And all the sisters wept over the relics of the martyr. Then, washing them, they laid them upon the board on which the saint had rested during her life when she gave herself to brief repose. Placing the body of the martyr upon this board, they fitted all the severed members to the wounds in their proper places, and with psalmody bore the honorable relics into the church.

At the approach of evening, Vrienna commanded that the monastery gates be opened, so that all who wished might enter the church and, seeing the martyr, glorify God, who had given her such great courage and endurance in her sufferings. And a multitude of people came. Lysimachus also came there together with the comes Primus, for he said to the comes:

"I renounce all my ancestral customs and idol-worship, and I leave all my riches, and I will go and unite myself with Christ." To this the comes answered him:

"And I, together with thee, will do the same. Let Diocletian perish with his rule. I will no longer serve him, but, leaving everything, I will serve Christ."

Thus the two of them, having agreed with one another, left the praetorium[10] and came to the monastery, to the relics of the holy Febronia.

There also came the bishop of that city with the priests, the clergy and a multitude of monks, and they performed the all-night praise of God with tears and spiritual joy.

When the day came, they brought a beautifully made reliquary for the body of the martyr and laid the honorable body in it with reverence; then they applied to it each severed member, and the teeth they placed upon the breast of the martyr. After this they anointed the relics with myrrh and fragrances and buried them in the church, glorifying and thanking the Lord. And healings were granted to the sick from the saint's tomb, so that a multitude of Hellenes believed in Christ and were baptized. Lysimachus and Primus also received holy baptism. In doing so they laid aside their rank and would not return to the impious Diocletian, but, renouncing the world, they went to the archimandrite Marcellus and received the monastic habit; having lived pleasingly to God in labors and ascetic feats of fasting, both of them ended their lives in peace and passed over to Christ.

In the same way the boyar's wife Ieria, having given to the monastery of Vrienna all her estates, approached the latter with this request.

"I beseech thee, mother," she said, "receive me as a daughter in place of the holy Febronia, and I will serve thee, showing obedience in all things, as Febronia served thee."

Having said this, she took off all her precious women's garments and gave them for the adornment of the church; and she herself, renouncing the world, became a nun.

The festival in honor of the holy martyr Febronia was celebrated in the monastery of the abbess Vrienna after her martyric death, every year in the month of June, on the 25th day, on which the saint accom-

10. *Praetorium* – the palace of the prefect, the governor of a province.

plished her heroic struggle for Christ. And on the day of the feast there was a remarkable miracle every year: during the all-night singing, the holy martyr appeared in the church among the singing sisters and took her former place. When this happened for the first time, all the nuns, seeing the saint among them, were terrified, and Vrienna cried out in a loud voice:

"Here has come to us my daughter Febronia!"

At this she rushed toward her with joy, intending to embrace her with a mother's embrace. But the saint at once became invisible. From that time no one dared to touch the one who appeared, or even to speak a word to her; but with awe and wonder everyone looked upon her each time, and from the vision of the saint they felt great joy within themselves and were moved in their hearts, involuntarily shedding tears. For three hours the saint stood among the singers, seen by all, and then again became invisible.

The bishop of that city greatly revered the name of the holy Febronia: he founded a church in the name of the martyr, which he built over the course of six years. Having finished the building of the church and adorned it, on the day of the memory of the holy Febronia he gathered the neighboring bishops for the consecration of the church and wished to transfer the honorable relics of the martyr into it. When the all-night singing was completed, the bishops with the whole council of clergy came to the monastery, and, after prayer, they opened the tomb of the saint and saw her honorable relics shining with unearthly beauty, like a ray of the sun. At this all the nuns wept and sobbed, grieving that so precious a treasure was being taken from them. But when the bishop's hands touched the reliquary to take it, at once a clap of thunder sounded in the air, so strong that all fell to the ground in fear. After the lapse of one hour the bishop again dared to touch the reliquary; but suddenly there came such an earthquake that the whole city was shaken. Then all understood that the holy martyr did not wish her relics to be taken from the place of their burial. The bishop was filled with great grief and no longer dared to touch the reliquary, but began to beseech Vrienna:

"Hear me, my sister: thou knowest with what zeal I raised, to the glory and honor of the Venerable Martyr, a church, which required a full six years. And now the holy martyr has not deigned to hearken to my prayers and does not wish to move into the church built in her honor. Therefore I beseech thee: take with thy own hands at least one of the severed members of her body and give it to us, so that my labor may not remain without reward."

Vrienna stretched out her hand and touched one of the saint's hands, intending to hand it to the bishop; but the abbess's hand was held back by an invisible power and became as though dead. Then Vrienna, shedding tears, began to speak, addressing the saint as one living:

"I beseech thee, my daughter, holy martyr Febronia, be not angry with me, thy mother; remember my labors for thee, and do not dishonor my old age."

When she had said this, her hand was set free.

After this Vrienna again said to the martyr with tears:

"Give us thy blessing, our lady, and incline to our request to thee."

Having said this, she again stretched out her hand, took one tooth of the martyr that lay upon her breast, gave it to the bishop, and at once closed the reliquary.

The bishop received the tooth with joy, placed it in a golden vessel, and, together with the other bishops, his clergy and the whole people, returned to the newly built church, carrying the gift received with psalmody, accompanied by candles and censers, amid the general rejoicing of the people. Having brought the gift into the church itself, the bishops consecrated it. On that day in the newly consecrated church there were many healings of the sick through the prayers of the holy martyr: the lame received strength in their feet and walked, the blind regained their sight, the demoniacs were freed from the demons; and whoever was afflicted with any infirmity, merely touching with his lips that small part taken from the relics of the martyr and kissing it, at once received healing and departed home whole, rejoicing and blessing God.

After the consecration of the new church in the name of the holy Febronia, the venerable abbess Vrienna lived yet two years; and, drawing near to her blessed end, she appointed in her place as abbess Thomaida, after which she departed to the Lord.

"I, however," says the writer of this Life, the abbess Thomaida, "after the repose of our mother Vrienna, wrote the Life and sufferings of the holy martyr Febronia, as I saw them with my own eyes; and concerning Lysimachus I wrote what I heard from his own lips. All this I have written for the benefit of those who read and of those who hear what is read, to the glory of Christ our God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages." Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 6:

"My most sweet Bridegroom, Christ," cried Febronia, "it is not hard for me to follow after Thee; for the sweetness of Thy love has fixed my soul with hope, and the beauty of Thy mercy has gladdened my heart to drink the cup of sufferings for Thee, that I may be counted worthy, with the wise virgins, to rejoice with Thee in the bridal chamber. Wherefore, O Venerable Passion-bearer, honoring the ascetic feats of thy labors, we beseech thee: intercede that the doors of the bridal chamber may not be closed to us also."

* * *

Memory of the Holy Right-believing Prince Peter and Princess Feveronia, in monasticism David and Euphrosyne, Wonderworkers of Murom

Память святых благоверных князя Петра и княгини Февронии, в иночестве Давида и Евфросинии, Муромских чудотворцев

This pious prince Peter[11] came of a pious and holy family[12]. He was brought up in the Orthodox faith and in chastity in the city of

11. St. Peter – David, prince of Murom, was the second son of the Murom prince Yuri Vladimirovich. He began to reign in Murom after his elder brother Vladimir Yuryevich, entering into the administration of the principality on December 18, 1203.

12. The progenitor of the princes of Murom, Prince Constantine Svyatoslavich, was numbered among the saints; his memory is celebrated on May 21.

Murom[13], and he ruled his principality, observing strict justice in all things. When the time came, he was united in marriage to the right-believing Princess Fevronia, who likewise came of a pious family[14] and had been diligently instructed in godliness. Thus both being holy and righteous persons, the blessed Peter and Fevronia loved purity and chastity, and they were always merciful, just and meek. They delivered from the power of their oppressors those who suffered wrong, honored worthily those of the monastic and priestly orders, giving them material aid, showed great compassion toward the poor, and zealously exercised themselves in fasting and abstinence. Desiring, according to the word of the Lord, to inherit the earth of the meek[15] and to win for themselves the eternal blessedness of the righteous, they also, and in all else besides, pleased Christ very greatly by their good works. Having then attained a venerable old age, the blessed Peter fell into bodily sickness and received the tonsure, being given the name David in monastic life. After this, having been ill for a short time, he reposed in firm faith unto God in the Kingdom of Heaven. In like manner the holy Princess Fevronia, fulfilling her sincere desire, took the monastic habit, receiving the name Euphrosyne in religious life, and, like her husband, with unwavering faith and a pure conscience she reposed, commending her soul into the hands of God[16]. Thus both holy spouses inherited the earth of the meek, which they had so desired from their youth. After the death of the blessed Prince Peter, the nobles and boyars mourned him as a father, the townsfolk as their intercessor and protector, and the poor widows and the destitute, who lacked sustenance, as their provider and helper. The honorable bodies of the holy prince and princess were es-

13. In antiquity Murom was the center of the northern Rostov-Suzdal region; today it is a district town of the Vladimir province.

14. There is a tradition that the holy Princess Fevronia by origin was a simple peasant woman, the daughter of a "tree-climber and beekeeper" from the village of Laskovaya, in the Ryazan province.

15. Mt. 5

16. The holy Prince Peter and Princess Fevronia reposed on one day, June 25, 1228; but in the opinion of the Most Reverend Filaret their death falls on April 25, 1228, the 25th day of April being reckoned by him as the day of their death and June 25 as the day of the opening of their relics. Their glorification began at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and at the Moscow Council of 1547 it was decided to celebrate their memory locally. Afterward (probably from 1552) this celebration became universal.

corted with solemnity by all the inhabitants of the city, and they were buried together in one tomb in the city of Murom. Even to this day, through their honorable relics the saints work wonders to the glory of God for those who approach them in faith[17].

Troparion, Tone 8:

Thou wert a branch most honorable of a pious root, having lived well in godliness, O blessed Peter; likewise with thy wife, the wise Fevronia, having pleased God in the world, ye were also made worthy of the life of the venerable. With them pray ye to the Lord that He keep your fatherland unharmed, that we may ever honor you.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Contemplating the rule of this world and its temporal glory, thou didst live piously in the world, O Peter, together with thy wife, the wise Fevronia, pleasing God by almsgiving and prayers. Wherefore, even after death, lying together in one tomb, ye bestow invisible healing; and now pray ye to Christ to preserve the city and the people who glorify you.

* * *

17. "The blessed David and Euphrosyne," says the Most Reverend Filaret, "in their life were a model of Christian marriage, ready for all deprivations for the evangelical commandment of an unbreakable union. And now by their prayers they bring down heavenly blessing upon those entering into marriage. So show many experiences of their life beyond the grave."

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF JUNE

June 26

26 июня

New Calendar June 26 · Old Calendar July 9 (civil dates)

Appearance of the Wonderworking Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos Called "of Tikhvin"

Явление чудотворной иконы Пресвятой Богородицы, нарицаемой Тихвинской

In the year from the creation of the world 6891, and from the Incarnation of the Word of God 1382, in the reign of the Grand Prince Demetrius Ivanovich[1], under the Most Holy Metropolitan of All Rus' Pimen[2] and the Archbishop of Novgorod Alexis, there appeared in Rus' the most venerable icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, with the image of her Infant, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal, depicted upon her left hand. This appearance took place in the following circumstances.

Within the bounds of Great Novgorod, not far from the Varangian Sea[3], upon the waters of the great lake Nevo[4], fishermen were catching fish. And while they fished, suddenly a radiant beam from heaven shone upon them... Looking up, they beheld a wondrous sight: through the air above the waters, borne by unseen hands, was an icon of the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, shining like the sun. The fishermen, seeing so marvellous an appearance, were at first struck with terror, and then filled with joy. Leaving their work, they fixed their eyes upon the wondrous sight before them, desiring to see whither the holy icon would go and

1. Demetrius III Ivanovich reigned at Moscow with the title of Grand Prince from 1363 to 1389.
2. Pimen governed the Russian metropolia from 1382 to 1389, with an interruption (between 1385 and 1388).
3. The Varangian Sea was then the name for the Baltic. The name Varangian was borrowed from the ancient Varangians, who inhabited the shores of present-day Sweden.
4. Lake Nevo, today Lake Ladoga.

where it would stop. But God did not will to grant them this desire, and the holy icon soon vanished from their eyes and became invisible.

Afterwards the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos appeared within the same Novgorod territory, in the village of Vymochenitsa, on the river Oyat[5], a hundred *poprishches*[6] from Tikhvin[7]. Here it appeared to the local inhabitants, standing in the air and shining with ineffable light. Seeing so unusual an appearance, the inhabitants of that village gathered together, and, astonished, marvelled at the wonder they beheld; then they began to pray fervently to the Most Pure Theotokos. Then the wonderful icon of the Lady of Heaven descended from the aerial heights to the people on the earth. The inhabitants of Vymochenitsa received the icon of the Queen of Heaven with great joy, and at once, with zeal, built in her honour a chapel, in which they placed the image sent to them; afterwards, on the site of this chapel, a church was erected in memory of the glorious Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos. Here, in the village of Vymochenitsa, the icon remained for some time, granting healings to many sick people who came to it in faith.

But after a short time it was taken from there by an unseen hand, and, borne through the air, it appeared in the settlement of Kozhela, near a river called the Pashi[8], twenty *poprishches* from Tikhvin — appearing in exactly the same way as in the village mentioned above. Seeing it shining with a wondrous light, the inhabitants of that settlement all flocked together, filled with wonder and awe, and prayed fervently to the Most Pure One that she would grant them mercy and send down to them her icon. And their prayer was fulfilled. The icon descended from on high to the earth, and the local inhabitants in their turn built in its honour a chapel, on the site of which a church was afterwards built in memory of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos.

But not even in this place did the Most Pure One will her icon to remain long: after some time it was again taken from there invisibly, and,

5. Oyat is the left southern tributary of the river Svir, which flows out of Lake Onega and empties into Lake Ladoga on its eastern side.
6. Poprishche was a measure of distance. In ancient Rus' a poprishche equalled almost 656 present-day sazhens.
7. Tikhvin is a town in the Novgorod province.

with its gracious appearance, it visited several more places. In all these places, which were marked and hallowed by the presence of the wonderworking image, chapels were first built by the zeal of the faithful, and afterwards churches of God.

Thus the holy icon wondrously passed from place to place, borne through the air like a light cloud, until at last it came to rest near the town of Tikhvin, on the river Tikhvinka[9].

This final appearance occurred in exactly the same manner as the first ones. The venerable icon, like a cloud, sped through the air and then stood still, remaining miraculously suspended in the air. Such was the wonderful and supernatural progress of the icon of the Mother of God! A multitude of people from the town of Tikhvin and the surrounding villages, drawn by the great wonder, gathered at the site of the appearance; with them came also priests with crosses and icons. For a long time they prayed before the wonderworking icon, chanting psalms and sacred hymns; then, together with the people, they began to cry out:

"Come to us, O Queen; come to us, O Lady; look upon us, thy unworthy servants; send down upon us the mercies of thy loving-kindness; visit us from on high, and enlighten those darkened by sins with thy radiant coming."

While they prayed so fervently and shed many tears, the holy icon descended from heaven into their hands and was received by them with reverence and joy. Having fervently kissed the icon and offered many prayers before it, the inhabitants of the surrounding villages at once began to cut trees for the chapel. That same day they laid three crowns of logs for the chapel's framework and set them around the icon. When night came, the assembled people went home, leaving several persons near the wonderworking icon to remain in unceasing prayer all night.

Those left behind did indeed pray through the whole night, but towards morning, wearied from the night's vigil, they dozed off. And

8. Pasha is a river flowing into Lake Ladoga at the mouth of the river Svir. It runs through the Petersburg and Novgorod provinces, midway between the rivers Oyat and Tikhvinka.
9. Tikhvinka is a tributary of the river Syas, which flows into Lake Ladoga from its south-eastern side.

while they slept, a marvellous miracle took place. The wonderworking icon, together with the foundation of the chapel, was transferred, as if by the command of God, from its place to another. Together with it, all the logs prepared for building the chapel were also carried to another place; and not only the logs, but even the chips — everything, down to the smallest, was moved by an unseen hand, so that none of the watchers saw or heard it. When they awoke, they found on the former spot neither the image of the Most Pure Theotokos, nor the foundation of the chapel, nor the trees for it, and they were filled with great sorrow and fear.

In the morning the local inhabitants gathered again to venerate the venerable icon of the Theotokos and to build a chapel in her honour. But finding nothing in the place where they had left the image and had begun to build the chapel, they were struck with terror and asked those who had spent the night near the icon:

"What does this mean?"

They told how they had spent the whole night in prayer, how towards morning they had slept briefly, and how, on waking, they had found neither the icon, nor the trees, nor even the chips, taken no one knew where. Then all were filled with great sorrow, grieving that they had lost so precious a spiritual treasure. With weeping and sobbing they offered their prayers to God and began to cry out thus:

"O Lord, Lover of mankind! Send us again thy divine gift, which thou didst in thy loving-kindness and glory send to the land of Rus'; do not hide from us this priceless treasure, with which we hope to enrich our spiritual poverty. O Lady, Merciful Mother! Whither hast thou departed from us, thy unworthy children? Yesterday, by thy coming to us, thou didst fill our hearts with great joy, and today by thy departure thou hast plunged us into unending sorrow, and hast given us over to tears and sobs. But appear to us again, O our Light, and turn our sorrow into joy."

Having offered such a prayer, they scattered in different directions over that hill and throughout the surrounding grove, looking now up at the air, now down at the earth, and striving to find the icon. Nor were their diligent searches in vain. Soon they beheld a wondrous light com-

ing from the east, from the other side of the river Tikhvinka, from a marshy forest wilderness about two stadia distant from the hill. Seeing the light, the people at once hastened towards it and there found the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, together with the foundation of the chapel and all the logs and chips from them. The frame erected on the hill remained wholly intact as it had been set up before, while the holy icon was in the frame by its eastern side, hanging in the air, since it had not been fastened to the wall. Seeing this, those who had found the icon fell down before it, shedding tears of joy and glorifying God and His Most Pure Mother.

"Glory to thee, O Christ God," they cried, "glory to thee, O Most Pure Mother of God, that thou hast not forsaken us, thy servants! We beseech thee: do not forsake us to the end, but abide with us always, saving and keeping the rational flock of thy Son."

After praying, the whole people completed the building of the chapel, and then, choosing the worthiest men, they sent them to Great Novgorod, to the most reverend Archbishop Alexis and to the governor of Novgorod, with tidings of the glorious appearance of the icon, which, borne by Angels through the air, had come to them from no one knew where.

Hearing the account of the great wonder that had occurred at Tikhvin, the archbishop and the governor were amazed, and, filled with spiritual joy, glorified God and His Most Pure Mother. At once they informed the Grand Prince of Moscow, Demetrius Ivanovich, of the wonderful event, and his spirit was also filled with joy. Then the most reverend Alexis ordained several priests and deacons for Tikhvin and sent them, together with the men who had come to him, giving them an antimension and his blessing to build and consecrate a church on the river Tikhvinka, in the name of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. When they came to the Tikhvinka and had offered prayers before the wonderworking icon, they zealously set about building the church. The feast of the Dormition of the Most Pure Virgin Mary was drawing near when they finished building the church. Intending to consecrate the church on that feast, they sent a sexton to the surrounding villages, some twenty *poprishches* and more, to announce to the Christians the

day of the church's consecration and to warn them to prepare themselves for the coming celebration by fasting and prayer.

The sexton, whose name was George, was a man of righteous life, reverent and well-pleasing to God. On the day of the forefeast of the Dormition, as he was returning to the church and was already three *poprishches* of the way from it, in a forest wilderness, he perceived an extraordinary fragrance, as though from a multitude of incense and aromatic substances; for the grace of the Holy Spirit had perfumed that place where the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos Herself was to appear.

George was astonished and began to ponder whence in the deserted, remote wilderness came so extraordinary a fragrance. Suddenly he beheld the Most Holy Mother of God sitting upon a fallen pine tree, holding in Her right hand a scarlet staff on which She seemed to lean. Before Her stood a radiant man, clothed in bright vestments and in appearance resembling St. Nicholas, Hierarch of Myra. Seeing this wondrous apparition, the sexton was seized with fear and terror and fell to the ground as one dead. Then the hierarch who stood before the Theotokos drew near, touched him, and said:

"Arise, and fear not!"

George rose with trembling and joy, knelt down, and, folding his hands upon his breast, gazed upon the marvelous vision.

And the Most Holy Virgin, who sat upon the pine tree, said to him:

"George! Go to My church and tell the priests and all the people not to set upon it the iron cross which they intend to erect; let them instead set up a wooden one. Such is My will."

The sexton, gathering his courage, said to the Most Holy One in fear:

"O my Lady and Sovereign! They will not believe me!"

But the hierarch who stood before the Theotokos said to him:

"If they do not believe you, a sign shall be given to convince them."

After these words the Most Holy One and the hierarch who stood before Her became invisible. Then the sexton was fully convinced that he had been granted a miraculous vision of the Most Holy Theotokos and of the great Wonderworker St. Nicholas. Immediately falling to the

ground, he gave thanks to God, who had granted him to behold so glorious an apparition.

Coming to the church, the sexton told the priests and all the people what he had seen and heard, but they did not believe him and ordered the workmen to set the iron cross upon the church. But when one of the workmen, at the priests' command, took the cross and, climbing onto the roof of the church, began to set it in place, suddenly a great storm and a strong wind arose. Caught up by the gust, that man with the iron cross was lifted as though by hands and set down upon the ground, without the least harm to him, as though he had not fallen from a height but had himself descended to the earth. Seeing this terrible miracle, the priests and all the people present were greatly afraid, and, believing the sexton's words, they glorified God and His Most Holy Mother, and also magnified St. Nicholas. Then, immediately fashioning a wooden cross, they set it above the church, and with great joy and exultation they celebrated the consecration of the church together with the commemoration of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. From the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God there were then many miracles, and those afflicted with various diseases were granted healing. This was so not only at that festival but also after it.

After the consecration of the church on the Tikhvinka River, all the people went to the place where George had been granted the miraculous vision. Having prayed, they founded here a chapel in the name of St. Nicholas, and from the fallen pine tree upon which the Most Holy Theotokos had appeared to George they made a cross and set it in the chapel for the veneration and honor of all the people. In this chapel, afterwards, many miracles took place, as also in the church in honor of the Most Holy Virgin Mary mentioned above.

Seven years passed after that, and then, through the negligence of the church servants, by God's permission, a fire broke out in the Tikhvin church of the Mother of God from a candle that had not been extinguished. The whole church was turned to ashes, but the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy One remained unharmed: by the invisible power of God it had been carried out of the fire and was found not far from that place, at a distance of half a *poprishche*[10], standing in a juniper bush. At the same time a fire broke out also in the chapel that stood in the wilderness, which too was engulfed by the flames and burned; but the cross, made from the fallen pine tree and standing in the chapel, was likewise invisibly carried out of the fire and was found a short distance from the chapel, standing in a thicket of juniper.

On the site of the burned church another was built, likewise of wood, and then a new chapel was erected in the wilderness, on the former site; after this the holy icon of the Most Holy One was set in the church, and the pine cross in the chapel. But after five years had passed, the church caught fire again at night and burned to its foundations, while the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, like the unburnt bush,[11] was found among the ashes whole and in no way damaged. The chapel in the wilderness also burned, in some unknown manner, but the wonderworking cross that stood in it remained likewise unharmed. All marveled at such extraordinary miracles and glorified God and His Most Holy Mother. Then with zeal they hastened for a third time to build a church on the site of the two that had burned, again of wood, but larger and more majestic than the two former ones. This newly built church stood for more than a hundred years, until the time of the reign of the pious Grand Prince of all Rus', Basil Ioannovich.[12]

Stirred by great zeal and love for the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Grand Prince Basil commanded that a stone church be built on the Tikhvinka in place of the wooden one. With the money he sent, a stone porch was soon erected, and when the builders began to whitewash it, the struc-

10. That is, at a distance of 328 sazhens (656:2).

11. The burning bush (the thicket), burning yet not consumed, which Moses saw on Mount Horeb before his call to be leader of the Hebrew people, prefigured the Most Holy Virgin Theotokos, who did not change her virginity even after the birth of her Son.

12. Basil IV Ivanovich, father of John the Terrible, reigned from 1505 to 1533.

ture, by the inscrutable judgments of God, collapsed and buried under the stones twenty of the builders. The priests and overseers of the workmen, as well as all the people, were greatly grieved for the builders buried under the stones, for they thought that all of them had been crushed to death. With sorrow and weeping they began to cast away the stones, wishing to uncover the bodies of the slain. But after three days of labor, having cleared away all the stones, they found all of them alive and without any injury. Thus they were preserved, by the mercy of God and through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos. Great joy filled the hearts of all present at this marvelous miracle, and all gave thanks to Christ God and to His Most Holy Mother. Then they again set to the works and in a short time built a beautiful porch for the church.

When the construction of the new church was finished, for its consecration, at the desire of the Grand Prince, there came the Most Reverend Serapion, Archbishop of Novgorod, who, having consecrated the church, solemnly carried into it the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Mother of God.

After some time, Grand Prince Basil Ioannovich also came to the Tikhvinka. Drawn by love for the Most Holy Virgin Mary, he desired to see and kiss the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy One, and also to pray before it and to view the newly built church. At that time the Archbishop of Great Novgorod was the Most Reverend Macarius, who by the will of God was afterwards raised to the throne of the Moscow Metropolis.[13] He accompanied the Grand Prince on this journey and, together with him, came to the Tikhvinka. Here they prayed with zeal before the icon of the Most Holy One, performing many services and supplications, and then departed, the archbishop for Novgorod and the Grand Prince for Moscow.

After the repose of Basil Ioannovich, his son Ivan Vasilievich[14] ascended the Grand-Princely throne of Moscow, and he was the first to receive the royal crowning. Like his father he had great zeal for the

13. He occupied the Moscow metropolitan see from 1542 to 1564.
14. Tsar John IV Vasilievich, called the Terrible, who was first crowned to the kingdom and took the title of tsar, reigned from 1533 to 1584.

wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Mother of God at the Tikhvinka, and, like the pious Prince Basil Ioannovich before him, he went there on pilgrimage. Seeing that the church was administered by secular priests and deacons, and that numerous villages surrounded it, Tsar Ivan Vasilievich found this unseemly and resolved to found a monastic community there. After consulting with the Metropolitan of Moscow Macarius, the Archbishop of Novgorod Pimen, and his own princes and boyars, he commanded that all the surrounding villages and the clergy attached to the church be moved to another place, far from the church, and that monks settle at the church and begin the establishment of the monastery. And so, after a short time, at the Tsar's expense, a monastery was built on the Tikhvinka, entirely of stone and enclosed by stone walls. In it was established a common life, as in other great and renowned monasteries. The first abbot of the newly founded monastery was Cyril; under him many monks, drawn by the miracles from the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, began to leave their desert dwellings and come to the Tikhvin monastery.

One of the first to come here, while the monastery was still being established, was the monk Abraham, who had earlier struggled in the Monastery of St. Sergius, situated at Velikie Luki, about five hundred *poprishches* from the Tikhvin Monastery. As he himself related, he had been ill for a long time and had already begun to prepare for death. Then his spiritual guide, Martyrius, a God-pleasing man, having heard much about the wonderworking Tikhvin Icon of the Most Pure Mother of God and the abundant healings granted through it to the sick, advised Abraham to make a vow to the Most Pure One that he would go to Tikhvin and pray there before Her wonderworking icon. The sick man at once made this promise and was instantly healed of his grievous illness. Thus returning from the gates of death, he immediately rose from his sickbed, completely well, rejoicing and glorifying God. His spiritual guide Martyrius also rejoiced, seeing the speedy healing of his disciple and marvelling at the wondrous miracle of the Mother of God. He further advised Abraham not to delay in carrying out his intention, but to go at once to Tikhvin and fulfil the vow he had made to the Most Pure One.

Abraham immediately set out and, having reached the Tikhvin Monastery, reverently fulfilled his promise. With joyful tears he fell down before the precious icon of the Mother of God, kissed it with his lips, and offered it worship with all his heart. Having given thanks to the Most Pure One, he told all who were present of the mercy shown to him by the Queen of Heaven. At that time Pimen, Archbishop of Novgorod, was at the River Tikhvinka, overseeing the work of establishing the monastery; news of Abraham's miraculous healing reached him as well. The Hierarch was filled with joy and glorified the Lord and the Most Pure Virgin Mary who had given Him birth. He would not allow Abraham to return to his spiritual guide Martyrius, but entrusted him with the church keys, so that in gratitude for the unspeakable mercy shown him by the Mother of God, he might be the first to come to Her church and the last to leave, opening it before the services began and closing it when they were ended.

Meanwhile, after sending Abraham away, the elder Martyrius began to grieve that he himself had not gone with him to venerate the image of the Most Pure One. At last he resolved to go to Tikhvin as soon as his disciple returned. After waiting a long while for him, the elder grew anxious; and then he saw this vision in a dream. In the direction of Tikhvin, a great pillar of fire rose before Martyrius's eyes, and at its summit was an image of the Most Holy Theotokos, shining like the sun and resembling the one in the Tikhvin Monastery. Then Martyrius was seized with an intense desire to kiss this image. In that state of mind he awoke, and with even greater longing desired to see and kiss the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos near Tikhvin. He made ready at once, left everything, and hastened to Tikhvin. When he reached the monastery and saw the image of the Most Pure One, Martyrius reverently fell down before it, weeping many tears of joy. There he also saw his disciple, completely well; and after that he did not wish to return to his own monastery, but remained in the Tikhvin Monastery, so that he might behold the wondrous image of the Most Pure Virgin Mary every day.

After some time, however, by God's will, Martyrius was transferred to another hermitage, forty versts from Tikhvin, where the aforemen-

tioned Abraham had once seen a cross in the heavens, formed of stars and illuminating the whole region. When he moved there, the blessed Martyrius took with him a copy of the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One and remained there in silence, laboring for God day and night; the copy of the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God that he had brought with him he unfailingly carried wherever he went. Once it happened that he was in the city of Tver, where, by command of the right-believing Tsar and Grand Prince John Vasilievich, the Kazan king Simeon[15] then resided. During the elder Martyrius's stay in that city, Simeon's son John died, having been ill for a long time beforehand. Then the Venerable Martyrius laid upon the dead boy the icon of the Mother of God that he carried with him, and the dead boy immediately rose again. Simeon was filled with great joy and glorified the Lord God and His Most Pure Mother. Later, wishing to show his gratitude to the blessed Martyrius, he built a stone church in his hermitage and established a monastery there.

But let us now turn to the Tikhvin Monastery and to the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos that appeared at Tikhvinka, and relate other miracles wrought through it.

From the time the precious icon appeared at Tikhvinka until the monastery was established, 177 years passed, during which the church was under the care of secular priests. Many miracles flowed from the holy icon during that time, and many healings were granted through it to all who approached it with faith; yet none of those who lived then recorded these wonders for the edification of later generations, and thus we are deprived of the opportunity to know anything about them. Even after the monastery was established, few of the miracles wrought through the icon were recorded, partly through simplicity and partly through negligence; and the few accounts that have come down to us we now gather like ears left behind after the harvest, or a few clusters accidentally left in the vineyard after the vintage.

15. This refers to Simeon Bekbulatovich, khan of Kazan, a baptized Tatar. For a time (in 1574) the Terrible set him on the royal throne in his own place, though of course Simeon was considered tsar only in name. Four years later he was exiled from Moscow and given the government of Tver and Torzhok.

A man named Theophilus, who had been blind for four years and six months, prayed before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, received healing, and regained his sight. This was in 1581.

In the same year a boy named Charalampius, who was possessed by a demon, was brought before the image of the Most Pure One and freed from the unclean spirit.

Zachariah, a blind man who had seen no light for five years, was healed as soon as he was brought to the holy icon.

A man named Clement, who lived in the reigning city of Moscow, had a wife named Parasceva who fell ill. For a whole year she had lain in bed and could not rise from it; the severe pains throughout her body had caused her eyes to become blind, and her mind had grown clouded. Her husband had tried every remedy for the sick woman and was already despairing of his wife's recovery. But then he heard that in Tikhvin there was a wonderworking icon of the Most Pure Mother of God, from which healings flowed for all who had recourse to it with faith. Filled with hope, he urged his wife to vow to the Most Pure Mother of God that she would go and venerate Her Tikhvin Icon. She obeyed her husband and made this vow. As soon as she had spoken the words of her vow, she immediately rose from her sickbed as though awakening from sleep, and was healed of her grievous illness. All the members of her body grew strong and became sound—only the sight of her eyes was not restored.

Then the husband and his healed wife immediately set out for Tikhvin, together fulfilling the vow made to the Most Pure One. When they reached the Tikhvin Monastery on the first Saturday of Great Lent, they went straight from their journey into the church to the icon of the Most Pure One and prayed before the holy icon, holding a service of supplication. During the Sunday All-night Vigil, as they continued standing and praying in the church, a new miracle was wrought upon the wife: by the grace of the Most Pure One she received her sight and thus became completely well. All who were in the church, seeing this miracle, glorified God and His Most Pure Mother with tears of compunction. After offering many prayers of thanksgiving before the holy

icon, the healed woman and her husband returned joyfully to their home. This was in 1583.

In 1586 a blind man named George was brought to the Tikhvin Icon of the Most Pure Mother of God. As he prayed before the wonderworking icon on the feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos, he began to see with his right eye. Without anyone's help he went to his home, glorifying Christ God and His Most Pure Mother for granting healing to one of his eyes.

A few days later, a man named Andrew was brought to the monastery, to the wonderworking image of the Lady. He was paralysed, and was also deaf and mute; he had suffered from these afflictions for fifteen years. When a prayer for his healing was offered before the icon of the Most Pure One, he immediately received perfect health: his hearing was restored, his speech was loosed, and all his limbs received strength and vigor, so that he stood upon his feet like a completely healthy man.

A similar miracle was wrought upon a woman named Mavra, who lived by the River Ustye.[16] She was blind and had seen no light at all for seventeen years. When she was brought to the wonderworking image of the Most Pure One, she immediately received her sight. This was in 1587.

In the same year, on March 4, a boy named George was brought to the Tikhvin Monastery from Great Novgorod. For six years he had been possessed by an unclean spirit and had suffered grievously from it. When he was brought before the image of the Most Pure One, the dark spirit, unable to endure the light of grace flowing from the wonderworking image, departed from the afflicted boy and vanished like darkness before the sun; and the boy became completely well.

A certain widow named Juliana was afflicted in her eyes so severely that she went blind and for two years did not see the light of God. Having heard of the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One near Tikhvin, and of the ineffable healings granted through it to men, Juliana was kindled with a fervent faith toward the Most Pure One and vowed to go to Her icon to venerate it. And in that very hour the Heavenly Lady re-

16. Ustye is a river in Yaroslavl province; together with the river Veksa, it forms the headwaters of the river Kotorosl, a left tributary of the Volga, into which it flows in Yaroslavl itself.

stored the sight of her eyes, in her own house. Immediately, desiring to give thanks to the Most Pure One as soon as possible, she, now seeing, went without any outside help to the Tikhvin Monastery of the Most Pure One, and having there fulfilled her vow, she made known to all the mercy of God shown upon her. This was in 1589.

At almost the same time a lame man named Akindin, who for two years had been entirely unable to walk, his legs being contracted, came crawling on his knees to the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure Mother of God; and no sooner had he prayed before Her than his legs straightened at once and became whole. In the sight of all he rose to his feet and began to walk, giving thanks to Christ God and to His Most Pure Mother.

In the same year, on 10 August, a blind youth named Jonah, brought to the holy monastery from Great Novgorod, received his sight before the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God.

Another youth, named Maxim, possessed by an unclean spirit, when his parents led him to venerate the icon of the Most Pure One, already on the way received heavenly help from the Most Blessed Mother of God: by the power of God the unclean spirit was cast out of him, and he, arriving at the Tikhvin Monastery, told everyone of the miracle wrought upon him. Then all gave thanks to God and to the Most Pure Mother of God. This happened in 1591.

A woman named Helen, who had been completely blind for two years and six months, so that she saw no light, regained her sight before the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One on one of the Sundays, at the Liturgy, during the singing of "It is truly meet...".

In 1593 another woman, named Mary, also regained her sight; she had been brought to the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One for the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God.

Likewise a certain man named Clement, who worked in making various objects of silver, having fallen ill in his eyes and lost his sight, received healing after prayers before the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God.

Another blind man, named Philip, who had seen no light for five years, having been brought to the Tikhvin Monastery during the

Sunday of Orthodoxy, while standing and praying here before the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, was made wholly to see and began to see everything clearly. This happened in 1596, during the Liturgy, at the transfer of the holy gifts from the table of oblation to the Holy Table.

In the same year there came from Moscow a certain man named Cyril, blind in one eye, and during prayer before the icon of the Most Pure One he regained his sight. This is what he related about himself on this occasion. Having fallen ill with a grievous sickness and suffering constantly from pains in the head, he went blind in both eyes, saw no light for half a year, and had no relief whatever from his illness, although his kinsfolk showed him much and every kind of care. He had already begun to despair of receiving healing, when suddenly his wife beheld a vision in a dream, during which she heard such words:

"Let your husband go to Tikhvin, to the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure Mother of God. There he shall find healing for himself. But if he does not go, he will suffer yet greater afflictions."

Awaking from sleep, the wife at once told her husband of the vision. He immediately began to pray fervently to the Most Blessed Mother of God, and in his prayer he vowed to the Queen of Heaven, the pure Mother of God, to go to Tikhvin to venerate Her icon; at that same moment he received relief from his illness: he began to see the light with his eyes, and even became completely healthy. But deferring the fulfillment of his promise from day to day, he gradually forgot about it, and thus did not fulfill what he had promised. For this negligence, God's chastisement again fell upon him: for after some time the illness returned to him, and he went blind a second time in both eyes. Then, recalling his unfulfilled vow and recognizing his sin, the sick man began to weep, to sob, and to repent, and again turned with prayer to the Most Holy Mother of God, assuring Her that he would fulfill the vow he had made earlier. By the mercy of the Most Blessed Queen of Heaven, he received healing a second time, but he regained sight only in one eye, while the other remained sightless. Not deferring the fulfillment of his vow for a long period, he at once set out for Tikhvin, and seeing the

icon of the Most Pure One there with one eye, after prayers before it he regained sight in the other eye as well.

In December, on the 9th day, of that same 1596, twenty-three people came to the monastery, led by two: Gregory and Michael. Having served a thanksgiving prayer service before the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, they told of themselves the following. They had been far away in the Arctic Ocean, hunting sea animals. When they put in at a certain desolate place, they were detained there for a very long time by a sea storm that arose. Their stores of food ran low, and amid the torments of hunger they all came close to death from going without food for so long. Then each of them, awaiting death, began to pray to God, asking forgiveness of their sins. In doing so they recalled the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Mother of God at Tikhvinka, and began to pray to her fervently. In the night that followed, to one of them, who had dozed off a little amid his prayer, there appeared the swift Helper, the Most Holy Virgin Mary, and bade him tell all his companions to nourish themselves on a certain herb growing there, until the time came for them to sail home by sea. He told the vision to all who were with him, and when they tasted of the herb pointed out to them, they found in it a fine taste and satiety, as from bread. And that herb was for them as once the manna was for the Israelites in the wilderness, and they subsisted on it for twenty days, until the storm abated.

After a short time there came to Tikhvin a woman named Helen, who related about herself the following. For three years she had been blind, but once, moved by faith in the Most Pure One, she ordered herself to be led to the Tikhvin icon of the Mother of God, and while she was on the way she suddenly regained her sight, and reached the monastery without outside help; here, too, they offered the thanksgiving veneration to the Mother of God before Her wonderworking icon.

Likewise a man named Mamant, coming from the Belozersk region [17], said that he had been blind for a long time, but as soon as he vowed

17. The Belozersk land lay around the White Lake, which is situated in the north-eastern corner of present-day Novgorod province. Here there was a special principality, which from the middle of the 14th century belonged to the Moscow prince.

to go to Tikhvin and venerate the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One, he at once regained his sight completely. This was in 1597.

Another man, named Diomid, came from the same country and in the same year to the monastery of the Most Pure One, and likewise told of himself that he had been paralyzed for a whole year, but afterward, recalling the wonderworking Tikhvin icon of the Most Pure One, he began to pray to her in his mind and vowed to go to venerate the most pure icon: at once he became healthy, and without the least delay fulfilled his vow.

In the same year a certain Pimen, possessed by a fierce demon, was sent by his relatives to Tikhvin, bound with chains; and when they were still halfway there, he received healing through the mercy of the Most Pure One: the demon departed from him, and he arrived fully healthy and venerated his Healer with reverence. This was on 9 December.

A man named Kodrat began to suffer from pain in the head and went blind in his eyes, and for a full year and a half he saw no light; hearing, however, of the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God situated near Tikhvin, he prayed fervently and vowed to go to it to venerate it. And no sooner had he uttered the words of the vow than he instantly regained his sight. But deferring the journey to another time, he soon entirely forgot his promise and did not go to give thanks to his Healer, the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God. Ten years after the time he had regained his sight, he went blind again in the same way as before. Yet, despite this, he did not recall his vow until in a dream vision he received admonition. For in his sleep he saw a certain man, who said to him:

"Go to Tikhvin to venerate the icon of the Most Pure One; if you do not go and do not fulfill your vow, you shall not receive the restoration of your sight."

Rising from sleep, he remembered his vow and recognized his transgression; at once he went to the Tikhvin Monastery of the Mother of God, accompanied by a guide. And when he was brought before the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One and prayed before it with all

his heart, he instantly received healing through the mercy of the Most Holy Mother of God.

To a man named John, who had long been gravely ill and was already nearing death, St. Nicholas, the Hierarch of Christ, appeared in a dream vision and said to him:

"If you wish to receive health, make a vow to the Most Holy Mother of God that you will go and venerate Her wonderworking icon at Tikhvinka."

That man, awakening, at once began to pray to the Most Pure One with tears, and vowed to her that he would venerate her icon; in that very moment he became completely healthy and set out for the monastery, fulfilling his promise. This was in 1596.

In that same year there was brought to the monastery a blind woman named Mary, who for ten years had not seen the light; after praying before the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God she regained her sight.

Another woman, named Eudocia, who lived within the bounds of Lake Onega[18], was possessed and paralyzed, and besides this had a withered hand. As soon as she vowed to go to the icon of the Most Pure One to venerate it, she was healed in her own house of her possession and her paralysis: the unclean spirit departed from her, and her limbs, which had been paralyzed before, received strength and health. Only her hand remained unhealed, so that she would not forget her vow. When she came to the Tikhvin monastery and prayed to the Mother of God before Her icon, then her hand too became whole. This took place in 1603.

A lame and blind man named John vowed to go and venerate the icon of the Most Pure One, and received healing in his own house: his eyes were opened and his legs were straightened. Then he came to the Tikhvin monastery to give thanks to the Most Pure One, on the 1st day of March, in 1606.

Likewise many other people, afflicted with various infirmities, as soon as they made a vow to go and venerate the wonderworking icon of

18. Lake Onega lies within present-day Olonets province, to the north-east of Lake Ladoga.

the Most Holy Theotokos located on the river Tikhvinka, immediately received healing. "We know," says the Tikhvin chronicler, "that from this holy icon wondrous miracles never ceased to be wrought, and they always poured forth upon those who came in faith, like living water from a spring. Thus many blind men received their sight, the possessed were freed from demonic torment, the deaf were comforted by the gift of hearing, the paralyzed had their sinews strengthened, the mute were released from the bonds that tied their tongues, those sick in their feet leaped up like deer, and those suffering from headaches were healed. Even those afflicted with various infirmities in distant lands, as soon as they made vows before the wondrous icon, were not deprived of swift help from it. In a word, each one, according to his need, received speedy aid as soon as he came in faith beneath the roof of the Mother of God."

In the reign of the pious Tsar and Grand Prince Basil Ioannovich Shuisky[19], there was, because of our sins, great turmoil in the Russian land, partly from internal strife, partly from attacks by external enemies. Russian blood flowed everywhere. The reigning city of Moscow was in the hands of border people of alien faith, and Great Novgorod with all its region was held by the Varangians[20]. At this time the Tikhvin monastery also was under the power of the Varangians and suffered from them many oppressions. But then, by the mercy of God and by the all-powerful help of the King of Heaven, the scattered Russian forces, gathering into one army, wrested the reigning city of Moscow from the men of alien faith, and there the pious Tsar and Grand Prince Michael Theodorovich[21] ascended the throne. He sent his troops also into the borders of Great Novgorod against the Varangians, and here, at the river Ustye, a battle took place between the Russian forces and the advance regiments of the Varangians. The Varangian soldiers were defeated and took flight; the royal troops overtook them at the river Tikhvinka, and some they slew, and some they took captive.

19. Vasily Shuisky, elected by the boyars after the overthrow of the False Dmitry I, reigned from 1606 to 1610.

20. The Varangians here are the Swedes.

21. Michael Feodorovich Romanov, elected tsar by the Zemsky Sobor from all Rus', ascended the throne in 1613 and reigned until 1645.

Hearing of such a defeat of the Varangian soldiers, the Varangian voivode, who sat in Great Novgorod and had in it numerous Varangian regiments, was filled with great wrath and fury. Wishing to avenge this defeat upon the Russians, he sent his regiments that were in Novgorod against the Tikhvin monastery, to lay waste and ruin it utterly, together with all the surrounding villages. Hearing of this, the local inhabitants flocked with their wives and children under the shelter of the monastery, and together with the monks and a few royal soldiers took refuge behind its strong stone walls, shutting themselves in there against the Varangians. In this they all placed their hope not so much in the strength of the walls as in the help and intercession of the Unconquerable Wall and Protection of all who trust in Her, the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God.

The Varangians did not keep them waiting long; approaching the walls of the monastery, they surrounded it on all sides and began to attack it. Those shut up in the monastery experienced great fear, and while some stood on the walls and fought with the Varangians, others, gathered together with the monks in the church, with tears fervently prayed to God and to the Most Pure Mother of God before Her wonderworking icon, performing an All-night Vigil and beseeching the Most Pure One for help for the Orthodox Christians. And this help was not slow to appear to them.

On that same night, one of the women, named Mary, dozing off during the prayer, saw in a dream vision the Most Blessed Virgin Mother of God, who, appearing to her, said:

"Tell all who are in the monastery: let them take my icon and carry it around the walls about the monastery, and then they will see God's mercy upon them."

Waking up at once from her sleep, the woman told the vision to all who were in the church. They were filled with joy and hope of help from on high, and taking up with prayer the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One, they raised it upon the monastery wall; chanting the litany, they began to go around the monastery and at the same time with tears cried out to the Most Holy Mother of God:

"Thou seest, Queen of Heaven, the afflictions of Thy servants; deliver us, then, from the enemies who surround us, and show forth Thy power, that all our foes may understand that Thou, our Protectress, art with us."

In that same hour a great terror fell upon the enemies: they fell into confusion and all fled from the monastery, although no one was pursuing them.

But after some time the Varangians approached the monastery again with still greater force, and, surrounding it, renewed the siege and made repeated attacks on the monastery. During the siege there were in the monastery not a few people of both sexes: amid the crowding of life and the living together of men and women, not all kept the purity befitting a holy place, and they were kindled with passion, like hay by a spark of fire. Because of this the wrath of God came upon the monastery, and the Lord left it without His help. Then the enemies surrounding the monastery, by God's permission, began to come in greater and greater strength, while the defenders of the monastery grew weary from constant fighting. Despair already seized all who were in the monastery, and they began to expect imminent destruction from the besiegers. With bitter weeping they all then flocked to the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One and, with tenderness, began to cry out before it:

"Thou seest, Most Pure Virgin Mother of God, our humility! With tears we hasten to Thy most pure icon and humbly beseech: abandon not, O Most Pure One, Thy monastery, which Thou Thyself didst found here by the manifestation of Thy wonderworking icon! Thou seest, O Sovereign Lady, the fierce attack of our enemies upon us. Leave us, Thy servants, not without intercession, for we look for no help from anywhere except from Thee alone."

At this time there was in the monastery a servant of the Solovetsky monastery, Martinian, a pious and God-fearing man. The Most Pure One appeared to him in a vision, surrounded by saints—Nicholas the Wonderworker, the Venerable Barlaam of Khutyn, and Zosimas of Solovki—and said:

"My help has departed from this place because many have defiled it by their unclean deeds."

Martinian awoke from his sleep in terror and with tears told of his vision to those who held authority in the monastery. Hearing the account of the Solovetsky servant, the superiors at once searched out all the people who were defiling the monastery by falling under the power of unclean lust, and drove them out; then they cleansed the church vestibule and began to propitiate God and the Most Holy Mother of God with many fervent prayers, shedding abundant tears and beseeching the Most Pure One for forgiveness and intercession, that they might not be delivered into the hands of their enemies. And the Lord, who loves mankind, at the intercession of His Most Pure Mother, changed His righteous wrath into mercy toward those perishing, and from that time those besieged began to grow strong and to regain their power, while their enemies began to weaken. At last, gathering their strength and trusting in the help of the Most Pure One, the besieged suddenly came out from behind the monastery wall, and, rushing upon the enemies, bravely engaged them in battle. Divine help, through the prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos, aided them, and the Lord granted them victory over their enemies, for although they were not many, they put to flight many thousands of foes and took some of them captive.

Yet even after this the Varangians did not leave the holy monastery in peace. Wishing to repay their shame, they gathered still greater force and again approached the monastery: surrounding it, they often made fierce assaults on its walls and began to dig underground trenches beneath the walls. Then the Most Pure One appeared again in a nocturnal vision to the aforementioned Martinian and said to him:

"Tell the superiors to drive the swine away from My house, for they have dug everywhere around and have already undermined the threshold of the doors leading into the monastery."

The same appearance of the Most Pure One was granted also to another man in the monastery, named Gregory, and they both—Martinian and Gregory—reported the words of the Theotokos to all present in the monastery.

On that same night the Lord sent the enemies a terrifying vision: they saw coming from Moscow a multitude of armed warriors, with many bright cross-bearing banners. Thinking that these were the royal regiments coming to the aid of those shut up in the monastery, the Varangians were seized with terror and wished to flee. But, hoping by their mines to do harm to the monastery and its walls, they lingered somewhat.

Meanwhile the besieged, strengthened by the vision that had appeared to Martinian and Gregory, offered prayer before the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God and, armed as before, went out of the monastery and rushed upon their enemies. The invisible help from on high again aided them, as it had before: aiding the Orthodox, the Lord threw the enemy's regiments into confusion, and a great fear and trembling fell upon them. In confusion they took to flight, and in their terror they struck one another, pursued not so much by the few visible warriors as by the countless invisible soldiers. Then the Orthodox warriors, seeing their enemies in flight, took still greater courage and pursued them with renewed strength, cutting them down like stalks of grain and taking some prisoner. As for the enemies who were in the ditches, the host that had come out of the monastery struck some of them with swords and buried others alive in the earth. When the battle was over, the captured Varangians related that on the previous night they had seen a numerous host come to the aid of the monastery, and that this same host afterwards came out from behind the monastery walls and drove them on with great force. Hearing this account from the Varangians, the Orthodox gave thanks to God and to the Most Pure Mother of God with tears. This glorious victory took place on the very feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord, in 1614.

The following year the Varangian voivode who sat in Great Novgorod, burning with rage against the Tikhvin monastery, at which so great a multitude of his warriors had perished, again gathered a strong force and, sending it against Tikhvin, ordered that the monastery be razed to its foundations without any mercy, that the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God be hacked to pieces, and that her church be

demolished stone by stone. News of this order reached the Tikhvin monastery. Great fear came upon all who were then in it, and they wished to take the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Mother of God and flee with it to Moscow. But the wonderworking icon remained immovable in its place, so that when the priests attempted to lift it from its place while singing a moleben, they could not do so. The miracle admonished the faint-hearted, and they understood that the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos did not approve of their intention to abandon the monastery. Placing all their hope in the almighty help of the Queen of Heaven, all who were there shut themselves within the monastery and awaited the coming of the enemies. But the swift Intercessor of the Orthodox and the Watchful Guardian of Her monastery did not allow the Varangians even to reach the monastery, and blocked their path with a wondrous vision. There appeared to the Varangians a numerous and well-armed host hastening towards them, ready to engage in battle. Not hoping to withstand so invincible a force, they, seized with fear, took to flight, crushing and trampling one another. From that time the Varangians no longer dared approach the Tikhvin monastery.[22] Thus the Most Pure Virgin Theotokos, in glory and more than once, defended Her monastery from its enemies, and not only did She take Her monastery out of their hands, but She also soon freed Great Novgorod with all its territories from the Varangian yoke and delivered it to the Orthodox Tsar of Russia. And by Her prayers peace and tranquillity came to the whole Russian realm.

After the end of the calamities described above, when the monastery, together with the whole Russian land, was enjoying the peace that had come, it pleased God to visit it, preserved from the attacks of the Varangians, with fire, in order to admonish and cleanse of all defile-

22. About a year after such a miraculous victory, royal envoys arrived at the Tikhvin monastery to conclude peace with the Swedes. Having taken a copy of the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, the envoys set out 50 versts from the monastery to the village of Stolbovo, not far from the city of Ladoga, and there the Swedish envoys also arrived. Here, on 10 February 1617, the Peace of Stolbovo was concluded, the principal surety of the peace on the Russian side being the copy of the wonderworking Tikhvin icon which they had brought. This copy was afterwards transferred to Moscow and set up in the Dormition Cathedral, and then, at the urgent petition of the Novgorodians, who had taken part in the war against the Swedes, it was sent to Novgorod and set up in the St. Sophia Cathedral, where it remains to this day.

ments those who dwelt in it. This terrible visitation of God had been miraculously foretold to the brethren of the monastery. It happened thus.

In Tikhvin there lived a certain beggar named Nikita, who, for the sake of pleasing God, had taken upon himself the ascetic labor of holy foolishness. To him, not in a dream but in waking reality, appeared the Venerable Macarius of Zheltovody, who said:

"Go and tell the abbot and the brethren to observe abstinence with diligence, and above all not to keep anything intoxicating in the monastery, since drunkenness is the cause of all evils. Moreover, let them not admit into the monastery, except for church services, persons who might stir up temptations among the brethren, and especially women. Tell them also to pray diligently to God and to the Most Pure Mother of God, that the terrible chastisement of God by fire may be turned away from the monastery."

Then Nikita, not knowing the saint, asked him who he was.

The one who appeared answered:

"I am Macarius of Zheltovody, and I have come here to the wonderworking image of the Most Pure Mother of God."

Having said this, he became invisible. Nikita went to the abbot and the brethren and told them of the vision he had had. But they did not believe him and mocked him as a holy fool. Several days passed, and suddenly from a trivial cause one cell caught fire; the flame quickly spread and seized all the buildings, so that the whole monastery was set alight. The fire was so great that not only the wooden structures were turned to ash, but many stone buildings also crumbled from the heat. Then the monks knew that truly the Venerable Macarius of Zheltovody had appeared to the holy fool Nikita and, through him, had warned them of the wrath of God that threatened them. Repenting, they began to keep all that the venerable one had said, and they prayed with diligence to the Most Pure One, asking forgiveness for their sins. And by the mercy of the Queen of Heaven the monastery, after some time, was again splendidly restored, and it stands unharmed to this day, flourishing like a lily and glorified by the miracles wrought through the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One. For even now

those who come to the monastery in faith receive before the icon what they ask for and obtain wondrous healing of their infirmities.[23]

There is no need for us to speak of all these miracles: they are recorded in the monastery of the Most Pure One, to the glory of the Lord God and of His Most Blessed Mother.

Whence the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Mother of God was brought to Tikhvin, there is no certain report. In old manuscript books it is written that by the will of God it came into Russia from Greece, from Constantinople, in the reign of the Greek emperor John Palaeologus,[24] 70 years before the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.[25] This was seen from the following circumstances.

At the time when the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Mother of God began to be glorified at Tikhvin by many and great miracles, it happened that some Novgorod merchants, pious men, were in the imperial city of Constantinople. Conversing with them, the Most Holy Patriarch of Constantinople recalled the wonderworking icon that had once been with them, which had disappeared and departed from the imperial city, and he asked them:

"Have they not heard anything about such an icon?"

They then related to him the following, confirming their account with an oath as to the truth of all that they told:

“One wonderworking icon of the Mother of God,” they said, “came into Great Russia through the air, God knows from whence, and appeared in various places within the bounds of Great Novgorod, at a distance of 180 poprishches from it, moving from place to place; at last it appeared in glory on the River Tikhvin, where it performed wondrous and ineffable miracles, and there it abides in a church to this day.”

23. The Tikhvin icon of the Mother of God is one of the best-known and most venerated of her icons in Russia. Thousands of people flock to Tikhvin every year to venerate this wonderworking image. Russian princes and tsars enriched the monastery with their gifts and themselves made pilgrimages to venerate the icon. In both capitals, in many cities and monasteries, and even in village parish churches, there are copies of this icon renowned for miracles. In the Tikhvin monastery a cross procession with the wonderworking icon around the environs of the monastery is performed 24 times a year. The value of the precious adornments on the icon amounts to 70 thousand rubles.

24. This refers to John V Palaiologos, who reigned from 1379 to 1391.

25. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks took place in 1453.

Hearing such an account, and perceiving that this icon which had appeared at Tikhvinka was the very one about which he had inquired, the patriarch began to sigh from the depth of his heart and to question them more closely about the Tikhvin icon. Then he himself related how that same icon had once gloriously departed from the imperial city by sea, heading whither it pleased God, and how, after some time, it had returned again to the imperial city, how many miracles and benefactions had flowed from it to the faithful, and how, through prayers offered before it as a mighty helper, victories and triumphs over enemies had been granted.

"But now," he said, "because of our pride, our hatred of brethren, and our other injustices, it has surely departed from us once more and will not return again."

Having said all this with deep emotion, the patriarch went with the Novgorod merchants into the church and showed them the place and the case in which the icon of the Most Pure Mother of God had stood. That place, if one enters the church by the western doors, was by the right pillar of the church; there another icon, smaller in size, had now been set up, and an unquenchable lamp was burning.

Hearing this and seeing it, the Novgorod men were greatly astonished and glorified the Lord God and His Most Pure Mother, who through the medium of Her most pure image had worked many miracles in various lands. For a long time they conversed with the patriarch about the icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, and they told one another of the miracles wrought by the Mother of God: he of those that had been done in the Greek land, they of those that had astonished the Russian land. And the Russian men rejoiced greatly on hearing the report they had received concerning the wonderworking icon of the Most Pure One.

When they had left Constantinople and reached the Russian land, then from them all over Russia there became known what they had heard in Constantinople. What the Ecumenical Patriarch had said in answer to their questions about the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God, and his account of the miracles that flowed from it, and his indication to them of the place where the icon had stood while in Con-

stantinople, were briefly recorded. From that time all became persuaded that this holy image was none other than the one that had departed from Constantinople. Therefore, after the likeness of Constantinople, a place was prepared in the Tikhvin monastery for the wonder-working icon of the Most Holy Theotokos at the first right pillar on entering the church by the western doors. Here it stands to this day, working many and unsearchable miracles.

And since this wonder-working icon of the Mother of God at Tikhvin is called by some the Hodegetria, and the Roman or Lydda icon, it will be fitting to mention here that in Constantinople there were two icons especially glorified by miracles: one called the "Hodegetria," and the other the Roman, or Lydda icon. Thus, the "Hodegetria" is one icon, and the Roman is another. Of these two icons we shall briefly speak here, so that everyone may have knowledge of them.

* * *

Concerning the Wonder-Working Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos Called "Hodegetria"

О чудотворной иконе Пресвятой Богородицы, нарицаемой «Одигитрия»

For a list of the icons of the Mother of God with their images, see the wonder-working icon of the Most Holy Theotokos called "Hodegetria"

Some time after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, the holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, who was a skilled iconographer, painted on a board the likeness of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and brought it to the Most Pure Virgin Herself. Looking upon the depiction of Her countenance on the icon, the Most Pure recalled her former prophecy concerning Herself and said: "For from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Lk. 1:48). Then, pointing to the icon, She said: "May My grace be with this icon." And this word of the Most Holy Theotokos was fulfilled in reality: by the grace of the Most Blessed Virgin, manifold and ineffable miracles actually flowed from that icon, and healing was granted to the sick.

Afterwards the Evangelist Luke sent this icon to Antioch[26], to the sovereign Theophilus, who was among those who believed in Christ, and for whom Luke had written his Gospel and the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. In Antioch the icon was worthily venerated not only by Theophilus but by all the Christians who dwelt there.

Many years passed thereafter, and the holy icon was taken from Antioch and transferred first to Jerusalem, and then to Constantinople. Its transfer to this capital of the Greek kingdom came about in the following circumstances.

The Empress Eudocia, wife of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius the Younger[27], having come to the holy land to venerate the sanctuaries there, took the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos painted by the Evangelist Luke and sent it as a gift to the imperial sister, the blessed Pulcheria, as is written in the life of the latter. Pulcheria received the wonder-working icon with joy and love and set it in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos which she had built in Blachernae[28]. From then on this icon became no small adornment of the imperial city, for many different miracles and healings of the sick flowed from it. After some time the icon was called the "Hodegetria," which means "Guide" or "She who shows the way." This name became fixed to it after the Mother of God Herself appeared to two blind men, led them into Her Blachernae church to the wonder-working icon, where, having prayed, they received their sight.

In the reign of Heraclius[29], the Greek kingdom was simultaneously attacked by the Persians and the Scythians. The commander of the Persian king Chosroes[30], Sarvar, and the Scythian prince approached Constantinople itself with a numerous army and besieged the city, cut-

26. Antioch is a city in Syria, on the river Orontes.
27. Emperor Theodosius II the Younger reigned from 408 to 450.
28. Blachernae was a district in Constantinople, in the western corner of the city. In the days of the prosperity of the Byzantine Empire it was renowned throughout the East for its shrines; especially famous was Blachernae for the church of the Mother of God built by Leo the Great (457–474). In his reign the precious robes of the Most Holy Theotokos, brought from Palestine, were placed in this church; here also were kept, in a gold-worked reliquary, her omophorion and a part of her girdle.
29. Emperor Heraclius reigned from 610 to 641.
30. Chosroes II of the Sassanid dynasty is meant; he reigned from 590 to 621.

ting it off from the rest of the world and preparing to deal it a decisive blow. Then the Patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius, taking with especial reverence the wonder-working icon "Hodegetria," together with the robe of the Most Pure Theotokos, went around the walls of the city with them and the other holy icons, and performed the moleben chant to the Lord God and to His Most Pure Mother. And by the mercy of God, through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Greeks were granted a miraculous deliverance of their imperial city from the barbarians. When the patriarch and clergy, after fervent supplication before the icon of the Most Pure Virgin, lowered the robe of the Theotokos into the waters of the sea inlet, a storm arose on the sea and sank the ships of the attacking enemies; at the same time those of the assailants who were on land were also thrown into confusion, and so were driven off by the Greek troops without special difficulty. In memory of this wondrous intercession of the Most Pure, shown over the imperial city, it was established that the thanksgiving Akathist be sung annually on the fifth Saturday of Great Lent.

When the heresy of iconoclasm gained the upper hand, and a persecution was raised by impious emperors against the holy icons and against their venerators, then some of the Orthodox clergy secretly took the icon "Hodegetria" by night from the Blachernae church and carried it to the monastery of the Pantokrator[31]. Here they concealed it in a church wall; then, after praying, they lit a lamp before the image and enclosed it, so that it would not be defiled by the iconoclasts.

Thus the wonder-working icon remained hidden for many years, until all the protectors of the heresy had perished. And when peace returned to the Church and the contentious strife against the holy icons ceased, they searched for a long time for where the venerable icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, painted by the Evangelist Luke and afterwards called the Hodegetria, was located. At last, by divine revelation, the icon was found concealed in the wall of the church of the Pantokrator monastery, and it was seen that the lamp lit before it had not gone out. All the faithful, learning of this discovery of the wonder-working

31. That is, of the Lord Almighty; the monastery was situated on the outskirts of the city.

icon, were filled with great joy, and with prayer and singing solemnly carried it back to its former place in the Blachernae church.

* * *

Concerning the Wonder-Working Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Lydda, or Roman

О чудотворной иконе Пресвятой Богородицы Лидской, или Римской

The holy chief Apostle Peter and the holy Apostle John the Theologian, before departing, as the other Apostles did, to different ends of the earth with the preaching of the Gospel, first preached Christ in the cities near Jerusalem. And when they were in the city of Lydda[32], which was afterwards called Diospolis, and had converted many to Christ there, they built there a church in the name of the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God. Circumstances favored the building of the temple. At that time peace and tranquility had come to the Church of Christ, for shortly after the murder of the protomartyr Stephen the persecution of the Christians ceased in Judea. This was helped by the circumstance that the Roman emperor Tiberius[33], who had heard much of Christ our Lord, commanded that the Christians not be persecuted. Of this peaceful time for the Christian Church the Book of the Acts of the Apostles says: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord" (Acts 9:31). Having built the church in Lydda, the Apostles Peter and John went to Jerusalem and besought the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God to come to Lydda to see the church built in Her name, to bless it and to consecrate it by Her coming, so that the prayers offered in it to God, born of the Most Pure, might reach His throne. To this request of the apostles the Most Pure said: "Return to Lydda with joy: I will be there with you." Coming again to Lydda, they saw in the church, on one of the stone pillars that support the building, an image of the Most Pure, not painted by human hand but traced by the will of God, presenting a beautiful likeness of Her countenance and of all the

32. A city in Palestine, northwest of Jerusalem, on the road to Joppa.
33. Emperor Tiberius reigned from 14 to 37 A.D.

honorable garments which She was accustomed to wear. Seeing this, the Apostles bowed down before this wonder-working and not-handmade image and gave thanks to the Word of God, who was incarnate of the Ever-Virgin. Afterwards the Most Holy Theotokos Herself came to Lydda; seeing Her image, and the multitude of Her venerators who believed in Christ Jesus, She rejoiced in spirit and granted to Her image grace and the power of working miracles.

Many years passed after this, and Julian the Apostate[34] ascended the throne of the Roman caesars, who raised a cruel persecution against the Church of Christ. Knowing of the existence in Lydda of the wonder-working image of the Most Pure, he sent there a kinsman of his, likewise named Julian, with orders to efface that image. And then a marvelous miracle took place. As the stonemasons, with their stonecutting tools, tried to erase the image, the colors and strokes penetrated deep into the stone pillar, and the depiction remained unharmed despite all the efforts of the stonecutters. Having labored long and achieved nothing, they departed, unable to obliterate the sacred image. The report of so wondrous a miracle spread to all the ends of the earth, and from that time multitudes of believers began to flock to Lydda to venerate the wonder-working image of the Most Pure.

After many more years had passed, the blessed Herman, who was afterward Patriarch of Constantinople, set out for Palestine to venerate its holy places[35]. Having visited Jerusalem and venerated the Tomb of the Lord and the other holy sites there, he came also to Lydda. Here, having venerated the wonderworking icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, he commissioned an iconographer to make an exact copy of it on a board. When the iconographer had completed the commission, Herman received the copy from him and, taking the icon with him to Constantinople, always kept it by him as an inestimable treasure and offered prayer before it every day. Then, in the reign of Artemius, who was called Anastasius[36], he was chosen by the will of God to be Patriarch of the imperial city.

34. Julian the Apostate occupied the throne from 361 to 363.
35. St. Germanus occupied the patriarchal throne in Constantinople from 715 to 730.
36. The Emperor Anastasius II is meant, who reigned from 713 to 715.

But Leo the Isaurian[37], who after Anastasius ascended the imperial throne and proclaimed himself a zealous iconoclast, raised a persecution against the Orthodox and with dishonor cast the Most Holy Patriarch Herman from the patriarchal throne. Driven from the church and from his patriarchal house, St. Herman took with him two holy icons, one of Christ the Savior and the other that very icon of the Most Holy Theotokos which the iconographer had copied for him from the icon at Lydda that was not made by human hands. Then, before boarding a ship to go into exile, he wrote a letter to the Pope of Rome, the Most Holy Gregory[38], in which he informed him of his unjust exile and of the persecution of the Orthodox by the iconoclast emperor. Having written this letter, he made an opening in the solid board of the icon of the Savior and placed the sealed letter there, noting the time and hour of its writing. Then, closing the opening, he kissed the icon itself with tears and said twice:

"Master! Master! Save Thyself and us!"

Having said this, he lowered the icon into the sea, and it, floating over the sea, reached ancient Rome within a single day. That same night the Pope was informed by God of the imminent arrival at Rome of the image of the Savior. Therefore, on the following day, as soon as the sun rose, the Pope, taking his clergy with him, got into a boat and, with candles and censers, sailed down the Tiber toward the sea to meet the icon of the Lord Jesus. When they reached the mouth of the river where it empties into the sea, they saw the icon as if walking upon the waters; filled with reverent awe and spiritual joy, they bowed down before it. Then Pope Gregory, turning to the honorable image, said:

"If Thou, O Master, hast come to us unworthy ones, then we beseech Thee: as Thou didst gloriously walk upon the waters, so ascend also into our hands, for we, fearing our unworthiness, do not dare to touch Thee."

No sooner had he said this than the icon immediately rose up and, flying through the air like a bird, descended into the hands of the hierarch. He, kissing it with tears and honoring it as was fitting, carried it

37. Leo III the Isaurian reigned from 716 to 741.
38. St. Gregory occupied the papal throne in Rome from 715 to 731.

to Rome with chanting, accompanied by the clergy, and went through the city with it so that everyone might see that divine icon. Then he placed it in the great church of the holy Chief Apostle Peter. Here he took from the icon the patriarchal letter, not touched at all by the water, and after reading it, learned of all that had been done in Constantinople by the impious iconoclast emperor. From the letter the Most Holy Pope also saw that the icon had come to them by sea from Constantinople within a single day, and glorifying God, he told everyone present of this; then all began to magnify the incomprehensible power of God. Grieving over the dominion of the iconoclast heresy throughout the East and over the exile of the Most Holy Herman, the Pope wrote to the impious emperor a bold letter denouncing his wickedness. The icon remained in Rome, and from it many miracles poured forth and healing was granted to the sick and infirm.

Meanwhile the Most Holy Herman, seeing that the iconoclasts had begun to subject icons to dishonor and outrage, to cut them into pieces, to cast them into the fire and throw them into filth, and on the other hand feeling the approach of death, wrote from his place of exile a second letter to the Primate of Rome, and in this letter he informed him of all the lawlessness being committed in the East. Then he cut an opening in the board of the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, which had been painted in Lydda, and placed in it his letter, noting on it the time and hour of its writing. Having kissed the icon, the hierarch said with bitter weeping:

"Go, O Lady, fleeing not from Herod into Egypt[39], but from the beast-like iconoclasts to Rome: there the Orthodox will keep Thy image and will not give it into the hands of the impious for outrage.

So let Thy honorable icon cross this great expanse of the sea, borne by Thy help and grace: for Thou didst bear on Thy arms Him who created heaven, earth and sea. As for us, who suffer for the holy icons, through which we render honor and worship to Thee and to Thy Di-

39. Herod, called the Great, who was King of Judea in the year of the Nativity of Christ, is meant; to escape his designs to kill the newborn King of the Jews, the Mother of God fled into Egypt together with her Son Jesus and Joseph, her betrothed.

vine Son, grant rest in the dwellings of the righteous, in the bosom of Abraham."

With such words the Most Holy Herman lovingly kissed the icon and lowered it into the sea.

And the icon floated swifter than an eagle's flight and in a single day reached Rome. That same night the Primate of Rome was informed by God of the arrival at Rome of the icon of the Queen of Heaven. Therefore, rising from sleep, he set out with all the clergy to meet it, as they had gone before to meet the icon of the Savior, sailing up the Tiber with candles and censers. When they reached the mouth of the Tiber, they saw the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos coming toward them not lying flat, but upright, as if standing, in accordance with the image painted on it. The Pope stretched out his hands to it, and the icon itself rose into the air and descended into his hands. With great joy the Most Holy Pope received the icon and, kissing it, returned to Rome, marveling at the wondrous works of God. Then he opened the aperture made by the Patriarch Germanus, and reading the letter found there, understood that the icon had been lowered into the sea only the day before and had thus come to them in a single day. Grieving for the Most Holy Germanus, that great lamp of the Orthodox Church, which was going out in exile, the Pope conducted a solemn procession with the honorable icon of the Most Holy Theotokos through the whole city, as he had done with the icon of the Savior, and then carried it into the church of the holy Apostle Peter and set it here in the sanctuary. From that time on, wondrous miracles flowed from this icon in Rome and healing was granted to the sick.

After that several more years passed, during which the iconoclast emperors and patriarchs raged in Constantinople. But at last all of them perished in disgrace, and the pious Emperor Michael[40] ascended the Byzantine throne; because of his minority, the state was at first governed by his pious mother, the Empress Theodora[41]. Under them

40. Emperor Michael III ascended the throne in 842, but began to govern the State independently from 855; he reigned until 867.

41. Theodora, wife of the Emperor Theophilus (824–842), governed the state, on account of the minority of her son Michael, from 842 to 855.

the iconoclast heresy was utterly uprooted, and the triumph of Orthodoxy came.

At this time the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, which the Most Holy Patriarch Germanus had taken to the place of his confinement, and which afterward had sailed from there to Rome and been placed in the sanctuary of the church of the holy Apostle Peter, began, before the eyes of all who were in the church, to move and tremble, though none of those present was moving it. This recurred many times, sometimes during evening service, sometimes during morning service, and sometimes during the Liturgy. All the people of Rome were struck with terror and marveled greatly at so strange a wonder. The First-Enthroned of Rome at that time was the Most Holy Pope Sergius[42]; and once, when he was serving the divine office in the church of the Apostle Peter, concelebrating with a numerous clergy, the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos suddenly again began to move and tremble strongly. Seeing this, all present were struck with terror and began to cry out loudly and fervently: "Lord, have mercy!"

Thus, by calling down the mercy of God, they brought it about that the trembling of the icon ceased. But afterward the icon, again beginning to move, rose from the place where it stood and was lifted up into the air. Then all who were in the church crowded into the sanctuary with cries and stretched out their hands toward the icon to receive it, fearing lest it fall to the ground and be broken; but they could not attain their desire, for the icon was borne through the air very high. Slowly, as if passing through the church, it moved toward the exit from the church, carried by invisible angelic hands. The Most Holy Pope, with all the clergy and people, followed the icon in fear and trembling, beholding the wondrous miracle. Reaching the Tiber, the icon descended onto its waters and floated with the current toward the sea. All the people and the Pope went along the bank and, watching the icon depart, escorted it with tears. At this, the Most Holy Pope Sergius cried out: "Woe to us, O Queen and our Lady, woe to us! Whither dost Thou depart from us, O Divine Ark? As once the holy icon of Thine came to us

42. Pope Sergius II (from 844 to 847) is meant.

over the waters, so now by the same way it departs from us. This wondrous departure of Thine casts us into fear and trembling: we fear lest a persecution like that in Constantinople, because of which Thy holy icon sailed away from there, may come upon us also from the iconoclasts or other lawbreakers. How long, O Most Pure One, will the storms and heretical disturbances that trouble the Church of Christ not cease?"

This and much more the Pope said, escorting with the people the wonderworking icon until it was hidden from them, caught up by the swift sea current. After that the Most Holy Pope ordered the miracle that had occurred to be recorded in the chronicles, so that memory of it might remain for all generations to come.

Meanwhile the holy icon, sailing over the sea, reached Constantinople and came to shore in its harbor near the imperial palace. Pious men who happened to be there took it up and carried it to the pious Empress Theodora. Receiving the holy icon, and learning that it had been found at the sea-landing, Theodora said that it was probably one of those icons which the iconoclasts, binding them to stones, had cast into the sea; now the cords with which it had been bound had come loose or rotted away, and so the icon had risen to the surface. Thus the others also thought, together with the Empress.

Soon afterwards, the pious Emperor Michael and the Most Holy Patriarch Methodius sent to Rome distinguished envoys, both of the clergy and of the laity, bearing letters to the Pope, in which he was invited to Constantinople to a council for the examination and condemnation of the iconoclastic heresy. Having reached Rome and delivered the letters to the Pope, the envoys brought great joy to the Roman Primate and to all Orthodox Christians, for these learned that the dominion of the iconoclastic heresy had come to an end. Afterwards they themselves were also consoled, hearing there of the great wonders that had come from the icons of the Savior and of the Mother of God: how, in the days of the Most Holy Pope Gregory, first one and then another had sailed by sea to Rome, sent by the Most Holy Patriarch Herman; and how recently an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, rising of itself from the place where it had been set, had again sailed away from Rome. Record-

ing all these wondrous events, they noted the day of the departure of the icon of the Most Pure Theotokos from Rome; and afterwards, arriving at Constantinople, they told everything they had heard to the Emperor, the Empress and the Patriarch Methodius. They then recalled the icon found at the sea-landing, and thought: "Has not this icon sailed to us from Rome?"

Soon there arrived at Constantinople special envoys from the Pope, charged with being present at the council as representatives of the Roman bishop. They were shown the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos found on the seashore, and they at once recognized in it that very wonderworking image which had lately sailed away from them. Having told this to the whole people, they brought all into great joy and amazement. After that, they examined the records of the day of the icon's departure from Rome, and saw from them that the icon had reached Constantinople within a single day. Then the Patriarch, with the whole clergy, in the presence of the Emperor and the Senate, took the wonderworking icon and, accompanied by the people, solemnly transferred it to Chalkoprateia[43], where they set it up in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, rejoicing over the wondrous gift sent down from God. From that time this wonderworking icon of the Mother of God was called the Roman, because it had sailed to Constantinople from Rome.

Troparion to the Mother of God in honor of her Tikhvin Icon, Tone

Today, like a most bright sun, thine all-honorable icon, O Lady, has shone upon us in the air, illumining the world with the rays of mercy; which great Russia, as a certain divine gift from on high, reverently received, and glorifies thee, O Theotokos, Lady of all, and joyfully magnifies Christ our God born of thee. Pray to him, O Sovereign Lady Theotokos, that he may preserve all Christian cities and lands unharmed from all the snares of the enemy, and

43. Chalkoprateia was a district in Constantinople.

save by faith those who worship his divine and thine most pure image, O Virgin unwed.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

Let us the peoples draw near to the Virgin Theotokos, the Queen, giving thanks to Christ God; and before her wonderworking icon, looking up with tenderness, let us fall down and cry to her: O Lady Mary, who by the manifestation of thine honorable image hast wondrously visited this land, save in peace and prosperity our faithful emperor and all Christians, showing them to be heirs of heavenly life. For we faithfully call to thee: Rejoice, O Virgin, salvation of the world.

* * *

Memory of our Venerable Father David of Thessalonica

Память преподобного отца нашего Давида Солунского

The blessed David was born in an eastern land, and like a luminous star shone over the whole world: exercising himself in abstinence from his youth, he appeared before men as though an Angel in the flesh. Settling near the city of Thessalonica[44], three versts from it, St. David made for himself a tent beneath an almond tree; there, like a sweet-voiced bird, he comforted all who came to him with words of great benefit. His mind was always directed to the divine height: by this he was enriched with the gift of working miracles, and became a radiant pillar of the Church, enlightening all with his wondrous signs. Bravely enduring now the cold and now the fierce heat, he became as it were impassible. And since he had quenched in himself the fire of carnal desires, a material fire could not scorch him either. Once he took in his

44. Thessalonica, or Salonica, is a very considerable and ancient city of Macedonia, lying at the head of the larger Gulf of Thessalonica or Thermaic Gulf, forming part of the Aegean Sea (Archipelago). In Thessalonica the Apostle Paul preached Christianity, and for it he wrote two epistles. By reason of its commercial activity and wealth it was one of the most important cities of the Byzantine Empire. At present this city, under the name Salonica, is, after Constantinople, the first commercial city of European Turkey, with a very numerous population.

hands a burning coal, and placing incense upon it, stood before the emperor and censed him with it, and his hands suffered nothing from the fire. Seeing this, the emperor was astonished and bowed down at the feet of the servant of God. In general, by his life and the miracles he worked, St. David greatly amazed men, who, beholding the saint, glorified God, wondrous in his saints. After a long and glorious life, St. David departed in peace to God[45], whom he had loved from his youth.

Kontakion, Tone 1:

A garden ever-blooming, bearing the fruits of virtues, thou didst appear upon the garden tree like a sweetly singing bird; and thou didst receive paradise rather, the tree of life, the Lord, in thy heart, as one who had tilled the soil, O God-wise one, by whom thou feedest us with grace: pray ever for us, O most blessed David.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, memory of our holy father Dionysius, Archbishop of Suzdal, who reposed in 1384.

✠

45. St. David died about 540, in the reign of Justinian and Theodora.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF JUNE

June 27

27 июня

New Calendar June 27 · Old Calendar July 10 (civil dates)

Life of Our Venerable Father Sampson the Hospitable

Житие преподобного отца нашего Сампсона странноприимца

Great Sampson, whose renown spread everywhere, was born in the famous city of ancient Rome. His parents were wealthy and distinguished people who traced their descent from royal blood. Having thoroughly studied all worldly wisdom, Sampson also learned the art of medicine, but not out of need nor for the sake of gain, for he was quite content with his own wealth. He pursued it partly so as not to be idle, and partly with the aim of serving the poor, by the help of God, through his knowledge of the healing art. Sampson healed many who suffered from incurable diseases by the power of his skill. The grace of God, which grants healing, also aided his medical art; this grace had been bestowed upon him for his virtuous life and his faith in God. Besides outward worldly wisdom, Sampson also possessed an understanding of the Divine Scriptures. He was much occupied with reading the sacred books and, stirred by faith and hope, he was strengthened in the love of Christ.

When the parents of St. Sampson had died and he became the possessor of vast estates, the saint did not cease his works of mercy, healing the needy without payment. Rather, he began to exchange his temporal and quickly perishing riches for those that do not perish and are eternal, following the words of the Gospel (Mt. 6:20). Generously distributing alms to the poor in obedience to the commandment of God, he spent his wealth with both hands, striving to satisfy every need of the poor and destitute, desiring by feeding their perishable bodies to acquire for himself imperishable treasures. So he did all the days of his

life, for mercy was natural to him from birth, and through his upbringing it was even more firmly established in his heart. Wishing to live his life more modestly and simply, Sampson set free a multitude of his slaves, keeping only one for necessary service. Indeed, why did he need so many slaves, when he himself had become a true and sincere slave of the Lord? Thus he renounced all his riches, by which he had been bound as with a kind of chains, and was content with one garment and one cord to gird his loins. Desiring to enrich his soul with spiritual wealth, he despised the world and all that is in the world, and, imitating Christ, became a wanderer. Leaving his kinsmen and acquaintances, he departed from ancient Rome and settled in a desert, as the Prophet Elijah once did.

But God, for the benefit of many, led His faithful servant to the new Rome, that is, to Constantinople. Here, having found a certain dwelling, St. Sampson settled in it, giving rest to wanderers and beggars and serving them in every way. St. Sampson not only healed them by his medical skill, but also strove to please them with food and bedding. He did all this with such zeal that the virtue of mercy seemed to all to be innate in him. As it is natural for the sun to shed the rays of light, and for fire naturally to scorch whatever touches it, so Sampson's zeal and love for the poor, the sick and wanderers were, as it were, natural to him. And God, who does not leave without His blessing works of mercy toward neighbors performed for His sake, and who accepts the alms given to neighbors as an offering to Himself, bestowed a special power upon the cares and labors of St. Sampson for the benefit of the sick: all who suffered from incurable diseases and whom he received into his house received a miraculous healing. But the saint concealed under the guise of medical skill the gift of working miracles given him by God, for he was distinguished by humility and did not wish to receive glory and honor from men. Yet a lamp cannot be hidden under a bushel, just as a city set on a hill cannot be concealed; so St. Sampson, shining with the light of good deeds and having ascended the mountain of perfect God-pleasingness, became known to all. The Patriarch of Constantinople also heard of him, and summoning him, ordained him to the priesthood, although the saint did not desire it.

The report of the saint's virtues and of his extraordinary healing skill reached even the imperial palace. This happened under the following circumstances.

The Emperor Justinian[1] fell into a grave illness and suffered severely from a fierce, incurable disease. Physicians were summoned, but after examining the emperor they began, as was their custom, to dispute among themselves. For a long time they only gave the emperor vain hope with their words, but in fact they could neither heal his disease nor even relieve his sufferings. Skilled physicians were summoned from all the regions of the Greco-Roman Empire, but none could heal the emperor of that cruel illness. The emperor was angered with them and commanded that they all be banished from his sight. He himself turned to the Source of all healing and to the Creator of all creation, the Lord God: to Him alone he entrusted his life, and from Him alone, with tears, he began to seek help. God did not disdain the emperor's earnest and tearful prayer. Falling asleep for a short time, he saw in a vision a multitude of physicians standing before him, clothed in bright garments. Then a certain radiant youth approached him and began to point out each of the physicians, saying what rank each held and how old he was. Among them he showed the emperor one who was humble in countenance and gray-haired, clothed in priestly vestments. Pointing to him, the luminous youth said to the emperor: "This one, and no other, will heal you, O emperor, of your deadly disease."

Awakening from sleep, the emperor was greatly gladdened and gave thanks to God, who had given him a good hope of recovery. Then, recalling the appearance of the man he had seen in the dream, he commanded that all the physicians be summoned to him again. When they stood before him, he gazed at them for a long time, seeking among them the man he had seen in the dream; not finding him, he again fell into sorrow and began to grieve. Then, not ceasing to hope in the help of God, he again commanded that such a physician be sought as he had seen in the vision. Describing the features of the man he had seen, the emperor promised to reward generously whoever would help him find

1. The Greco-Roman emperor Justinian reigned from 527 to 565.

that man. Many searched for the physician described by the emperor and did not find him. At last one of the imperial servants, who was known to the emperor himself and was a friend of St. Sampson, remembered the saint, who, being a physician of the infirm, in the features of his face was wholly like the healer described by the emperor. He told this to the emperor, and the emperor commanded that the saint be brought to him with honor.

When the saint entered to the emperor, the emperor, seeing him, at once recognized that this was indeed the man he had seen in the dream. Filled with joy, he quickly rose from his seat, and going up to the saint, embraced him and kissed not only the old man's lips but also his head and hands, saying:

"You are truly, Father, the one whom the Lord God showed me in the dream, promising through you to restore my health."

Having said this, he led him into his bedchamber, and sitting beside him, he delighted in gazing upon him. He pressed the saint's hands to his eyes and kissed them with tears, hoping to receive healing from them.

The blessed Sampson, seeing such great humility in the emperor, was grieved and said to him gently:

“Do not do this, O emperor, do not abase yourself with immoderate humility, lest you lead me into the sin of pride; then the guilt of my condemnation before the Righteous Judge would fall upon you. In what do I surpass other men, being poor and sinful, myself in need of the Lord’s merciful condescension for the healing of my sins? Only your great faith directed toward the Lord, and your warm hope in His mercy, will move Christ, the Heavenly King, to mercy, and He will heal you, for He can do all that He wills.”

Having said this, Sampson touched the diseased place on the emperor's body with his hand, pretending to apply remedies, desiring thereby to conceal the gift of miraculous healing given him by God. And no sooner had he touched the diseased place with his hand than the emperor suddenly felt relief from his illness, and soon there came to him a complete healing.

Having received perfect health, the emperor rejoiced greatly, not only at his recovery but also at having been granted to behold so great a God-pleasing man. Then, wishing to thank the saint worthily, he offered him much gold and silver. But the saint said to the emperor:

"I, O emperor, had much gold, silver and estates, but I left it all for Christ's sake, in order to receive the eternal heavenly blessings. But if you wish to show me your favor, then for the sake of God and your own salvation, do this: build beside my hut a house where I may give rest to the infirm and to the wanderers, whom I am accustomed to serve. Thereby you will obtain from God an eternal reward for yourself, and comfort my old age."

Hearing such words from the saint, the emperor regarded this request as a gift to himself rather than a petition, and commanded that a hostel and hospital be built as the Venerable one desired. When the building was completed, the emperor assigned to it various estates for the needs of the wanderers who found rest there and of the sick who were healed.

After that, for many years, St. Sampson devoted himself to the work of serving strangers and healing the sick. In such labors he attained a deep old age; his body grew weak, he fell somewhat ill, and drew near to death. When his soul was parting from his body, he remained bright of countenance and did not grieve at all in view of death, as other souls commonly grieve, being filled with carnal and worldly cares, beset by many sins, and therefore fearful of death.

The saint knew Who was calling him, from what labors and to what peaceful haven, and what delights awaited his blessed soul there, for every laborer is worthy of his reward (Lk. 10:7). Thus the God-pleasing soul of St. Sampson departed to the heavenly mountain regions[2]; and his body was honorably buried in the church of St. Mokius the Martyr, from whose lineage this great servant of God was descended according to the flesh, being the spiritual heir of the martyr's virtue.

2. This was in 530.

Being a great servant of God, the saint became renowned for miracles wrought by him not only during his life but also after death. Some of his posthumous miracles we shall recall here.

Once there was a fire in Constantinople which began at the church of St. Sophia[3]. The fire was so strong that no one could do anything to extinguish it. The flames spread quickly, and already most of the luxurious palaces and buildings adorning the city were burning. The fire reached even the hospice of Venerable Sampson. But, surrounding it on all sides, the flames did not touch it at all, and it stood in the midst of the fire like the unburnt bush. Many saw at that time Venerable Sampson, who swiftly walked around the enclosure of the hospice and angrily drove the flames of the fire away from it; and the fire, as if terrified before the face of the saint and obeying his command, withdrew from the hospice to another place. Then suddenly thunder sounded and a cloud appeared in the sky; immediately afterward a heavy rain fell, which by the saint's prayers quenched the entire fire.

After his death the saint also granted healing of every kind of sickness, as he had granted it during his life.

It happened once that a certain nobleman, Theodorit, by rank a spatharios[4], hurrying down the steps of his house on some errand, stumbled and injured the joint of his leg. The leg suddenly became very painful, and he took to his bed. For three days, from severe suffering, he could neither eat nor drink, nor fall asleep, nor say anything, and he was as one mute. But, keeping his sound mind amid his sufferings, he prayed diligently in his mind to God and to His servant, St. Sampson, calling him to help. After three days, at nightfall, the spatharios Theodorit saw St. Sampson standing at his feet; touching his injured leg, the saint said:

"Arise, for you shall no longer be ill."

And having said this, the saint became invisible.

3. The cathedral church in Constantinople. Under the emperor Justinian it was rebuilt anew. By the splendor of its architecture and the richness of its decoration, it belongs among the finest buildings in the world.

4. Spatharios – a sword-bearer; a court rank.

Theodorit at once felt himself completely healthy, and joyfully began to thank God aloud and to say:

"Truly St. Sampson is a great servant of God!"

Then, feeling his leg and seeing that it had become perfectly sound, he rose and began to walk. And with the coming of morning he went to the tomb of the Venerable and, making a thankful prostration before it, told all who were there of the healing granted him.

Another nobleman in Constantinople, named Leo, riding on horseback, scraped his leg against a stone wall; an ulcer opened, and he fell gravely ill, the sickness growing worse each day. His household advised the sick man to summon a physician to bleed him. And when the fourth day drew near, on which the physician was to come to the sick man, there appeared in the night a vision to the aforementioned Theodorit, who had received healing from his illness a short time before. He saw three men entering the house of the sick nobleman; in one of them he recognized St. Sampson, whom he had seen during his own illness, and of the other two he thought they were the unmercenary physicians Cosmas and Damian. Theodorit asked them:

"Where are you going?"

They, looking upon him with love, answered:

"To the nobleman Leo."

Theodorit then said to them:

"Do you know, my lords, that he suffers a grievous illness, and on the coming day physicians will come to him to treat his injured leg?"

Then the saints said to Theodorit:

"Let it not be so: we shall come to him again on Friday and heal him."

Waking from sleep, Theodorit at once went to the sick man and told him of his vision. Leo believed his words and did not admit the physicians, but, placing all his hope in God, waited for Friday, continually abiding in prayer. And indeed, when Friday came, his injured leg was suddenly healed and became sound like the other, entirely without need of any medical treatment. Feeling himself well, Leo at once went to the tomb of Venerable Sampson and gave thanks to him and to those who had appeared with him.

Glorifying His servant Sampson through many miracles, God also glorified him through the outflow of healing myrrh from the tomb of the Venerable, whereby the sick, afflicted with every kind of infirmity, received health when anointed with this myrrh. The healing power of this myrrh was also experienced by the aforementioned nobleman Leo. It happened that, after his recovery from his illness, he fell ill again throughout his body, and he lay on his sickbed like one paralyzed, all the members of his body being immovable. But when he was anointed over his whole body with the myrrh flowing from the tomb of the Venerable, he at once received healing. On another occasion he fell ill in his eyes, but, anointing them with the myrrh from the tomb of St. Sampson, he again received health.

Giving thanks to the saint for the repeated healings wrought for him by the Venerable, the nobleman Leo took upon himself the care of his hospice, which at that time had somewhat declined, and in sufficient measure supplied it for various needs from his own estates.

It will not be out of place to mention here also that the superintendent of the hospice at that time was a certain Enesius, a man lazy and negligent in his service, who attended carelessly to the needs of the sick and the strangers. Once at night Venerable Sampson appeared to him, not in a dream but as though awake, and began to strike him with a staff, saying angrily: "Why are you negligent in your service and do not care for the needs of strangers and the sick?"

From the blows Enesius fell so gravely ill that his voice was taken away and he became mute; his body turned blue from the wounds caused by the saint's staff. When in the morning many came to him, Enesius could say nothing to them, but only pointed to his body, blue from the blows; then, taking a sheet of paper and a reed, he wrote on it how he had been punished by the saint for his laziness and negligence. Learning of what had happened, the nobleman Leo came to visit the sick man. Seeing that his body was wholly blue from the blows, he began with tears to pray to Venerable Sampson.

“O holy servant of God,” so he prayed, “you know my faith and my zeal toward you; fulfill now my prayer: here before you is Enesius, whom you punished, and who, writing on paper what befell him, has

himself made known both his sin and your admonition to him. Heal him of his sickness, that your miracle may become widely known for the glorification of the name of God."

When the nobleman Leo had prayed in this way, Enesius's tongue was loosed and his mouth was opened, and he told in detail all that had happened to him, and from that time he was wholly amended.

After that, certain God-fearing men, consulting among themselves, approached the patriarch and asked him to consecrate the hospice and the church. This was indeed done. And for the comfort of strangers and the reception of the infirm, another house and a hospital were built beside the newly erected church.

After some time the builder[5] of the hospice was Eustratius, who likewise did not concern himself with the sick and the strangers, and was besides avaricious. Once, for many days, he did not give the sick oil, and for this God punished him by making his eyes ill. One of his friends, named Leo—not the one we spoke of above, but another who bore the same name and served in the hospice—said to him:

"Provide oil in due measure for the sick and the strangers, and your eyes will be well; if you do not believe my words, I will give you a written pledge in confirmation of what I have said."

Having said this, he wrote the following to Eustratius:

"I, Leo, trusting in the holy Wonderworker Sampson and relying on him with unwavering faith, make myself your surety as confirmation that if you provide enough oil for the poor and the strangers, your eyes will be healed of their sickness; for St. Sampson will obtain health for you."

Having received such a pledge and promised to provide oil in due measure for the sick and the strangers, Eustratius on that very day received healing of his eyes. But since he was avaricious by nature, he again stopped providing oil. And one night Venerable Sampson appeared to him and said angrily:

"Why do you test me, disregarding my admonitions?"

Terrified by this vision, Eustratius, at the coming of morning, summoned his friend Leo and gave him a great quantity of oil, asking

him to pray for him to St. Sampson and to obtain from the holy servant of God the forgiveness of his sins.

One of the royal counselors, named Barda, a man of noble rank, fell ill with a carbuncle, from which large and incurable sores formed on his breast. For a long time he endured grievous suffering from his sickness. Meanwhile the day arrived of the memory of the holy martyr Mokius: the physicians who attended the sick man, and all his household, had gone to the church of the holy martyr for the All-night Vigil, while the sick man lay upon his bed, sorely grieved that he could not go to church for the feast and bow down before the wonderworking tomb of the Venerable Sampson, which was in that church of the holy martyr. At that time there appeared to him a certain radiant elder, who said to him:

– Arise!

To this the sick man said:

– But how can I arise? All the members of my body have grown weak from my grievous illness.

But the elder said again:

– I tell you: arise and go to the church of the holy martyr Mokius, whose feast is being celebrated today; there pray before the tomb of the holy Sampson.

Having said this, the elder became invisible.

The sick man, however, suddenly feeling strength in his limbs, began little by little to rise from his bed. At the same time he noticed that the pain from the sores had ceased. When he untied the medical bandages and plasters from his wounds, he saw that the sores had been completely healed. Filled with joy, the nobleman dressed himself in festive garments and went to the church. Seeing him unexpectedly healed, all who were in the church were astonished and glorified God. At that time it was the custom that, if anyone fell into some sickness, he would command that he be carried to the hospital of the holy Sampson, and there, according to his faith, receive health. Thus, when a slave of a certain presbyter fell ill with dropsy, the presbyter sent him to the hospital of the holy Sampson. Having stayed there several days

5. Superior – a monk in authority.

and receiving no relief from his sickness, the slave returned to his master's house. The presbyter, seeing him, was greatly angered at his unbelief and again sent him to the hospital, commanding him to ask for the myrrh flowing from the saint's tomb and to anoint himself with it. The slave went, spent the night in the hospital of the holy Sampson, and returned from there healthy. Of how he was healed, the slave related the following: "This night I saw in a dream the holy Sampson appearing to me; touching my belly with his hand, he said to me: 'Go hence, you are already well.' I immediately awoke and felt myself healthy."

The wife of a church servant, Irene, suffered from the same illness. In a dream vision she beheld the holy Sampson come to her together with the holy unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian, and touch her. After that she received health.

These and many other miracles were wrought and healings granted through the prayers of the Venerable Sampson, whereby God, wondrous in His saints, was glorified, to Whom from us also are offered honor and glory, worship and thanksgiving, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Troparion, Tone 8:

In thy patience thou hast gained thy reward, O Venerable Father, enduring in unceasing prayers, loving the poor and providing for them; wherefore pray to Christ God, O merciful and blessed Sampson, that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion, Tone 8:

As to a physician most skilled and an intercessor well-pleasing, we who run to thy divine shrine, O God-wise Venerable Sampson, gathering together in love, rejoicing with psalms and hymns, glorify Christ, who bestows upon thee such grace of healings.

* * *

Memory of St. Severus[6]

Память святого Севира

In the land of Tudera[7], between two mountains, in a valley called Interoclea, there was a church of our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary. The presbyter at it was Severus, a man of wondrous and God-pleasing life. One of the local inhabitants, falling ill and approaching death, hastily sent messengers to that presbyter to tell him to come to him quickly, to hear his confession of the sins he had committed and to absolve him of them before his departure to death. At this time Severus was in his vineyard, where he was occupied with trimming the clusters. Having heard the request of those sent, he said to them:

– Go on ahead, and I will soon catch up with you.

But afterwards, seeing that there still remained many clusters to gather, he wished to wait a little longer, that he might gather also what was left. Having finished his work, he set out on the way to the sick man. On the way he was met by those who were with the sick man, who said to him:

– Why, Father, did you delay? But trouble yourself no more, for that man has already died.

Hearing this, the presbyter trembled with horror and began to weep bitterly, calling himself the murderer of the deceased. Not ceasing to weep, he reached the house where the body of the dead man lay, and with tears fell to the ground before the bed, sobbing and striking his head upon the earth; and in the hearing of all who were there, he blamed himself for that man's death. As he wept thus, the dead man suddenly revived. Seeing this, those present were greatly astonished at the miracle that had occurred and rejoiced at the resurrection of the dead man, and for joy they wept. Then they asked:

– Where were you? And in what manner has your soul, separated from the body, returned again into it?

6. This narrative is taken from the book of St. Gregory the Dialogist (*Dialogues*, ch. 12).
7. This locality was in central Italy, in the province of Valeria, between the mountains Reate and Ameterium.

He answered:

– Some Ethiopians[8], very terrible and proud, from whose nostrils and ears fire issued, took me and dragged me toward certain dark places filled with horror and trembling. But suddenly there appeared a most radiant youth, who came toward us with other light-bearing men; turning to those who were dragging me, he said to them with authority: "Return him, for Severus the presbyter weeps over him; for the sake of this man's tears the Lord grants again to this dead man life in the body."

Hearing such a story, Severus rose from the ground with unspeakable joy and gave thanks to God. Then, having taught the one who had risen how he must bring repentance to God, he heard his confession, absolved him of his sins, and communed him of the Divine Body and Blood of Christ. After that the one who had risen lived yet seven days, unceasingly praying to God, and on the eighth day he joyfully reposed in Him.

Thus we learn how God loved His presbyter Severus; for He would not grieve him, but quickly heard the prayer of the saint and did according to his desire. From this it is also revealed that the presbyter Severus loved the Lord God with his whole soul and labored for Him zealously all his life. Having served the Lord, at the completion of his earthly ascetic struggle he stood before the throne of Divine glory, together with the choirs of saints glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God in Trinity, to Whom from us also be glory forever. Amen.

* * *

8. Ethiopians are often called, in the sacred books, the gloomy spirits of malice, who are opposed to the bright Angelic powers.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF JUNE

June 28

28 июня

New Calendar June 28 · Old Calendar July 11 (civil dates)

Translation of the Honored Relics of the Holy Martyrs Cyrus and John

Перенесение честных мощей святых мучеников Кира и Иоанна

These holy passion-bearers, Cyrus and John, suffered for the name of Christ on the 31st day of January in the reign of Diocletian[1], in the city of Canopus, twelve *stades* distant from the great city of Alexandria. After their martyric deaths, the Christians secretly took their holy bodies and buried them with honor. The healing relics of these holy martyrs were discovered after a long lapse of time (from the day of their martyric death); they were discovered precisely when the Orthodox Christians, having vanquished the idol-worshipping Hellenes, began to build churches everywhere without fear.

Especially without fear did the Christians begin to build churches from the time of the Emperor Theodosius the Great. The Emperor Theodosius the Great[2], having vanquished the Western emperor Maximus[3] with all his armies through the prayers of the holy fathers who labored in the Egyptian deserts, sent distinguished men to these fathers with a request for help. Among the holy fathers who labored in Egypt, one should mention one named Senuphius, who became famous for miracles and dwelt in a skete. Concerning this father, the emperor wrote to Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, asking him to send Senuphius to him in Constantinople, that he might be strengthened by his blessing and prayers in the struggle against his adversaries. Theophilus, ful-

1. He governed the eastern half of the Roman Empire from 284 to 305.
2. He reigned from 379 to 395.
3. Strictly, a pretender to the imperial throne.

filling the emperor's desire, went himself to the skete of the Venerable Senuphius and entreated him to go to Constantinople to Emperor Theodosius. However, Senuphius by no means wished to leave his cell. At last, after the patriarch's urgent entreaties, Senuphius took his cloak and staff, lifted them up, turning toward the east; then, raising his eyes to heaven, he said:

"O Lord God of hosts! With humility I pray Thee: give to this cloak and to this staff that power which Thou in Thy mercy wouldst have given to me, had I gone there."

Having prayed in such words, Senuphius gave the cloak and staff to the patriarch, saying:

"Send these to the emperor in my place, and write to him that during the battle he should clothe himself in the cloak, take the staff in his hand, and go boldly forward before his regiment against the enemies; and he will see the power of God."

The patriarch sent the cloak and staff to the emperor and conveyed to him the words of the Venerable one.

The emperor, receiving what was sent in faith, and doing everything according to the words of the Venerable one, gained a glorious victory over his enemies. In memory of this victory, and also as a reminder of the Venerable Senuphius, the inhabitants of the city of Alexandria carved a statue of the emperor standing on a high pedestal; on the statue the emperor was clothed in a monastic cloak and held a staff in his hand; and every year the inhabitants of the city of Alexandria solemnly celebrated the day of that victory, offering thanksgiving to God.

From this very time, owing to the ever-greater spread of Christianity, the faithful began to build churches in Alexandria and throughout Egypt. And when Patriarch Theophilus desired to build a large church in Canopus in the name of the holy Apostles, the relics of these holy wonderworkers Cyrus and John were discovered. This took place after the death of Theodosius, in the reign of his son Arcadius. The translation of those relics is described in the Life of Cyril.

"At a distance of two *stades* from Canopus there was a place called Menuthis (formerly it was a village). Here stood an ancient pagan

shrine, which had been the dwelling of demons; this place inspired terror in all, since many unclean spirits dwelt there. Patriarch Theophilus, while still alive, wished to cleanse that place of demons and consecrate it for the praise of God, but, distracted by other cares and already near the end of his days, the saint did not succeed in carrying out his intention. Saint Cyril, having received the Alexandrian see after Theophilus, resolved to carry out Theophilus' intention and fervently prayed to God that He would grant him help from on high and strength to overcome and drive the unclean spirits out of Menuthis. And behold, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision, commanding him to transfer the honored relics of the holy martyrs Cyrus and John to Menuthis, in order to drive out the power of the demons from there. Saint Cyril did so: he transferred the relics of the saints to Menuthis[4] and built a church there in their name. Soon after this the unclean spirits departed from there forever, and that place became a source of healings bestowed through the martyric relics.

It is necessary here to recall briefly also the miracles accomplished by these holy wonderworkers Cyrus and John.

In the time of the most holy Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria[5], the son of the city prefect Julian, named Ammonius, had some painful swellings on his neck, growing inward, which physicians call scrofulae or strumae[6]; increasing day by day and maturing, these swellings greatly burdened his neck and threatened death. Many skilled physicians were summoned, but the sick man received no relief from them. The father and son, greatly saddened, abandoned those physicians and turned for help to the holy wonderworkers Cyrus and John; he began to pray with tears before their honored relics, asking them to grant health to his son. The saints, appearing in a vision, commanded the youth first of all to abandon his cares for wealth and glory and, as a sign of humility, to sweep the dust from their church; then, making a plaster of wax mixed with bread, they commanded that it be applied to the neck and

4. The event of the translation of the relics of the holy friends of God Cyrus and John took place about 412.
5. Eulogius was patriarch from 579 to 607.
6. Probably something like carbuncles or painful swellings of the skin.

throat of the sick man. And as soon as all this was done, the swellings immediately resolved, and Ammonius received health through the prayers of these holy unmercenary physicians.

Some time later the same Ammonius, forgetting the admonitions of the saints, grew proud and again fell ill with another sickness, which was a punishment for his disobedience. He began to suffer in his stomach, and the illness was so grievous that, because of it, he could not take any food or drink at all; whatever he took into his mouth was vomited back. Then he again turned for help to his familiar physicians, the holy passion-bearers Cyrus and John, and began to pray to them with tears. These saints, appearing to him in a vision, first rebuked him for his pride, then commanded him to take off his precious garments and clothe himself in sackcloth; then, taking water vessels, they commanded him to carry cold water to the sick brethren and the poor to quench their thirst. When Ammonius had done all this conscientiously, the saints immediately appeared to him and commanded him, taking oil from their lamp and also wax from the candles lit at their shrine, to make a plaster and apply it to his stomach. Having done all this, Ammonius received health.

A certain Alexandrian, named Theodore, who had long been blind in both eyes, was brought to the church at Menuthis and to the many-healing relics of the holy passion-bearers; he prayed here with fervor for healing of his blindness. The saints appeared to him in a vision and commanded him to go and wash in the spring that flowed near their church. He went, washed, and when he wiped his face with a towel, he immediately regained his sight and felt that cataracts, like some scales, had fallen from his eyes onto the towel. Theodore returned with joy to the church, showing everyone on the towel the traces of his blindness.

Another man, named Callus, who corresponded to his name and was beautiful in his life[7], accidentally fell from a ladder, shattered the shin of his leg into many pieces, and suffered grievously. This man summoned many physicians to help him, but could receive no aid from them. Then he turned with firm faith to these unmercenary physicians,

7. "Kalos" from Greek, "beautiful."

Cyrus and John; having anointed his leg with oil from their lamp, the sick man was immediately healed.

A certain Isidore from Maiuma[8] suffered from an illness of the liver, which, beginning to rot, turned into blood, became inflamed, and was spat out with blood. Since this man could get no relief from any physicians, he turned to the many-healing relics of these holy passion-bearers. The saints appeared to him, not in a dream-vision but openly, and gave him to taste a piece of lemon; receiving the lemon from their hands, he did not know from whom he received it: he thought it was one of the people who had come to venerate the honored martyric relics. When the sick man had eaten what was given him, immediately his stomach was as if disturbed and vomited up a large worm that had been gnawing at his liver; the saints, the unmercenary physicians, became invisible. Isidore, from that time on being in health, gave thanks to God and His holy saints.

A certain Mina, governor of the city of Philopolis[9], suffered from a severe fever; to this illness there was added a hardening of the stomach, so that his natural functions ceased. All the medicines that the sick man took by mouth not only brought him no relief, but still more burdened his stomach, remaining in it. This man suffered for two weeks; his illness was very fierce, so that he had already despaired of the help of physicians. Recalling the holy unmercenary physicians Cyrus and John, Mina commanded that he be carried with his bed to Menuthis, to their many-healing relics. While he, after praying with tears at the relics, dozed off and fell asleep, the saints appeared to him and gave him a fig to taste. Awakening from sleep, he found a fig on the bed beside him; he ate it, and immediately his stomach illness resolved and he became well.

Another, Mina, nimble and swift of foot like the ancient Asahel[10], "like a roe in the field" (2 Kgdms. 2:18), was so severely afflicted in his feet that he could not walk at all, and he lay on his bed for a long time,

8. Maiouma was a port city of Palestine, serving as the harbor for Gaza, an ancient city of that land, not far from Jerusalem. It is known as the place of episcopal activity of St. Cosmas.
9. One of the Egyptian cities.
10. Asahel was the son of David's sister Zeruiah, brother of the commander Joab, one of David's chief generals.

for his feet had swollen greatly. This Mina ordered that he be carried on his bed to the holy wonderworkers Cyrus and John. And when he anointed his feet with oil from the lamp burning before the honorable relics of the saints, he at once rose up healthy and was able to walk, for his feet were completely healed. For all this he gave thanks to God and to His holy friends.

A certain woman, named Theodora, once drank water and swallowed a small toad without noticing it; the toad began to grow in her belly. At first the toad caused Theodora little suffering, for it was itself small; but when the toad grew and became large, it caused such great pain that the woman had no rest at all, day or night, on account of her fierce sufferings. She cried out loudly and threw herself upon the ground, but no one could help her, and no one could even discover what her illness was; many thought that a demon was tormenting her. At last she was brought to these holy wonderworkers, Cyrus and John; and they, appearing to her at night, commanded her, before taking any food, to drink a large quantity of water. The woman did so; at once her stomach was stirred, she vomited up a large toad, and she became healthy. All who saw this were amazed and glorified God and His holy friends.

After the woman Theodora, a certain man, Theodore, also turned to the saints for help. This Theodore by chance took a poison given by evil men and suffered greatly, receiving no help from physicians. While Theodore was praying with tears for his healing, the saints appeared to him in a vision and bade him eat a certain creature, called in Greek the scolopendra[11]. Awakening after the vision, Theodore signed himself with the sign of the cross, for he thought it was a demonic apparition; then again he began to pray to the saints, asking them for healing. On the next night the saints again appeared to Theodore and commanded him to do the same; but even this time he did not come to believe the saints, for that creature was considered poisonous, not healing. And a third time the same appearance of the saints came, but even this time Theodore did not obey them, thinking it was a demonic deception. At

11. Something like a lizard.

last, on the fourth night, the saints appeared to Theodore no longer in a dream-vision but while he was awake; the saints expressed their compassion for Theodore and said to him:

"Why do you not believe our words? Rise up quickly and go to our spring; there eat whatever you find edible; that will be an effective remedy for you."

Theodore, believing in the truth of the appearance of the saints, set out at dawn to the spring and found there a small cucumber lying on the ground; Theodore took it and ate it with pleasure. And when he was about to put the last piece of the cucumber into his mouth, he noticed in it the last part of the creature called the scolopendra, for he had already eaten almost all of the creature within the cucumber. Greatly frightened, he threw the rest of the cucumber to the ground, after which he began to vomit, and with the cucumber and that creature he vomited out all the poison that had been in him. After this Theodore felt entirely well, and, coming to church, he bowed down with thanksgiving before the honorable relics of his healers.

A certain woman, named Mary, came from Babylon to Menuthis, to the relics of the holy wonderworkers. She brought with her her eight-year-old son, from whose mouth, by demonic guile, his tongue had been drawn out; the boy's tongue was a span[12] in length, far larger than an ordinary human tongue, and had a very strange appearance: it was thick, black, foul-smelling, repulsive to all who looked upon it, and all the while it poured forth black spittle. This boy happened to fall to the ground at the tomb of the saints and struck his tongue against the marble that was there; at once his tongue, freed from demonic guile, returned to its place and took its usual size, and so the boy was healed.

Brought to the relics of the saints was a certain Eugenius, from Egypt, who was suffering from dropsy; from this affliction his whole body had swollen and his belly was very distended. To this Eugenius the saints appeared in a vision, touched his belly with their hands, and said:

"Eugenius! Rise and return healthy to your house."

12. A span equaled 4 or 5 vershoks.

Eugenius, rising, at once was freed from all the burden of the swelling and received perfect health. Having recalled these few, out of many, wonders of the holy unmercenaries Cyrus and John, let us glorify Christ God, who bestowed such grace upon them, glorified forever with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 5:

O Christ God, who hast granted us the wonders of Thy martyrs as an unshakable wall: by their prayers scatter the counsels of the nations, strengthen the sceptres of kingdoms, for Thou alone art good and lovest mankind.

Kontakion, Tone 3:

Having received the gift of wonders from Divine grace, ye saints, ye work miracles unceasingly in the world, invisibly cutting away all our passions by your working, O God-wise Cyrus, together with glorious John: for ye are indeed divine physicians.

* * *

Memory of the Venerable Paul

Память преподобного Павла

The Venerable Paul was from the city of Corinth[13], of Christian parents; having been brought up in piety and having loved God from his youth, he came to one of the monasteries and received the tonsure into monasticism there; he labored much in ascetic deeds of fasting and was an experienced ascetic. Upon this Paul the demon of fornication made war; once at night, while the Venerable Paul was standing in prayer, a demon appeared to him and said:

"If you do not satisfy your carnal lust, even once, I will cruelly attack you!"

But Paul forbade the demon in the name of Jesus Christ and drove him away with the sign of the cross.

13. Corinth, the most ancient of the cities of Greece, was located in the northern part of ancient Argolis, on the shore of the Gulf of Corinth.

Then the demon taught a certain harlot woman to bring to the Venerable Father an infant recently born to her; placing this infant on the bed of the Venerable Father, the woman said to him:

"I conceived this from you yourself and bore it."

The elder received the infant with joy. The heretics, however, coming to the elder, bound his hands behind his back and, tying the infant to the neck of the Venerable Father, led him about the city with mockery. Standing in the midst of the people and making a sign with his hand, Paul said:

"Listen, brethren! Let us ask the infant, and let him tell us who his father is."

(The infant was but a few days old from his birth.) And Paul said to the infant:

"Tell us, who is your father?"

The infant, tearing his swaddling clothes, pointed with his hand at a certain blacksmith and said:

"There is my father, not Paul the monk."

The people who heard this bowed down to the elder, asking him for forgiveness.

From this time God granted the Venerable Father the gift of healing. Paul laid his hands upon the sick and they received health.

Having lived more than seventy years, the Venerable Father departed to the Lord[14], Whom he had served without negligence, and he was numbered among the saints; together with them he glorifies the One God in the Trinity, to Whom glory is also offered from us forever. Amen.

* * *

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On this day is the memory of the Venerable Fathers Sergius and Herman, Wonderworkers of Valaam, who died about 1353.

14. The time of the repose of the Venerable Paul is not known with precision.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JUNE

June 29

29 июня

New Calendar June 29 · Old Calendar July 12 (civil dates)

Life, Labors, and Sufferings of the Holy and Glorious, All-Praised, Chief Apostle Peter

Житие, подвиги и страдание святого славного и всехвального верховного Апостола Петра

The brother of the First-Called Apostle Andrew, the holy Apostle Peter, who before being called by the Lord Jesus Christ bore the name Simon, was the son of the Jew Jonah of the tribe of Simeon. He came from Bethsaida, an insignificant and little-known Galilean town in Palestine. He took as his wife the daughter of Aristobulus, brother of the holy Apostle Barnabas, and had by her children: one son and one daughter. Simon was a simple and unlettered man; filled with the fear of God, he kept all the commandments of the Lord, "walking before Him without blame in all his deeds." Simon's occupation was fishing; by this labor of his hands, as a poor man, he obtained sustenance for his family, feeding his wife, children, mother-in-law, and his aged father Jonah.

His brother Andrew, however, disdaining the vanity of the restless world, embraced the path of the celibate life: he went to the Jordan to the holy John the Baptist, who preached repentance (Mt. 3:1–17), and became his disciple. Hearing from his teacher the testimony about Christ the Messiah, and especially his words pointing with his finger to the Lord, "Behold the Lamb of God" (Jn. 1:29–36), Andrew left John and, together with another of the Baptist's disciples, followed the Lord, asking Him:

"Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?"

"Come and see," the Savior answered them.

They went and saw where He lived, and remained with Him that day (Jn. 1:38–39).

On the following morning Andrew came to his brother Simon and said to him:

"We have found the Messiah, the Christ."

And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus, looking upon him, said:

"Thou art Simon, son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas, which means a stone (Peter)" [1] (Jn. 1:41–42). And at once the holy Peter was kindled with love for the Lord, believing in Him as the true Christ sent by God for the salvation of the world. But he still did not leave his house nor give up his occupation, providing for his household what was necessary for their livelihood; in this, for the sake of their aged father, Simon was sometimes helped by his brother Andrew; so they lived until the time of the Lord's calling them to apostolic service.

Once, after John the Baptist had been cast into prison, the Lord Jesus Christ was walking near the Sea of Galilee (it is also known as the Sea of Tiberias or the Lake of Gennesaret), and, seeing Peter and Andrew casting their nets into the sea, He said to them:

"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:18–20).

In what sense the Lord wished to make them fishers, He indicated by a miraculous catch of fish. Entering Simon-Peter's boat, Christ commanded him to cast the nets, to which Peter answered:

"Master, we have toiled all night and have caught nothing; but at Thy word I will let down the net."

Having done this, they caught a great multitude of fish, and even their net was breaking, which was a prefiguring of the spiritual apostolic catch: the Apostles were to draw many peoples to salvation in the net of the Word of God. Seeing such a miracle, Simon Peter fell at the knees of Jesus and said:

"Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man."

Terror seized him and all who were with him at this catch of fish. In answer to Peter, who asked the Lord to depart from him, the Savior, on the contrary, calls him to follow Him:

1. *Kifa* is a Syriac word meaning stone; the Greek word *Petros* (*petra* – rock, stone) has the same meaning.

"Come after Me; from now on thou shalt catch men for life, as formerly thou caught fish for death."

From this time the holy Apostle Peter followed Christ, as did his brother Andrew and the other disciples just called. The Lord loved the Apostle Peter for his simplicity of heart: He visited Simon's poor house, where by the touch of His hand He healed his mother-in-law, who lay in a fever. And when in the morning the Lord rose and withdrew to pray in a desert place, Peter and those with him, unable to endure being without the Lord even for one hour, went after Him, diligently seeking their beloved Teacher; and, finding Him, they said to Him:

"All men seek for Thee, O Lord" (Mk. 1:30–37).

The holy Apostle Peter never left the Lord, but constantly remained with Him, rejoicing in beholding Him and in His words "sweeter than honey." He was an eyewitness of many great miracles of the Lord, which clearly pointed to Christ as the Son of God, in whom he believed without any doubt. And as he believed in his heart "unto righteousness," so with his mouth he confessed "unto salvation." When the Lord came into the regions of Caesarea Philippi[2], He asked His disciples:

"Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

They said:

"Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He says to them:

"But whom do ye say that I am?"

Simon Peter answered:

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The Lord vouchsafed to bless and promise this true confession of the Apostle; He said to the holy Peter:

"Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas, for flesh and blood have not revealed this to thee, but My Father who is in heaven; and I say to thee: thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall

2. This city lay near the sources of the Jordan; it was built up by Herod's son Philip in honor of the emperor Tiberius, and hence its name.

be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" [3].

Burning with warm love for the Lord, the holy Apostle Peter wished that no evil should touch Him; therefore, when the Lord foretold His sufferings, he contradicted Him, saying in ignorance:

"Be merciful to Thyself, O Lord! This shall not be unto Thee!"

Although these words of the Apostle were not pleasing to the Lord Jesus, who had come precisely to redeem the human race from perdition by His suffering, nevertheless they were inspired by ardent love for the Lord; they revealed, moreover, the Apostle's guilelessness: hearing the reproachful word of the Lord, "Depart from Me, Satan! [4] Thou art a stumbling block unto Me," the Apostle did not feel angry irritation and did not withdraw from Christ the Savior, but, hearing the rebuke with love, followed the Lord with even greater zeal (Mt. 16:13–23). Once many of the disciples, unable to comprehend the Lord's words [5], said of them:

"What strange words! Who can hear them?"

And then they withdrew from the Savior and no longer walked with Him. Then the Lord Jesus said to the twelve:

"Will ye also go away?"

Simon Peter answered Him:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Jn. 6:53–58).

Having such faith and such zeal for the Lord, the holy Apostle Peter dared to ask Him permission to come to Him upon the water [6]. The Lord did not forbid it. Then the holy Apostle Peter, getting out of the

3. Here by the stone is understood not the Apostle Peter but the faith confessed by him, or the Lord Himself; the promise of the gift of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven the Lord afterwards, after His resurrection, repeated to all the Apostles (Jn. 20:21–23).

4. *Satan* is a Syriac word meaning adversary; in the strict sense this is the name in Holy Scripture for the chief of the evil spirits (1 Thess. 2:18); in the broader sense the word *satan* means in general an opponent of the will of God, even if from some simplicity and lack of understanding, as we see in the present case with the holy Apostle Peter.

5. On the Mystery of the Communion of the Flesh and Blood of Christ (Jn. 6:53–58).

6. Just as the Lord Himself drew near to His disciples over the raging waves of the Lake of Gennesaret (Mt. 14:22–27).

boat, "walked on the water to come to Jesus." But not yet having, before receiving the Holy Spirit, perfect firmness in faith, he, "seeing the strong wind, was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried out:

"Lord, save me."

Jesus immediately stretched out His hand, upheld him, and says to him:

"O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" (Mt. 14:28–31).

The Lord, who delivered the holy Apostle from drowning, also delivered him from little faith when He said to him [7]:

"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Lk. 22:31–32).

Together with two other disciples, James and John, the holy Apostle Peter was granted to behold on Tabor the glory of the Transfiguration of the Lord revealed, and with his own ears to hear the voice of God the Father come from on high to the Lord Jesus. Of this the holy Apostle speaks in his epistle:

"We made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, not following cunningly devised fables, but having been eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when from the excellent glory there came to Him such a voice: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And this voice which came from heaven we heard, being with Him on the holy mountain." [8]

When the Lord drew near to His voluntary sufferings and crucifixion, the holy Apostle Peter showed his zeal for the Lord not only in word, saying:

"Lord, I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and to death" (Lk. 22:33), but also in deed, drawing his sword and with a blow cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest, Malchus (Jn. 18:10). Although God, in His providence, permitted the Apostle Peter to fall into a threefold denial of Christ the Savior, our Lord, he arose and was corrected through true repentance joined with bitter weeping (Mt. 26:69–75). The holy Peter, first of all the Apostles, was granted to see the risen Lord Jesus Christ, as the holy evangelist Luke says of this:

7. At the Supper with His disciples before His sufferings.
8. 2 Pet. 1:16–18; cf. Mt. 17:1–27; Mk. 9 and following, Lk. 9 and following.

"The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon" (Lk. 24:34); the holy Apostle Paul writes of the same: Christ "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve" (1 Cor. 15:4–5). Beholding the Lord, the holy Peter was filled with ineffable joy, receiving from Him also merciful forgiveness of his sin. The threefold denial of the Lord he fully blotted out by a threefold confession of his love for the Savior, answering His threefold question:

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"

"Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

And Christ the Savior restored Peter to his apostolic dignity, making him shepherd of the rational sheep and entrusting to him the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Jn. 21:15–17).

After the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Peter, as the chief among the Apostles, became the first teacher and preacher of the Word of God, gaining in a single hour three thousand believing souls for the Church of Christ (Acts 2:14–41). He also manifested great miraculous power. Entering the temple with St. John for prayer, St. Peter saw a man who had been lame from birth, sitting at the doors of the temple called Beautiful. Seeing Peter and John, the man asked them for alms. Peter and John, looking intently upon him, said:

"Look at us."

And he looked at them fixedly, hoping to receive something from them. But Peter said:

"Silver and gold I do not have; but what I have, that I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

And taking him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and knees were strengthened, and leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered with them into the temple, walking, leaping and praising God.

Through this miracle and the preaching of St. Peter the Apostle, about five thousand people came to believe in Christ (Acts 3:1–26; 4:4). St. Peter struck dead by his word Ananias and his wife Sapphira, inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sacrilege and for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1–10). In Lydda[9] he healed the paralytic Aeneas, who had lain on his bed for eight years, saying to him:

"Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you!" (Acts 9:32–34)

In Joppa[10] he raised the dead maiden Tabitha (Acts 9:36–42). His hands and his words were not the only miraculous instruments; even his very shadow bestowed healing: "so that they carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them" (Acts 5:15). And when King Herod laid hands on some of those belonging to the Church (in Jerusalem), to "do them harm," and having killed James, the brother of John,[11] with the sword, seized St. Peter and cast him into prison, binding him with two chains, an Angel of the Lord by night loosed him from his fetters and freed him from confinement (Acts 12:1–10). The chief Apostle Peter first opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, baptizing at Caesarea[12] the Roman centurion Cornelius after the vision of a sheet let down from heaven, full of four-footed beasts and creeping things, and of a voice commanding Peter to kill and eat all of them and not to regard as unclean what God had cleansed; this vision was a sign of the conversion of the Gentiles to Christ (Acts 10:1–48). St. Peter the Apostle rebuked Simon the Samaritan magician, who had hypocritically received baptism and wished to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit for money:

9. Lydda: a city in Palestine, near the present Ramla, formerly Arimathea.

10. Joppa: one of the most ancient cities of Asia, on the north-west shore of the Mediterranean Sea between Caesarea and Gaza.

11. James, son of Zebedee, one of the twelve Apostles, the own brother of the Evangelist John. St. James was the first of the Apostles to receive a martyr's death, in the persecution of Herod Agrippa, king of the Jews, in the year 44 after the Nativity of Christ. His memory is April 30.

12. Meant is Caesarea of Palestine, which stood on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; this city was restored by Herod the Great, who named it Caesarea in honor of the emperor Augustus. The Apostle Paul was here (Acts 9:29–30, 18:28, 21:8); he spent two years here as a prisoner (Acts 23:33, 24:27, 25:4); here the Apostle Philip lived (Acts 21:8); here Herod Agrippa died, struck by an Angel and eaten by worms (Acts 12:19–33).

"Your silver perish with you," said the Apostle to the magician, "because you thought that the gift of God may be obtained for money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this your sin, and pray to God, that perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:18–23).

These and other deeds of St. Peter the Apostle mentioned here are set forth more fully in the Holy Gospel and in the Book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, which are continually read aloud in the churches for the faithful. Therefore, for the sake of brevity, there was no need to take from these books of Holy Scripture in detail everything concerning St. Peter the Apostle; these books ought to be well known to Orthodox Christians. Concerning the further evangelical labors and toils of St. Peter the Apostle, little known to most people, St. Symeon Metaphrastes[13] says the following.

From Jerusalem[14] St. Peter came to Caesarea Stratonis[15], where he ordained a bishop from among the presbyters who accompanied him; having healed many in Sidon[16] and ordained a bishop there, he came to Berytus[17] and likewise ordained a bishop there; then he came to Byblus, and from there to Tripoli of Phoenicia[18], where he stayed with a wise man named Marson, whom he ordained bishop for the faithful of that city. From Tripoli he came to Orthosias; then to Antaradus, then to the island of Aradus, thence to Balanea, Pant, and Laodicea[19]; in the

13. A church writer of the 10th century.
14. The chief city of Palestine, now the provincial city of the Damascus vilayet (governor-generalship) in Syria (in the Turkish Empire), on the brook Kidron, on the slopes of three spurs of the Judean mountains, Akra, Zion and Moriah. Jerusalem is dear to every Christian as the center of great events of Old and New Testament history, as the mother of Christian churches, whence the word of the good tidings went forth over the whole universe.
15. Caesarea Stratonis is the same as Caesarea of Palestine.
16. Sidon: a Phoenician city on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, along which Phoenicia also extended.
17. Berytus or Berit: a Phoenician city famed in antiquity as a nursery of enlightenment and learning; today Berit, known by the name Beirut, is the chief city of the Asiatic-Turkish vilayet (governor-generalship) of Syria, and an important commercial center.
18. Byblos, Tripoli: cities of Phoenicia.
19. Laodicea: the chief city of the Asia Minor province of Phrygia.

last he healed many sick, cast out unclean spirits from the possessed, and gathered a church of the faithful, giving them a bishop. From Laodicea St. Peter came to Antioch, a city of Syria[20], where Simon the magician had hidden from the soldiers sent by the Roman emperor Claudius[21] to seize him; learning of the coming of St. Peter the Apostle, Simon fled to the cities of Judea. In Antioch St. Peter healed many infirm and, after preaching about the One God in three Persons, ordained bishops: Marcian for Syracuse in Sicily[22] and Pancratius for Taormina[23]. From Antioch St. Peter came to Tyana in Cappadocia[24], from there he visited Ancyra in Galatia[25], where he raised a dead man and established a church, catechizing and baptizing many and ordaining a bishop for them. Leaving Ancyra, he went to Sinope in Pontus[26], and from there he came to Amasea, which lies in the midst of the land of Pontus. Then, having visited Gangra in Paphlagonia[27], Claudiopolis in Honoriad, and Nicomedia in Bithynia[28], the holy Apostle stopped at Nicaea[29]. Intending to go to Jerusalem for the feast of Pascha, he turned back from Nicaea, came to Pissinus, and then to Cappadocia and Syria. Visiting Antioch again, he at last reached Jerusalem. During his stay here, in the third year after his conversion to Christ, the holy Apostle Paul came to him, as he himself reports in his epistle to the Galatians:

"After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days" (Gal. 1:18).

20. Syria: a region of Asiatic Turkey on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.
21. Claudius: emperor 41–54 A.D.
22. Sicily: one of the large islands of the Mediterranean Sea, now forming part of the Kingdom of Italy.
23. Tauromenium: a considerable city on the eastern shore of Sicily at Mount Taurus, whence its name.
24. Cappadocia: a region of Asia Minor on the border of Armenia and Cilicia.
25. Galatia: a special country in Asia Minor, which bordered on the west Phrygia, on the south Lycaonia and Cappadocia, on the east Pontus, on the north Bithynia and Paphlagonia.
26. Pontus: the north-eastern region of Asia Minor.
27. Paphlagonia: a harsh mountainous region in the northern part of Asia Minor.
28. Bithynia: a region of Asia Minor adjoining the Black Sea on the north.
29. Nicaea lies in Bithynia (see the previous note) on the eastern end of Lake Ascania; at one time a flourishing commercial city and even a royal residence. In the history of the Christian Church it is remarkable as the place where the first (in 325) and seventh (in 787) Ecumenical Councils were held.

Having established during this time the ecclesiastical ordinances, St. Paul departed to the work to which he had been called; St. Peter the Apostle again visited Antioch, where he ordained Evodius as bishop; then, arriving at Synada, a city of Phrygia[30], he withdrew from it to Nicomedia[31]; there he ordained Prochorus as bishop, who, even after receiving the episcopate, followed St. John the Theologian. Coming from Nicomedia to Ilion, a city of the Hellespont[32], the holy Apostle ordained Cornelius the centurion as bishop there and returned to Jerusalem. Here the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to St. Peter in a vision, saying:

"Arise, Peter, and go to the West: the time has come for it to be enlightened by your preaching; and I shall remain with you."

At this time Simon the magician[33] had already been seized by the soldiers who sought him and brought to Rome[34] to receive punishment for his deeds. But he, having darkened the minds of many by magical cunning, so deceived them that not only did he suffer no punishment, but he was even regarded by many as a god. This forerunner of Satan so amazed the Emperor Claudius himself with his sorcery that a statue of the magician was carved and set up between two bridges on the Tiber, bearing the inscription: "To Simon, the holy god." Justin and Irenaeus write about this in detail. We, however, (says Symeon Metaphrastes) shall return to the word before us. Great Peter, having told

30. Phrygia: a region of Asia Minor between Galatia to the north and Pisidia and Pamphylia to the south. It was enlightened by the holy Apostle Paul.

31. Nicomedia: a city in Bithynia.

32. The Hellespont was the name of the strait separating the Thracian Chersonese from Asia (Troas, Lesser Phrygia).

33. According to the testimony of St. Justin Martyr, Simon Magus, who came from the Samaritan village of Gitta or Titton, studied philosophy in Alexandria, and afterwards became famous as a magician, presenting himself as the great power of God. "At that time, according to Roman and Greek testimony, in various lands of the Greco-Roman world there appeared a multitude of people under the names of magi, Chaldeans, mathematicians and enchanters, who, possessing some knowledge of the mysterious forces of nature, still little explained, presented themselves as extraordinary men, and by the healing of certain diseases, by incantation, divination, prophecy, sorcery, charlatan mystery and various artifices so acted upon the ignorant popular masses that they drew great numbers after them and were considered something extraordinary." To this class of men belongs also Simon Magus.

34. Rome, the chief city of the Roman state, lies in the central part of Italy, in the region of Latium, on both sides of the river Tiber, where it flows into the sea.

the brethren of the vision that had come to him, took leave of them and, visiting the churches, again arrived at Antioch, where he found the holy Apostle Paul. Here he ordained bishops: Urbanus for Tarsus[35], Epaphroditus for Leucas in the Adriatic, Apelles, brother of Polycarp, for Smyrna, and Phygellus for Ephesus[36]; of the last it is said that he, straying from the right path, entered into communion with Simon. From Antioch St. Peter came to Macedonia[37], where he likewise ordained bishops: Olympas for the Philippians[38], Jason for the Thessalonians[39], and for the Corinthians[40] Silas, whom he found staying with the holy Apostle Paul. Having ordained Herodion as bishop in Patras, St. Peter sailed to Sicily, and arriving at Taormina, stayed for a short time with Pancratius, a most eloquent man; having catechized and baptized here a certain Maximus and ordained him bishop, he came to Rome.

In Rome the holy Apostle Peter preached daily in the squares and in the houses about the One God, the almighty Father, and the One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, true God of true God, and the One Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life; and he drew many to the faith of Christ, delivering them by holy baptism from the seduction of idolatry. Seeing all this, Simon the magician would not keep silent nor conceal his malice against St. Peter; he considered the Apostle's preaching, by which his glory was overthrown, a disgrace to himself; and the magician began openly to oppose the true teaching of the Apostle with his

35. Tarsus: once a large and populous city in the south-east of Asia Minor, the chief city of the province of Cilicia, on the river Cydnus, not far from the Mediterranean Sea. Even now it is a considerable commercial city with 40 thousand inhabitants.

36. Ephesus: a seaport, the commercial and chief city of the Asia Minor province of Ioppia; it later became the center of the activity of the Apostle John the Theologian; here was the 3rd Ecumenical Council in 431; now Ephesus is a poor Turkish village, Ayasaluk.[1*]

37. Troas: a seaport city, from which it was not far to cross by sea into Europe. – Macedonia: a coastal region bordering on the Archipelago on the north-west.

38. The city of Philippi, to whose Christians the holy Apostle Paul wrote an epistle, lay in Macedonia, on the river Strymon, not far from the Aegean Sea; it was one of the most renowned cities of this region, which is why the writer of the Book of Acts calls it the first of the most famous cities of this region (Acts 16:12); the church in Philippi was founded by the holy Apostle Paul during his second apostolic journey.

39. A city of Macedonia.

40. Corinth: west of Athens, on the isthmus, most renowned in antiquity for its extensive trade, then the residence of the Roman governor.

lying words and deeds, contradicting St. Peter in the midst of the city without any shame. The magician deceived the people, stirring up strange fancies in them; he displayed apparitions that went before him and followed after him, which he told the people were the souls of the dead; he also displayed the dead who had risen, who bowed down to him as to a god; he healed the lame, restoring to them the ability to walk and leap. But all this was not reality but illusion, like the fabled Proteus[41], who changed in various ways: now appearing with two faces, now, after a short time, turning into a goat, a serpent, a bird, now resembling fire; in a word, assuming every form to beguile the senseless. But it was enough for the great Apostle of the Lord to look upon Simon's deeds, and at once the magician's sorceries disappeared.

Concerning the struggle of St. Peter the Apostle with Simon the magician, besides Metaphrastes, the Prologue and the Great Menaion-Chetii report the following.

When Saint Peter came to Rome and learned that Simon, calling himself Christ, was performing great wonders before the eyes of the people, he was kindled with zeal for the true God and went to the house of Simon. At its gates he found a great crowd of people, who were forbidding the Apostle to enter the house. Then Saint Peter said:

"Why do you hinder me from going to the deceitful sorcerer?"

"He is not a sorcerer," they answered from the crowd, "but a mighty god. He has set at his gates a watchman who knows the thoughts of men."

With these words they pointed the holy Apostle to a black dog lying in the gateway, remarking:

"This dog puts to death all who think untruth about Simon."

"I speak the truth about him," affirmed Saint Peter. "Simon is of the devil."

Then, drawing near to the dog, the Apostle said:

41. Proteus: a prophetic old sea-god, one of the fabulous Greek deities subject to Poseidon, god of the sea, who tended the seal herds of the goddess Amphitrite. His dwelling was considered to be the island of Pharos or Carpathos, whither he came out of the water to rest in the shade of the coastal rocks. To obtain a prophecy from him one had to catch him and hold him by force or cunning, since he took various forms, often thus escaping those who awaited predictions from him.

"Go and tell Simon: Peter, the Apostle of Christ, wishes to come in to you."

The dog went and, in human speech, conveyed to Simon what the holy Apostle Peter had commanded. All who heard the dog speak were struck with terror. Simon, in his turn, sent the same dog with the words:

"Let Peter come in here."

When the holy Apostle had entered the house, Simon began his sorcery before the people, in the sight of Saint Peter. The holy Apostle, however, by the power of Christ, displayed great wonders. Which ones? Of the many wonders, the ancient Greek church historian Hegesippus, who lived near the time of the Apostles[42], recalls the following great miracle. In Rome, a noble widow of royal lineage had a son who died in his youth, and his mother wept for him inconsolably. Those who pitied her remembered the men who had appeared in Rome, Peter and Simon the sorcerer, who were said to raise the dead; and so some summoned Peter to the dead youth, and others summoned Simon. Many people, both nobles and common folk, gathered for the youth's burial. Saint Peter said to Simon the sorcerer, who was boasting of his power before the whole people:

"Whichever of us raises this dead man, his teaching must be acknowledged as true."

The people approved the Apostle's decision. Simon, relying on his magical cunning, addressed the people:

"If I raise the dead man, will you kill Peter?"

"We will burn him alive before your eyes!" cried the people.

Approaching the bier of the dead youth, Simon began his magic, and with the aid of demons he succeeded in making the dead man move his

42. Hegesippus: the author of the *Memoirs*, a work in 5 books, which has not come down to us. Information about his life and work, very fragmentary, is given by the father of church history, Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea. He reports that Hegesippus was a Christian of Jewish origin who lived in the second century; he made a journey to Corinth and Rome, where he lived for a very long time, meeting here with many bishops and holding conversations with them on dogmatic questions. Hegesippus died in the reign of Commodus (180–192). Nothing definite can be said about the content and character of Hegesippus' work; it can only be remarked that in all probability it bore a historical-polemical character, being directed against Gnostic heresies.

head. Immediately the people began to shout that the youth was alive, that he had risen. They at once wanted to lead Saint Peter away to be burned. But the Apostle, by a sign of his hand, asked them to be silent, and when there was quiet he said:

"If the youth is truly alive, let him rise, speak and walk; until you see this, do not doubt that Simon is deceiving you with his sorcery."

Simon walked for a long time around the bier, calling upon the power of the demons, but without success. Then he wished to flee for shame, but the people held him back. And Saint Peter, the true wonder-worker, who had raised Tabitha and performed many other glorious miracles, stood at a distance, lifted his eyes and hands to heaven, and began to pray:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who hast commanded us in Thy name to raise the dead, I beseech Thee, give life to this youth, that those present here may know that Thou art the true God and that there is none other beside Thee, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen."

After this prayer he called out to the dead man:

"Young man! Arise, for my Lord Jesus Christ heals you and raises you up."

And immediately the dead man opened his eyes, rose up, and began to walk and to speak.

This account of Hegesippus is supplemented by Marcellus of Rome, at first a disciple of Simon the sorcerer and afterwards enlightened by Apostle Peter with holy faith and holy baptism. In his epistle to the holy martyrs Nero and Archilleus, Marcellus speaks of the youth raised by the holy Apostle:

The youth, falling at the feet of Saint Peter, cried out:

"I saw the Lord Jesus commanding the Angels to return me, at your prayer, to my widowed mother."

Then the whole people began to cry out:

"God is one, and there is no other beside the One confessed by Peter!"

But Simon the sorcerer fled, having by demonic power given his head the appearance of a dog's; nevertheless the people seized him,

some wishing to stone him, others to burn him. But the holy Apostle Peter opposed this, saying:

"Our Lord and Teacher did not command us to repay evil with evil. Let him go; let him go wherever he wishes. He has enough shame, reproach, and the proof of the powerlessness of his sorcery."

The freed Simon, Marcellus relates, came to me, supposing that I knew nothing of the miraculous event. Simon fastened to the gates of my house, with an iron chain, an enormous dog, and said to me:

"I will see whether Peter will come to you as is his custom."

And within an hour Saint Peter came to the door, untied the dog, and said to it:

"Go and tell Simon the sorcerer: stop deceiving men with demonic power, men for whom Christ shed His Blood."

The dog went and, as a man would, conveyed the Apostle's words to Simon. Hearing this (Marcellus says), I hastened to meet Saint Peter and received him with honor into my house; Simon and the dog I drove out. The dog, without harming anyone else, then flew at Simon himself, seized him in its teeth and threw him to the ground. Seeing this from the window, Saint Peter forbade the dog in the name of Christ to touch Simon's body. The dog, not touching the sorcerer's body, tore all his clothing, so that he was left completely naked. At this sight the people shouted at Simon, mocking and reviling him; and then they drove him out of the city together with the dog. From such shame and disgrace Simon did not show himself in Rome for a whole year, until Nero, the successor of Claudius[43], an impious emperor, heard from evil men the praises of the malicious sorcerer. Nero sought out Simon, came to love him greatly, and took him as a friend.

The Prologue and the Great Menaia, moreover, also tell the following about Simon the sorcerer.

Simon the sorcerer ordered himself to be beheaded with a sword, promising to rise again on the third day; in his place he set under the sword a ram, which he had given the ability to appear as a man; so the ram was beheaded instead of the sorcerer. Saint Peter, however, dis-

43. Emperor 54–68 A.D.

pelling the demonic delusion, exposed Simon's lie: all saw that it was a ram, not Simon, whose head had been cut off.

Concerning the final victory of Saint Peter over the sorcerer, which brought about the latter's ruin, all agree in relating it as follows.

Unable to prevail over the holy Apostle Peter in anything, and no longer able to bear the shame and humiliation, the sorcerer promised to ascend into heaven. Gathering all the demons who served him, Simon, with a laurel wreath on his head, came to the center of the city of Rome to a tall building; having climbed to its top, he began to speak angrily to the people from the height of the building:

"Since you Romans have until now remained in your folly and, forsaking me, have followed Peter, I too am leaving you. I will no longer protect the cities; instead I will command my Angels to take me in their arms before your eyes, and I will ascend to my Father in heaven, whence I will send down great punishments upon you for not having heeded my words and not having believed my works."

Having said this, the sorcerer clapped his hands and threw himself into the air; supported by the demons, he began to fly through the air, rising upward. The people, in great astonishment, said to one another:

"This is the work of God, to fly with flesh through the air!"

The great Apostle Peter then began to pray to God aloud, so that all could hear:

"Lord Jesus Christ, my God! Expose the delusion of this sorcerer, lest those who believe in Thee be led astray!"

And then he cried out:

"O demons! I command you in the name of my God: no longer bear him, but leave him there where he now is, in the air."

And immediately the demons, obeying the Apostle's command, abandoned Simon in the air; and the accursed sorcerer fell to the earth, as the devil once did when cast down from heaven to the earth, and, falling, was shattered. The people who were present cried out for a long time:

"Great is the God proclaimed by Peter, and truly there is no other God beside Him!"

The fallen sorcerer, though greatly broken, was, by God's providence, still alive, so that he might come to know the powerlessness of the accursed demons and his own, be filled with shame, and understand the power of the Almighty God. Lying on the ground with his limbs shattered, he endured indescribable suffering, and in the morning, in torment, he gave up his unclean soul, delivering it into the hands of the demons to be carried down to hell, to Satan their father. Saint Peter, after the fall of Simon, stood in an elevated place and, with a sign of his hand calling for silence, began to teach the people the knowledge of the true God; and by his lengthy discourse he turned many to the Christian faith.

Emperor Nero, learning of the shameful end of his friend, was exceedingly angered against Saint Peter and wished to kill him. But, as Saint Metaphrastes relates, the furious emperor carried out his malicious intent against the holy Apostle Peter not at once but only some years later. After the death of Simon the sorcerer, Saint Peter remained in Rome not long; having converted and baptized many, established the Church, and ordained Linus as bishop, he went from Rome to Terracina[44], where he ordained Epaphroditus (another, not the one mentioned above) as bishop.

Having arrived at Sirmium, a city of Spain, and having ordained Epenetus here as bishop, he withdrew to Carthage in Africa, where he consecrated Crescens as bishop. Reaching Egypt, he appointed bishops there: Rufus for Seven-Gated Thebes, and Mark the Evangelist for Alexandria. Then, by revelation, he was in Jerusalem on the day of the Dormition of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and again returned to Egypt. Passing through Africa, he reached Rome; from here he went to Mediolanum[45], and then to Photikê, where he appointed bishops and presbyters. Departing for Britain[46], he lived here a long

44. Tarraco or Tarracon: an ancient Iberian settlement on the eastern coast of Spain between the Pyrenees and the Ebro, by the river Tulcis.

45. Probably the one situated in Gaul.

46. Under the name of Britain the ancients originally understood all the islands lying north of Gaul between the German Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Britain was the name applied chiefly to the largest of them, which bore the native name of Albion.

time, drawing many peoples to the faith of Christ. In Britain there appeared to the holy Apostle Peter an Angel, who said to him:

"Peter! The time of your departure from this life has drawn near. You must go to Rome, where, having endured the death of the cross, you will receive a worthy reward from Christ the Lord."

Giving thanks to God, St. Peter, after the appearance, remained in Britain for several days, establishing churches and ordaining bishops, presbyters and deacons. In the twelfth year of the reign of Nero he arrived in Rome and appointed Clement as bishop, as his helper in the governance of the Church, although the latter refused, not wishing to take upon himself such a yoke. Heeding the exhortations of the Apostle, Clement, as an obedient son, bowed his neck beneath the yoke of Christ and, together with his teacher and the other holy men, drew the chariot of the Word of God. And many noble and distinguished men and women in Rome were enlightened by faith and holy baptism. Now Emperor Nero had two wives of remarkable beauty, whom he loved more than all his other concubines. Having accepted the holy faith, they resolved to live a chaste life and would not submit to the lustful desires of the emperor. He, the most shameless and insatiable fornicator, was enraged on this account against the whole Church of the faithful, and especially against the Apostle Peter, the cause of the conversion to Christ of the said women, who had begun a chaste life (the emperor also recalled the death of his beloved friend Simon the Magician), and began to seek St. Peter for execution. The aforementioned church historian Hegesippus reports that when St. Peter was being sought for slaughter, the faithful begged him, for the benefit of many, to hide himself and withdraw from Rome. The Apostle would not at all agree to this, preferring rather to suffer and die for Christ; but the believers, weeping, besought the Apostle to preserve his life, so necessary to the holy Church, which was tossed among the unbelievers by waves of calamity. Yielding to the tearful entreaties of the whole rational flock, St. Peter gave a promise to hide himself from the city, and on the following night, having taken leave of all after the common prayer, he departed alone. And when he was at the city gates, he saw the Lord Je-

sus Christ coming to meet him, entering the city; bowing to Him, St. Peter asked:

"Where are You going, Lord?"

"I am going to Rome to be crucified again," the Lord answered him, and became invisible.

Astonished, the Apostle understood that Christ, who suffers in His servants as in His own true members, wished to suffer also in his body at Rome. Therefore he returned again to the faithful and was taken by soldiers to death. St. Metaphrastes says that St. Peter was taken not alone but together with a multitude of the faithful, among whom were Clement, Herodion, and Olympas; their tormentor condemned them to beheading by the sword, and St. Peter the Apostle to crucifixion. Taking the condemned, the soldiers led them to the place of execution; Clement, as a relative of the emperor, they spared, releasing him to freedom; Herodion and Olympas, who had come to Rome with the Apostle Peter, together with many of the faithful they killed by the sword. St. Peter, however, begged his executioners to crucify him head downward, honoring thereby his Lord, who had been crucified on the cross of His own will; he did not wish to make himself like Him in the manner of crucifixion, desiring to bow his head beneath His feet. Thus died the great Apostle of the Lord, St. Peter, glorifying God by a death on the cross: enduring great torment from the nails in his hands and feet, he committed his undefiled soul into the hands of God on 29 June[4251]. His disciple, St. Clement, having obtained the body of the Apostle, took it down from the cross, hid it, and, gathering the remaining faithful and hierarchs, buried it with honor; they also gave an honorable burial to the bodies of Herodion, Olympas and the other faithful who suffered with him, glorifying Christ God, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.

* * *

Life, Labors and Sufferings of the Holy, Glorious and All-Praised Chief Apostle Paul

Житие, подвиги и страдание святого славного и всехвального верховного Апостола Павла

The holy Apostle Paul, before his apostleship called Saul[47], was by birth a Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin; he was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, to noble parents who had formerly lived in Rome and afterward moved to Tarsus of Cilicia[48], with the honorable title of Roman citizens; therefore Paul also was called a Roman citizen. He was a kinsman of the holy first martyr Stephen, and was sent (probably together with him) by his parents to Jerusalem to study the law of Moses; there he was among the disciples of the renowned teacher in Jerusalem, Gamaliel. His fellow student and friend was Barnabas, who later became an Apostle of Christ. Saul thoroughly studied the law of his fathers, became a great zealot for it, and joined the party of the Pharisees (strict zealots of everything national and outwardly pious).

At that time in Jerusalem and in the surrounding cities and lands the holy Apostles were spreading the good news of Christ; and long disputes often arose between them and the Pharisees and Sadducees (who rejected tradition and did not believe in the immortality of the soul) and all the Jewish scribes and teachers of the law, who constantly hated and persecuted the preachers of Christ. Saul also hated the holy Apostles, and would not even listen to that preaching about Christ; he mocked Barnabas (who had already become an Apostle of Christ) and uttered blasphemy against the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the holy first martyr Stephen was being stoned by the Jews, Saul not only did not grieve for the blood of his kinsman, innocently shed, but even approved the murder and guarded the garments of the Jews who were striking Stephen. After that, having obtained authority from the high priests and elders of the Jews, he tormented the Church (the assembly of the faithful) with still greater fury, entering houses and seizing men and women and sending them to prisons. Not satisfied with persecuting

47. Saul is a Hebrew name, meaning "desired" or "prayed for"; Paul is a Roman name, meaning "small." Some scholars think that he was a long-awaited, firstborn son and received both names at his very birth, as a Roman citizen, from his father. But Saint Demetrius of Rostov, following the opinion of St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose and others, thinks that Saul was renamed Paul at his very baptism. In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, however, there is no information as to when and for what reason this change of name took place.

48. Tarsus was once a large and populous city in the south-east of Asia Minor, the chief city of the province of Cilicia, on the river Cydnus, not far from the Mediterranean Sea. Even now it is a considerable and commercial city with 40 thousand inhabitants.

the faithful in Jerusalem, and continuing to breathe threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, he set out also for Damascus[49], with letters from the high priest to the synagogues, so that there too, whomever he found of the believers in Christ, both men and women, he might bind them and bring them to Jerusalem. This took place in the reign of Tiberius[50].

When Saul was already drawing near to Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him (so suddenly, strongly and dazzlingly that he fell to the earth), and at that same moment he heard a voice saying to him: "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute Me?" He, full of astonishment, asked: "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said: "I am Jesus, whom you persecute; it is hard for you to kick against the goads"[51]. Saul, trembling and terrified, asked: "Lord, what do You command me to do?" And the Lord said: "Rise and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do" (Acts 9:4–6).

The soldiers who were going with Saul were also terrified, and, struck by the extraordinary light, stood in stupefaction: they heard the voice speaking to Saul, but saw no one.

At the command of the Lord, Saul rose from the earth, and with his eyes open he saw no one: his bodily eyes were blinded, but his spiritual eyes began to see.

The guides and helpers of Saul led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus; there he remained three days, seeing nothing, and in a state of repentance he neither ate nor drank, but only prayed unceasingly that the Lord would reveal His will to him.

49. Damascus is one of the most ancient cities of the world. Already in the times of King David it was the chief city of an independent state; even before the Nativity of Christ it fell under the power of the Romans. The faith of Christ was established here by the disciples of the Lord who were scattered after the stoning of Stephen. The synagogues of Damascus were subject to the high priest of Jerusalem; the civil authority did not interfere in the religious affairs of the Jews. In Damascus they still point out the house where baptism was administered to the Apostle Paul, and the place from which he was lowered down the wall. In 1516 Damascus was annexed to the Turkish Empire, and now it is a very commercial and wealthy city with 200 thousand inhabitants. It lies north-east of Jerusalem, at a distance of about 200 versts, in Syria, at the foot of Anti-Lebanon.

50. Tiberius was a Roman emperor, from 14 to 37 A.D. In his time Jesus Christ was crucified.

51. "To kick against the goads" is a popular proverb expressing the vanity of efforts to resist an irresistible force, and all the more so a Divine, almighty one.

In Damascus there was also the holy Apostle Ananias[52], to whom the Lord, appearing in a vision, commanded to seek out Saul, who was living in the house of a certain man named Judas, and to enlighten his bodily eyes by touch and his spiritual eyes by holy baptism.

The Apostle answered: "Lord! I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to Your saints[53] in Jerusalem; and here he has from the high priests authority to bind all who call upon Your name." But the Lord said to him: "Go, for he is My chosen vessel, to bear My name before the nations and kings and the sons of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for My name"[54].

St. Ananias, going by the command of the Lord and finding Saul, laid his hands upon him: and at once, as it were scales fell from his eyes; suddenly he regained sight, and rising, received baptism and was filled with the Holy Spirit, who consecrated him to apostolic service; and he was renamed from Saul to Paul, and immediately began to preach in the synagogues about Jesus, that He is the Son of God[55].

And all who heard were amazed (at this change in the mind of the persecutor of the Church of Christ) and said:

"Is not this the very man who in Jerusalem persecuted those who call upon this name? And did he not come here for this purpose, to bind them and lead them to the high priests?" (Acts 9:21)

And Saul grew more and more in strength in the faith and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving to them that this is the Christ (that is, the promised Messiah). At last the Jews grew enraged

52. Ananias was a Christian from among the Jews; afterwards he was appointed bishop in Damascus, and he reposed as a martyr, stoned to death in Eleutheropolis (between Jerusalem and Gaza). – His memory is celebrated on the 1st of October.

53. "Thy saints" – so in the earliest times Christians were called, after their sanctification in Christ, on account of their blameless life and mutual love.

54. “Before the Gentiles” – they are placed first to signify that Paul would be a preacher chiefly among them. “I will tell him” – words of the Lord meant to reassure Ananias; their sense: go, do not be afraid: now none of the Christians will suffer from Saul; on the contrary, he himself will suffer for My name.

55. "He laid his hands on him" – as a sign of the communication to him of the grace of the Lord even before baptism: everything concerning Paul, although it was accomplished through a man, was accomplished by God Himself. – "Something like scales fell from his eyes": this was only Paul's inner sensation; it seemed to him that as if scales fell from his eyes. His immediate preaching afterwards in Damascus shows his fiery spirit and his whole-hearted acceptance of the faith in Christ.

against him, agreed to kill him, and watched at the city gates day and night so that he should not escape from them. But the disciples of Christ who were in Damascus with Ananias, learning of the Jews' consultation, when they had resolved to kill Paul, took him and at night let him down in a basket from a window of a house that adjoined the city wall. He, leaving Damascus, did not at once make his way to Jerusalem, but first went into Arabia[56], as he himself writes in his Epistle to the Galatians: "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter" (Gal. 1:16–18).

On coming to Jerusalem, St. Paul sought to join himself to the disciples of the Lord, but they were afraid of this, not believing that he was also a disciple of the Lord. But St. Barnabas the Apostle, seeing him and being convinced of his conversion to Christ, rejoiced, and taking him by the hand led him to the Apostles; and Paul related to them how on the way he had seen the Lord, and what the Lord had said to him, and how he, Paul, had boldly preached in Damascus in the name of Jesus. And the holy Apostles were filled with joy and glorified the Lord Christ. St. Paul also, in Jerusalem, contended for the name of the Lord Jesus with the Jews and Hellenists[57], proving to them that Jesus is the Christ foretold by the prophets.

Once, while standing in church and praying, Paul unexpectedly and involuntarily fell into an ecstasy[58] and saw the Lord. The Lord said to him: "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me." Paul said: "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in the synagogues those who believed in Thee; and when the blood of Stephen, Thy witness, was shed, I stood

56. The details of his stay in Arabia are entirely unknown. It is likely that he devoted himself to the study of the Scriptures and prepared himself for the new activity designated to him by the Lord.

57. "Hellenists" were the name given to Jews who lived in various countries of the pagan world and spoke the Greek language then in wide use.

58. "Ecstasy" (otherwise, trance) is an extraordinary state of a person, not occurring by his own will, in which, while he is awake, the external world is as it were shut off from his bodily senses, and the inner sense is opened to the manifestations of the invisible, spiritual world, which God is pleased to grant to him in a vision; the Apostle Peter was in such a state.

there, approved his slaying, and kept the garments of those who stoned him." And the Lord said to him: "Go; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22:18–20). After this vision, St. Paul, although he still wished to remain some days in Jerusalem, consoling himself with meeting and conversing with the Apostles, could not: the Jews, with whom he had disputed about Christ, grew furious and wished to kill him. Learning of this, the Christians of Jerusalem escorted him to Caesarea[59], and from there sent him by sea to Tarsus (his homeland), where he remained for some time, preaching the word of God to his countrymen.

Thither later, by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, came Barnabas and took Paul with him to Antioch in Syria, knowing of his appointment to be the Apostle of the Gentiles; preaching here for a whole year in the synagogues, they converted many to Christ, and they were called Christians[60]. After a year had passed, the two holy Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, returned to Jerusalem and related to the holy Apostles what the grace of God had wrought in Antioch, and greatly gladdened the Church of Christ in Jerusalem[61]. Bringing with them abundant alms from the willing benefactors in Antioch, for the poor and needy brethren who lived in Judea[62], since at that time, in the reign of Claudi-

59. Caesarea was in antiquity the name of many cities of the Roman Empire. Here is meant Caesarea in Palestine, built by Strato in honor of the emperor Octavian Augustus, on the Mediterranean Sea, about 100 versts north-west of Jerusalem, which was the residence of the Roman governors of Judea; it was fortified and adorned by Herod, and once had an excellent harbor; now it is a heap of ruins. In Palestine there was also another Caesarea, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, built by the Galilean tetrarch Philip in honor of the emperor Tiberius, and called Caesarea Philippi (in antiquity it was called Vansea).[2*]

60. The name "Christians" did not arise among the followers of the Lord, who ordinarily called one another brethren, disciples, believers; it was first used outside the Church, and most probably was given to the followers of the Lord by the pagans of Antioch, who, meeting a very considerable number of believers, ceased to regard them as a Jewish sect and gave Christianity an independent significance.

61. "The Church in Jerusalem" means the general liturgical assembly of Christians; church buildings, as edifices, appeared later. The holy Apostles Jason and Sosipater were perhaps the first to erect, on the island of Kerkyra (now Corfu, one of the Ionian Islands, near Albania), a splendid church in the name of the holy first martyr Stephen.

62. This was the first union of the Church of Christ of the Gentiles with the church of the Jews, in which brotherly love was solemnly expressed; at the same time it was a testimony to the great grace of God acting in the church of the Gentiles.

us[63], there was a great famine, foretold through a special revelation of the Holy Spirit by St. Agabus, one of the 70 Apostles[64].

Departing from Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul again came to Antioch. When they had remained here for some time in fasting and prayer, in the service of the Divine Liturgy and in the preaching of the word of God, it pleased the Holy Spirit to send them to preach to the Gentiles[4270]. The Holy Spirit said to the elders in the assembly at Antioch: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). Then the presbyter, having performed a fast and prayer and laid hands on them, dismissed them[65].

By the prompting of the Holy Spirit, Barnabas and Paul came to Seleucia[66] and from there sailed to the island of Cyprus (the homeland of the Apostle Barnabas). Here, being at Salamis[67], they preached the word of God in the Jewish synagogues and traversed the whole island as far as Paphos[68], where they found a certain Elymas (a sorcerer), a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was in attendance upon the local proconsul Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, over whom Elymas evidently had influence. The proconsul, summoning Barnabas and Saul, desired to hear the word of God from them and listened to their preaching. But Elymas the sorcerer, opposing them, sought to turn the proconsul away from the faith. St. Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit and fixing his gaze upon the sorcerer, said: "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a dark-

63. Claudius Caesar, successor of Caligula, occupied the Roman throne from 41 to 54 A.D.; during this time famine raged more than once in various regions of the Roman Empire.

64. The memory of St. Agabus is celebrated on the 8th of April.

65. The performance here of a special fast and prayer showed that the Church of Jerusalem regarded the mission of Paul and Barnabas to preach to the Gentiles as a matter of special importance.

66. Seleucia was a small harbor city on the river Orontes, at the place where the river flows into the sea.

67. Salamis was a seaside city where the Apostles disembarked.

68. Paphos was the chief city of the island of Cyprus, the seat of the governor; it was situated on the coast opposite Salamis: evidently the Apostles passed through the whole island and, of course, preached about Christ.

ness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand" (Acts 13:10–11).

And immediately there fell on the sorcerer a mist and a darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Then the proconsul, seeing what had happened, fully believed, marvelling at the teaching of the Lord. Many people also believed with him, and the assembly of the faithful increased.

Sailing from Paphos, Paul and those with him came to Perga in Pamphylia, and from Perga to Antioch in Pisidia[69]. Here they preached about Christ, and when they had already brought many to the faith, the envious Jews incited the leading men of the city, who were devoted to paganism, and with their help expelled the holy Apostles from the city and its environs.

The Apostles, shaking off the dust from their feet there, went to Iconium[70] and, remaining there a considerable time, preached boldly and brought to the faith a great multitude of Jews and Gentiles, not only by preaching but also by signs and wonders which were wrought by their hands; there they converted the holy virgin Thecla and betrothed her to Christ. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and their rulers to oppose the Apostles and stone them. Learning of this, the Apostles withdrew to the Lycaonian cities, Lystra and Derbe, and their environs[71].

Preaching in Lystra, they healed a certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb and had never walked; in the name of Christ they raised him to his feet, and he immediately stood up and began to walk. The people, seeing this miracle, raised their voices, saying in the

69. Antioch of Pisidia was a Roman colony; in it Paul and Barnabas first preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. It must be distinguished from Syrian Antioch or Seleucia. The latter was founded 300 years B.C. on the river Orontes, 30 versts from the sea, by Seleucus Nicator, founder of the kingdom of the Seleucids, as one of the numerous Greek colonies; it quickly became one of the vast and famous cities of Syria and its capital. In the Christian Church it occupied second place after Jerusalem; its primates received the title of patriarch; now their residence is in Damascus. And Antioch itself is now a poor Turkish town – Antakya.

70. Iconium lies south-east of Antioch of Pisidia, in Asia Minor, at the foot of the Taurus mountains; it was once the chief city of the Lycaonian eparchy.

71. Lycaonia was a region of Asia Minor neighboring Pisidia; Lystra and Derbe were small towns in it, south-east of Iconium.

Lycaonian tongue: "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men" (Acts 14:11). And they called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes[72], and bringing oxen and wreaths they wished to offer sacrifices to the Apostles. But Barnabas and Paul (hearing of this) rent their garments and, approaching the people, cried aloud: "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you" (Acts 14:15). And they set before them the word about the one God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that is in them, who sends rain and fruitful seasons from heaven, and fills the hearts of men with food and gladness. And in saying this they barely persuaded the people not to offer them sacrifice. While they were in Lystra and teaching, some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and urged the people to turn away from the Apostles, boldly saying that they spoke nothing true but lied in everything, and they further incited the credulous to worse, for they stoned St. Paul, as the chief preacher, and dragged him out of the city, supposing him already dead.

He, however (with the help of the faithful), rising up, entered the city again, and the next day withdrew with Barnabas to Derbe. Having preached the Gospel in this city and gained a considerable number of disciples, they returned, passing through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith. Having ordained presbyters for them in every church, they prayed, observing a fast, and commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Then, passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia[73], and having preached the word of the Lord in Perga, they went down to Attalia[74], and from there sailed to Antioch in Syria, whence they had first been sent by the Holy Spirit to preach the word of the Lord to the Gentiles. And arriving at Antioch, they gathered the faithful and told them all that God had done with them, and how many Gentile people had been brought to Christ.

72. Zeus and Hermes (otherwise Jupiter and Mercury) were the names of the pagan gods: the chief god and the messenger of his will, who sometimes accompanied him, and the patron of commerce, the intermediary between men and the gods.
73. Pisidia and Pamphylia were regions of Asia Minor, south-west of Lycaonia.
74. Now Adalia, a coastal city in Pamphylia, south-east of Perga.

Some time later a dispute arose in Antioch between the believing Jews and the Hellenists concerning circumcision: some said that it was impossible to be saved without circumcision, others considered circumcision a burdensome matter for themselves. Therefore it was found necessary for the Apostle Paul with Barnabas to go to Jerusalem to the senior Apostles and presbyters, to ask their opinion concerning circumcision, and at the same time to inform them that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles; with this last news they greatly gladdened all the brethren in Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, at the council assembly, the holy Apostles and presbyters entirely set aside the Old Testament circumcision as unnecessary under the new grace, and only enjoined abstinence from meat offered to idols, from fornication, and that they should harm no one, and with this decision they dismissed Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch, and with them Judas and Silas.

After arriving in Antioch, the Apostles remained there for a considerable time, and then set out again for the Gentiles, separating from one another: Judas returned to Jerusalem; Barnabas, taking with him Mark, his kinsman, made for Cyprus; and Paul, choosing Silas, went into Syria and Cilicia, and passing through the cities there, confirmed the faithful. Coming to Derbe and Lystra, he circumcised in Lystra Timothy, his disciple, only to still the murmuring of the Judaizing Christians[75], and took him with him. From there he set out for Phrygia and the land of Galatia; then he came into Mysia and intended to go into Bithynia[76], but the Holy Spirit did not permit it[77]. For when Paul was with his companions in Troas[78], there appeared to him in the night the following vision: a man, in appearance a Macedonian, stood before

75. Timothy was the son of a Jewess (who had accepted Christianity) and a pagan, and was himself a sincere Christian, approved by the brethren; with his consent Paul circumcised him "because of the Jews," since they would by no means have consented to hear the word of God from an uncircumcised man whose father was moreover a pagan.

76. Phrygia and Galatia were the inland regions of Asia Minor; Mysia and Bithynia were the north-western regions in it.

77. The actions of the Spirit are not specified by the historian, whether they were external or internal, but the Apostles clearly recognized them as the direct actions of the Holy Spirit.

78. Troas was a seaport town from which it was not far to cross by sea into Europe. Macedonia was a maritime region bordering the Archipelago on the northwest.

him and implored him, saying: "Come over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). From this vision Paul understood that the Lord was calling him to preach in Macedonia. Setting sail from Troas, he arrived at the island of Samothrace, and on the next day at Neapolis[79], and from there to Philippi, the nearest city of Macedonia, which was a colony of the Romans. In Philippi he first taught the faith of Christ and baptized a woman, Lydia, a seller of purple (cloth or garments of purple or red colour); she prevailed upon him to dwell with his disciples in her house.

Once, when Paul was going with the disciples to the place of prayer, there met him a certain maidservant possessed by a spirit of divination, who by her soothsaying brought great gain to her masters. Following Paul and his companions, she cried out, saying: "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17).

This she repeated for many days.

Paul, being indignant[80], turned to her, and commanding the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ, cast it out of her.

Then her masters, seeing that the hope of their gain was lost, seized Paul and Silas and led them to the rulers of the city, saying: "These men, being Jews, trouble our city and teach customs which it is not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe" (Acts 16:20–21).

The magistrates, tearing the garments from the Apostles, commanded them to be beaten with rods, and after giving them many stripes, cast them into prison. There, about midnight, as Paul and Silas were praying, the prison was shaken, all its doors were opened, and the bonds were loosed. Seeing this, the jailer believed in Christ, brought the Apostles into his house, washed their wounds there, was immediately baptized himself with all his household, and set a meal before them. And the Apostles returned again to the prison.

79. A seaport of Thrace, the first European city; today Kavana.

80. Paul was displeased with this confession of the unclean spirit, not wishing to have the support of his preaching from an enemy of God and of men, just as the Lord Himself did not accept the confession of demons (Mk. 1:24–25, 34; Mk. 3:11–12, etc.).

On the next day the rulers of the city realized that they had cruelly punished innocent men, and sent officers to the prison with orders to release the Apostles—let them go wherever they wished.

But Paul said to them: "They have publicly beaten us, Roman citizens, without a trial, and cast us into prison; and now they secretly release us? No, let them come themselves and lead us out" (Acts 16:37).

And the officers, returning, reported Paul's words to the magistrates; the magistrates were frightened that the prisoners whom they had beaten proved to be Roman citizens; and coming to them, they besought them to leave the prison and the city. They, having gone out of the prison, first came to the house of Lydia, with whom they had lodged before, and gladdened the faithful gathered there. Taking leave of them, they set out for Amphipolis and Apollonia, and from there to Thessalonica[81].

In Thessalonica, when they had already won many by their preaching, the envious Jews, gathering some wicked men, rushed to the house of Jason, where the Apostles of Christ were staying. Not finding the Apostles there, they seized Jason and some brethren and dragged them before the rulers of the city, slandering them as opponents of Caesar, who acknowledge another as king—namely Jesus. And Jason barely escaped from this affliction.

But the holy Apostles, having succeeded in hiding from these hostile men, went out of Thessalonica by night and came to Berea[82]; but there too the malicious envy of the Jews did not give the holy Paul any rest: when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the Word of God had been preached by Paul in Berea too, they came there also, stirring up and disturbing the people and inciting them against Paul. The holy Apostle was compelled to leave there also, not from personal fear of death, but at the urging of the brethren, that he might preserve his life for the salvation of many; and the brethren sent him away to the sea. His com-

81. Amphipolis was the chief city of the 1st district of Macedonia, southwest of Philippi; Apollonia (today the small town of Erissos) lies southwest of Amphipolis, in the northern part of the Athos peninsula; Thessalonica (or Salonica) was the chief city of the 2nd district of Macedonia, on the gulf of the Aegean Sea, today an important commercial city of Turkey and the storehouse of Macedonian trade.

82. Berea was a city southwest of Thessalonica.

panions, Silas and Timothy, the Apostle left in Berea, that they might strengthen the newly converted in the faith, since he knew that the Jews sought only his head. He himself embarked on a ship and sailed for Athens[83].

In Athens Paul was stirred in spirit at the sight of the idols filling that city, and grieved over the perdition of so many souls. He began to reason in the synagogues with the Jews and daily in the marketplaces with the Greeks and their philosophers. His hearers brought him to the Areopagus (this was the name of the place where public judgment was held beside the idol temple). They brought him there partly so that they might hear from him something new in the former assembly, and partly also (as St. Chrysostom thinks) so that they might hand him over to judgment, torments and death, should they hear from him anything worthy of punishment.

But St. Paul, having earlier seen in the city an altar on which was written "To the unknown God," began his speech on this occasion and proceeded to preach to them the True God, hitherto unknown to them, saying: "Him, whom you worship without knowing, I proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23).

And he began to tell them of God—the Creator of the whole world—and of repentance, and of judgment, and of the resurrection of the dead.

Hearing of the resurrection of the dead, some of the hearers mocked, while others wished to hear still more about this. And Paul went out from their assembly, not condemned, as one guilty of nothing; and the Word of God preached by him was not without profit for the winning of souls: for certain men, having joined him, believed in Christ; among them were Dionysius the Areopagite and a certain noble woman named Damaris, and many others were baptized.

Leaving Athens, Paul came to Corinth[84] and lived there with a certain Jew named Aquila; there Silas and Timothy came to him from

83. Athens was the chief city of Greece, the center of Greek learning, art and commerce of that time. According to tradition it was founded about 1550 B.C.; in the long course of its life it was the capital of a kingdom, a republic and a duchy; in the 15th century it was conquered by the Turks, and in the 19th century it was freed from them and became the capital of the Greek kingdom.

Macedonia, and together they preached about Christ. Aquila with his wife Priscilla was by trade a tentmaker; Paul was acquainted with this craft, and worked together with them, and by his labour gained food for himself and his companions, as he himself says in the epistle to the Thessalonians: "Neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you" (2 Thess. 3:8). And again: "These hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts 20:34).

And every Sabbath he persuaded the Jews in the synagogues, proving that Jesus is the Christ. But since they stubbornly resisted and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them: "Your blood be upon your heads; I am clean; from now on I go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).

And when he had decided to leave Corinth, the Lord appeared to him in a vision by night and said: "Be not afraid, but speak and do not hold your peace, for I am with you, and no man shall set on you to harm you, for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9–10).

And Paul remained in Corinth a year and six months, teaching the Word of God to the Jews and the Greeks, and many believed and were baptized; and the ruler of the synagogue himself, Crispus, believed in the Lord with all his household and was baptized. But some of the unbelieving Jews fell upon Paul with a whole crowd and brought him before the judgment seat of the proconsul Gallio (who was the brother of the philosopher Seneca[85]); but he refused to judge Paul, saying: “If there were any wrong from him, or wicked intent, I should have reason to hear you and would judge him; but in your dispute about teaching and about your law, I do not wish to be judge.”

And he drove them away from the judgment seat. After this, Paul, having remained there some more days, took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria with those who were with him. Aquila and Priscilla fol-

84. Corinth, west of Athens, on the isthmus, was in antiquity most famous for its extensive trade, and was then the residence of the Roman governor.

85. Seneca was born in Spain shortly after the Nativity of Christ, came to Rome, where he gained renown as a philosopher, and became the tutor of the emperor Nero, who afterwards condemned him to death; Seneca opened his veins and thereby carried out the sentence of death.

lowed him, and on the way they all stopped at Ephesus[86]. There, preaching the word of the Lord, the holy Apostle Paul wrought many miracles, and not only did his hands work wonders, healing every disease by a single touch, but also his handkerchiefs and head-bands, soaked with the sweat of his body, had the same miraculous power: for, laid upon the sick, they immediately healed them and drove unclean spirits out of men. Seeing this, some of the wandering Jewish exorcists dared to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying: "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." But the evil spirit answered them: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped upon them, and overcoming them, gained such power over them that he beat and wounded them, so that they could barely flee naked from the hand of the demoniac. This became known to all the Jews and Greeks of Ephesus, and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was glorified, and many believed in Him. And even from among those who practised sorcery, very many, after embracing the holy faith, gathered their magic books, and reckoning their price, found that they were worth 50 thousand drachmas[87], and burned all the books publicly. So mightily did the Word of the Lord grow and prevail.

But Paul was preparing to go to Jerusalem and said: "After I have been there, I must also see Rome" (Acts 19:21).

But at this time no small tumult arose in Ephesus among the silversmiths who made models of the temple of Artemis. When the tumult was quelled, the holy Paul, having spent 3 years in Ephesus, set out for Macedonia; from there he came to Troas, where he remained seven days.

On the first day of the week, when the faithful had gathered to break bread, Paul held a long discourse with them, intending to depart from them the next day, and continued until midnight in an upper room

86. Ephesus was a seaport, the commercial and principal city of the Asia Minor province of Ionia; it later became the center of the activity of the Apostle John the Theologian; here the 3rd Ecumenical Council was held in 431; today Ephesus is the poor Turkish village of Ayasalouk.

87. A drachma is about 20 kopecks; consequently the books burned amounted in silver to up to 10 thousand rubles.

lit by many lamps. Among those listening was a young man named Eutychus, who, as he sat at the window, fell into a deep sleep and, overcome by sleep, fell down from the third story and was taken up senseless. The holy Paul went down, fell upon him, and embracing him, said: "Be not troubled, for his soul is in him" (Acts 20:10).

Then Paul went up again to the upper room; the young man was brought in alive, and they were greatly comforted. Paul spoke with them at length, even until daybreak, and, having taken leave of the faithful, departed from there.

Having come to Miletus[88], Paul sent to Ephesus to summon the presbyters of the Church to him, for he himself did not wish to go there, lest he be delayed on his way, since he was hastening to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

And when the Ephesian presbyters had gathered to the Apostle, he delivered an exhortation to them and, among other things, said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of the Lord and God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood" (Acts 20:28). And he foretold to them that after his departure grievous wolves would enter among them, not sparing the flock. He spoke to them of the journey that lay before him: "And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I count my life as nothing, neither do I hold it dear, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:22–24). Then he said: "And now, behold, I know that ye all shall see my face no more" (Acts 20:25). Then there was much weeping among them. Falling upon Paul's neck, they kissed him, grieving especially over his words that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship. And he, having given them all a final kiss, set out on his way.

And having passed through many cities and lands, both along the sea-coast and on the islands, and having everywhere visited and

88. Miletus was a seaport south of Ephesus, once flourishing, which founded a multitude of colonies; today it is a simple village.

strengthened the faithful, he put in at Ptolemais[89]; from there he came to Caesarea Stratonis[90], and stayed in the house of the holy Apostle Philip.

Once a prophet named Agabus came there to the holy Paul, and taking Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said: "Thus saith the Holy Spirit: So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man whose belt this is, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts 21:11).

When the brethren heard this, they began with tears to beseech Paul not to go to Jerusalem; but Paul answered them: "What are ye doing? Why do ye weep and break my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

And the brethren were silent, saying: "The will of the Lord be done!"

After this, the holy Apostle Paul went to Jerusalem with his disciples (among whom was also Trophimus the Ephesian, a Gentile who had been converted to Christ), and was warmly received by St. James and the whole assembly of the faithful[91].

At that time, Jews came from Asia[92] to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, who were continually enemies of Paul and everywhere stirred up insurrection against him. Seeing Paul in the city, and with him Trophimus the Ephesian, they complained of Paul to the Jewish chief priests, scribes, and elders, saying that he was destroying the law of Moses, forbidding circumcision, and everywhere preaching Jesus crucified; and they incited one another against Paul, that they might

89. Ptolemais was an ancient seaport in the south of Phoenicia, within the bounds of Palestine; today Saint-Jean-d'Acre, which in 1799 successfully withstood the siege of Bonaparte.

90. Caesarea, see above.

91. James, the brother of the Lord, was the elder son of Joseph the betrothed, by his first wife; he accompanied Joseph and the Most Holy Virgin Mary with the Infant Jesus in their flight into Egypt; after His resurrection the Lord granted him a special personal appearance (1 Cor. 15:7); after the Ascension of Christ he was appointed by the chief Apostles the first bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, having been predestined to this by the Lord Himself; for his spiritual life he enjoyed high esteem from the Apostles themselves, presided at the Apostolic Council, and, having spent his whole life in Jerusalem, he even received from unbelievers the name "the Righteous." – His memory is October 23.

92. Asia was the name of the western provinces of Asia Minor – Mysia, Lydia, Caria, that is, the whole western coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which was governed by a proconsul.

seize him. And when they saw the holy Paul in the temple of Solomon during the feast, they suddenly devised a slander against him, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying: "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who everywhere teacheth against the people, and the law, and this place (the temple); moreover, he hath also brought Gentiles into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place" (for they thought that Paul had brought Trophimus into the temple).

At these cries the whole city was stirred, and the people gathered together; the rioters seized Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and at once shut the doors: they wished to kill Paul, but not in the temple, lest they defile the holy place.

At that time word reached the commander of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately gathered soldiers and centurions and hastened to the temple; when the rioters saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander took him and ordered him to be bound with two iron chains; afterwards he began to ask who he was and what he had done.

The people, however, cried out to the commander to put Paul to death. But because of the noise and the confused shouting of the crowd, the commander could not learn at all what Paul was accused of, and ordered him to be taken into the fortress. And a great multitude of people followed the commander and the soldiers, crying that Paul should be killed. When they reached the steps leading up to the fortress, Paul asked the commander to allow him to speak a few words to the people; he granted permission. And Paul, standing on the steps, addressed the people and spoke loudly in Hebrew, saying: "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you" (Acts 22:1).

And he began to tell them of his former zeal for the law of Moses, and how on the way to Damascus he had been surrounded by a heavenly light, and how he had seen the Lord, Who sent him to the Gentiles.

But the people, wishing to hear him no more, began to cry out to the commander: "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For it is not fit that he should live!"

Crying thus, they cast off their garments and threw dust into the air, carried away by rage, and insisted that Paul be killed. The commander ordered him to be brought into the fortress and gave instructions that he be scourged, in order to find out from him why the people were so enraged against him. But when they had bound Paul with straps to the post, he said to the centurion standing by him:

— "Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman citizen, and that without a trial?" (Acts 22:25)

When he heard this, the centurion came and reported to the commander, saying:

— Take heed what thou art about to do! This man is a Roman citizen.

Then the commander came to Paul and asked:

— Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?

He said:

— Yes.

The commander said uneasily:

— I acquired this citizenship for a great sum of money.

And immediately he released him from his bonds.

On the next day the commander ordered the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin to assemble, and brought the holy Paul before them.

Paul, fixing his gaze upon the Sanhedrin, said:

— Men and brethren! I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day (Acts 23:1).

And the chief priest Ananias, at these words, ordered those standing by him to strike Paul on the mouth...

Then Paul said to him:

— God shall smite thee, thou whited wall! Sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and contrary to the law commandest me to be smitten?[4299] (Acts 23:3)

And perceiving that one part of the assembly were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul cried out, saying:

— Men and brethren! I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; I am being judged for the hope of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6).

And when he had said this, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided: for the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge both. And there arose a great outcry. The Pharisees said:

— We find no evil in this man.

But the Sadducees maintained the contrary, and a great dispute continued.

The commander, fearing that the assembly would tear Paul to pieces, ordered the soldiers to take him from among them and bring him into the fortress.

The following night the Lord appeared to the holy Paul and said:

— Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome (Acts 23:11).

When day came, some of the hardened Jews met in counsel and swore that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. And there were more than forty souls who had taken this oath. When he learned of this, the commander sent Paul to Caesarea, to the governor Philip, with a large detachment of armed soldiers.

Hearing of this, the chief priest Ananias and the elder members of the Sanhedrin themselves went to Caesarea and brought accusations against Paul before the governor, reviling him in his presence and urgently seeking his death, but they did not succeed in anything, for no fault worthy of death was found in him. Nevertheless, the governor, wishing to gratify the Jews, kept Paul in bonds.

Two years passed. Porcius Festus succeeded Philip as governor. The chief priests asked him to send Paul to Jerusalem. This they contrived with evil intent: they hoped to kill the Apostle of Christ on the way. And when Festus asked Paul whether he wished to go to Jerusalem to be judged, Paul answered: “I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also know very well. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there is nothing of which these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar” (Acts 25:10–11).

Then Festus, having conferred with his counsellors, answered Paul:

— You have appealed unto Caesar; unto Caesar shall you go.

Some days later King Agrippa[93] came to Caesarea to congratulate Festus and, learning about Paul, wished to see him. And when Paul stood before King Agrippa and the governor Festus and told them at length of Christ the Lord and how he had believed in Him, King Agrippa said to him:

— You almost persuade me to become a Christian.

But Paul answered:

I would pray God that, whether in a little or much, not only you, but all who hear me today, might become such as I am, except for these bonds (Acts 26:29).

After these words, the king, the governor, and those who were with them rose; they withdrew to one side, conferred together, and decided:

This man has done nothing deserving death or bonds.

And Agrippa said to Festus:

This man might have been set free, had he not appealed to Caesar.

Thus they decided to send Paul to Rome, to Caesar, and handed him and certain other prisoners over to a centurion of the imperial cohort, named Julius. And he, having taken the prisoners and Paul, put them aboard a ship, and they all set sail.

Their voyage was exceedingly perilous because of contrary winds. When they had come near the island of Crete and entered a place called "Fair Havens," St. Paul, foreseeing what was to come, advised them to winter there with the ship; but the centurion trusted the pilot and the master of the ship more than Paul's words. When they had sailed out into the middle of the sea, a violent wind arose against them, a great tempest came on, and such a dense fog fell that for 14 whole days they saw neither the sun by day nor the stars by night, and did not even know where they were, for they were tossed by the waves; and in despair they ate nothing throughout all those days, already expecting death. There were 276 persons on the ship. Paul stood among them and comforted them, saying:

93. King Agrippa was Agrippa II, son of Herod Agrippa I, the last king of the family of the Herods, ruler of some regions of Syria.

"Men! You ought to have listened to me and not sailed from Crete, and so would have avoided these hardships and harm. But now I urge you to take heart, for not one soul among you shall perish, but only the ship. For an Angel of God, to whom I belong and whom I serve, appeared to me this night and said: 'Fear not, Paul! You must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:21–25).

And Paul urged them all to take food, saying:

"This is for your preservation; for not a hair shall fall from the head of any of you" (Acts 27:36).

Having said this, he took bread, gave thanks to God before them all, broke it, and began to eat. Then they all took heart and likewise ate.

When day came, they saw land, but did not recognize what region it was, and steered the ship toward the shore. As they approached it, the ship ran aground on a shoal and stuck fast; the bow was embedded and remained immovable, while the stern was being broken by the force of the waves. The soldiers conferred among themselves about killing all the prisoners, lest any of them swim away and escape; but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, restrained them from this intention and ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and reach the shore. And as they watched them, the others also began to swim, some on planks, others on whatever they could find among the ship's gear; and all reached land safely and escaped from the sea.

Then they learned that the island was called Melita[94]. Its inhabitants, who were foreigners, showed them no little kindness, for, because of the rain and cold that had come on, they kindled a fire to warm those who had been drenched at sea.

Meanwhile Paul gathered a great quantity of brushwood and laid it on the fire; then a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself upon his hand. When the foreigners saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to one another:

94. Melita is today Malta, an island south of Sicily; on Malta there still exists a tradition of the Apostle Paul's sojourn there.

Surely this man is a murderer, for though he has escaped from the sea, the judgment of God does not let him live.

But Paul shook the snake into the fire and suffered no harm. They expected that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing that no harm had befallen him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

The chief man of that island, named Publius, received those who had escaped from the sea into his house and entertained them hospitably for three days. At that time his father lay ill, suffering from fever and pain in his stomach. Paul went in to him, prayed to the Lord, laid his hands upon the sick man, and healed him. After this, the other sick people on the island also came to the holy Apostle and were healed.

After three months, all who had escaped from the sea sailed from there with the Apostle, now on another ship, and came to Syracuse[95], from there to Rhegium, then to Puteoli[96], and at last reached Rome. When the brethren in Rome heard of Paul's arrival, they came out to meet him as far as the Appian Forum and the Three Taverns[97]. When Paul saw them, he was comforted in spirit and gave thanks to God.

In Rome, the centurion who had escorted the prisoners from Jerusalem handed them over to the commander, but allowed Paul to live apart, with a soldier guarding him.

And Paul lived in Rome for two whole years, receiving all who came to him, and preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching about our Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

Thus far we have related from the book of the Acts of the Apostles, written by St. Luke, the life and labors of Paul. As for his other labors and sufferings, he himself recounts them in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, as follows: "in comparison with others, I was more abundant in labors, immeasurably in stripes, more often in prisons, and often at the point of death. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes save one; three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three

95. Syracuse was a seaport on the southeastern coast of Sicily, 18 miles from Malta.

96. Rhegium is today Reggio, in southern Italy, opposite Messina, on the northeastern coast of Sicily.

97. Puteoli is today Pozzuoli, a seaport near Naples. Appii Forum was a small town about 60 versts from Rome. The Three Taverns was a settlement 15 versts from Rome.

times I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have spent in the deep; often in journeys" (2 Cor. 11:23–26).

Having measured the breadth and length of the earth by walking, and of the sea by sailing, the Apostle Paul also knew the height of the heavens, being caught up to the third heaven. For the Lord, comforting His Apostle amid the many painful labors he endured for His holy name, showed him the blessedness of heaven, which the eye has never seen; and there he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

How the holy Apostle accomplished the other struggles of his life and ministry is related by Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, the historian of ecclesiastical events[98].

After two years of imprisonment in Rome, St. Paul was released as one entirely innocent, and preached the word of God, now in Rome, now in other western lands.

St. Simeon Metaphrastes[99] writes that after his Roman imprisonment the Apostle labored for several more years in proclaiming Christ: having left Rome, he went through Spain, Gaul, and all Italy, enlightening the pagans with the light of faith and turning them from the delusion of idols to Christ. While he was in Spain, a noble and wealthy woman, having heard the Apostle's preaching about Christ, desired to see the Apostle Paul himself and persuaded her husband Probus to entreat the holy Apostle to come to their house, so that they might entertain him with hospitality. When St. Paul entered their house, she looked upon his face and saw written in letters of gold upon his forehead the words: "Paul, Apostle of Christ." Seeing this—which no one else could see—she fell joyfully and fearfully at the Apostle's feet, confessing Christ as the true God and asking for holy Baptism. She was the first to receive Baptism (her name was Xanthippe); then her husband Probus, and all their household, and Philotheus, the ruler of the city, and many others there were baptized.

98. Eusebius Pamphilus was bishop of Caesarea in Palestine (268–340), a church historian who stood close to many great events of his time.

99. Symeon Metaphrastes was a collector and compiler of the lives of the saints, secretary to the emperor Constantine VII; he died about 940.

Having passed through all these western lands and illumined them with the light of the holy faith, and foreseeing that his own martyric end was drawing near, the holy Apostle returned once more to Rome. From there he wrote to his holy disciple Timothy, saying: "For I am already becoming a sacrifice, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day" (2 Tim. 9:6–8).

The accounts of the time of the holy Apostle Paul's martyrdom differ among the church historians. Nicephorus Callistus[100], in the 2nd book of his history, chapter 36, writes that St. Paul suffered in the same year and on the same day as the holy Apostle Peter, on account of the sorcerer Simon, whom Paul had helped Peter overcome. Others say that Paul suffered a full year after Peter's death, on the same 29th day of the month of June on which St. Peter had been crucified a year earlier. They give as the cause of Paul's death that by his preaching of Christ he exhorted maidens and women to live a chaste and pure life. Yet there is no great disagreement among these accounts: for in the life of St. Peter, according to Simeon Metaphrastes, it is said that St. Peter did not suffer immediately after the sorcerer Simon's destruction, but after several years had passed, because of two of Nero's beloved concubines, whom the Apostle Peter had converted to Christ and taught to live chastely. And since St. Paul lived in Rome and the surrounding regions at the same time as Peter, both accounts could easily be true: that St. Paul helped St. Peter against the sorcerer Simon during his first stay in Rome, and that, having come to Rome a second time, he again worked with St. Peter in one accord for the salvation of men, instructing both men and women in a chaste and pure life. In this way the holy Apostles stirred the fury of the impious and dissolute Emperor Nero[101], who condemned them both to death: he executed Peter by crucifixion, as a foreigner, and Paul by beheading, as a Roman citizen, who could

100. Nicephorus Callistus was a Greek church historian; his "Ecclesiastical History" in 23 books is especially notable, of which the first 18 have come down to us, and of the rest only fragments; he died in 1350.

not be put to a dishonorable death—if not in the same year, then on the same day. When Paul's honorable head was severed, blood and milk flowed from the wound. The faithful took his holy body and laid it in the same place as St. Peter.

Thus fell asleep the chosen vessel of Christ, teacher of the nations, preacher to the whole world, one who beheld the heights of heaven and the delights of paradise, the wonder of Angels and men, the great ascetic and sufferer who bore upon his own body the wounds of his Lord, the holy and most exalted Apostle Paul; and a second time, now apart from the body, he was caught up to the third heaven and stood before the Trinitarian Light, together with his friend and fellow-worker, the holy and most exalted Apostle Peter[4309], passing from the Church militant to the Church triumphant, amid the joyful thanksgiving, voice and acclamation of those who celebrate; and now they glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God in Trinity, to whom from us sinners also is offered honor, glory, worship and thanksgiving, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion, Tone 4:

O first-throned Apostles and teachers of the universe, entreat the Lord of all to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 2:

Thy firm and God-proclaiming preachers, O Lord, the chief of Thine apostles, Thou didst receive into the enjoyment of Thy good things and into rest; for Thou didst accept their sufferings and death as more than every fruitful offering, Thou alone who knowest the hearts.

* * *

101. Nero, Roman emperor (54–68), stained himself with his cruelty even toward his closest relatives, and especially toward the Christians. At the same time he was a patron of scholars, poets and singers, and himself took part in the Olympic Games. Vain, depraved and unbridled, he provoked a conspiracy against himself and was compelled to put himself to death.

ALSO COMMEMORATED THIS DAY

On the same day, the memory of the Venerable Peter, Prince of the Horde, Wonderworker of Rostov (d. June 29, 1290).

NOTES

4251. St. Peter the Apostle reposed in the year 67 after the Nativity of Christ, at the same time as St. Paul the Apostle. St. Peter was buried on the Vatican hill, and St. Paul near the Ostian Way, not far from Rome. According to the tradition of the Roman Church, the heads of both Apostles are preserved in the Lateran Basilica in Rome; the body of St. Peter rests in the Vatican Basilica, and that of St. Paul in his church outside the walls on the Ostian Way. – From St. Peter the Apostle the Holy Church possesses, as a precious inheritance, two of his catholic epistles; of these, the first was written about 65 in Babylon, and the second shortly before his end in Rome. In these epistles St. Peter exhorts Christians to lead a life strict, holy and temperate, worthy of their high calling, warning them against being drawn away by the allurements of paganism and against the preaching of the false teachers who were to come.

4270. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit," i.e., in the general assembly of the Antiochene Church, when the service was taking place with the celebration of the Eucharist, one or several prophets who participated in the service expressed the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to set apart Barnabas and Saul for preaching to the Gentiles. Or perhaps the Apostles Barnabas and Paul themselves explained their calling to the assembly, and the assembly dismissed them. Thus here begins the first apostolic journey of St. Paul. He was prepared for it by an extraordinary revelation – a rapture to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:1–5). For the omnipotence of God, of course, it meant nothing to rapture for a time the soul of Paul entirely out of the body; but it is difficult (observes St. John Chrysostom) to discern the necessity of such an unprecedented separation of the soul from the body in a living man, even for the holiest people. "The spiritual world, whither Paul was caught up, as not subject to space, exists everywhere; and therefore it is only required that the capacity for communion with it be opened in the spirit of a man, and he, remaining in the body without any change of place, may be in heaven – in the company of Angels and blessed souls" (Innocent of Kherson).

4299. The severe rebuke of the Apostle Paul is explained by the fact that either he did not recognize the high priest, because of the weakness of his sight, or because before him was not the former high priest known to him once. Having rebuked the open and unfounded insolence, Paul acted after the example of Jesus Christ, Who likewise rebuked the injustice of the one who struck Him before the sentence was passed. We have just spoken of the weakness of sight of the Apostle Paul; indeed this was an infirmity of which he often complained; this was precisely the "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7) from which he suffered. The inflamed condition of the eyes the Lord left upon the Apostle as an indelible sign of His miraculous appearance to him on the road to Damascus; Paul

himself said that he lost his sight from the sudden glory of that light, so that with open eyes he saw no one; and if afterwards his sight was restored, nevertheless weakness could remain in him: the midday journey under the scorching Syrian sun, the brilliance of a light that surpassed even that midday light, and the blindness that befell the Apostle could have produced inflammation and weakening of his eyes; his sojourn in the desert and in Damascus, where many suffer in their eyes, could have maintained this weakness of sight, and at times even intensified it. Paul's words in the Epistle to the Galatians: "you did not despise my temptation in my flesh, nor did you loathe it... I bear you witness, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me" (Gal. 4:14–15) sufficiently clearly hint at an impairment of sight which at times had its attacks and was accompanied by headache. That is why, having uttered a rebuke to the high priest who had insulted him, Paul had grounds to justify himself, that he could not discern that his offender was the high priest.

4309. The Holy Apostle Paul left us in his epistles the names of other of his co-workers as well. They helped him with such love, and he himself was so pleased with them, that in an outline of his life it is fitting to mention at least some of them, whom he himself gratefully recalls. Thus, for example, he names Luke, praised throughout all the churches for the Gospel, and moreover chosen by the churches to accompany Paul in acts of beneficence (2 Cor. 8:18–19); Timothy, who, like the Apostle, labored in the work of the Lord, and Paul had no one equally zealous; Timothy serves him in preaching as a son to a father (1 Cor. 16:10; Phil. 2:19–22); he names Tychicus, as a beloved brother and a faithful servant in the Lord, able to bring heartfelt consolation (Eph. 6:21–22); Priscilla and Aquila, his fellow workers in Christ Jesus (Rom. 16:3); Epaphras, his beloved fellow worker and faithful minister of Christ (Col. 1:7); Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, fellow workers for the Kingdom of God, and a comfort to him (Col. 4:10–11); Titus, a true son in the common faith, to whom Paul entrusted the completion of what was unfinished in Crete, who comforted him both by his arrival, and by his joy, and by his affection for the believers: "he is my partner and fellow worker" (Titus 1:4–5; 2 Cor. 7:6, 13, 15, 8:23); Sosthenes, who afterwards became bishop in Colophon (1 Cor. 1:1). Let us remember, finally, Silas, who together with Timothy remained in Berea amid all dangers, only to confirm the brethren in the faith, in accordance with the desire of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:13–15). And there were many of them, not even named by name, and remembered only for their deeds of love.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF JUNE

June 30

30 июня

New Calendar June 30 · Old Calendar July 13 (civil dates)

Synaxis of the Holy, Glorious and All-Praised Twelve Apostles:

Собор святых славных и всехвальных двенадцати Апостолов:

Peter (Life on June 29); Zebedee (April 30); Bartholomew (June 11); James the son of Alphaeus (October 9); (May 10)

This feast is very ancient. Testimonies to it are found already in the fourth century.

INDEX OF SAINTS AND FEASTS

A

Account of the Repose of the Blessed Constantine, Metropolitan of Kiev, 98

Memory of the Holy Martyr Agrippina, 483

Passion of the Holy Martyr Akylina, 262

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Alexander and Antonina, 189

Commemoration of the Venerable Alexander, Abbot of Kushta, 169

Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Amos, 310

Repose of Our Venerable Father Anubius the Confessor, Hermit of Egypt, 94

Appearance of the Wonderworking Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos Called "of Tikhvin", 547

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Aristocles, Demetrian, and Athanasius, 459

C

Celebration of the Wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God of Vladimir, 499

Concerning the Wonder-Working Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos Called "Hodegetria", 575

Concerning the Wonder-Working Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Lydda, or Roman, 578

Passion of the Holy Martyr Concordius, 80

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Cyriaca, Caleria, and Mary, 134

D

Memory of our Venerable Father David of Thessalonica, 586

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Dionysius, Abbot of Glushitsa, the New Wonderworker, 28

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre, 93

Passion of the Holy Martyr Doulas, 314

Memory of the Venerable Doulas the Passion-bearer, 324

F

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Frontasius, Severinus, Severian and Silanus, 84

H

Commemoration of our Venerable Father Hilarion the New, 107

Synaxis of the Holy, Glorious and All-Praised Twelve Apostles:, 656

Homily of St. John Chrysostom on the Nativity of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord John, 507

Translation of the Honored Relics of the Holy Martyrs Cyrus and John, 601

J

Memory of our Venerable Father John the Hermit, 443

Memory of the Holy Apostle Jude, Brother of the Lord According to the Flesh, 400

Memory of the Holy Martyr Julian of Tarsus, 463

L

Life and Martyrdom of St. Justin the Philosopher, 7

Life and Miracles of the Holy Prophet Elisha, 275

Life and Passion of the Holy Apostle Barnabas, 206

Life and Passion of the Holy Hieromartyr Lucian, 63

Life and Passion of the Holy Venerable Martyr Febronia, 516

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew, 198

Life and Sufferings of the Holy Hieromartyr Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata, 472

Life of Blessed Jerome, 349

Life of Our Father among the Saints, Leucius the Confessor, 446

Life of Our Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, 149

Life of Our Holy Father Ephraim, Patriarch of Antioch, 139

Life of our Holy Father Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople, 296

Life of Our Holy Father Nicephorus the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople, 32

Life of Our Holy Father Tikhon, Wonderworker, Bishop of Amathus, 373

Life of Our Holy Father Triphyllius, Bishop of Leucosia, 269

Life of Our Holy Father Vassian, Bishop of Lodi, 174

Life of Our Venerable Father Agapitus of the Kiev Caves, the Unmercenary Physician, 23

Life of our Venerable Father Bessarion, 103

Life of Our Venerable Father Onuphrius the Great, 224

Life of Our Venerable Father Paisius the Great, 404

Life of our Venerable Father Peter of Athos, 244

Life of Our Venerable Father Sampson the Hospitable, 588

Life of Our Venerable Father Zosimas, Bishop of Babylon, 86

Life of the Venerable Julius the Presbyter and Julian the Deacon, 465

Life, Labors and Sufferings of the Holy, Glorious and All-Praised Chief Apostle Paul, 628

Life, Labors, and Sufferings of the Holy and Glorious, All-Praised, Chief Apostle Peter, 610

Memory of the Holy Martyr Lucillian, and with him the Four Youths Claudius, Hypatius, Paul and Dionysius, and of the Holy Virgin Paula, 60

M

Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Marcellinus, 135

Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Methodius, Bishop of Patara, 458

Memory of our holy father Metrophanes, Patriarch of Constantinople, 77

P

Memory of the Venerable Paul, 608

R

Translation of the Relics of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates, 146

Translation of the Relics of the Holy Martyrs Inna, Pinna, and Rimma, 460

Memory of the Holy Right-believing Prince Peter and Princess Feveronia, in monasticism David and Euphrosyne, Wonderworkers of Murom, 544

S

Memory of St. Severus, 599

Suffering of the Hieromartyr Marcellus, Pope of Rome, and Those With Him, 119

Suffering of the Holy Great Martyr John the New, 49

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Justin and His Companions, 19

Suffering of the Holy Martyr Zosimas the Soldier, 437

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Leontius, Hypatius and Theodulus, 388

Suffering of the Holy Martyrs Manuel, Savel and Ismail, 378

Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs Marcian, Nicander, Hyperechius, Apollo, Leonides, Arius, Gorgias, Selinius, Irenaeus and Pambo., 102

Sufferings of the Holy Venerable Martyrs Archelais, Thecla and Susanna, 112

Synaxarion for the Nativity of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, 502

T

Tale of the Repentance of Theophilus, 484

Memory of Our Venerable Father Theodore the Hermit, 97

Memory of Venerable Theophanes, 188

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Tikhon, Wonderworker of Lukh, 376

Memory of the holy Hieromartyr Timothy, Bishop of Prusa, 188

V

Passion of the Holy Martyrs Vitus, Modestus and Crescentia, 331

Z

Memory of the Holy Martyrs Zenon and Zena, 481

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Zosimas, 144